The Challenge: While there were some networking opportunities for postgraduates within institutions across Ireland, there was a gap in student engagement opportunities across institutions.

The Solution: The USI Postgraduate Working Group was established in 2017/18 to create a platform for postgraduates across institutions in Ireland to connect with one another.

The Structure: Every postgraduate in Ireland is eligible to join the Working Group. This is typically via the local Students’ Union where an expression of interest can be made. Alternatively, a postgraduate can contact the Vice President of Postgraduate Affairs (VPPGA) at postgrad@usi.ie. Meetings are held approximately every 6-8 weeks.

Aims and Objectives:
• To facilitate a platform for postgraduates across Ireland to seek advice from their peers on local issues, share practice nationwide, and discuss unique postgraduate learning experiences.
• To inform national campaigns, for example, on postgraduate-specific issues, welfare, etc.

Learning to date:
• There is a need to devote considerable time during meetings for local issues. This enables postgraduates to share any local challenges and provide a platform for postgraduates from other institutions to impart advice/guidance based on previous experience.
• While there is a good postgraduate membership of the working group, there is a need to broaden awareness of the group. The more postgraduates that feed into the working group, the greater potential success in rolling out national campaigns, and supporting local issues.
• Similar structures at an institutional level can contribute to wider collaboration and the development of shared understanding of issues, which in turn, would support the continued evolution of national approaches.

This case study was published as part of the Postgraduate Student Engagement project in April 2021 by the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP). To find out more visit studentengagement.ie