

Dr Brendan O’Keeffe | University of Limerick

General Biography

I am lecturer in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences at the University of Limerick with over 10 years’ experience working in schools and third level settings. As a researcher in health and physical education, I am a firm believer in the importance of practice-based evidence informing evidence-based practice, and always strive to have the practitioner (teacher) at the heart of my teaching and research. My research interests span across a broad range of health and fitness related themes among youth in school settings, including: the pedagogy of health-related fitness; scalable school-based health promotion interventions; resistance exercise in school settings; and barriers and supports to physical activity participation, particularly among marginalised youth. I also have particular interest in examining the impact of the newly established leaving certificate Physical Education subject.

I am committed to the design and dissemination of pioneering school-based research that makes a difference to students and school communities. In line with the Cosán framework, my work focuses on student-centred approaches to learning in a Physical Education context specifically, and whole-school approaches to activity and health promotion. I am passionate about researching educational programs that provide youth a safe place to learn and thrive. I enjoy bringing people together and finding ways to work cohesively to enhance the issue in focus. My track record of working on local (Youth-Fit), national (CSPPA) and international (FitBack Europe) school-based research projects underlines my capacity to ensure evidence-based research gets disseminated, effectively implemented, and sustained in real-world settings.

The opportunity to join the RiRS panel provides a unique avenue to further develop existing research networks and collaborations, ultimately influencing practice on the ground in schools. The opportunity to work with, share ideas and learn from practicing teachers is one that I wish to pursue through engagement in the Researchers in Residence Scheme. My contribution as an RiRS panel member will be to facilitate PE Departments and teachers in the development and delivery of high-quality evidence-based programmes in the ‘Leading learning’ theme of the Cosán initiative. I also have a keen interest in whole-school approaches to activity promotion and well-being.