Projects funded by IAFA and Chartered Accountants Ireland Educational Trust

Project 1	
Title	**Voice and silence in the professions: The propensity for tax and accounting professionals to speak up**
Investigators	Brendan McCarthy (University of Limerick) Elaine Doyle (University of Limerick)
Summary	Research has shown that employees frequently withhold 'voice' in relation to a wide variety of issues. These include internal decision-making, managerial competence, unequal pay and organisational inefficiencies, among others. This is despite the widely accepted belief that employee input can make a positive contribution to an organisation, through increased innovation, more efficient work-processes, error-correction and early detection of illegal or unethical acts. This research aims to explore the voice issues experienced by tax and accounting professionals working in non-Big 4 settings, the facilitators and inhibitors that would influence their decision to speak up, and the voice mechanisms available to them.

Project 2	
Title	**Faculty readiness for integrating emerging technologies into accounting education**
Investigators	Margaret Healy (University College Cork) Anna Vysotskaya (University of Surrey)
Summary	This study will assess the awareness, readiness, and attitudes of accounting educators in Irish and UK higher education institutions toward incorporating emerging technologies into accounting teaching. By identifying current levels of preparedness and barriers to adoption, the study will generate evidence-based recommendations for curriculum design, faculty development, and policy initiatives. In doing so, it will support existing reputations of higher education institutes across Ireland and the UK for preparing highly skilled accounting graduates, aligned with the expectations of professional bodies, regulators, and employers.

Project 3	
Title	**ESG practices and corporate bankruptcy risk**
Investigators	Mohamed Elsayed (Queen's University Belfast) Yousry Ahmed (Newcastle University)
Summary	This project examines whether firms' ESG practices relate to corporate bankruptcy risk. It investigates whether ESG practices are associated with reduced failure risk by strengthening stakeholder relationships, supporting legitimacy, and improving financial resilience. Using firm-level panel data of U.S.-listed companies, the study combines established ESG measures with bankruptcy events (e.g., Chapter 11/Chapter 7 filings) and relevant financial and governance characteristics. The project employs econometric models commonly used in bankruptcy prediction and event-risk settings (e.g., probit/logit and related robustness analyses) to provide evidence on the ESG–bankruptcy risk relationship.

Project 4	
Title	**Can artificial intelligence improve financial forecasting accuracy in entrepreneurial finance?**
Investigators	Seán O'Reilly (University College Dublin) Michael Metzger (Dublin City University)
Summary	This project investigates whether artificial intelligence (AI) can enhance the accuracy of financial forecasting in entrepreneurial finance. Early-stage firm frequently present optimistic revenue and profit projections when seeking funding, yet systematic evidence linking these forecasts to realised financial outcomes remains limited. By matching projected budgets from equity crowdfunding, bank loan, and venture capital contexts with audited financial results, the study evaluates forecast credibility at scale. Machine learning and large language models (LLMs) will be trained on forecast inputs and benchmarked against entrepreneurs' original projections. The project contributes to AI in financial decision-making and the responsible adoption of emerging technologies in SMEs.