

ELA DOCTORATE WORKSHOP 2026

REPORT

30th edition

Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin), Grangegorman Campus, Dublin, Ireland
24–27 June 2026



Sponsored by
Learn Logistics – Kuehne Foundation

Introduction

The 30th edition of the ELA Doctorate Workshop took place in Dublin, Ireland, from 24 to 27 June 2026, hosted by Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) at its Grangegorman Campus and sponsored by the Kuehne Foundation, Learn Logistics. Continuing a tradition that spans three decades, the workshop once again brought together PhD students, moderators, and academic and industry keynote speakers from across Europe to discuss ongoing doctoral research in logistics and supply chain management.

This year's edition confirmed the workshop's role as a flagship event for the European logistics research community, combining rigorous scientific discussion with a strong emphasis on networking, mentorship, and professional development. The workshop was chaired by Dr. Claudia Colicchia (Politecnico di Milano), supported by three fellow moderators, and welcomed by TU Dublin and by Dr. André Kreie on behalf of Learn Logistics – Kuehne Foundation.

Participation

Twenty research proposals were originally selected for the 2026 edition; nineteen PhD students ultimately took part in the workshop. Table 1 shows the distribution of selected students by country of their university, confirming the strong international character of the workshop, with students from 9 different countries.

Tab. 1 – Students by country of university

Country	Students
Germany	5
Sweden	4
Italy	3
United Kingdom	2
Denmark	1
Finland	2
Belgium	1
Netherlands	1
Ireland	1

Total: 20

As in previous editions, each paper was assigned two fellow PhD students as "discussants" alongside the session moderator, preparing questions in advance and helping lead the discussion. This peer-discussant format was again highlighted by several participants as one of the most valuable aspects of the workshop (see Student Feedback below).

Topics of the Proposals

The proposals presented at the 2026 workshop covered a broad spectrum of themes within logistics and supply chain management. Table 2 groups the papers presented into five broad topic areas.

Tab. 2 – Proposals by topic area**Green logistics, decarbonisation and circular economy (6)**

Title of the proposal	Country
Green logistics solutions and practices for sustainable food supply chains	Italy
The haulier's perspective in the electrification of road freight	Sweden
Designing and managing reverse logistics for the circular economy	Italy
Improved resource efficiency in the circular value chain of plastics in construction	Sweden
Computational Modeling and Simulation of Large-Scale Freight Electrification	Sweden
CO2 transport network design – From systemic optimisation to actor centric perspectives and insights	Germany

Supply chain and transport resilience (3)

Title of the proposal	Country
Designing resilient transport chains in intermodal road-rail transport	Germany
Resilience of perishable freight transport: a case of food retailers in Sweden	Sweden
Assessing the Impact of Supply Chain Resilience on Sustainable Supply Chain Performance through the Mediating Role of Circular Economy: Evidence from the Chinese Textile Manufacturing Industry	Ireland

Urban logistics and last-mile delivery (3)

Title of the proposal	Country
Optimization under Complex Constraints in Large-Scale Last-Mile Delivery: Heterogeneous Fleets, Nonlinear Costs, and Minimum Load Utilization	Germany
Improvement of urban loading zones: Simulation-based analysis of logistics services and complementary uses	Germany
Urban logistics real estate: spatial, social, and environmental considerations for cities in transitions	Belgium

Digitalisation, automation and decision-support (4)

Title of the proposal	Country
Technology implementation of Logistics 4.0 in road freight transport organizations	Denmark
Increasing transparency in machine learning-based stockout prediction models	Germany
Understanding the selection, implementation, and evolution of automated order picking systems in warehouses	Italy
Developing a supplier multi-dimensional decision strategy tool for a UK-based premium automotive manufacturer	United Kingdom

Organisational and human dimensions of supply chains (3)

Title of the proposal	Country
Servitization and Advanced Services: Evidential Foundations, Supplier Governance, and Network Structures	Finland

Title of the proposal	Country
Supply Chain Resilience (SCR), Risk Uncertainty, and Human Resource Management (HMR) Practices in the UK manufacturing sector	United Kingdom
Labor Market Challenges in the Logistics Industry	Netherlands

This variety encouraged cross-disciplinary dialogue and allowed participants to develop a broader perspective on emerging themes and trajectories in logistics and supply chain research. Alongside the more established areas of green logistics and urban/last-mile logistics, this year's proposals also showed a notable concentration on supply chain and transport resilience, as well as on the organisational and human dimensions of supply chains, themes that may be worth monitoring in future editions.

Workshop Format

The workshop was chaired by Dr. Claudia Colicchia (Politecnico di Milano, Workshop Chair) and structured around four thematic sessions, each led by one moderator:

- Session I – Dr. Pietro Evangelista (National Research Council of Italy – CNR, Institute for Studies on the Mediterranean, ISMed, Italy)
- Session II – Dr. Chao Ji Hyland (Technological University Dublin, Ireland)
- Session III – Dr. Claudia Colicchia (Politecnico di Milano, Italy)
- Session IV – Dr. Edward Sweeney (Heriot-Watt University, UK)

Each PhD student presented for 15 minutes, followed by a 20-minute discussion led by the session moderator together with two fellow student discussants, a format designed to combine expert academic feedback with structured peer-to-peer exchange.



Two keynote contributions enriched the scientific programme:

- Dr Kevin Byrne, Head of the School of Business Technology, Retail and Supply Chain at TU Dublin, delivered the academic keynote on Friday 26 June.
- Dr. Arthur O'Sullivan, Managing Director of Linde Material Handling (Ireland), gave the industry keynote at the closing dinner, offering a practitioner's perspective on current logistics challenges.

A dedicated session, “Sharing experience in groups: Bridging the PhD journey and publishing”, gave students the opportunity to discuss career development, publishing strategies, and the challenges of the PhD journey in smaller, informal groups.

The Best Presentation Award, sponsored by the Kuehne Foundation, was announced by Dr. Claudia Colicchia and the certificate awarded by Prof. Dr. Hans-Christian Pfohl (ELA Board Member and Chairman of the ELA Research Committee) during the closing dinner at Trinity City Hotel. This year's award was given to Anton Zackrisson (Linköping University, Sweden) for his presentation on computational modeling and simulation of large-scale freight electrification.



The social programme complemented the scientific sessions: the workshop opened with a kick-off dinner at Dunne & Crescenzi on Wednesday 24 June; on Thursday evening participants took part in a Viking Splash Tour around Dublin; and the workshop closed with the award dinner at Trinity City Hotel on Friday 26 June.



Student Feedback

At the end of the workshop, participants were invited to complete an online satisfaction survey. Ten of the nineteen participating students responded; feedback was very positive across all dimensions, as summarised in Table 3.

Tab. 3 – Average satisfaction scores

Dimension	Average score
Scientific usefulness for the development of the project	4.2 / 5
Quality and usefulness of the feedback received	4.4 / 5
Quality of the discussion and the moderators	4.7 / 5
Opportunities for networking with other PhD students	4.8 / 5
Organisation and logistics	4.6 / 5
Hospitality and social programme	4.7 / 5
Overall satisfaction with the workshop	4.7 / 5
Likelihood to recommend to a fellow PhD student	9.5 / 10

What worked well

Participants consistently praised the quality and depth of the feedback received, describing the pairing of moderators with two student discussants per paper as one of the strongest features of this edition, generating richer and more constructive discussion than a moderator-only format. The composition of the group, combining different countries, disciplinary backgrounds, and stages of the PhD, was repeatedly mentioned as a key strength, together with the quality of the networking opportunities and the friendships built over the course of the workshop. The organisation, hospitality, and social programme (including the kick-off dinner, the Viking Splash Tour, and the closing dinner) were also highlighted as well executed and a valuable counterbalance to an intensive academic schedule. One participant summarised the experience as follows: “The quality of the discussions was excellent, and the friendly, welcoming atmosphere made the workshop a highly enjoyable and successful experience.”

Suggestions for future editions

The main suggestion raised by several students was to consider extending the programme from two to two-and-a-half or three days, in order to allow a more relaxed pace between presentations, particularly in the later sessions of each day. A few participants also suggested scheduling the industry keynote earlier in the programme (e.g. on the first evening) rather than at the very end of a long day, and creating additional informal opportunities, such as a short Q&A slot, to interact with moderators and keynote speakers outside the formal sessions. These are useful and constructive inputs that the organising team may wish to consider when planning future editions.

Key Outcomes and Broader Implications

The ELA Doctorate Workshop 2026 confirmed, in its 30th edition, its pivotal role in cultivating the next generation of logistics scholars. Participants sharpened the clarity and scientific rigour of their

doctoral projects, benefited from structured feedback from both senior academics and peers, and expanded their professional networks across countries and institutions. The consolidated student-discussant format continued to strengthen the peer-learning dimension of the workshop, without reducing the quality of the academic guidance provided by the moderators.

The very high overall satisfaction and recommendation scores reported by participants (average 4.7/5 and 9.5/10 respectively) confirm that the workshop continues to deliver strong value to the doctoral community it serves, thirty years after its first edition.

Acknowledgements

This year's edition was made possible through the generous support of the Kuehne Foundation, via Learn Logistics, and the excellent hosting by Technological University Dublin. Special thanks go to Dr. André Kreie for his continued support on behalf of Learn Logistics – Kuehne Foundation, and to the moderators, Prof. Dr. Claudia Colicchia, Dr. Pietro Evangelista, Dr. Chao Ji Hyland, and Prof. Dr. Edward Sweeney, for their guidance throughout the four sessions. Thanks are also due to Dr Kevin Byrne and Dr. Arthur O'Sullivan for their inspiring keynote contributions, and to all participating students and their supervisors for their engagement and enthusiasm. A special acknowledgement goes to Prof. Dr. Hans-Christian Pfohl, who founded the ELA Doctorate Workshop thirty years ago and, as Chairman of the ELA Research Committee, continues to provide the leadership that allows it to flourish; it was a privilege to have him present the Best Presentation Award at this milestone 30th edition.

Conclusion: Looking Ahead

Reaching its 30th edition, the ELA Doctorate Workshop reaffirmed its status as a cornerstone gathering for logistics and supply chain doctoral research in Europe. By bringing together emerging researchers, experienced moderators, and industry voices, the 2026 edition in Dublin created a space for rigorous academic exchange, mentorship, and the growth of a lasting professional community.

Building on the very positive feedback received, the organising team may wish to reflect on the overall pacing of the programme going forward, alongside other possible refinements, while continuing to preserve the elements that participants valued most: the in-depth, dual (moderator and peer) discussion format, the diversity of the group, and the balance between academic rigour and a warm, collaborative atmosphere.



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