



Spotlight Interview with

# RUPERT BOWEN

University College Dublin



Rupert Bowen, International Postgraduate Liaison

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK A LITTLE ABOUT THE COLLEGE AND THE PROGRAM?

Thank you very much for having me. University College Dublin is a large university based in Ireland, in Dublin. We began in 1830 or so, where we have a large, leafy campus just south of the city, which is a lovely place to work. We also have this master's program in forensic computing, which is within the School of Computer Science,

and that's been running for about 16 years. The origins of the program came out of the Irish police force. They approached the university and said that they needed some help with this new thing called computer forensics. So I'd say that goes back a long way. It evolved out of that and became a master's program about 16 years ago.

Uniquely, it's focused on law enforcement. It's restricted to law enforcement officers and it's also delivered online. What that means is we've been able to recruit students from all over the world now, from 70 countries. I think today we've had over 1,500 students and graduates, including a lot from the United States. What happened was we initially got a couple of students from the US who were prepared to come to Ireland for their exams, including Det. Cindy Murphy from the Madison, WI Police Department. She spread the word in the US, and we ended up having a portion of our exams take place in Madison. Then it spread from there. We started with 50 students and now we have about 300 students each year so. It's a big program and we've developed a lot of students from the US and Canada. We opened an exam center in northern Virginia, and now have an exam center in Ottawa with the Canadian Police College. I started coming to IACIS a few years ago and funnily enough, met a lot of our graduates here as well from all around the world. Many of them are working as row coaches and instructors. Some of them are doing the BCCE course and so on. They then apply so they can get credits for their work with IACIS. That's why I keep coming back because it's such a fantastic event. It really is unbelievable, unique really. What an experience to see that room with 400 people getting trained.

**“UNIQUELY, IT'S FOCUSED ON LAW ENFORCEMENT. IT'S RESTRICTED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND IT'S ALSO DELIVERED ONLINE. WHAT THAT MEANS IS WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO RECRUIT STUDENTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD NOW, FROM 70 COUNTRIES.”**

It's a very large group, and it's fascinating to be able to meet so many people from all around the world; to be able to communicate with you and the college and be able to get that additional training and education that is really necessary for this field. It is always changing and everything is always updating. It's a struggle, well not a struggle but a challenge, to keep 18 different courses we have in our master's program up to date. The courses are taught largely by law enforcement officers with a couple of adjunct faculty from industry, and led by two professors from our university plus a professor

from Pace University in New York. So, it's a big team teaching it. The lovely thing about coming here to Orlando is that I get to meet some of our students and graduates because this is an online program. We don't actually see them that often. They come for exams in Dublin sometimes. Today I've met 15 of our students and graduates. It's really nice to see them. Some of them are instructing as row coaches and they bring people and they recommend the course to people so that's fantastic. I've heard nothing but good things about it really. It's a great opportunity for sure. They say why they did it and what they got out of it which you wouldn't normally hear. People tell stories about how I'd help them get a job, for example. People have lots of different motivations for doing a master's at different stages of their careers. You've got to remember that this program is law enforcement only. The typical student is not 22, they're 37. They're kind of early, mid-career and some of them later in their careers. They might be doing it to get practical knowledge and skills in areas that they maybe have gaps in. So that's one reason why they do it. If they're a bit further on in their career they would find that it's really useful to get validation of their existing skills from a university and gain confidence in their abilities. Other people say that they really get a lot of benefits because they meet people from other forces in other countries through the program which is really useful. It helps seeing how people do things in other countries but also to make professional contacts which can be useful in investigations. So yeah, it's good to hear that.

## WHAT ARE THE PREREQUISITES TO ENTER THE PROGRAM?

The first and most important consideration is that they're working for a law enforcement agency, and for us, law enforcement isn't just police. It could be a government department or agency like tax revenue, border control, or regulatory enforcement. As long as they're working in an organization like that, that's the most important thing. Most people actually have an undergraduate degree, but they don't need to have one. If they've already got law enforcement experience, we accept that in lieu of having an undergraduate degree.

## DO YOU GET CREDIT FOR HAVING YOUR IACIS CFCE?

Well, a lot of people are very attracted to the program because we offer credits for prior learning. The IACIS certifications and training closely align with the values we hold at UCD Dublin, which ultimately reduces the amount of work the students have to perform to earn their master's.

## WHAT COSTS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM?

The tuition fees are very reasonable, and we keep it reasonable because we know over half of our students pay fees themselves. Tuition is about \$6,000 US per year over two years, part-time. So, the total tuition fees you would be paying will be around \$12,000 US at the moment depending on the exchange rate. In addition to that, there would be the costs associated with traveling to an exam center once per year, in regards to travel and accommodations. We do not charge for the exams. But, that's it, \$12,000 US overall. The costs are very competitive with other programs available in the same field of study.



Lilia Herdegen  
2024 IACIS Conference Host