



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

19th November 2026

The Faculty
of Health Sciences
presents the

Inaugural Lecture

Professor
Derek Sullivan



Professor Derek Sullivan

Professor of Oral Microbiology

Derek Sullivan is a Professor of Oral Microbiology in the School of Dental Science and the Dublin Dental University Hospital. Derek graduated with a B.A.(Mod) in Natural Sciences from the Department of Microbiology, Trinity College Dublin in 1986 and went on to complete a PhD from the University of Newcastle in 1990. Returning to Dublin in 1991 to work as a postdoc with Prof. David Coleman, Derek's main research interest switched from bacterial to fungal pathogens. Derek was appointed to a lectureship in 1996, to a Senior Lectureship in 2004 and as Professor in Microbiology in 2008. In 2003 Derek received the British Society for Medical Mycology "Award for outstanding contributions to mycological research".

During his long career in Trinity and the DDUH, Derek's research has primarily been focused on investigating the epidemiology and pathogenesis of the human fungal pathogen *Candida albicans*. One of the highlights of this research was the identification in 1995, along with David Coleman, of a newly described species, *Candida dubliniensis*, which we named after the University of Dublin. More recently, Derek's research has been focused on the novel expanded TLO gene family in *Candida albicans* which we hypothesise contributes to the ability of this species to colonise and infect such a wide variety of anatomic sites in humans.

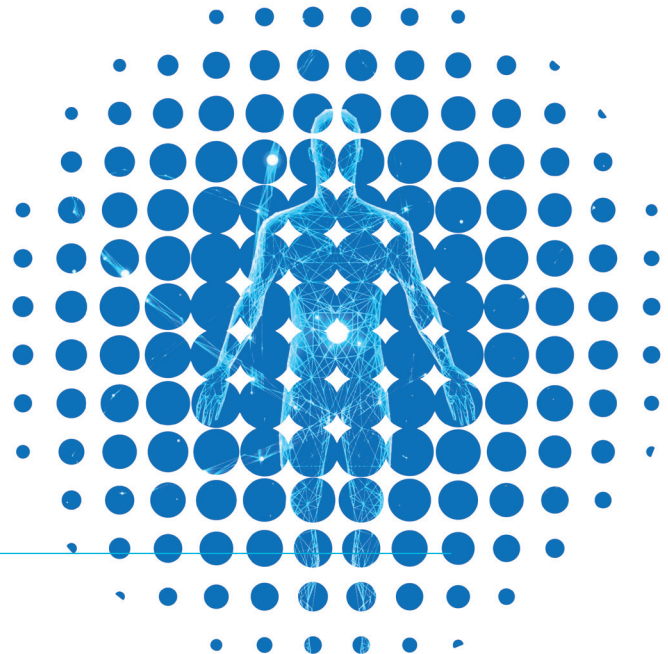
Candida here, Candida there, and Candida everywhere! Why is *Candida albicans* such an opportunist?

By understanding how this complex pathogen causes disease we hope to be able to identify potential targets for urgently needed novel antifungal drugs. Derek's research has resulted in approx. 120 publications and during his career he has been awarded over €4 million in grant funding as Principal or Co-Principal Investigator.

In addition to his research, Derek has held numerous roles within the Dental School, including Director of Research and Director of Undergraduate Teaching & Learning, as well as being the Associate Dean for Research in Trinity from 2012-14.

***Venue:**
Dublin Dental University Hospital.*

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Inaugural lectures provide newly appointed professors with the opportunity to showcase their academic activity to the College community and members of the public. An inaugural lecture is a significant event in an academic staff member's career.

At Trinity College, inaugural lectures are a ceremonial occasion, which is why academic robes are worn by the inaugural professor and the rest of the platform party.