Professor Margaret Gearty



Personal Summary

Margaret Gearty is an action researcher, educator and scholar-practitioner whose work focuses on action research, learning history and participatory inquiry. She is the founding director of New Histories (www.newhistories.co.uk), through which she has developed innovative approaches to learning, organisational change and systemic practice. Her particular interest lies in how people can respond meaningfully to the ecological and social challenges of our time at personal, relational and systemic levels. Her work seeks to connect the personal to the political through cultivating engaged spaces of inquiry, learning and storytelling out of which new pathways for collective action can emerge.

For over a decade Margaret has been an active member of the research and teaching community at Hult International Business School (formerly Ashridge), where she was awarded a professorship in 2018. She has supervised six successful doctoral candidates, served as both an internal and external doctoral examiner, and held leadership roles including Academic Director of the MSc in Sustainability and Responsibility and co-director of the Action Research Skills Programme.

An enduring thread running through Margaret's work is her interest in how learning develops within relationships and communities, and how this can cultivate more thoughtful forms of collective action. Her published work has contributed to the development of learning history as an action research methodology and to wider conversations on organisational learning, inquiry-based pedagogy and, more recently, ecological inquiry and poetic ways of knowing and acting in response to the climate crisis. Through her consultancy she continues to bring scholarship and practice together in collaborative inquiry with universities, research councils, public bodies and third-sector organisations, while also working alongside individual researchers, practitioners and doctoral scholars as a coach and mentor.

With a first-class degree in microelectronic engineering and an early career in the international technology sector, Margaret brings a distinctive combination of analytical, practical and relational perspectives.

Academic Profile

- Professor (Adjunct Faculty), Hult International Business School
- Doctoral supervisor since 2012 with six successful doctoral completions and ongoing supervision of current doctoral candidates
- Experienced internal and external doctoral examiner
- Internationally recognised contributor to action research and learning history
- Extensive publication record across action research, organisational change and sustainability
- Research expertise in learning history, participatory inquiry, organisational learning and action research
- Experienced researcher, educator and consultant across higher education, government and third-sector organisations.

Academic Appointments

Professor (Adjunct Faculty) Hult International Business school	(2013-Present)
Director, New Histories Ltd	(2011-Present)
Academic Director – Ashridge/Hult MSc Sustainability and Responsibility	(2015-2018)
Research Fellow –University of Bath	(2010-2014)
Research Fellow - Open University (AHRC Stories of Change)	(2014-2018)
Programme Co-director – University of Bath. Lowcarbonworks Knowledge Transfer	(2009-2010)
ESRC Doctoral Researcher – University of Bath. Lowcarbonworks.	(2006-2009)

Earlier professional experience

Prior to moving into research and higher education, Margaret held engineering and management roles in the semiconductor and technology sectors with Robert Bosch GmbH (Germany), STMicroelectronics (UK, USA and France), SuperH, Logica (Netherlands) and Philips Research (Netherlands). She holds a number of patents in CPU design.

Doctoral Supervision and Examinations

Doctoral supervisor since 2012 with six successful doctoral completions and ongoing supervision of doctoral candidates

Dr Rob Atkinson

Dr Pleuntje Van Meer

Dr Annemiek Friebel

Dr Jouke Kruijer

Dr David Briggs

Dr Joe Ellis

External examiner (completed)

Dr Alexandra Stubbings, 2015. At Ashridge (Accredited by Middlesex)

Internal examiner (completed)

Dr Paul Stanley 2019/2021,

Dr Joeri Kabalt 2019

Dr Chris Goscomb 2020,

Dr Nick Pope 2020

Dr Katharina Sell 2021

Dr Britta Babel-Cavallero 2023

Research and Professional Expertise

- Action research and inquiry-based pedagogy
- Learning history and narrative methods
- Organisational and systemic learning
- Participatory inquiry
- Doctoral education
- Sustainability transitions

Selection of consulting projects

Emerald Consulting – learning history (2019-Present)
Working in partnership with Emerald Consulting to provide evaluation and narrative support to an ecology of NGO's based in Africa who are combating wildlife trafficking and crime. Contributing on the creation of learning histories and design over six phases.

New Citizenship Project – Advisor (2019)
Worked in partnership with New Citizenship Project to provide mentoring and advisory support on a Learning History project with a grassroots investigative journalism network.

Global Green Growth Institute Ethiopia – Learning consultant (2015)
Worked in partnership with Emerald Consulting to design a learning history inquiry process for Ethiopian government and development partners involved in the acclaimed Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) initiative launched by President Meles in 2012.

Ashridge consulting – Action research evaluation consultant (2012-13)
Worked as part of the action research evaluation team for one region of the UK health services' leadership development programme. Conducted a series of reflective interviews, participated in client sense-making sessions and co-authored final report

Visiting Appointments and Invited Contributions

- Schumacher College
- Cambridge University
- University of Birmingham
- Coventry University
- Royal Geographical Society
- Irish Colloquium in Action Research (keynote)

Education

Ph.D. 2009 University of Bath. UK. *Supervisor*: Prof Peter Reason

Dissertation title: *"Exploring Carbon Reduction through Tales of Vision, Chance and Determination: Developing Learning History in an inter-organisational context"*

M.Sc. 2006 Responsibility and Business Practice, University of Bath (*Distinction)*

M.Sc. 1989 Microelectronic engineering. University of Dublin, Trinity College. Ireland

B.A.I 1987 Electronic Engineering. University of Dublin, Trinity College (*First Class Hons; Gold medal*)

Selection of Publications

Gearty, M. (2023). Learning history: Engaging multiple perspectives for learning. In D. B. Szabla, D. Coghlan, W. Pasmore, & J. Kim (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in organizational change* (Chap. 9). Edward Elgar.

Gearty, M. (2023). Wilding moments. *Appreciative Inquiry Practitioner, 25*(2), 11–13.

Gearty, M., & Marshall, S. (2022). Towards everyday activism(s): Making the "eco" move: How reflexive video-making is helping us connect to an ecologically orientated practice. In T. Boydell & M. Pedler (Eds.), *e-Organisations and People*, *28*(3–4), 14–27.

Gearty, M., & Marshall, J. (2021). Living Life as Inquiry: A systemic practice for change agents. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 34***,** 441–462.

Gearty, M., & Coghlan, D. (2018). The first-, second-, and third-person dynamics of learning history. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, *31*, 463-478

Bradbury, H., Roth, G., and Gearty, M. (2015). The practice of learning history. In H. Bradbury (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of action research* (3rd ed., pp.17–30). Sage.

Gearty, M. R. (2015). Beyond you and me: Stories for collective action and learning? Perspectives from an action research project. *Action Learning: Research and Practice, 12*(2), 146-165.

Gearty, M. R. (2014). Learning history. In D. Coghlan & M. Brydon-Miller (Eds.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of action research* (Vol. 2, pp. 492–496). Sage.

Gearty, M. R., Bradbury-Huang, H., & Reason, P. (2015). Learning history in an open system: Creating histories for sustainable futures. *Management Learning, 46*(1), 44-66. 10.1177/1350507613501735

Gearty, M. (2008). Achieving carbon reduction: Learning from stories of vision, chance and determination. *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship, 30*, 81-94.

Coleman, G., & Gearty, M. (2007). Making space for difference: The CARPP approach to action research. *International Journal of Action Research, 3*(1–2), 190–214.

Gearty M, Williams M, Pivcevic P, Reason P. (2013) 'Piloting digital storytelling and action research as an approach to stimulate pro-environmental advocacy and behaviour change*" A report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.* University of Bath.

Reason, P., Coleman, G., Ballard, D., Williams, M., Gearty, M., Bond, C., Seeley, C., & Maughan McLachlan, E. (2009). *Insider voices: Human dimensions of low carbon technology.* Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice, University of Bath.

Gearty, M. (2009). *Exploring Carbon Reduction through Tales of Vision, Chance and Determination: Developing Learning Histories in an inter-organisational context.* (Doctor of Philosophy), University of Bath.

Coleman, G., Gearty, M. and Shah, R. (2014) 'Evaluation and real time learning' 360 - The Ashridge Journal