Prof Kelly is educated to PhD level, with degrees in Civil (BE), Offshore (MEngSc) and Electrical Engineering (PhD) and is senior member of the IEEE. He received Professorial designation from CIT in December 2016, following international panel review. He has more than twenty years' experience of Irish higher and International educational teaching and management experience whilst at CIT/MTU. Prior to joining CIT in 2000 he pursued a research career for ten years in the NMRC (now Tyndall) in terms of securing funding at National and EU level, EU project management, publications, invited talks etc.

He has a significant track record in R&D, postgraduate supervision, and assessment both external to and within CIT/MTU. He has acted as external examiner at Master's and PhD level to other HEIs nationally as well as external examiner on undergraduate programmes. He is an expert international evaluator on the accelerated Doctoral training programme for university staff from the SATN network in South Africa (now THENSA) where he has co-delivered expert modules on research methods as well as evaluating and monitoring international PhD student progress. He has been invited to review PhD grant applications for the NRF (National Research Foundation) in South Africa. He is an advocate for high standards in Research Ethics (RE) and Research Integrity (RI) and sits on the National forum on Research Integrity in Ireland.

Since 2013 Prof Kelly has been head of the department of Mechanical Biomedical and Manufacturing Engineering and was recently appointed to the post of Vice Head of the iEd hub at MTU. The iEd Hub is a Human Capital Initiative (HCI) funded project which will be delivered by a consortium led by University College Cork with Munster Technological University and 9 enterprise partners. The funding awarded under HCI will allow the consortium to develop over project duration, a novel, agile educational platform to produce next generation graduates for the Health & Life Science, Medical Technology and Biopharmaceutical Technology sectors in Ireland.