Maynooth University Guide for MAP Academic Advisors

Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth

Welcome from the Registrar

Dear Colleagues

Maynooth University has a strong tradition of diversity in its student body.

We have developed supports for mature students, students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and students with disabilities, and as a result we have seen high participation by students from diverse backgrounds.

One of our key achievements has been in supporting students from diverse backgrounds to succeed in higher education. It is particularly impressive that students who access the University through the HEAR scheme (which provides additional points for students from disadvantaged backgrounds) have a higher completion rate than other students.

A great part of this success is attributable to the support provided by the university staff who help students on a daily basis, and of course to the efforts and determination of the students themselves. However, we are also fortunate to have a range of specialist supports for mature students, students from non-traditional backgrounds, and students with a disability.

This handbook is intended as a reference guide to the range of supports available. I hope that it will help to ensure that we are all aware of the available services, and better able to guide students as a result.

I would particularly like to thank both the Access Office and MAP Academic Advisors for their continued efforts in supporting students and embedding good practice into the university culture.

Yours sincerely

Aidan Mulkeen

Registrar

Section 1:
Overview of Maynooth University Access Programme (MAP)

The Maynooth University Access Programme (MAP) encourages under-represented groups to enter third level and provides support through their time at Maynooth. These groups include under-represented school leavers, mature students, students with disabilities and members of the travelling community.

The ethos that underpins all MAP supports are enabling, building transferable skills and assisting students with the transition in and out of University.

The principal objective of MAP is to widen access to third level education for specific equity groups: mature students, socio-economically disadvantaged school leavers, students with a disability, and members of the Irish Traveller community.

MAP is founded on 4 pillars; outreach into the community, promoting pathways into University, easing the transition for incoming students to Maynooth and supporting our current students. MAP's supports are personal, academic and financial in nature and are designed to promote confidence and independence.

MAP also seeks to embed equity and diversity issues into the culture of the University, thereby influencing the development of inclusive policies and practices that will support a diverse student and staff body.

Maynooth University is a national leader in both attracting and retaining students who are underrepresented in higher education. MAP has taken a leadership role in developing national policy in the area of widening participation.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

MAP runs a programme of activities aimed at removing barriers to progression to higher education. MAP's initiatives create realistic expectations for educational progression among schools, parents, adult learners and communities who historically do not access higher education. These initiatives are a blend of inreach and outreach and support the University to meet its own and national targets for widening participation. The development of the outreach programme relies on key relationships with education providers and communities as well as with key University partners. Our outreach activities include the following:

- MAP Information, Advice and Guidance Activities
- Publications and web-based information
- Shadowing Programme for Mature Students
- Take 5 Summer School for secondary school students
- MAP Special Awards for secondary school students and teachers
- Science Practicals for Leaving Certificate Students
- Computer Science Camp
- College Awareness Week
- Mathematics Support Centre Drop-In Sessions for Second Level Schools

PATHWAYS TO UNIVERSITY

MAP contributes to the development of HEAR and DARE, national entry routes for school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and school leavers with disabilities, as well as the mature student entry route.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS ROUTE

HEAR is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. HEAR applicants must meet a range of financial, social and cultural indicators to be considered for a reduced points place and extra college support. For more information on the HEAR scheme, please visit www.accesscollege.ie.

DARE

DARE is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places on reduced points to school leavers with disabilities. DARE is for school leavers who have the ability to benefit from and succeed in higher education, but who may not be able to meet the points for their preferred course due to the impact of a disability. For more information on the DARE scheme, please visit www.accesscollege.ie.

THE MATURE STUDENT ENTRY ROUTE

This admissions route is for people aged 23 or over who may not have achieved their full potential in previous education or who have been out of education for some time. Applicants apply through the CAO. The selection process comprises either interview only or written assessment/interview. It also involves referral to mature student summer courses in academic writing and mathematics, where required.

CERTIFICATES IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

The Maynooth University Certificate in Science is a Level 6 Foundation Programme for mature students who wish to undertake a foundation year in preparation for degree studies in the Science and Engineering areas.

TRANSITION TO MAYNOOTH

MAP has developed a series of initiatives to enable students to make a successful transition to third level study. Early engagement initiatives, through which potential students are gradually introduced to the University and afforded the opportunity to learn vital academic skills, are designed to empower students to surmount transitional difficulties and therefore participate fully as students of Maynooth University. These initiatives include:

– Summer Programmes for incoming mature students in academic writing and Mathematics
– Launchpad Orientation Programme
– Orientation Programme for Mature Students
– Disability Office Information Session
– Specific Orientation for Students on the Autistic Spectrum

STUDENTS IDENTIFIED BY MAP MAY NEED SUPPORT WITH

– Lower expectations about going to University
– Adapting to a third level environment
– Financial costs associated with being in college
– Lack of confidence and lower self-esteem
– Developing self-advocacy skills
– Balancing family and childcare obligations
– Mobility around the campus and accessing buildings
– A range of academic issues which might include note taking in lectures, accessing printed materials, absences due to the impact of a disability and support in taking exams.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

Supports developed by MAP are aimed at achieving equity of participation while supporting students to develop as independent learners. The support activities are designed to increase the rates of retention, attainment and progression of our students. MAP works towards the mainstreaming of much of its post-entry supports through collaboration with key University partners. These MAP supports include:

- Mature, Disability and Access Student Advisors
- MAP Academic Advisors
- Assistive Technology Centre
- Technology
- Financial Supports
- Individual Learning Support
- Additional Academic Tuition
- Individual Needs Assessments for Students with Disabilities
- PAs, Notetakers and ISL Interpreters
- Examination Accommodations
- Student Central

Students registered with MAP may have a different learning style, may have had different experiences of education and life and may require more support to become independent learners.

University students are encouraged to take responsibility for getting their work done and organising their time effectively. The MAP Team plays a key role in assisting students registered with the Access Office to develop these skills and become an independent learner while taking into account different learning styles, illness and disability related issues and diverse needs.

Section 2:
Role of MAP
Academic Advisor

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

MAP Academic Advisors have a specific
role to assist students supported by
MAP with academic course-related queries
and concerns.

The MAP Academic Advisor initiative started as a support for MAP students in 2011-12. The initiative started with Mature Student Advisors and expanded to include students who enter Maynooth University through the HEAR scheme and students with disabilities. It was envisioned that students supported by MAP would have a designated member of academic staff within their department who could assist them with course related issues or academic queries or concerns. The programme also created a link between the academic departments and MAP to ensure the supports offered were relevant to the academic studies and endeavours of our students. MAP Academic Advisors also raise awareness within their academic department of the issues that may affect students who are supported by MAP.

A MAP ACADEMIC ADVISOR IS:

1. A source of support and advice for MAP students who have academic course related queries and concerns;

2. A link between academic departments and MAP on academic issues relating to students supported by MAP;

3. A source of advice for MAP on academic issues;

4. A source of information for potential students on specific aspects of courses run in their department;

5. A conduit to ensure faculty are using Workbench to pull information on students with disabilities in their lectures;

6. A key person in the department to be aware of legal obligations to ensure that students with disabilities are reasonably accommodated;

7. A conduit to raise awareness of issues in relation to diversity and equality within the department;

8. An advocate within your Department around accessibility and diversity issues.

A MAP ACADEMIC ADVISOR IS NOT:

1. A student counsellor. Students in need of counselling should be referred to the campus Counselling Service and/or Student Health Centre;

2. A financial or personal advisor to students. Students should be referred to Maynooth University Budgeting Advice Service.

3. A retention officer. Students at risk of dropping out should be referred to the Access Office and/or Academic Advisor's Office;

4. A person with sole responsibility to resolve all "access" issues brought to their attention; or

5. A Disability Advisor. Students with disabilities should be referred to the Disability Office.

WHAT SUPPORTS ARE IN PLACE FOR ME FROM MAP?

MAP provides training and end-of-semester review meetings for MAP Academic Advisors. You can also contact MAP Advisors if you have any queries on how best to support a student. We run a number of training sessions throughout the year and would be delighted to facilitate a session for your department if required. Contact details for MAP staff are at the back of this handbook.

You should contact MAP immediately if you have any questions about your role, a concern about the level of support a student is receiving or concerns about a student's welfare.

HOW DO STUDENTS CONTACT ME AS MAP ACADEMIC ADVISOR?

Students supported by MAP are informed about MAP Academic Advisors and are encouraged to seek support if academic issues arise throughout the year. The list of MAP Academic Advisors is on the MAP website so students may email or ring you to schedule a meeting. MAP also encourages students to meet with you during your advertised office hours.

For some students who are registered with the Disability Office, their Disability Advisor or the Assistant Psychologist from Student Central may schedule a meeting for the student and attend in an advocacy role.

DO I NOTIFY MAP OF 1:1 ACADEMIC MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS?

Generally you do not have to notify MAP of individual meetings with students but please contact us if you need advice in relation to a particular issue or if you are concerned about a student's welfare.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO CONFIDENTIALITY?

MAP only shares information on students when we have been given consent by the student to do so. Information that is made available might include, for example, that a student entered the University through the HEAR route or that a student is registered with the Disability Office. This information is shared with MAP Academic Advisors for the specific purpose of supporting students and should only be made available to those staff members who are directly involved in the provision of support.

The information is 'sensitive personal data' that is protected under Data Protection legislation and it must be treated confidentially. Students may choose to disclose additional information in relation to their personal circumstances, often to provide some background as to why they are struggling with a particular issue. Such disclosures are also regarded as 'sensitive personal data' and must be treated confidentially.

HOW CAN MAP ACADEMIC ADVISORS BE ADVOCATES FOR INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Inclusive teaching means recognising, accommodating and meeting the learning needs of all students. By developing an inclusive learning environment, all students can be assisted to engage with the curriculum and to deepen their understanding. Increasingly, third level institutions in Ireland and abroad are looking at ways of opening up the curriculum and making education more inclusive for all students. Often the style of teaching and assessment on a particular programme may inadvertently exclude some people, who would otherwise participate in that programme. While maintaining academic standards, alterations can be made to both the delivery of course content and methods of assessment. The way that learning materials are presented can directly affect students' acquisition of information. There are a number of adjustments that can be made to the structure of a course to make it more inclusive, such as:

- Use Moodle to make notes and overheads available online, ideally in advance of the lecture.

- Provide course material in accessible formats, keeping writing style clear and concise.

- Provide reading lists in advance to facilitate early reading and planning. Help students to make choices about essential reading.

- Avoid using out-of-print books as it is much more difficult and expensive to reproduce these sources in alternative formats.

- Use a multisensory approach to cater for different learning styles. Convey information orally about what you have written on the board or shown on overheads.

- Provide an overview when introducing a new topic so students know what to expect – highlight the main argument and key points.

- Provide a summary at the end of a lecture or topic.

- Provide a list of new terms and vocabulary, giving explanations where necessary.

- Assignment topics should be provided early. Additional follow-up may be required to reinforce the deadline and to clarify what is expected.

- Discuss the instructions for examination papers and their structure with students well in advance of the exam.

- Ensure that students receive advance warning of any changes to their normal routine.

- Allow students to use assistive technology devices during lectures.

- Facilitate the use of educational support workers e.g. note-takers or personal assistants during lectures.

- Provide examination supports for in-course assessments when requested.

- Some students may be absent from college for prolonged periods and may need direction from the lecturer on areas for revision. Clear guidelines on important lectures in the module, such as essential texts to read etc., would be extremely beneficial.

- Flexibility on attendance may be required, as it may not be possible for some students to be present at all lectures/ tutorials.

- Some students may require extra time to complete assignments. This should be pre-agreed with the student and a new deadline should be set for the assignment.

- Some students with particular disabilities (e.g. fatigue difficulties) may tire easily and may require rest breaks during lectures or class tests.

- Some students may find it difficult to work in a group. Alternative ways of completing group assignments may need to be considered.

Dr. Christine Griffin is Senior Lecturer in the Biology Department. She is the Mature Student Coordinator and MAP Academic Advisor for the department.

Her research interests are biological pest control and behavioural ecology of invertebrates. Christine has been the MAP Academic Advisor for Biology since the programme was started in the 2011-2012 academic year. She has been the Department's Mature Student Supervisor before the programme commenced.

What are the typical queries you are asked as MAP Academic Advisor?
From students:
Struggling with particular sections of the course or with keeping up in general Having difficulty meeting dead-lines for assignments; e.g. I have missed a deadline- should I forget about that assignment and focus on keeping up with current workload?

Colleagues:
How to take disability into account in assessing student work?

What have you learned from the role?
Over the years that I have been a MAP Academic Advisor I have become increasingly aware of the diversity of abilities and skills in our student body in general. Those who have an identifiable issue and have disclosed to the Access Office are our particular concern, but are the minority. However, this minority do us a great service; being registered with the Access Office empowers them to point out issues where they experience difficulties and in so doing they can draw our attention to things that many of their colleagues may also find problematic, and (hopefully) raise the quality of the educational experience for the whole class as a result.

MAP Academic Advisors do not have to have all the answers; we need to be able to draw out the student's concerns and needs and together come to the best plan for dealing with them in conjunction with colleagues within and outside the academic department.

> **I have found the role most rewarding and also humbling to see how students can persevere and succeed despite great burdens in their lives.**

Please give an example of the typical student query you receive and how you assisted the student to resolve their difficulty.
"I have been absent a lot due to illness and now am struggling to make up for it." I helped the student to review the course section by section to identify what assessments (MCQs, practicals) and lectures had been missed and what action needed to be taken. We discussed what notes/reading lists/text books were available, and which sections were conceptually more difficult. The student had been allocated an additional tuition grant by MAP. Together we agreed which sections would most profit from tutorial help. Having identified problem areas, I e-mailed relevant teaching staff in preparation for contact by the student and asked the relevant academics to locate tutors.

What tips or suggestions would you have for new MAP Academic Advisors?
Maintaining staff awareness is one of our important roles. Keep MAP issues on the agenda for departmental staff meetings.

At the start of each academic year (especially where new staff have joined) circulate and talk through a summary of key information (such as how to view/access information on Workbench, where to find MAP information online, guidelines for marking work by students with dyslexia, and general inclusive teaching practices). Identify areas where staff have questions and invite someone from the Access Office to deal with them at a staff meeting.

What are the challenges of the role of MAP Academic Advisor for your academic department?
One challenge is in regard to disclosure. Workbench is an excellent medium for informing staff about MAP students taking their modules, but other channels of communication need to be put in place where part-time and temporary teaching staff are involved.

For a department with practical classes and project work there are additional challenges in regard to health and safety in labs.

What are the most effective supports offered to you as a MAP Academic Advisor?
In addition to the obvious- Access Office web site and meetings, occasional seminars on particular issues, contact with Access Office by phone calls/email regarding particular students - I have found meeting with a student along with their disability advisor provides added insights and perspectives.

Dr. Ciarán Mac an Bhaird has been the Mathematics and Statistics MAP Academic Advisor for 4 years. He is a lecturer and Mathematics Support Centre Manager.

His current areas of research focus on Mathematics Education and Algebraic Number Theory. In Maths Education he is working on the benefits of introducing new methods of teaching Maths to students.

He is particularly interested in using podcasts, screencasts and touchscreen technology. He is also developing resources to help introduce the history and background of mathematical topics to students at all levels.
In Algebraic Number Theory he is interested in Gauss Sums and Cyclotomic Numbers. He is currently working with the computer package Singular in order to investigate these topics further.

What are the typical queries you are asked as MAP Academic Advisor?
Typically queries are from students who are looking for advice on how to study maths.

What have you learned from the role?

I find the role rewarding when students listen to the advice, it really makes a difference. And getting positive student feedback is rewarding in itself and some of the students are inspirational.

However, it can be tough in mathematics to try things on your own, and some students, despite a lot of advice, time and effort, simply will not listen.

Please give an example of the typical student query you receive and how you assisted the student to resolve their difficulty.

Generally students have fallen behind for some reason. The causes vary significantly, but many fall into the trap of either working only on their own and getting no help or only working with others, and not trying the work on their own first. I generally advise, based on previous student feedback, that a mixture of these approaches can make a difference.

Students should always try the material on their own, and once they get stuck, make a list of the problems that they have and then ask for help. It can be a slow process but if students stick to this approach, it can make a huge difference.

What tips or suggestions would you have for new MAP Academic Advisors?

It is essential that there is always two way communication between you and MAP. If you, or MAP, refer a student to the other party, an email must be sent cc'ing the relevant person and the student, otherwise students can fall through the cracks. Also, it can give you some of the background on the student before they arrive looking for assistance.

Finally, I personally adapt a three strikes policy. I give students three chances to turn up or try what they have been advised, after that, I will not contact them. However, if they appear again of their own initiative, I will of course assist them as best I can.

What are the challenges of the role of MAP Academic Advisor for your academic department?

There are over 700 students doing mathematics in first year, approximately 1200 in total, so the number of queries I have to deal with can be overwhelming at certain times of the year.

What are the most effective supports offered to you as a MAP Academic Advisor?

> **In general, the support given by MAP staff is exceptional.**

Students have also compiled a list of advice on how they got through first year, these documents are available from the MSC website http://supportcentre.maths.nuim.ie/resources

Checklist
with Student

It is preferable that students who contact a MAP Academic Advisor regarding an academic issue are encouraged to attempt to resolve their situation themselves.

HAS THE STUDENT...	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Already approached the lecturer/ course coordinator/ tutor/ Head of Department to discuss their difficulty?			
Made contact with their Class Rep to advise them of any relevant issues/ difficulties?			
Linked in with fellow classmates to set up a study group or collaborate on notetaking, assignment, project, etc.?			
Accessed the MAP Area on Moodle (enrolment key map02) to avail of a range of electronic learning resources?			
Searched the Moodle spaces of their academic departments, Writing Centre, Mathematics Support Centre and Access Office for recommended links to website that would assist with the skills needed at third level?			

HAS THE STUDENT...	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Attended the Critical Skills course aimed at helping students to develop clarity of thinking, ability to make fine distinctions, develop sophisticated analysis and critique, and the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly both verbally and in writing?			
Signed up for one of the Essay Writing Seminars that run throughout the year?			
Attended Student + which is a free, academic skills course for first year students? The course has been designed to assist students with their transition to Maynooth University.			
Logged into the Library Area on Moodle (no enrolment key) to learn digital literacy, research and referencing skills? Attended the Library Information Skills Training (LIST) sessions, which are 30-minute drop-in sessions (times listed on the Library Website) that cover a wide variety of library and information literacy skills?			
Attended the Mathematics Support Centre if required?			
Attended the Academic Writing Centre if required?			

Section 3:
Supports Available
for Students

Life during University can be difficult for some students who experience financial, personal or academic difficulties. For some first year students, it can be the transition from secondary school to University which causes some initial difficulties.

The transition into University is a massive leap into the world of becoming an adult and taking responsibility for their own lives, and learning to balance study and life independently from parents and teachers.

For some first year students, University is the first time they have to set their own study routines, managed their time and make academic choices about courses and modules in a new third level environment.

With the new found freedom of life as a student at University, students may struggle with personal issues like their health and nutrition, drugs and alcohol and personal safety. They may also for the first time in their lives be dealing with the financial issues of budgeting for everyday life. Some students will have part time work in order to have the funds to attend University.

For mature students, balancing the demands of home with study can cause difficulties. Some mature students may be faced with issues different from those coming to college straight from school such as looking after elderly parents or relatives or childcare responsibilities.

Specific supports for MAP students

There are a range of programmes and initiatives which are specifically designed for students who are supported through MAP. The programmes and initiatives assist MAP students with the transition to third level and then to develop their skills to meet their academic potential.

ORIENTATION PROGRAMMES

Dedicated Orientation programmes are designed to support and ease the transition to third level for students who are entering the University through HEAR, DARE or the mature student entry routes. They help students to get to know one another and the University before starting their academic programmes. They give students great insight into what University life is like in Maynooth.

MATURE/DISABILITY AND ACCESS STUDENT ADVISORY SERVICE

MAP provides a single dedicated point of contact for all registered mature, HEAR and students with disabilities on an individual and confidential basis.

The Advisor can be the first port of call for students and can offer assistance and guidance in any area in which a student is experiencing difficulties, whether academic or personal. HEAR students access dedicated financial support including a contribution towards the cost of books and materials.

MAP ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Every Academic Department at Maynooth University has a designated MAP Academic Advisor. This initiative provides embedded provides embedded academic support for all MAP students. The MAP Academic Advisors have become a focal point, not only for supporting students, but also supporting other staff in their own Departments.

TECHNOLOGY+

Technology+ is an innovative module that introduces MAP students to the latest educational technology, showing them how to integrate it into their learning. Technology+ is delivered in the Assistive Technology Centre and consists of small group sessions with tutor and online support.

EXTRA ACADEMIC TUITION

Some students supported by MAP may be approved for extra academic tuition. This is approved in consultation with the academic department.

Mainstreamed supports at Maynooth University

Maynooth University has a range of supports for students that will assist them with the academic, personal and financial areas of their lives. The mainstreamed supports listed below are available to all students at Maynooth University.

Academic Issues

DEPARTMENTAL OFFICE HOURS

Students who are new to University may not be aware that their academic department and lecturers have scheduled office hours. This can be the first port of call for students to get clarification or assistance with an academic assignment or concept.

LIST (LIBRARY & INFORMATION SKILLS TUTORIALS)

LIST aims to assist students with various information literacy topics ranging from Library Databases to mindmapping using campus-based online software. Students should be directed to the Library website to get specific dates and times for LIST training.

Subject librarians can also be a great source of support and guidance for students.

WRITING CENTRE

The Writing Centre offers free, friendly, non-judgemental writing help to any student, undergraduate or postgraduate, regardless of course, degree or level. Students can drop in on their own or in groups to work with tutors on course work or material/topics with which they may be having trouble. Students may also book one-to-one appointments to discuss their writing with peer tutors. In addition, the Centre offers writing workshops, supports writing groups, engages in discipline specific work and carries out research.

MATHEMATICS SUPPORT CENTRE

The Maynooth University Mathematics Support Centre (MSC) is a free service providing informal, friendly additional support to all undergraduate Maynooth University students. Regular attendance at the MSC has been shown to help improve students' experience of mathematics at Maynooth University.

ACADEMIC ADVISORY OFFICE

The Academic Advisory Office offers a convenient first point of contact for students who wish to seek advice or assistance with their general experience of University life. The office provides an ombudsman-like role for students who may be encountering difficulties in their programme of study.

STUDENT+

Student+ is a free, academic skills course for first year students. The course has been designed to assist students with their transition to Maynooth University as it will help students to develop many of the key skills needed for studying at university.

CRITICAL SKILLS COURSE

This is a course aimed at helping students to develop clarity of thinking, ability to make fine distinctions, develop sophisticated analysis and critique, and the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly both verbally and in writing. These are key academic skills which we seek to develop in all university programmes. This Critical Skills course provides an opportunity for a concentrated focus on development of these skills, which should be of particular interest to ambitious students seeking to perform well, and to students having difficulty adjusting to university expectations.

Financial Supports

GRANTS

The third level maintenance grant is the main source of financial aid for students. For more information on the maintenance grant visit www.susi.ie and www.studentfinance.ie

STUDENT BUDGETING ADVICE SERVICE

Maynooth University has a Student Budgeting Advisor who provides financial advice as well as support and guidance to all students who have financial concerns or difficulties. Students can make an appointment with the Student Budgeting Advisor on the Student Budgeting Advice Service website. For more information please see www.maynoothuniversity.ie/money-matters.

THE STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND

The Student Assistance Fund "SAF" provides financial support to students who are in significant financial difficulty and whose participation in University would be at risk without support. Students should make an appointment directly with the Student Budget Advisor for information on making an SAF application.

MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION (MSU) CHILDCARE FUND

The Maynooth Students' Union (MSU) has allocated money towards a Childcare Fund in order to assist student parents during their time at college with the costs of childcare. Undergraduate students contributing towards the cost of childcare are entitled to apply. Any amount awarded is a once off payment and not a loan. Applications are available from the Maynooth Student Union.

SHORT TERM LOAN

The Short Term Loan is usually for a small amount (maximum €50.00) and is intended to help with an unexpected and immediate emergency or crisis (e.g. an unexpected prescription). It is expected that it will be repaid relatively quickly; a second or subsequent short term loan can only be availed of if the previous loan has been repaid in full. Students apply by contacting Chaplaincy at chaplaincy@nuim.ie or Tel 01 7083320 or by calling to the office on the 1st floor, Student Services Centre, North Campus. A decision will be made on the same day.

THE EMERGENCY FUND

The Emergency Fund is a fund which is available to assist students who are experiencing unforeseen and immediate financial difficulties as a result of a once-off emergency event. Students must have exhausted all other sources of financial support; be unable to meet daily living expenses and their financial difficulties are negatively impacting on their education.

The Emergency Fund generally makes funds available to a student only once during his/her time in University. Students should make an appointment to meet with the Student Budgeting Advisor. If there is no immediate appointment available the student should email student.budget@nuim.ie indicating that they require an emergency appointment.

Personal Supports

Some students may speak to you about being lonely or having difficulties with making friends. They can link in with Clubs and Societies, Student Union, Sports Centre and the Chaplaincy Office – all good places for students to find out what is happening on campus and to make new friends.

STUDENT HEALTH CENTRE

The Student Health Centre is located on the ground floor of the Student Services Building, North Campus. The service is envisaged as an addition to the student's own family doctor or specialist medical service.

COUNSELLING

The Student Counselling Service is a professional, confidential counselling service provided to all registered students of Maynooth University. Counselling provides the opportunity for any student to discuss in private any concerns which may be impacting on academic performance or personal health and well-being. Counselling is generally offered on a one to one basis, is short-term in nature, is strictly confidential and is provided free of charge. Self-referral to the Service is welcomed and encouraged.

CHAPLAINCY

The Maynooth University Chaplaincy service offers friendship and support to all on campus. Their vision is to assist all students and staff to realise their full potential while in Maynooth University. They are available to listen in confidence, and to accompany the student, not only in times of difficulty, but at whatever point the student is in their life. They offer hospitality, support and care.

SECURITY

Students should download the Campus Watch booklet from Campus Security for advice on how to stay safe on campus and discuss any concerns with the Security Department.

DRUGS/ALCOHOL

Students should self-refer to the Counselling Service to get support with all personal problems.

Section 4: Disability Office Information

The Disability Office works with staff and students of the University to create an inclusive environment where students are supported to reach their full academic potential.

ROLE OF THE DISABILITY OFFICE

The Disability Office works with staff and students of the University to create an inclusive learning environment where students are supported to reach their full academic potential. A large part of our role involves working with colleagues across the University to help ensure that services and facilities are accessible to students with disabilities. The supports and accommodations coordinated by the Disability Office assist students with two key transitions in their academic journey – the transition from **school to college** and from **college to career.** Our supports are designed to be enabling, helping students acquire key academic and life skills that help them become more independent in their learning and that are transferable to the workplace. The Disability Office supports **full-time and part-time students,** and students who are studying at **undergraduate and postgraduate level.** Students who typically register with the Disability Office include students with the following disabilities:

– Autistic Spectrum Disorders

– ADD/ ADHD

– Blind/ Low Vision

– Deaf/ Hard of Hearing

– DCD – Dyspraxia/ Dysgraphia

– Mental Health Conditions

– Neurological Conditions

– Significant Ongoing Illnesses

– Physical Disability

– Specific Learning Difficulty (incl. Dyslexia and Dyscalculia)

Most students with disabilities apply for a place at Maynooth University through the CAO and indicate that they have a disability or specific learning difficulty. Some students also apply to DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) which is a supplementary admissions route for students with significant disabilities.

Some students who register with the Disability Office belong to more than one of the MAP target groups, such as mature students with a disability and students with a disability who come through the HEAR route.

Students can disclose a disability at any time throughout the year. Very often, students may choose to disclose to one of their lecturers and they should be advised to contact the Disability Office.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Increasingly progressive legislation over the last twenty years has placed a statutory obligation on Higher Education Institutions to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to services and facilities.

The supports and accommodations recommended by the Disability Office are guided by the University's legal obligation to ensure that students with disabilities are treated fairly and equitably.

Under the Equal Status Acts (2000-2010), educational institutions are required to do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability. The Acts specifically state that an educational institution is discriminating against a student with a disability if it doesn't do all that is reasonable to accommodate that student.

Under the Disability Act (2005), students with a disability have a statutory right to an independent assessment of their educational needs. The Disability Office at Maynooth University completes a needs assessment with every student with a disability to assess the educational needs of the student and to determine the supports and accommodations that are required. The Disability Act also places a statutory obligation on the University to ensure that buildings, services, facilities and information are accessible to people with disabilities.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

WHAT IS A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

A reasonable accommodation is any action that helps alleviate a substantial disadvantage.

It is a support or an adjustment - such as modifying the delivery of a course, altering the physical environment or providing an examination accommodation - that allows the student to participate fully and without an educational disadvantage.

Reasonable accommodations aim to remove the impact of a disability so that students can demonstrate their full level of academic potential while not being given any advantage over other students.

Remember: an educational institution is discriminating against a student with a disability if it doesn't do all that is reasonable to accommodate that student.

EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

- Students with physical disabilities require classrooms and laboratories that are located in accessible locations.

- Blind or low vision students are unable to see materials in visual formats. Lecture notes in Braille or auditory digital formats allow them to access lectures in the same way as other students.

- Lectures delivered orally are inaccessible to students who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Providing a Sign Language Interpreter and/ or written notes removes this barrier and is a reasonable accommodation.

- Some students may be unable to take accurate or sufficiently detailed notes due to the impact of a disability (e.g. handwriting difficulties or effects of medication on concentration). Allowing students to record the teaching session in such instances is a reasonable accommodation.

- Lectures delivered orally can also be inaccessible to students who have significant learning issues. A student who has a mental health condition or dyslexia, for example, would benefit from lecture notes or handouts in advance of class.

- Some students may be unable to complete an assignment within the required time frame due to the impact of a disability (e.g. absence from University due to hospitalisation). Extending the deadline in such instances is a reasonable accommodation.

Students can disclose a disability at any time throughout the year. Very often, students may choose to disclose to one of their lecturers and they should be advised to contact the Disability Office.

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Every student with a disability has an assessment of need to assess the impact of the disability and to determine the supports and accommodations that are required to help the student reach his/ her academic potential. In advance of the needs assessment, students are required to provide medical documentation from an accepted Medical Consultant/ Specialist. Students with a mental health condition, for example, must provide documentation from a Psychiatrist and students with a significant ongoing illness must provide documentation from a Consultant/ Specialist in the area of the condition. Every student with a disability is assigned a Disability Advisor with particular expertise in the student's area of disability. The needs assessment is a comprehensive assessment which explores the following:

– The impact of the student's disability

– Previous experience of education

– Demands of the course the student will be studying

– Supports and accommodations that have worked well in the past

– Good practice in the provision of reasonable accommodations nationally

– Range of accommodations that are required to support the student at Maynooth University

The Disability Office shares information on students with disabilities with Academic Departments for the specific purpose of ensuring that students receive reasonable accommodations in class and when being assessed. This information is made available through Workbench and students must provide consent for the information to be disclosed. The information that is made available is limited to the student's category of disability, details of their academic supports and examination accommodations, and general information on the impact of a disability and inclusive teaching practices.

> Lecturers should check Workbench regularly to ensure they are aware of students with disabilities taking their modules and the supports and accommodations are required.

SUPPORTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The mainstreamed supports at Maynooth University assist all students, including students with disabilities, to become more effective and independent learners. Some students may require additional supports and accommodations to reduce the impact of a disability. These supports are agreed as part of the needs assessment any may include:

Launchpad is designed to support and ease the transition to third level for students who are entering the University through HEAR and DARE. Launchpad is a residential orientation programme to help students get to know one another and the University before starting their academic programmes. It gives students a great insight into what university life is like in Maynooth.

Every student with a disability has a dedicated **Disability Advisor** with particular expertise in the student's area of disability. The Disability Advisor conducts the assessment of need and identifies the required supports to ensure students are reasonably accommodated to reach their academic potential.

Educational technology is a central pillar in the support provided by the Disability Office as it helps students acquire new skills, enabling them to manage the impact of their disability and to become more autonomous in their learning. **The Educational Technology Officer** conducts an assessment with students to determine which technologies will help reduce the impact of a disability and enable them to reach their academic potential. **The Assistive Technology Centre** is a modern facility equipped with the latest educational and assistive technologies where training is provided. In line

with our commitment to create an inclusive learning environment, a wide range of educational technologies are **mainstreamed across the campus.**

Technology+ is an innovative module that introduces students to the latest educational technologies and shows them how to integrate these technologies into their learning.

Some students with a disability may require a more enhanced level of support to ensure they can fulfil their academic potential in university. Examples of this type of support include note-taking in lectures for students who are unable to write or use a computer, Personal Assistants to assist some students with mobility around the campus, and provision of Sign Language Interpreters for students who are Deaf. Individuals who provide this type of support are known as **Educational Support Workers** (ESWs) and are usually postgraduate students who are recruited and trained by the Disability Office.

Our supports are designed to be enabling, helping students acquire key academic and life skills that help them become more independent in their learning and that are transferable to the workplace.

Student Central is a psychology-led programme of academic support for students with significant learning needs.Students who typically avail of this support include students with Asperger's Syndrome, Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder or a mental health condition. Support is tailored to meet the individual needs of the student, with the objective of improving academic outcomes and helping the student meet the demands of his or her course.

The MAP Academic Advisors are a key support to students registered with disabilities. Students who are registered with the Disability Office can experience difficulties during the course of the academic year due to illness or impact of their disability. The assistance that MAP Academic Advisors provide to students with academic guidance and support with course related academic issues is pivotal.

Students who experience difficulties with key academic skills due to the impact of a disability- time management, organisational skills, note-taking, essay planning, revision strategies- may be provided with some **one-to-one learning support** through the Disability Office. This is only provided in exceptional circumstances and where mainstreamed supports have proved to be ineffective.

Some students may be unable to fully benefit from lectures and tutorials due to the impact of a disability (e.g. a student with low vision in a lecture with a heavy emphasis on visual presentation of content). The Disability Office, in conjunction with the Academic Department, can facilitate some **additional academic tuition** in such instances to help students keep up with their course work. This is a short-term temporary support that must be approved by both the Academic Department and the Disability Office.

Examination Accommodations are determined as part of the needs assessment process and are provided to ensure that students with disabilities can demonstrate their knowledge on an equal footing with their peers. These may include, for example, extra time, a smaller venue, rest breaks, use of a Scribe or a Reader and assistive technology. These accommodations are granted in accordance with *the University's Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations to Students with Disabilities.*

Students with a specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia) and Deaf students have a particular difficulty with spelling and grammar and can be disadvantaged when assessment takes the form of a written examination. For this reason, the University has **Marking Guidelines** to provide a framework for marking the scripts of such students. Students approved for Marking Guidelines can be identified by the Marking Guidelines icon that appears beside each student in the relevant Class List on Workbench.

Lecturers should check Workbench when correcting examination scripts to ensure Marking Guidelines are applied to all students who have been approved for this examination accommodation.