Maynooth University Department of Biology

Postgraduate Handbook

Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth

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Important:

An electronic version of this document can be found on the Biology Postgraduate MS Teams page, where the many embedded hyperlinks bring you directly to the relevant pages, forms, and resources.

Welcome to the MU Biology Department!

We are delighted to welcome you to the MU Biology department and hope that you will find your postgraduate years in the department academically rewarding and socially enjoyable. You are joining a lively and research-intensive department, which in addition to its role in undergraduate teaching, has over 50 postgraduate research students and around 10-15 postdoctoral researchers actively engaged in diverse research projects in 29 laboratories. The diverse research interests of each research group are described in this booklet.

We consider postgraduate researchers the most important group in the fabric of the department. Therefore, we are highly committed to supporting you in your research journey and career development and strive to provide an inclusive, inspiring, and supportive environment. The department is proud of its commitment to the Athena Swan principles of promoting gender equality, inclusivity, and diversity, having been the first MU department to obtain an Athena Swan Bronze award in 2018. Our existing Athena Swan action plan strives to further improve the research environment and culture in the department while preparing for a Silver award application. You can actively contribute to this process by joining the departmental Athena Swan committee or contributing to surveys and actively giving feedback and suggestions to the committee.

You will be conducting your research under the direction of your primary supervisor or supervisory team. In addition, you will be assigned two additional academic staff members as your advisor and assessor who form your departmental research student progress committee (DRSPC). You will be meeting with your DRSPC annually in April to review your progress and to give you an opportunity to discuss your research, supervisory arrangements, and career development. The members of your DRSPC are also available to support you at other times during the year. We foster a collaborative environment in the department, and as such academic staff, postdocs, technical and admin staff, and other postgrads are also around to support you in your research and general postgraduate journey. Never hesitate to ask for advice or support! We urge you to become an active and involved member of the department by participating in seminars and attending scientific and social events organised in the department. This is all part of your development into an independent researcher and will also make your postgraduate life easier and more fun.

As an MU postgrad, you also have access to all student services the university offers, including the student societies, sports facilities, health and counselling service, etc. In addition, the Graduate Studies Office offers support and organises events specifically for postgraduate students. Please familiarise yourself with these offerings and avail of them as needed/wanted. There are also opportunities to represent the Biology Postgrad community at departmental level (e.g. through the Postgrad committee) and university level (e.g. through the SU and Postgraduate Feedback Council) and to make your voice heard through your representatives on these committees.

We wish every single one of you the very best of success and enjoyment in your postgraduate journey and are available to support you should issues arise. Once again, a sincere welcome to the department!

Martina Schröder

Dr Martina Schroeder
Departmental Postgraduate Research Student Coordinator

Prof Paul Moynagh
Head of Department

History of the MU Biology Department

The Department of Biology was established in 1970. From a small department, heavily dependent on bought-in, part-time academic staff, the department has grown to be amongst the largest in the College. Until 1979, the Department was involved solely in teaching a component of the 3-year BSc (General) degree. In that year, three events, significant to the development of the Department, occurred:

- The Department was approved for participation in the 4-year (Joint Honours) BSc programme.
- The first research grants were awarded to the Department.
- The Department recruited its first postgraduate student.

Since that time, the Department has expanded steadily in numbers of undergraduates, postgraduates, post-doctoral researchers, and academic and support staff and in the range of courses offered.

The research activities of the Department have increased significantly in scope and the Department has established international reputations in areas of Biological Control, Biochemistry, Bioinformatics, Immunology, Medical Mycology, Molecular Genetics, Plant Biotechnology and Proteomics. The success in research is measurable in publications, research grants obtained, and postgraduate students who complete their degrees.

The department has also grown in the accommodation available for its teaching and research activities. Initially it was housed in Logic House on the South Campus, two halls of which had been converted into teaching laboratories. Research and office space were provided by adapting what had previously been student bedrooms. In 1978 a purpose-built teaching laboratory housing sixty students was added. This laboratory was named the McCullagh Laboratory after Dr (Bro.) Patrick McCullagh, one of the first staff of the Department. As the department grew, particularly in its research activities, it spread to temporary buildings which were mostly linked with the McCullagh Laboratory. Although these buildings had been well converted, they deteriorated steadily and were not particularly pleasant places to work in. Then, in the summer of 1993, the Department crossed the Galway Road to its present home on the North Campus in the Callan Building. By the end of 2002, the Department was further enhanced by the addition of the new Biosciences building, which housed a new Institute of Immunology, and a variety of core equipment for biological and biomedical research.

Today, the department's research laboratories are still housed in both the Callan and Biosciences Building, and many of the department's researchers are also involved in the Kathleen Lonsdale Institute for Human Health Research founded in 2019. This is aligned with a strong research focus on Human Health. A second research focus of the department has emerged in environmental science and sustainability.

The Department now offers different undergraduate degrees including BSc Honours (Biology), BSc (Double Honours), BSc (Biotechnology), BSc (Biological & Biomedical Science) and BSc (Biological and Geographical Sciences). It also has one of the largest postgraduate research student cohorts in the university.

Aim of the Department

Our aim is to enhance students' knowledge and understanding of important concepts in the Biological Sciences and to develop their analytical, practical, and communication skills and appreciation of environmental and other bioethical issues.

The departmental commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion

The Maynooth University Biology department is highly committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. We are proud to have been the first department in the University to receive an externally validated Athena Swan Bronze Department Award for our work towards promoting gender equality within the Department of Biology (in 2018).

Our goals in this area include supporting and advancing women's careers in Biology, promoting work-life balance in the department, and addressing any gender equality or diversity issues within the department. We look forward to engaging with all members (students and staff) of the department as we implement our Athena Swan Action Plan. As part of this we will continue to seek input from the student population (through surveys and focus groups) and will endeavour to keep you informed of our progress in this area as the department prepares for a Silver Award application.

For more information on the Department of Biology's Athena Swan Action Plan, please see https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/athena-swan or contact:

Mark Robinson (Biology Athena SWAN Committee Chair): Mark.Robinson@mu.ie
Lauren Flynn (PG Committee Member)
Courtney Tunstead (PG Committee Member)
Jamie Casey (PG member)
Omar Abdelrahman (PG member)

Biology Athena Swan Committee
September 2023

Who's who in the Department?

The Biology Department Postgraduate Research Student Co-ordinator

As Postgraduate Research Student Co-ordinator I support students with elements of the structured PhD programme and oversee their administrative implementation in the department (e.g., organisation of annual progress meetings). I interface with the MU Graduate Academy and act as the Biology Department's representative at internal and external meetings and events concerned with postgraduate matters.

I support initiatives to enhance the postgraduate experience in the department and regularly meet with the departmental postgraduate committee to obtain their feedback and ideas. I am also always happy to talk to individual postgrads if they want to bring ideas directly to me.

I act as a port of call for postgraduate questions and concerns within the department and will handle these in a confidential manner. I always have an open door and ear for postgraduates who wish to discuss any aspect of their postgraduate journey or postgraduate life in the department.

Dr Martina Schroeder,
Location: Room B2.18, 2nd Floor, Biosciences & Electronic Engineering Building, North Campus, Maynooth University.
E: Martina.schroeder@mu.ie (or contact me through MS Teams chat)

The Head of Department

Prof Paul Moynagh is currently the Head of the Department of Biology and Director of the Kathleen Lonsdale Institute for Human Health Research. He also leads a large research lab based on the 2nd floor of the Biosciences building.

Office hours: Monday 14.00-16.00
Location: B3.15, 3rd Floor, Bioscience & Electronic Engineering Building, North Campus, Maynooth University.

The Departmental Postgrad Committee

The Postgraduate Committee is a group of volunteer postgraduate students who represent the postgrad researcher community within the Biology department. They speak for the departmental postgrads on a range of departmental and University committees and can carry any issues or ideas arising in the departmental postgrad community into these fora. The postgraduate committee is committed to enhancing the postgrad experience in the Biology department, making it a safe and enjoyable place for PhD researchers. As such they are also involved in organising a range of scientific and social events during the year (e.g., postgrad seminar series, Christmas party etc). Postgraduate committee members are available for postgraduate students who need advice or want to voice concerns. Postgrad committee members will treat these issues confidentially and can bring concerns to the attention of the Postgrad coordinator or HoD on behalf of the individual student without revealing their identity.

We encourage all PhD students to engage with the Postgrad Committee and actively participate in their events. This will help you create a peer support circle within the department that is invaluable for both scientific and moral support. The chair of the Postgrad committee attends departmental staff meetings that take place every second month, where they have an opportunity to raise issues directly at departmental level and to contribute the postgrad voice to departmental discussions. It is therefore a good idea to engage with the chair and other members of the postgrad committee regularly to ensure that they truly represent the postgrad community during meetings.
Taking up a committee role can also be a very rewarding experience and (as an additional plus) looks good on your CV. If you are interested in joining the Postgrad committee, please email the chair, the committee welcomes new volunteers.

The Admin Team

The Biology Department Admin Team currently consists of:

The best way to reach the Admin Team is by emailing biology.department@mu.ie. The main Departmental Admin Office is located in Room 2.41 on the 1st Floor, Callan Building and is usually staffed from 9.30am to 12.30pm and from 2.30pm to 4.30pm daily.

Pigeonholes for each lab group are located outside the Admin office, and this is where any post directed to your work address will be placed. Thus, please check this regularly.

The Admin Team can assist with room bookings requests (mainly for Callan Conference room, NMSR and IBA), courier booking, forwarding emails to the department or specific groups within the department, arranging parking permits for guest speakers and other departmental visitors, arranging catering for meetings, and can help with queries regarding administrative procedures in the PhD programme.

Chief Technical Officer

Michelle Finnegan is Chief Technical Officer in the department. She is responsible for managing demonstrating allocations for undergraduate practicals and works with Áine Butler to look after ordering reagents and consumables for the department (see p. 29 for further information).

Her office is Room 2.42, 1st Floor, Callan Building
Email michelle.finnegan@mu.ie

Departmental Safety Advisor and Chief Technical Officer

Austin Power is currently the Departmental Safety Advisor and should be contacted with Health and Safety related queries. Please email him when you start to make sure you complete the required safety training.

His office is Room 1.25, Ground Floor, Callan Building
Phone (01) 708 6247
Email ap.power@mu.ie

Technical Support

The senior technical officer Noel Gavin provides support for departmental and lab equipment. He can be contacted for advice about departmental core equipment. He should also be contacted whenever there are issues with malfunctioning equipment, either departmental or lab-owned. If equipment needs to be dropped over to the workshop for repair, please make sure to clean and disinfect it appropriately and fill in an accompanying equipment repair form (to be downloaded on Biology safety MS Teams page).

The workshop is Room 1.04, Ground Floor, Callan Building, behind the Storeroom.
Phone (01) 708 3833
Email noel.gavin@mu.ie

Overview of Departmental Research Groups

The Biology department currently consists of 28 research groups with diverse research interests, spread across Callan and Biosciences Buildings.

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY STAFF RESEARCH INTERESTS

Name & Qualifications	Key Words	Research Interests
Dr O. Bayram, MSc PhD	Secondary metabolism, Mycotoxins, Fungal development, Cell signalling, Epigenetics, Gene expression, Protein-protein interactions	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/ozgur-bayram#2
Dr M.P. Butler BSc PhD	Cancer, Toll-like Receptor Signalling, sex differences in immune responses.	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/marion-butler#2
Dr J.C. Carolan B.A (Mod) PhD	Proteomics, Mass Spectrometry, Genomics, Molecular Biology, Bumblebees, Crop-pest Interactions	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/james-carolan#2
Dr J. Devaney BSc PhD	Ecology, Forest Ecology, Climate Change, Biodiversity-Ecosystem Function, Invasive species	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/john-devaney#2
Dr. T. Dirilgen BSc PhD	Ecology, Biodiversity (aboveground and belowground), Soil-Plant-Pollinator interactions, Soil biology and ecology, Sustainability	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/people/tara-dirilgen
Dr P. Dowling BSc PhD	Oncoproteomics, Biomarkers, Detection, Biofluids, Mass Spectrometry	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/paul-dowling#3
Professor S. Doyle BSc PhD	Disease diagnosis, Antimicrobial resistance, *Aspergillus fumigatus,* proteomics, nonribosomal peptide synthesis, Disease diagnosis, immunoassays and enzymology.	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/sean-doyle#2
Professor K. English MSc PhD	Cellular therapy, mesenchymal stem cells, immune modulation, pre-clinical models of inflammatory disease, organ transplantation, acute respiratory distress syndrome, asthma, gene therapy, muscular dystrophy	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/karen-english#2
Dr D.A. Fitzpatrick BSc PhD	Computational Biology, Bioinformatics, Genome Evolution, Phylogenomics, *G*enomics, Transcriptomics, Proteomics, Fungi, Metabolic pathways, Genome sequencing, oomycetes.	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/david-fitzpatrick#2

Dr E. Graciet MSc PhD	Protein degradation, biochemistry, plant molecular biology, plant-pathogen interactions, abiotic stresses, crop improvement	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/emmanuelle-graciet#2
Dr A. Hogan BSc PhD	Immunology, obesity, cancer, metabolism, immunometabolism	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/andrew-hogan#2
Dr. G. Hoysted BSc PhD	Fungal biology, Microbial Ecology, Mycorrhizal Interactions, Plants, Bacteria, Above-below ground interactions, Sustainability	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/people/grace-hoysted
Professor K.A. Kavanagh BSc PhD	*Aspergillus, Candida,* Fungi, Innate immunology, Insect, Medical mycology, metal-cell interactions, Proteomics	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/kevin-kavanagh#3
Dr L.M. Lopez BA PhD	Genomics, Human Health, Circadian Rhythms, Sleep, Neurodevelopmental Conditions.	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/lorna-lopez#2
Dr A.M. Maher BSc PhD	Entomopathogenic nematode, microbes, symbiosis, biodiversity	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/abigail-maher#2
Professor B.P. Mahon BSc PhD	Cell Biology, Immunology, microbiome/immune interaction	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/bernard-mahon#2
Dr J. Masterson BSc PhD	Allergy, Inflammation, Epithelial Cell Biology, Stem Cells, Fibrosis, Mucosal Barrier, Cellular Metabolism	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/joanne-masterson#2
Dr E. McNamee BSc MSc PhD	Autoimmunity, Mucosal Immunology, Translational Immunology, Chemokines, microRNAs	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/eoin-mcnamee#2
Dr C. Meade BSc PhD	Ecology, Molecular Ecology, Sustainability, Biogeography	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/conor-meade#1
Dr S. Miggin MSc PhD	Innate immunity, toll-like receptors, inflammation, Type-2-Diabetes, Osteoarthritis	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/sinead-miggin#2
Dr. D. Movia BSc PhD	Alternatives to animal modes, non-animal preclinical research, lung cancer, nanomedicine	
Professor P. Moynagh BA(mod) PhD	Molecular Immunology, Inflammation, Inflammatory Diseases, Signal Transduction,	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/paul-moynagh#3
Dr J.M. Nugent MSc PhD	Plant molecular biology, evolution and development	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/jackie-nugent#3
Dr S. O'Dea BSc PhD	Cell therapy, cell engineering, cancer research	Shirley O'Dea | Maynooth University

Dr D. O'Maoileidigh BSc PhD	Plant development, flower development, fruit development, photosynthesis, transcription factors, genomics	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/people/diarmuid-omaoileidigh
Professor K. Ohlendieck DipBiol PhD DSc	Skeletal muscle biology, protein biochemistry, proteomics, biomarker discovery	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/kay-ohlendieck#3
Dr N. Curran BSc PhD	Plant Biology	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/people/noreen-curran
Dr R. Owens BSc PhD	Pathogenic fungi, secondary metabolites, proteomics, antimicrobial agents, food proteins	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/rebecca-owens#3
Dr M. Robinson BBioMedSc PhD	Natural killer cells, liver disease and cirrhosis, tissue-resident immune cells, immunosenescence	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/mark-robinson#2
Dr M. Schroeder BSc PhD	Host-Pathogen interactions, Pattern recognition receptor signaling, Regulation of gene expression, RNA Biology	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/martina-schroeder#2
Professor F. Walsh BSc PhD	Antibiotic resistance, microbiomes, infectious diseases, bacteriology, metagenomics	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/biology/our-people/fiona-walsh#2

More details and photos of departmental staff (including admin and technical staff, as well as postgrads and postdocs) can be found on the Department of Biology webpage.

Staff Locations and Telephone Extensions

Rooms are located in the Callan Building except when prefixed with a 'B' to indicate the Biosciences and Electronic Engineering Building

For a complete listing of Maynooth University staff, including e-mail addresses please see the following link:
https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/people

Teaching Staff	Phone ext*	Room	E-mail	Consultation Time
Prof. Paul Moynagh *Head of Department*	6105	B3.15	paul.moynagh@mu.ie	Monday 14.00-16.00
Dr. Özgür Bayram	6879	2.31	ozgur.bayram@mu.ie	Tuesday 11.00-13.00
Dr. Marion Butler	3856	B3.18	marion.butler@mu.ie	Monday 11.30-13.30
Dr. Jim Carolan	6367	2.29	james.carolan@mu.ie	Monday 11.00-14.00
Dr. Noreen Curran	3834	1.18	noreen.curran@mu.ie	Friday after lecture
Dr. John Devaney	7496	2.27	john.devaney@mu.ie	Wednesday 11.00 - 13.00
Dr. Tara Dirilgen	7261	F2	tara.dirilgen@mu.ie	Thursday 14:00-16:00
Dr. Paul Dowling	6368	2.35	paul.dowling@mu.ie	Tuesday 11.00-13.00
Prof. Sean Doyle	3858	1.24**	sean.doyle@mu.ie	Tuesday 10.00-11.30
Prof. Karen English	6290	B3.17	karen.english@mu.ie	Monday 14.00-16.00
Dr. David Fitzpatrick	6844	1.26**	david.fitzpatrick@mu.ie	Monday 10.00-11.00
Dr. Emmanuelle Graciet	6255	B1.25	emmanuelle.graciet@mu.ie	Tuesday 10.00-12.00
Dr. Andy Hogan	6118	B2.16	andrew.e.hogan@mu.ie	Monday 11.00-12.00
Dr. Grace Hoysted	Teams	2.25	grace.hoysted@mu.ie	Tuesday 10.00-12.00
Prof. Kevin Kavanagh	3859	2.39	kevin.kavanagh@mu.ie	Mon & Wed 14.00–16.00
Dr. Lorna Lopez	Teams	2.36	lorna.lopez@mu.ie	Monday 10.00-11.30
Dr. Abigail Maher	6117	F6	abigail.maher@mu.ie	Tuesday 11.00-12.00
Prof. Bernard Mahon	3835	B2.15	bernard.mahon@mu.ie	Monday 09.00-11.00
Dr. Joanne Masterson	6369	B2.17	joanne.masterson@mu.ie	Monday 14.00-16.00
Dr. Eoin McNamee	6148	B2.19	eoin.n.mcnamee@mu.ie	Monday 10.00-11.30
Dr. Conor Meade	6386	2.34	conor.meade@mu.ie	Monday 12.00-13.00
Dr. Sinead Miggin	3855	B3.14	sinead.miggin@mu.ie	Tuesday 12.00-13.00
Dr. Dania Movia	6850	F1	dania.movia@mu.ie	Friday 12.00-13.00
Dr. Jackie Nugent	3857	B1.23	jackie.nugent@mu.ie	Tuesday 10.00-12.00
Dr. Shirley O'Dea	6480	F7	shirley.odea@mu.ie	Monday 10.00-11.30
Dr. Diarmuid O'Maoileidigh	Teams	B3.08	diarmuid.s.omaoileidigh@mu.ie	Monday 10:00-12:00
Prof. Kay Ohlendieck	3842	2.33	kay.ohlendieck@mu.ie	Monday 12.00-13.00
Dr. Rebecca Owens	3839	2.30	rebecca.owens@mu.ie	Wednesday 10.00-12.00 (Sem 1)
Dr. Mark Robinson	3860	B1.21	mark.robinson@mu.ie	Wednesday 14.00-16.00
Dr. Martina Schroeder	6853	B2.18	martina.schroeder@mu.ie	Monday 10.00-11.00

*Phone prefix: **(01) 708 *except*** numbers in **red which are prefixed by (01) 474…**
**=Located on ground floor Callan Building; F=Located in Foyer, 1st floor Callan Building; B=Biosciences & Electronic Engineering Building

The times when staff are normally available for consultation are given above. Appointments for other times must be arranged with individual lecturers. Staff with Teams listed under Phone No. can be contacted via Microsoft Teams.
Administrative Offices 2.40, 2.41 open daily: 9.30am-12.30pm; 2.30-4.30pm e-mail: biology.department@mu.ie

Programme Coordinators:

POSTGRADUATE COORDINATOR:	Dr. Martina Schroeder
MSC IN IMMUNOLOGY & GLOBAL HEALTH:	Dr. Sinead Miggin

For urgent matters the Programme Coordinators and/or Head of Department may be contacted in their rooms at any time. Please contact biology.department@mu.ie to make an appointment.

Getting started as a Biology Postgrad

Application, registration, and payment of fees/stipend

To commence your postgraduate studentship, you will first need to complete your application online through the Postgraduate Application Centre (PAC).

Once accepted, the Admissions office will send you details about the registration process (usually around mid-August). Make sure to complete your registration on time through Student Web (usually in September/January for 1st and 2nd semester starts). You will initially be registered on the 'PhD track' with your registration changing to 'PhD' following a successful Year 2 progress meeting.

Student Web is also where you must register for modules in the Structured PhD programme. This can be done at the same time as your programme registration but can also be done separately until the end of October, so you can consult with your supervisor and attend the departmental induction before choosing modules. Choices can also be amended until the end of October (so you can register for additional modules and de-register from modules you no longer wish to take).

Of note: You have to re-register each year in September for the next year of your PhD through Student Web. Missing registration deadlines results in unnecessary fees, so make sure to complete this on time each year. You must also register for modules that you want to take in the upcoming academic year.

Your postgraduate fees are usually (but not always) paid through a scholarship or research project grant. If this is the case, it is important that you complete the 'Funded Research Student Pack' together with your supervisor and return it at least 5 days before your official start date to fundedresearchstudent@mu.ie, so that payment of fees and stipend can be authorised.

In addition, to establish entitlement to exemption from income tax in respect of postgraduate scholarship income, you should submit a Scholarship Exemption Declaration Form to the Research Development Office.

University and Departmental Induction Meetings

All incoming postgraduate students must attend:

- the general Research Student Induction held by the Graduate Studies Office (usually in September).

- the departmental induction meeting organised by the departmental Postgrad coordinator (usually at the start of October)

These meetings will provide you with essential information about your postgrad journey and services that are available to you. Attending these meetings will answer or pre-empt many questions that you might have.

Additional Important Admin Tasks

- All incoming postgraduate students must complete the Biology New Member Form prior to starting with the department.

- Email Safety Officer Austin Power at ap.power@mu.ie to register for Safety Inductions

- Email Head Technical Officer (Noel Gavin) at noel.gavin@mu.ie to register for autoclave and centrifuge training.

- Make sure you have network access via Eduroam**.** You will find details on how to connect to the network on the IT Services webpage.

- Familiarise yourself with Moodle, the university's e-learning environment, and MS Teams, in particular the relevant (departmental) postgrad pages.

- Consider emailing the chair of the Postgrad committee to be added to Postgrad communication groups.

- Discuss potential advisor/assessor choices with your supervisor and (once agreed), complete the Initial Meeting Form and set up a short joint meeting. Submit the completed Initial Meeting form within 4 weeks of your start date (see also Structured PhD section below, p. 18).

- Discuss module choices with your supervisor and register for them through Student Web by the end of October/February at the latest (for 1st and 2nd semester modules respectively).

What does being a postgraduate research student in the MU Biology department involve?

As a postgraduate research student, you are an important and valued member of the MU Biology Department. You will conduct research as part of your research group and ultimately write a thesis on the results for submission to Maynooth University for the award of a research MSc or PhD.

In most but not all instances, your salary, university fees, consumable, equipment, and travel costs will be paid from a research grant from a national or international grant agency or charity. Your supervisor usually competitively obtains this grant, but there are also scholarships available to students, such as from the Irish Research Council (IRC) or the Hume Scholarships from Maynooth University. There is usually no support available for extra time required to complete your degree, so you should manage your research and thesis writing to take place within the allocated timeframe (usually 4 years for a PhD and 2 years for a research MSc). You also must comply with the specific regulations of your funder, e.g. about reporting requirements.

Departmental activities and seminars

It is recommended that you get actively involved in the departmental postgraduate community and in departmental activities. It is expected that you that you annually present your work at departmental seminars and Research Day. Regular attendance of the departmental postgrad seminar series is also expected and provides you with a great overview of the research conducted by other postgrads in the department. Thus, this is a good forum to find out about available techniques, equipment, and expertise, and to forge collaborations. You are also likely to present your work at national or international scientific conferences during your PhD, and the departmental seminar series is good practice for these occasions. In addition, you can obtain 5ECTS for presenting in the seminar series complemented with additional written work through BI825, a module we recommend for 2nd or 3rd year PhD students.

The department also runs two seminar series with mostly external speakers, a general Biology Seminar Series on Fridays and an Immunology Seminar Series on Tuesdays. Both are linked to postgraduate modules (BI830 and BI820) and you can therefore earn ECTS by attending the seminars and completing the activities linked to the these modules. In any case, we recommend that you attend as many of these seminars as possible, because you can learn a lot from presentations by others (presentation technique, new methods that could be applicable to your research, important new biological findings in other areas). These seminars also give you an opportunity to network with external speakers and to practise your research communication and critical analysis skills.

Demonstrating and supervisory responsibilities

It is policy in the Biology Department that all postgraduate students take part in demonstrating one undergraduate practical class per week (usually 3 hours, plus 2h preparation/grading) during the teaching terms. In MU, we have two teaching terms of 12 weeks each one running from the end of September to mid-December, and one running from the start of February to the end of April. Because you are assigned to individual modules and these don't usually have labs for the entire semester, you are likely to be involved in demonstrating for fewer weeks than that. In total, you can expect to be involved in demonstrating-related activities for 30-60h in each semester. As of 2023, PhD students are exempt from demonstrating during the final semester of 4th year (but can continue to demonstrate if they wish and their supervisor agrees). Unless otherwise specified as part of your scholarship agreement (e.g., for the MU doctoral scholarships) you will get paid an hourly rate that is agreed at departmental level for these demonstrating activities.

Additional sessions may be offered and can be accepted if agreed with your supervisor. You are not in any way obliged to agree to additional demonstrating hours and should decline if you do not wish to do this.

Please take your demonstrating duties seriously and help us to provide an excellent learning experience to our undergraduate students. This includes attendance of pre-labs and preparation for the lab (e.g., reading materials), engaging positively with students during the lab, and returning grades and feedback on assignments in a timely and constructive manner (following guidelines from academic staff and the senior demonstrator).

Postgraduate students are also often expected to help with training undergraduate students who join their labs for final year research projects. In these instances, postgraduate students usually help to supervise students on projects that are closely linked to their own research.

We strongly recommend that you take part in the CTL1 module to receive formal training in Teaching and Learning in the first year of your PhD. This will support you as you start engaging with demonstrating and take on supervisory tasks. We believe that engaging in these activities provides you with valuable supervisory and teaching experience that also strengthens your CV.

Conducting research in an ethical, safe, and collegial manner

As you conduct your research, we expect you to adhere to all university and departmental policies, as well as those by your specific funding agency. It is therefore important that you review these policies and familiarise yourself with your obligations concerning:

- University Research Policies
- HR Policies
- Rules & Regulations for Students
- University Regulations

Of particular importance are the Research Integrity Policy, the Research Ethics Policy, The University Safety Policy, the Protection against Workplace Bullying, Harassment & Sexual Harassment Policy, the Protected Disclosure Policy, and the Intellectual Property Management & Exploitation Policy.

In order to ensure your research is conducted in an ethical manner and produces reliable, high-quality data, we highly recommend that you complete the **Epigeum Research Integrity Course** in the first 6 months after starting your PhD. Email research@mu.ie to gain access to the course. Completion of this course is now also a requirement by many funding agencies.

You should also familiarise yourself with FAIR data management guidelines and develop a personalised data management plan for your research data (in consultation with your supervisor and research group). The library provides useful resources for data management plan development.

You are required to undergo Health and Safety training before starting lab research and to follow all Departmental Health and Safety guidelines as outlined in the Biology Safety Statement.

We expect you to act responsibly when using (especially shared) facilities and equipment: make sure you receive appropriate training/instruction, sign user books, report any malfunctions to line manager and/or technical staff, clean up after yourself.

As mentioned above, the Biology Department is committed to promoting gender quality, inclusion and diversity and does not tolerate discrimination, bullying, or harassment of any kind. Please always treat your colleagues and students you supervise in a respectful manner and avoid inappropriate and offensive language and behaviour. You are bound by the 'Student regulations of the University' and the 'Protection against Workplace Bullying, Harassment & Sexual Harassment Policy'.

Supervision

You will be conducting your research under the supervision of one or more academic staff members with expertise in your area of research. Different supervisory arrangements can be made. Many students just have one supervisor, others have a primary and a secondary supervisor, or two co-supervisors with equal responsibility. It is also possible to have secondary or co-supervisors in other MU departments or external institutions.

Your (primary) supervisor has responsibilities to you, the department, the university, and often external funders to ensure appropriate supervision and direction of your research. They are responsible for providing guidance on appropriate module selection, the standard of research expected, the planning of your research programme, and evaluating your progress. Close to completion of the studies, they should advise on the form of thesis presentation, its examination, and to agree and oversee the nomination of examiners.
Your supervisor is expected to:

- Help you navigate the university's administrative procedures relating to the PhD programme and postgraduate research.
- Help you define an appropriate research topic and explain the standards appropriate for a PhD.
- Give you guidance on the nature of the research, planning and execution of the research, literature research, and help you identify appropriate courses to attend.
- Provide you with accurate information about any prolonged leave periods, retirement plans, contract duration, etc.
- Have regular supervisory meetings with you and request regular research results and written work. Return such work with comments in a reasonable time.
- encourage the publication of the results of your research where appropriate.
- Assist and advise you on career path and professional opportunities.
- Facilitate you meeting other researchers and encourage attendance at research seminars, meetings or conferences as appropriate.
- make you aware of all relevant funding opportunities open to you and actively encourage you to apply.

MU Graduate Studies policies define the rights and responsibilities of research students, supervisors, departments and the university in much detail, so please consult the following document for more information on this:

The following publication by Hugh Kearns and Maria Gardiner might also be useful for getting the most out of your PhD supervisory relationship (linked in the electronic version).

Leave Arrangements & Working Hours

Working hours

Working hours for PhD researchers are not (yet) clearly regulated in Ireland. Due to your student status, you do not have defined working hours as such. The hours of the University are 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday and access to the Department is restricted after 8pm in the evenings and at the weekends.

As many postgraduate projects in the Department include wet-lab experiments, the general expectation is that postgraduates are on campus during the University hours of 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday, year-long, however this is project dependent, and there may be times when you can easily work from home. This should be discussed and agreed with your supervisor.

The department promotes a healthy work life balance as part of our commitment to the Athena Swan principles and we recommend that students discuss mutual expectations around working hours and leave openly with their supervisor when starting their PhD. This is included in the Initial Meeting Form, and work-life balance is also a topic in the annual progress form and during annual progress meetings.

To cope with the sometimes-intense demands of doing a PhD, it is important that you try to establish a healthy work-life balance from the start. Keep in mind that if you burn yourself out, you will not be as effective in your work, so nobody wins. Keep regular working hours and don't make it a habit to work into the evening and at weekends. Regularly working more than 40 hours per week (including your required demonstrating hours) is discouraged by the department. Learn to plan your experimental schedule well to use your working hours efficiently.

Importantly, you are not expected to engage with university communications (emails, texts, etc.) outside of your working hours (unless in emergency situations). While you may receive messages, you do not have to respond until you are back in work.

Take regular breaks during your working day, e.g., to go for coffee, lunch or a walk with other PhD students in the department. This is not only important for your health but will also help you build friendships in the department that can sustain and support you in your PhD journey.

It can and will happen occasionally that you exceed these working hours and guidelines, and that's ok for short periods of intense work (e.g., when deadlines are looming, or a paper is close to submission/revision), but it should not be the norm.

Please don’t struggle on if you feel your work-life balance is poor or slipping. Seek a conversation with your supervisor, other postgrads, your advisor etc, and agree measures to address this.

Annual leave

Leave entitlements for PhD students are not (yet) clearly defined in Ireland. In the department we believe that postgraduate researchers are also entitled to the Irish statutory entitlement of 20 working days/year (corresponding to 4 weeks annual leave, including the Christmas closure period, but excluding bank holidays). We recommend that you use your allocated annual leave every year, as it is important that you take breaks to rest and recharge. All leave should be discussed and agreed in advance with your supervisor.

Sick leave

Postgraduate students are entitled to sick leave, in line with University policies and policies of the student’s funding body. A medical certificate may be requested for sick leave extending beyond 3 days, and for repeated absences, but this is at the digression of the supervisor.

Maternity/paternity leave

The University does not currently have a formal policy regarding maternity or paternity leave for undergraduate or postgraduate students. Please notify the departmental Health and Safety Officer and your supervisor if you become pregnant during your PhD/MSc. This is important so that a risk assessment can be carried out to identify and minimise risks in the workplace. Many funding agencies now provide maternity support for PhD students, allowing them to take 26 weeks of paid maternity even if they have no statutory entitlement to maternity leave (e.g., IRC, SFI). PhD students should consult the policies of their individual funding bodies with respect to maternity/paternity leave arrangements. While you are pregnant, you are entitled to take time off for necessary medical visits connected to your pregnancy.

Compassionate and Carer's leave

Postgraduates may experience unforeseen challenges in their lives e.g., family illness, bereavement, emergency parental responsibilities, caring for an ill family member. Leave will likely be required for students in these circumstances. Please initially approach your supervisor with these leave requests, but feel free to also seek advice from the postgrad coordinator or your advisor if required.

Longer-term absences/Suspension of PhD registration:

Temporary suspension of PhD registration is an option to deal with extended sick leave or longer-term caring responsibilities (including maternity/parental leave). A request to suspend ('pause') your PhD registration must be submitted before the 31st of October and can be made for the whole academic year or for one semester. This means you won't be liable for fees during the period of suspension, and you won't be a registered student of the university. Students in receipt of stipends must agree a suspension of their PhD registration in advance with their funding body.

Please discuss this option with your supervisor, advisor, postgrad coordinator and/or the Graduate Studies Office if you feel this might be the right course of action for you.

Overview Of the PhD Years

The PhD couples your own personal development of research skills with the aspiration to make novel scientific discoveries that can be published in peer-reviewed scientific journals and will progress knowledge in the field. Please keep in mind that scientific progress is usually made in very small steps and that breakthrough discoveries are rare (and usually come on the basis of many years or decades of preceding work). And while publishing your research is great, it is not the be-all and end-all. Much more important is your growth and development into an independent researcher, and generating well-controlled, reliable, and reproducible results. By the end of your PhD period, you are expected to demonstrate that you can independently conduct high-quality research that makes a substantial novel contribution to knowledge and is considered publishable (but it does not need to be published yet). Not more, but also not less.

Year 1:

- Get to know the department and the university
- Identify and evaluate the key literature on your research topic (maybe write a brief literature review)
- Clarify your research topic and formulate your specific aims

- Learn experimental and/or computational methods that are required for your research (identify relevant training workshops or online modules if needed).
- Give a 5-min talk in the departmental seminar series about your research plans
- Get familiar with research integrity and data management guidelines and common issues
- Develop a system for organising your references/literature, lab notes, naming and labelling your samples and files (in consultation with your supervisor)
- Develop good time management skills and learn about good experimental design
- Aim to complete 10 ECTS for the structured PhD programme (2 modules), ideally including CTL1.

Years 2 and 3:

- These are the years in which the bulk of the research for your PhD will be carried out. You should be gaining in confidence and skills and be ready to address your specific aims with the methods you have learned or developed in Year 1 (and 2). Some (or even many) experiments will still not work out, and you may need to change your approach or optimise a method for it to start working. Occasionally, you may even need to reconsider your hypothesis. Keep in mind though that negative results are also results. By the end of Year 2 your progress should be substantial enough to show that you can successfully achieve a large part of your research aims by the end of your PhD period. At the end of Year 2, your DRSPC has to decide whether progression from 'PhD track' to 'PhD' registration is appropriate (it usually is!).
- Keep reading the relevant literature and re-evaluate your research aims and strategy regularly with your supervisor based on new findings (yours and those of others). During these years, you will become the expert on your PhD topic, you are getting ready to 'defend' your choices and approaches in your PhD viva.
- Identify and attend relevant workshops and conferences (in consultation with your supervisor). In Year 3 (or before) you should aim to present your research findings at at least one national or international conference.
- Start writing and generating thesis figures early. You can write up Materials and Methods as soon as you settle on final protocols for your experiments. You can write up draft thesis chapters for aspects of your research that you have completed (or nearly completed). Make good quality thesis-style figures for experimental data that you have finalised as you go on. Starting to write early will allow you to get early feedback on your scientific writing style and access support if needed through the Academic Writing Support Office. It will also make your life less stressful as you come to the final months of your PhD.
- Complete 10 ECTS in Year 2 and 10 ECTS in Year 3 for your structured PhD programme. This means you will have completed the required 30 ECTS by the end of Year 3 and can then focus on your experiments and thesis writing in Year 4.

Year 4:

- This is usually a year of intense work where you finalise your experimental results in the first 6-9 months and then write your thesis in the last 3-6 months.
- Before starting into Year 4, check that you have completed the completed 30 ECTS for the structured PhD programme (you can email the Records Office or contact the Postgrad coordinator). If you need more credits, register for modules, keeping in mind that credits will only be awarded in August.

- At the beginning of Year 4 you should have a clear plan for your thesis structure, in particular a good outline of the figures needed for your results chapters, so that you can fill gaps in a strategic manner.
- Think about a publication strategy in consultation with your supervisor. Can you coordinate compiling manuscripts for publication at the same time as your thesis?
- Plan for another conference attendance to present your research and to network (especially useful if looking for a postdoc position).
- Together with your supervisor, identify suitable internal and external examiners 2-6 months in advance of your submission date. These will need to be approved at faculty meetings that only take place every 2 months (and not over the summer). So, if you are submitting at the end of October, Faculty should approve your examiners in its September meeting at the latest.
- Familiarise yourself with thesis writing guidelines and submission procedures.

Thesis preparation and submission

Before you start writing your thesis, check the formatting guidelines on the MU examinations office website link above and look at some completed theses from your lab. Dr Abigail Maher has also compiled a useful MS word style guide that she made available on the Biology Postgraduate MS Teams page.

Usually, a PhD thesis in Biology contains the following chapters: Introduction, Materials and Methods, 3 results chapters, discussion, references. However, this structure is not mandatory.

PhD by publication:

In some cases, students might choose to submit a 'PhD by publication' rather than the traditional PhD thesis. This will have to be discussed in second or third year with the PhD supervisor and the DRSPC to obtain approval. Whether a PhD by publication is an appropriate route for a student, will be decided on a case-by-case basis. The university guidelines for PhD by publication can be found here.

Doctorate/Research MSc Theses Submission Dates:

31st October/ 29th February

These are the latest dates for submission of Doctorate/Research MSc theses without incurring registration and fees for next semester.

Together with your supervisor, make sure your examiners are chosen on time to be approved by Faculty in the September meeting at the latest (for October submission date), so that there won't be any delays in sending your thesis out for examination.

A few weeks before submission, students should obtain "Confirmation to submit" by emailing the Student Records Office at registration@mu.ie and the Fees Office at feepgsubmit@mu.ie with ***"Confirmation of Registration for Thesis Submission"*** in the subject field of each email. These offices need to confirm that the required ECTS have been obtained and that no fee payments are outstanding.

Currently, students are required to submit an electronic copy of their thesis in one pdf file with completed submission forms to research.theses@mu.ie. Submission forms are available on the examinations office website here. The thesis should be password protected. The password should be forwarded to research.theses@mu.ie in a separate email. Forms should be signed electronically by the Student, Supervisor and Head of Department.

Following examination, Doctorate Students are required to submit 3 hardbound copies of their final corrected thesis with a copy in one pdf file on CD/USB for the Library. Research MSc Students are required to submit 2 hardbound copies of their final corrected thesis with a copy in one pdf file on CD/USB for the Library.

The last Faculty meeting to approve Research Examiner Reports in advance of September Graduation is early May and early September before October/November graduation.

Please check up-to-date information on the Exams Office webpage.

Structured PhD Programme in Biology

Any student enrolling to do a PhD in the Department of Biology will be part of the Structured PhD Programme in Biology. This requires PhD students to complete a small number of accredited modules in addition to their research work. The aim is to provide students with a broader set of transferrable skills as well as further training in specialised subject areas that are directly relevant to their research. It also provides a framework for monitoring progress annually and providing additional support and feedback to postgraduate students outside of their supervisory arrangement (in the form of the Departmental research student progress committee, DRSPC).

The Departmental Research Student Progress Committee (DRSPC):

1) Students initially hold a meeting with their supervisor to agree a general project outline and research plan. During this meeting, an open conversation around expected working hours, holidays, etc should also take place. This meeting should be held prior to any lab work being undertaken. The research plan and agreed supervision structure should be formalised in the GSF1 Initial Meeting Form. Please note that the Biology Department uses modified versions of the generic Graduate Studies Office forms, so make sure to use the correct Biology Department Initial Meeting Form.

2) The supervisor (in consultation with the student) should appoint an Advisor and an Assessor (two members of academic staff) to the student. This is the student's Departmental Research Student Progress Committee (DRSPC). The advisor acts as a point of call for the student regarding any issues they wish to get independent advice and feedback on. The assessor is a member of staff required to critically assess the ongoing research programme of the student in a constructive manner. The student sets up an Initial Meeting with their assessor and advisor, where the conversation will be guided by the completed Initial Meeting Form. After the meeting, advisor and assessor sign the form, and the student submits the form to the Graduate Studies Office (with the Biology Office cc'ed) by the end of October/February (depending on their start date) or 4 weeks after their start date.

3) Departments are required to review annually the progress of a research student before the research student is permitted to register for the following year of study. In consultation with their supervisor, the student completes the departmental Biology Annual PhD progress form and sends this to their advisor and assessor. The student also arranges a progress meeting that must take place before the end of April each year. After the progress meeting has taken place, the advisor and assessor sign the progress report form and the student submits the form on the Postgraduate Moodle page by the end of April. This is a formal requirement of the university to allow registration for the next academic year and it is therefore important that these meetings take place in a timely manner.

   It is your responsibility to ensure the progress meetings take place and forms are submitted via the Biology Postgrad Moodle page on time.

   In the Biology Department, we view the annual progress meetings as a useful opportunity for the student to receive feedback on their work from two independent academic staff members and as a supportive and confidential forum to discuss any issues that have arisen in the work or the supervisory relationship. We also encourage discussions around work-life

balance and career development activities, as these are often topics that students value independent feedback and advice on. We would therefore encourage you to use these meetings as an opportunity for a constructive and supportive discussion on your research and your career development.

Following the annual progress meeting, the DRSPC makes a formal recommendation to progress into the next year of study. This is then ratified by the University's June Progression Board meeting. This recommendation is needed for you to be allowed to register for the next year of your PhD. After a successful 2nd year review, you will be switched from the PhD track registration to the PhD registration. It is possible to exit with a research MSc degree at this stage if the research programme is not considered viable or the student wishes to do so.

In our department, it is very rare for students to receive a 'progress with conditions' or 'not progress' recommendation, because our PhD students tend to be closely monitored and supported in their research by their supervisors throughout the year. If the DRSPC does however have concerns, they should consult with the student's supervisor and can request additional work/evidence of progress. The recommendation can then be re-evaluated in advance of the August Progression Board meeting.

Students can appeal DRSPC decisions by writing to their Head of Department, who will then forward the appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The appeal will be considered during the August Progression Board.

More detailed regulations can be found in the MU PhD regulations available through the Graduate Studies Office.

Result	Meaning
Progress on PhD Track *[Can only be awarded in Year 1 and Year 2 (FT), and in Years 1,2, and 3 (PT)]*	The university believes adequate progress is being made for this point in the research degree (early years).
Progress on PhD *[Can be awarded in Years 2, 3, 4 and subsequent years up to 6 (FT) or Years 3, 4, 5, 6 (PT)] and subsequent years up to 9. This result is not available in Year 1.]*	The university believes adequate progress is being made for this point in the research degree, having completed the substantive review process.
Progress with conditions	The progress made to date is not what is expected for this stage in the degree. The student may register and continue, but a change in performance is needed. Normally, the conditions set will be revisited by the DRSPC at the subsequent year's annual progression review.
Not progress	The University will not permit further registration as (a) the work produced is not of the required standard; and/or (b) the project is no longer viable.
Transfer to research master's degree	The student can complete the thesis and have it assessed as a research master's degree.

Structured PhD programme: module requirements

PhD Students are required to complete 30 ECTS of postgrad modules. This usually equates to six 5ECTS modules. These **MUST** be completed before submission of the PhD thesis is allowed.

From September 2023, any new PhD students with the department are strongly encouraged to complete their 30 ECTS by the end of year 3 of their programme, reserving the final year for completion of experiments and thesis writing.

Of the 30 ECTS 15 must be in transferrable skills modules and 15 in subject-specific modules (however, some modules can be counted as either transferable or subject-specific, especially FM-coded modules). More than 30 ECTS can be taken if agreed to by the supervisor.

Registration for Modules and award of ECTS:

Students must register for their chosen modules by the end of October/February through Student Web. This is important because you cannot obtain credits for modules you are not registered for. Registration for modules can be amended until the end of October/February (for second semester modules). ***Please de-register from modules you no longer intend to complete***, otherwise they show up on your transcripts as 'not completed'. Similarly, ***if you complete a module for which you are not registered, it is your responsibility to contact Student Records & Registration to have this module added***. *You cannot claim* credits for a completed module that you are not already registered for. **You are strongly advised to check your student registration at regular intervals throughout the year to ensure that your registration is correct.**

More information on registration can be found on the Registration and Records Office website here. The webpage also contains online forms to book appointments and a form for amending semester 2 module registration that is not available through Student Web.

Questions about registration or your student records should be directed to registration@mu.ie or records.office@mu.ie respectively.

Pass grades will be uploaded at the end of the semester (for semester-long modules) or the academic year (for year-long modules), but they will not be ratified until the relevant Exam Board has taken place. Please keep this in mind if you are taking modules during the final year of your PhD. ***You will not be allowed to submit your thesis before the ECTS are formally approved by the University at the end of the academic year (end of August).*** This is particularly relevant if you intend to submit your thesis earlier than September in Year 4, thus our recommendation to complete all 30 ECTS by the end of Year 3.

You should retain all evidence of module completion and check that your module credits have been awarded correctly annually and at least a few months prior to submitting your thesis. This will give you sufficient time to resolve any issues that may exist.

Transferable skills modules:
These include modules on general research skills; research ethics and integrity; communication skills; personal effectiveness/development; teamworking and leadership; career management and networking; entrepreneurship and innovation. Most of these will have a code of GSTXXX, as they

are offered through the Graduate Skills Programme run by the Graduate Studies Office. FM-coded modules can be counted as either transferable skills or subject-specific.

Modules offered in other departments:

Some modules in other MU departments are open to students from other disciplines, such as in languages; computer science; business and law; statistics and maths. These modules can be found at the following link.

If participating in such modules, you need to obtain the permission of your supervisor and the module coordinator. Following successful completion of the module, you need to fill in the 'Form for registering transferable modules' and submit this to the Records Office with the signatures of the module coordinator and supervisor.

Subject Specific Modules:

These include taught or flexible modules in the discipline area or in a cognate discipline area that are part of the Biology structured PhD programme (check Coursefinder). These are usually coded BIXXX, as they are run and assessed by Biology academic staff. Some of these are taught modules that are run in conjunction with undergraduate or MSc modules. These can be useful to take in year1 if you have a knowledge gap in a relevant subject area because your undergraduate degree did not offer a taught module in this area. If you are an MU graduate and have already taken the associated undergraduate or MSc module, you cannot take the linked PhD-level module (this would not make sense for your skill development anyway).

Other BIxxx coded modules are flexible and allow you to submit work related to workshops, summer schools, conferences, etc (e.g., BI891 and BI881).

External Modules:

In some cases, it may be possible for students to take suitable modules at other Irish third level institutions. Details around registration and payment or waivers of fees will have to be clarified by the student/supervisor directly with the external institution. After completion of the module, students can apply to transfer their credits to Maynooth University through the 'Gain Accreditation for Inter-Institution Research Modules Form' and forward the results and their external transcript to the Maynooth University Records Office for processing. This assumes that the student completes formal assessment of the module at the external institution and can access a transcript.

It might also be possible to fit participation in an external module under one of the flexible BIXXX coded modules (e.g., BI881 or BI891). This can be decided in consultation with the postgraduate research student coordinator.

Please note that each module code can only be used once.

Module assessment:

Details on module assessment and requirements can be found in the relevant module descriptors available on Coursefinder. Please always check the module descriptor to make sure you have all the required assignments and documentation to receive a pass for the module.

All postgraduate modules are assessed on a pass/fail basis (i.e., ungraded). The pass mark is 40%.

In case of modules that have a clear module coordinator (e.g., taught modules, seminar series) assessment takes place by the module coordinator. Please discuss assessment with the module coordinator at an early stage in the module, as these are often tailored towards the individual postgraduate student.

BI8xx-coded modules are assessed within the Biology department, either by the module coordinator (if there is one) or your assessor. Email your assessor all required documentation/assignments (as per module descriptor that can be found on course finder) at any time during the academic year, but at the very latest in May, as results need to be uploaded for June exam board meetings. We usually recommend that this is aligned with the annual progress meetings in April.

Most **GST-coded modules** are assessed by the Graduate Studies Office or the Research Development Office (check the module descriptor), with the exception of GST1 and GST2, which are also assessed by your assessor (not the supervisor as stated in GST module descriptors).

CTL1 and CTL1X are run and assessed by the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

FM-coded modules are also assessed by your assessor (and are administered by the Research Development Office).

Plan your module choices carefully in consultation with your supervisor. It makes sense to also ask other postgrads about modules that they found useful and interesting.

You should choose modules and courses that really enhance your skill and career development. You can claim credits for many activities that you engage in during your PhD. For example, you may need training in a specialised technique for your PhD research and could attend an external workshop that provides this training. You can then claim credits through BI881 for this activity (check the module descriptor beforehand). There are modules associated with the seminar series in the department, modules for claiming credit for conference presentations and publication writing, and for external research stays.

Popular module choices:

CTL1/CTL1X (recommended for demonstrators)
BI881, BI891, (flexible modules for workshops, summer schools, external courses)
BI825 (postgrad seminar series)
BI820 or BI830 (seminar series with external speakers)
BI821 or BI831 (for research visits in industry or abroad)
BI871 or BI872 (for conference presentations, poster/oral)

Programme Structure:

Full details of all modules are available at http://apps.maynoothuniversity.ie/courses/?TARGET=CS&MODE=SEARCH

Code	Title	Credits	Semester	Subject Specific	Transferrable skills
BI801	INTRODUCTION TO IMMUNOLOGY	5	1	y	
BI802	ADVANCED IMMUNOLOGY	5	1	y	
BI804	BIOETHICS, BIOPHARMACEUTICALS & CLINICAL TRIALS	5	1		
BI806	APPLIED AND MOLECULAR IMMUNOLOGY	5	1&2	Y	
BI807	TUMOUR BIOLOGY	5	1&2	Y	
BI808	VACCINES AND ADJUVANTS	5	1	y	Y
BI820[a*]	BIOLOGY SEMINAR SERIES	5	1&2	y	
BI821[b*]	INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	5	1&2	y	
BI825	RESEARCH COMMUNICATION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS	5	1&2		
BI830[a*]	IMMUNOLOGY SEMINAR SERIES	5	1&2	y	
BI831[b*]	INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	5	1&2	y	
B839	ANTIBIOTICS: DISCOVERY, MODES OF ACTION AND RESISTANCE	5	2	Y	
BI840	CONTROL OF PROTEIN ACTIVITY & ABUNDANCE	5	2	y	
BI855	ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS (PUBLICATION)	5	1&2	y	
BI857	PATENTING, EVALUATION AND LICENSING OF BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS	2.5	2		Y
BI871[b*]	CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE AND ORAL PRESENTATION	5	1&2	y	
BI872[b*]	CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE AND POSTER PRESENTATION	5	1&2	y	
BI880	MOLECULAR ECOLOGY AND BIOGEOGRAPHY	5	2	y	
BI881[b*]	ADVANCED WORKSHOP/COURSE/SUMMER SCHOOL/MASTERCLASS	5	1&2	y	
BI891	ADVANCED SPECIALIST MODULE - INTERNATIONAL	5	1&2	y	
GSE2[a*]	INNOVATION AND RESEARCH COMMERCIALISATION	5	1		Y
CTL1[a*]	PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE IN POSTGRADUATE TEACHING & LEARNING : TUTORS & DEMONSTRATORS	5	1		Y
CTL1X[a*]	PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE IN POSTGRADUATE TEACHING & LEARNING : TUTORS & DEMONSTRATORS	5	2		Y
GST1	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY MODULE	5	1&2		Y
GST2	FINDING INFORMATION FOR YOUR THESIS	5	1		Y
GST3	ACADEMIC WRITING	5	2		Y
GST8	GRANT MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE	5	1&2		Y
GST10	INNOVATION & RESEARCH COMMERCIALISATION	5	1	y	

Structured PhD programme in Biology, 30 credits minimum, 15 of which must be subject specific and 15 in transferrable skills modules. As can be seen from the table above, some modules are categorised as either subject specific or transferrable skills.

a These modules should be taken once within the first three years of programme.

b Credit For Conference Or Course Attendance And Presentation Is Given Once Only Within The Programme. This Principle Also Applies To Industrial And International Experience, And To The Advance Specialist- International Module.

*Recommended modules.

Research MSc Programme

The process is nearly identical to the PhD programme, but a student must take a minimum of only 10 credits in modules (at least 5 in transferable skills modules and at least 5 in subject-specific modules) from the Structured PhD programme. A research MSc is usually completed in 2 years (a minimum of 1-year), so we recommend taking 10 credits in your first year of study.

The research MSC student also has a DRSPC and completes an Initial Meeting Form and Biology Annual PhD progress form

Research MSc students can formally apply to switch to PhD registration in Year 2 to continue their postgraduate studies to PhD level with the support of their supervisor and DRSPC (which will be contingent on available funding and progress made).

What to do when problems or conflicts arise?

Maynooth University is committed to being a university community that promotes and advances equality, that respects and values diversity, and develops a collegiate environment of excellence with equality, in which the human rights, responsibilities, and diversity of all students and staff are recognised and respected.

The University has several official policies relating to the creation of a safe environment for all staff and students. The information below summarises these policies and explains how they are implemented within the Department of Biology.

As a postgraduate student the key policies are:

- Maynooth University Equality and Diversity Policy 2018
    - This covers all staff and students, as well as any external guests or contractors, and addresses bullying, discrimination, and harassment.

- Gender Identity and Expression Policy 2018
    - This covers all staff and students and anyone representing MU.

In your role as a demonstrator employed by the Department of Biology, you are considered an employee and the following key policies are applicable:

- Policy on the Employment of People with Disabilities
- Protection of Staff against Workplace Bullying, Harassment & Sexual Harassment
- MU Protected Disclosures Policy 2023
- Code of Conduct for Employees of Maynooth University 2022
- Grievance Procedure for Employees of Maynooth University 2022

All these policies can be found in full at:
https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/edi/edi-policies
https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/governing-authority/protected-disclosures
https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/policies

A problem or conflict arises that relates to your PhD research:

Often a problem or conflict during your PhD research relates to the relationship with your supervisor or lab colleagues. If appropriate, we recommend to initially openly discuss the issue with your supervisor. Supervisors may not be aware what the student is experiencing, and many issues arise due to miscommunication or differences in expectations between students and supervisors. Having open conversations can help to eliminate or minimise these issues.

If you experience personal problems during your PhD or feel overwhelmed, many people in the department are willing to talk and help: your supervisor, your advisor, the postgrad coordinator, the postgrad committee members, and the head of department. They can help you identify appropriate measures of support either internally (e.g., through alternative working arrangements) or externally (e.g., through MU Student Services). You can also directly contact the Student Helpdesk, the Student Counselling or Health Service, or any other relevant student service.

If you have a problem or complaint that cannot be resolved within your supervisory arrangement, you can set up a meeting with your DRSPC members (advisor and/or assessor) for advice. Postgrad committee members can also be contacted to act as a sounding board for minor issues.

If the issue persists, please contact the postgraduate coordinator and/or the Head of Department. Your complaint will be taken seriously and treated in a confidential manner. The postgrad committee can also be asked to initially raise the issue with the postgrad coordinator without revealing the identity of the student.

For independent advice outside of the department, you can seek advice from officers in the Graduate Research Academy.

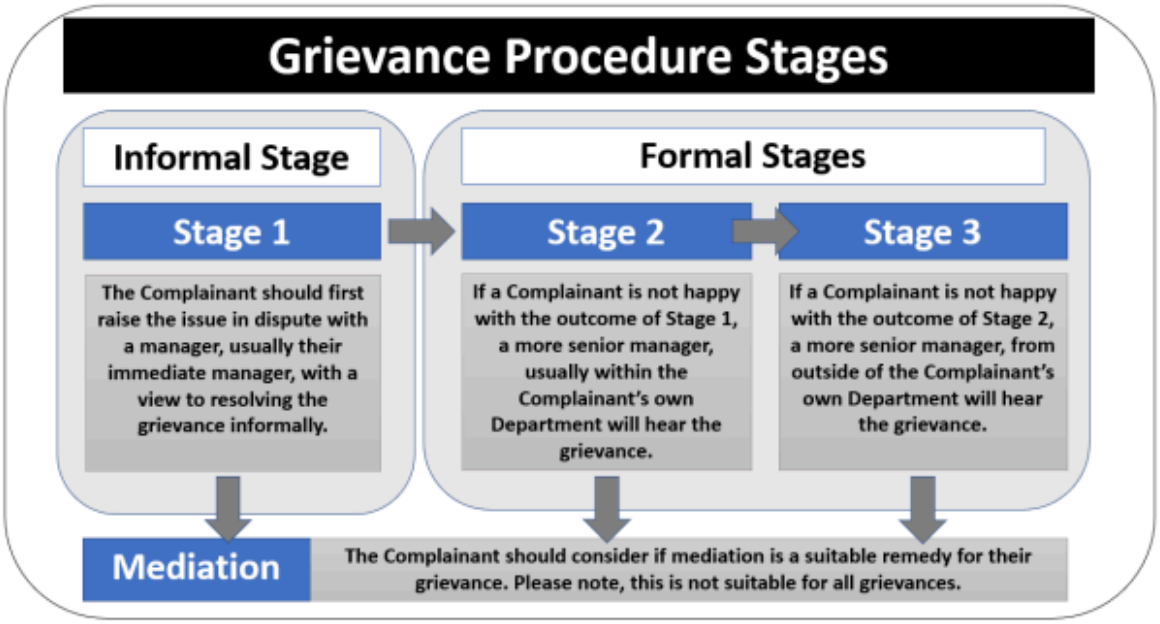
Ultimately, you can bring your matter formally to the attention of the Director of the Graduate Research Academy if a complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily inside the department.

For serious complaints of bullying, (sexual) harassment, or scientific misconduct, the university policies of ‘Protection against workplace bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment’, the ‘Protected disclosure policy, and the ‘Research integrity policy’ should be consulted and procedures followed to protect the student who is raising these concerns.
Research integrity falls under the remit of the Research Development Office (RDO), so this office should be contacted with any questions or concerns regarding research integrity and possible scientific misconduct.

A problem or conflict arises in the course of paid demonstrating:

Please refer to the Human Resources policies listed above for staff. In general, the first thing to do is discuss the issue informally with your line manager, either Patricia McDonnell (patricia.mcdonnell@mu.ie) or Michelle Finnegan (michelle.finnegan@mu.ie).

The diagram below from the Grievance Procedure for Employees of Maynooth University gives a general overview of process at the different stages.



If the problem involves bully or harassment, there are three options available. An informal process, mediation and a formal process.

The informal process involves discussing the problem with the person involved and asking them to stop. If you are uncomfortable doing this directly, you may ask the Head of Department or a contact person from outside the Department to raise the issue confidentially.

Mediation and the formal process are both run through the Human Resources Office. If the informal process fails to satisfactorily address the problem, please contact Human Resources Office directly for more information.

Support from outside the Department

To raise any complaints or to raise equality issues, students can contact the following supports:

Registrar's Office, Humanity House, South Campus
01 7083579
registrar@mu.ie

Vice President for Welfare and Equality or Postgraduate Representative, Maynooth Students' Union, North Campus
01 708 6808
welfare@msu.ie
doctoralrep@msu.ie

Student Services, Student Services Centre, North Campus
01 708 3554

Maynooth University Access Office, MAP Lodge, North Campus
01 708 6025
access.office@mu.ie.

The University is committed to the protection of all members of the university community and to the principle that every staff member and student is entitled to work and study in an environment free from harassment. As part of the procedures adopted by the University, a staff member or a student who believes that they have been the subject of harassment may discuss the alleged harassment in an informal manner with their Head of Department or with any one of several contact persons appointed by the University.

The following contact persons have been appointed and have been provided with training in relation to their roles as contact persons:

Dr Gordon Delap, Department of Music - Ph (01 708) 3794
Prof Maurice Devlin, Centre for Applied Social Studies - Ph (01 708) 3781
Prof Alison Hood, Department of Music- Ph (01 708) 6457
Mr Michael Bolger, Dept. of Geography - Ph (01 708) 4762

Speak Out Reporting Tool

Speak Out is an online anonymous reporting tool available to staff and students to disclose incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, hate crime, coercive behaviour/control, stalking, assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape.

https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/campus-life/student-wellbeing-support/counselling/speak-out-reporting-tool

Campus Security and Police:

If you want to report an incident or need to seek immediate security support:

Campus Security 01-708 3929.
Maynooth University Campus Garda (Police) 01 708 4726
Maynooth Garda Station (Police) 01 629 2380

Practical Information Biology Department

Ordering:

Michelle Finnegan (left) and Aine Butler (right) (room 2.43, Callan) look after ordering reagents and consumables for the department.


They can be contacted using biologyorders@mu.ie with queries on ordering.

The Biology Department uses an electronic ordering system (MU marketplace) for many suppliers. Discuss with your supervisor how ordering is handled in your lab. In some labs postgrads submit orders for approval through JDE/marketplace, in other labs the supervisor handles all orders.

If needed, you can get a log-in for Marketplace by contacting Ken Maddock (ken.maddock@mu.ie)

The videos in the links below explain how to create, save and share a basket.

1) How to create and use a saved basket of items in the MU marketplace *(4.33)'#*

https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/c51602ad-a8ed-4424-a6ad-095c9335dfe8

Make sure to label your basket clearly with lab, date, BU and name.

2) How to share a saved basket with another MU user *(2.32)*

https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/7f82054a-a720-4c55-bb6b-6ce14683b755

Please share your baskets with both Aine Butler and Michelle Finnegan, who look after ordering in the department. Also email biologyorders@mu.ie to let them know you have shared a basket.

For suppliers/items that are not listed in MU marketplace, you can continue to email order requisition forms to biology.orders@mu.ie.

Storeroom:

The Biology storeroom on the ground floor of the Callan building Rm 1.05 is open daily from 11.30am-12.30pm and from 3.30-4pm and maintains stocks of many commonly needed consumables (e.g., plastics) and stationary items.

Please sign out all items taken. Each lab is charged for stores on a monthly basis. If you are dissatisfied with any product stocked in the stores, please let the office know immediately.

All lab orders are taken in by the prep lab technicians and are kept for collection either in the storeroom, the freezers opposite the storeroom, or the cold room opposite teaching lab 1, depending on the required storage temperature of the items. There is a notebook outside the storeroom (accessible at all hours) that lists all orders that have come in and their storage location. Please make sure to check this regularly, collect your items and sign them out in the book.

Post:

All official post (both internal and external) must be left into the Biology Office by 2:00pm daily**.** Personal post will be accepted when stamped. You may also leave your stamped item of post for in the box outside the Post Office (opposite Londis) in the John Hume Building. Post will be delivered to the Post Office at 2.30 (approx.) daily.

Couriers:

For information on couriers, please contact the Admin Team at biology.department@mu.ie

Photocopying:

Photocopiers are located in room 2.32 Callan Building and also, on the 2nd floor office corridor in the Biosciences Building.

Your supervisor will provide you with the code for your lab which you will need to input into the photocopier. Please do not disclose this code to anyone outside your lab group. If you experience any difficulty when using a photocopier, please contact the admin team.

Shared equipment/equipment for collaborative use:

There are several shared facilities and departmental equipment that can be used by all labs. Some require the payment of a fee to the department; others are free to use.

Please see the departmental equipment that is available here.

Confocal microscope: contact Gemma Lynch (gemma.lynch@mu.ie) for advice if you wish to use Confocal microscopy for your research.

If you wish to use equipment owned by an individual lab, please contact the PI of the lab and ask for permission. This will be decided on a case by case basis by the PIs who own the equipment.

Claiming expenses

Maynooth University operates an electronic Staff Expenses Reimbursement system (ESS) which is done on-line. You will make the claim through the Employee Service System (ESS) via the For Staff webpage. A link to instruction manuals can be found at the following link.
If you are claiming for a car journey you must set up your car details first. Click this link for further instructions.

Claims which are more than four months in arrears will not be paid.

If you have further questions regarding payroll issues, please contact the Payroll Office.

Additional information on demonstrating

Demonstrating involves mandatory attendance at a pre-lab meeting with the lecturer in charge and then at the practical, where you will assist the students with their practicals and mark their write-ups. It is essential that you attend all pre-labs and practicals you are assigned to and help us maintain a high standard and an excellent student learning experience. This also involves returning grades and feedback in a timely manner as agreed with the lecturer/senior demonstrator.

Michelle Finnegan (michelle.finnegan@mu.ie), assisted by the senior demonstrator Patricia Colton (patricia.mcdonnell@mu.ie) assigns demonstrators to practicals. At the beginning of the year, you have the chance to submit preferences for demonstrating days and to opt in/out of additional hours. Make sure to submit these preferences, so that your demonstrating schedule can take account of these preferences.

Normal rate of pay: €13.44 per hour. You will also automatically receive holiday pay at a rate of 8% per claim per month.

SENIOR DEMONSTRATORS:
1ST YEARS: Teresa Redmond (teresa.redmond@mu.ie)
2nd/3rd YEARS: Patricia Colton (patricia.mcdonnell@mu.ie)

MAYNOOTH STAFF E-MAIL ADDRESS FOR MOODLE/ESS:

Michelle Finnegan will contact all new demonstrators for personal details before setting up their contract. You will then receive notification from HR regarding completion of a personnel form and IT services will issue you with a staff email. This staff email is used for Moodle access and for submitting your timesheets on ESS (online payment submission).

Further details on demonstrating and claiming hours will be given at the beginning of semester.

Michelle Finnegan/Fidelma Byrne and Head of Department approve ALL hourly timesheet claims.

The staff number you will be given will allow you to apply for a MyCard, a Parking Permit and give access to some computer services.

Maynooth University employer's registered number is 9587715A.

If you have further questions regarding payroll issues, please contact the Payroll Office

Hourly Timesheet Claims.

DEADLINES:

- You will need to enter your hours via the Core Portal by **midnight on the second Friday of every month,** therefore you will be claiming by midnight of the following dates this academic year:
    - 13 October
    - 10 November
    - 8 December
    - 12 January
    - 9 February
    - 8 March
    - 12 April
    - 10 May
- ***If you are claiming for something outside your typical hours, as assigned by Michelle & Patricia, you must add an explanation at the bottom of your timesheet before submission.***

Demonstrator Hours:

1st years

- 1hr prelab
- 3hr practical
- 2.5hr grading ***(not for workshops)***

(5.5hrs for any repeat lab taken within the week - prelab already paid for)

2nd/3rd years

- 0.5hr prelab (first prelab of a module will be 1 hour)
- 3hr practical
- 2hr grading ***(not for workshops)***

(5 hr for any repeat practical taken within the week- prelab already paid for)

4th Years

Hours differ depending on the practical so demonstrators will be notified separately.

Claim hours for the date of the practical, even if you attended a prelab on a different date. For example, if you demonstrated for a BI101 practical on Thursday morning, the 6th of October, you would enter 5.5 hours on Thursday the 6th, *NOT* 1 hr on Tuesday 4th (prelab) 3 hrs Thursday the 6th (lab) and 2 hr on Saturday the 8th (correcting). So, you would enter 08.30 to 10.00 on Thursday the 6th of October.

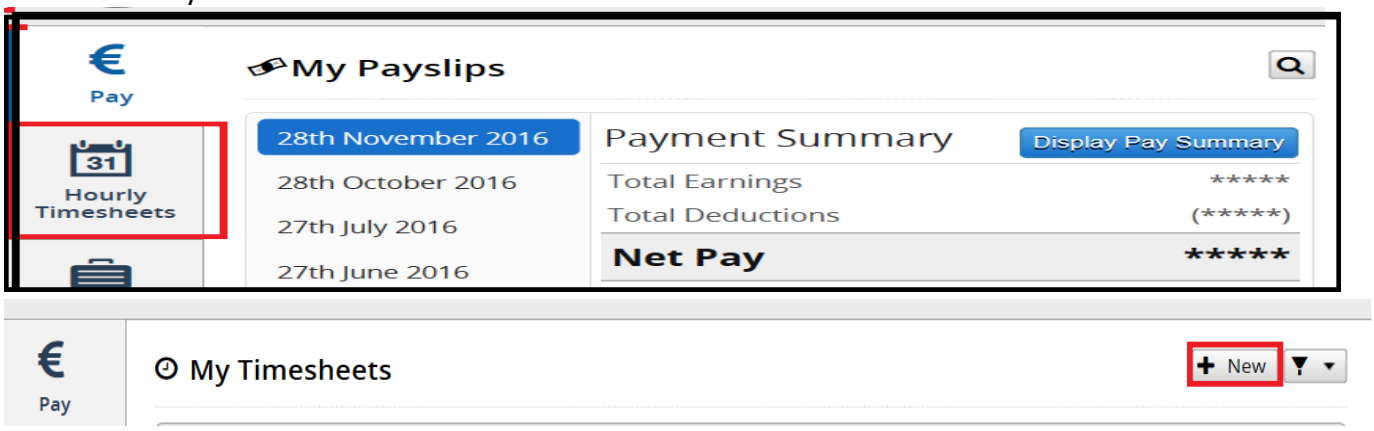
Making an Hourly Timesheet Claim – Claimant

Please see the following link to a video explaining the procedure Or YouTube

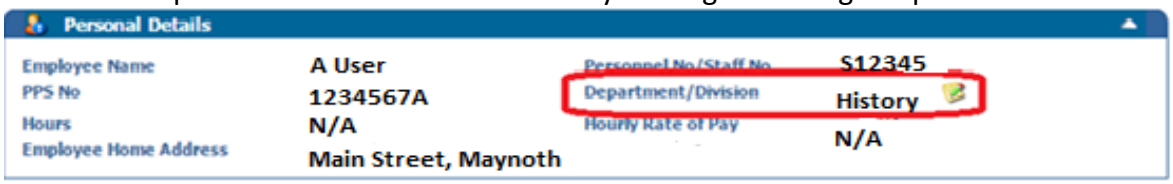
Step 1:

Login to ESS Core Portal:
Enter your staff username and password and sign in.

Step 2: Creating a New Timesheet
Click on Hourly Timesheets and New.



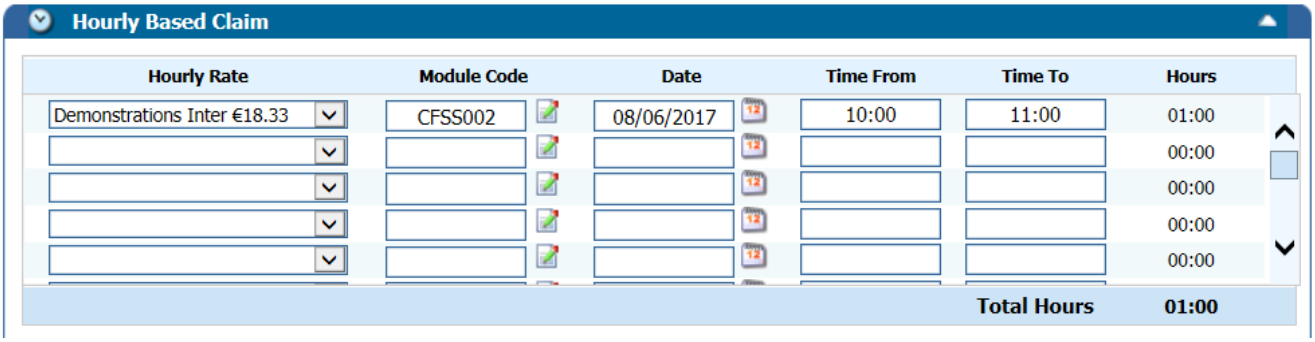
Select the department relevant to the Claim by clicking the change Department icon.



Claimant can review their Bank Details, but not add or amend. If you need your Bank Details amended, please contact HR.

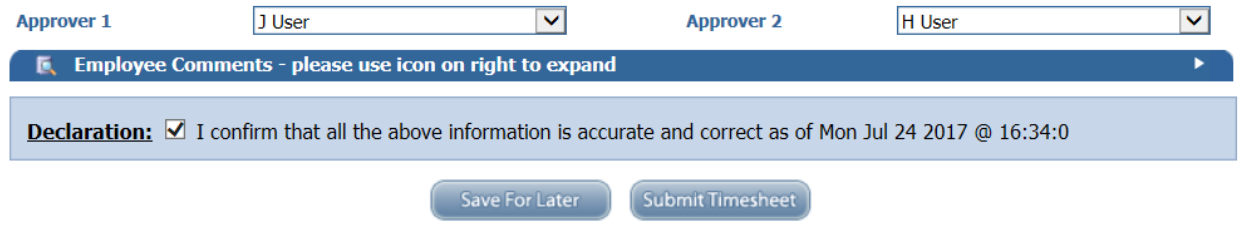
To create a new timesheet the claimant must select the following:

- Hourly rate from a drop-down menu
- The module code: click on the icon and enter the first few digits of the code or first few letters of the Department. In the case of administrative work enter "not" and select N/A not applicable.
- Date of the claim
- Time From and Time To. The system operates on a 24-hour clock. When entering hours for a full day you must enter hours for the morning and (if applicable) the afternoon separately.
- The hours will automatically calculate.

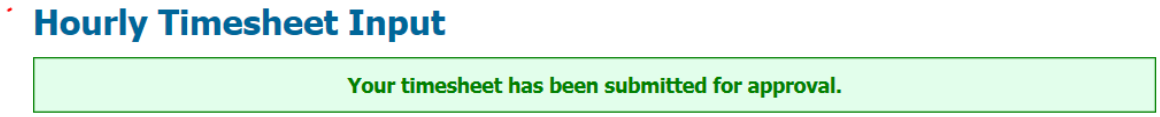


Step 3: Submit Timesheet

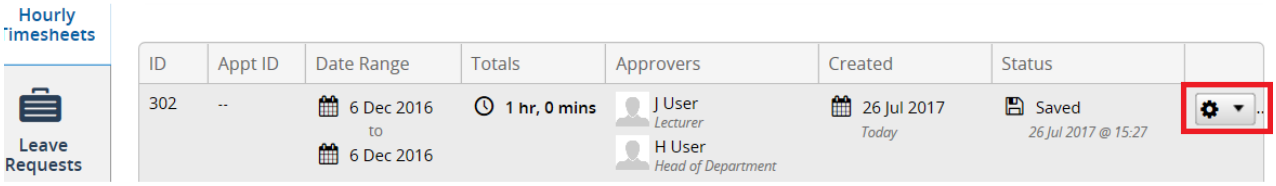
- Place a tick in the declaration box and click on Submit Timesheet.
- When you click on Submit Timesheet, an email is sent to your Approver 1.
- Approver 1 then enters the rate and cost centre and submits to Approver 2 for approval (or rejection)
- If Approver 1 or 2 rejects a timesheet you will receive an email notification requesting you to login, amend and resubmit.
- Please note you can also select the "save for later" option.

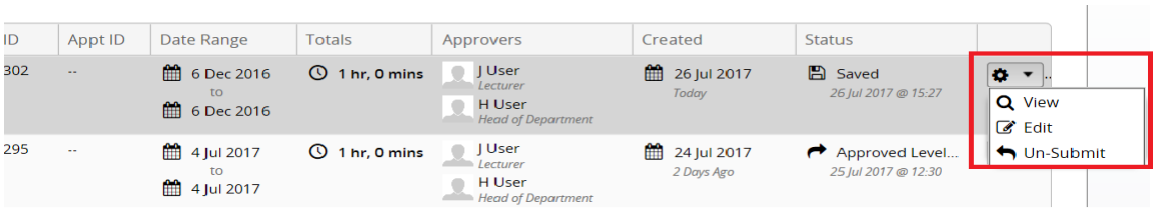


- When you select "Submit Timesheet" you will see the message below on your screen informing you that your timesheet has been submitted.



If you choose the "save for later" option when you log in you will see that the status is" Saved".





When you click on the drop-down menu on the cogwheel you will have the option to view, edit or un-submit.

The timesheet can be submitted by clicking on the declaration box and selecting the" submit timesheet" option.

Key Points:

- You can check the live status of your timesheet claim(s) under Hourly Timesheet Summary screen.
- The system operates on a 24-hour clock.
- You cannot claim for work in the future.
- When entering hours for a full day you must enter in hours for the morning and (if applicable) the afternoon hours separately.
- Please note that if you enter duplicate dates/times in error that the system will allow you to continue and enter several lines. When you try to submit the timesheet an error message will appear, and you will lose the details that you have entered.
- Only enter Claims relating to the same Department and Cost Centre. Mixing claims that relate to different Department and Cost Centres will make them impossible to approve by Department Administrators and Heads of Department resulting in the claim being rejected.
- You must have a username and password to access the online facility

Quick Grading Student Assignments Via Moodle – Non- Editing Teachers Biology

1. Log into Moodle using your staff email and password.
2. Select the appropriate Moodle course available on Dashboard (you will have access to all courses you are demonstrating for the academic year) Make sure that you have selected the relevant Academic year (not relevant to first time demonstrators).
3. Click the Submission portal that you are due to grade.
4. The demonstrator will then have access to the group which they have to demonstrate.
5. Click grade.
6. When finished grading please click marking completed.
7. For any students who have not submitted please enter not submitted in the feedback column.

Entering Grades on Moodle

1. Log into Moodle using your staff email and password.
2. Select the appropriate Moodle course available on Dashboard (you will have access to all courses you are demonstrating for the academic year) Make sure that you have selected the relevant Academic year (not relevant to first time demonstrators).
3. Click **Turn Editing on** in the top-right corner of the screen.
4. The student names in many modules will be arranged according to bench and demonstrator. After entering gradebook sort your students according to bench by clicking the triangle directly to the right of "Bench total" to sort the student names into bench order. This will make it easier for you to find your students.
5. In Grader Report, each column represents an assignment and each row a student. The rectangular box is the Grade box where you can quickly enter the grade. Locate the student you want and enter the grade in the appropriate column. Then, click **Update** after you add each grade.
6. Enter a zero if your student has not handed in a writeup. This can be amended if the student hands in a late writeup. NOTE: leave the grade box blank if an asterisk (acceptable absence) has been placed in the Feedback box (unless the student hands in a make-up writeup for a missed practical.) This might happen if the senior demonstrator or one of the office staff has received a medical cert before the marks are entered.
7. **Feedback**: It is important to add a feedback comment if the student has not handed in a writeup, such as **absent**, **write-up not submitted** or **sick**, which the student and module lecturers will see. Click the **Edit Grade** icon (Actions wheel – appears as cogged wheel). Enter a feedback comment in the Feedback box and click **Save Changes**. The comment can be amended if a student presents a sick cert or hands in a write-up at a later date. The administrative staff or senior demonstrator will normally modify the comment with an "asterisk" if a student is deemed to have an acceptable excuse for missing a lab practical. Repeat for each grade.

Warning: If you move to a new page before clicking **Update,** you will lose the grades you entered.

University Offices, Facilities and Services

Graduate Studies Office and the Graduate Research Academy

In 2023-24, responsibilities for postgraduate research students are migrating from the Graduate Studies Office to the newly founded Graduate Research Academy, which will offer more dedicated supports for research as opposed to taught postgraduate students.
https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/graduate-research-academy

To contact the Graduate Research Academy you can email research@mu.ie or director.graduate.research@mu.ie for communications which require the director's attention.

Other specific email addresses used by the Graduate Research Academy are:
rsdp@mu.ie (research skills development programme)
fundedresearchstudent@mu.ie
humephdscholarship@mu.ie

The GRA holds a compulsory induction meeting for new research students each September and organises workshops and writing retreats during the year in addition to offering many different generic skills modules through the structured PhD programme.

Registration and Records Office

This office deals with the annual registration as well as module registrations, as well as records of passed modules. Registrations can usually be completed online through Student Web, but you can book appointments on the website if needed or email registration@mu.ie with queries regarding registrations. There are also webforms for changing semester 2 registrations and for requesting transcripts on the website.
You can contact the records office by email on records.office@mu.ie

Examination Office

This office is responsible for examination of research theses. On their website, you can find all the up-to-date information about thesis submission, as well as forms and policies (e.g., thesis formatting guidelines, submission forms, viva voce guidelines):

Queries about thesis submission should be directed to: research.theses@mu.ie

IT services

IT services will automatically provide you with your MU email account and log-in details upon registration. You will receive a second staff account when you start as demonstrator.

This will give you access to Windows365. Through this, you have access to email, Office software and 1TB of OneDrive storage through your browser or dedicated apps. Office software including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote can be installed on your own

computer(s) and mobile device(s) at no extra cost. You can share files and collaborate with OneDrive and Office software and Use Teams for online meetings and collaborative file storage.

IT services manage the campus network, look after purchasing of computer hardware and software, and provide technical support for MU-owned computers (unfortunately not personally owned devices).
Available software (e.g., Endnote, ImageJ, Inkscape, Minitab, Python, R studio, SPSS etc) can be seen and downloaded via accessing 'Apps Anywhere':

You can request support by calling to the service desks in the Eolas building or in the library, by logging your issue at mu.ie /serviceportal, calling ext 3830, or by emailing servicedesk@mu.ie.

The MU Library

The **MU Library** provides the following:

- Access to physical books, journals, and Special Collections & Archives,
- 24/7 access to our electronic collections online (eBooks / e-Journals / databases)
- Access to exceptional digital collections, including extensive digital primary sources, available for your research.
- a dedicated PG study room with swipe access; a quiet zone in the library for you
- bookable group study-rooms
- PG training during the year (online & in-person) that will support your research and study.
- inter-library loans / document-supply and access cards to other libraries
- dedicated staff who supply information and research support

On the library homepage (https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library) you can explore the range of collections and services that are provided.

The search-box, LibrarySearch; searching the entire collection of MU Library

Your **MyCard** (student card) entitles you to access the library and to borrow books. Click the "*Using the Library*" tab on the library homepage, for more information.
You can borrow a laptop to use within the library or logon to one of their many PCs and of course, you can bring your own laptop too. IT Services have a dedicated helpdesk behind the Admissions Desk. The library has a 3D printer available (ask at the library desk) as well as a colour photocopier, in addition to many black and white photocopiers. You may wish to use the swipe-access, dedicated Postgraduate Room on Level 2 for your research, a quiet area in the library or book a group study room.

The library provides a **Subject Guide** for each area of study in the university, a great source of relevant subject-specific material and resources: https://nuim.libguides.com/?b=g&d=a

You can upskill in your own time using the **LIST Online short tutorials**.

The **Research Support Librarian Ciaran Quinn** offers a wide range of services. You can even make an appointment with him for 1-to-1 support in your studies. Further details can be found here.

- **Inter Library Loan (ILL)** service – this service allows you to borrow an item and receive a copy of a journal article or book chapter from another Library. You can make this request online via LibrarySearch. There is no charge for this service in the current academic year. Click https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library/using-library/inter-library-loans for further details.
- **ALCID card**. This card allows users to visit libraries in Ireland and consult their material. Get further information on this service from our website.
- **SCONUL card.** The SCONUL Research Extra (SRX) scheme gives academic staff and research postgraduates borrowing facilities in most of the higher education libraries in Ireland and the UK.

USEFUL LINKS:

Library homepage: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library
Subject Guides: https://nuim.libguides.com/?b=g&d=a
LIST online: http://nuim.libguides.com/list-online
Inter-Library loans: https://bit.ly/3ivpNOe
Group Study Rooms: https://nuim.libcal.com/booking/MU_GroupStudyRooms
Research Support Librarian: https://bit.ly/2NTvCqk
Special Collections & Archives: https://bit.ly/2Zy11nN

CONTACTS:

- Research students and staff (research support) contact:
  - Ciarán Quinn, ciaran.quinn@mu.ie

Moodle

Moodle is the e-learning environment we use at Maynooth University. Moodle allows you to access resources and online activities associated with your course from wherever you can access the web.

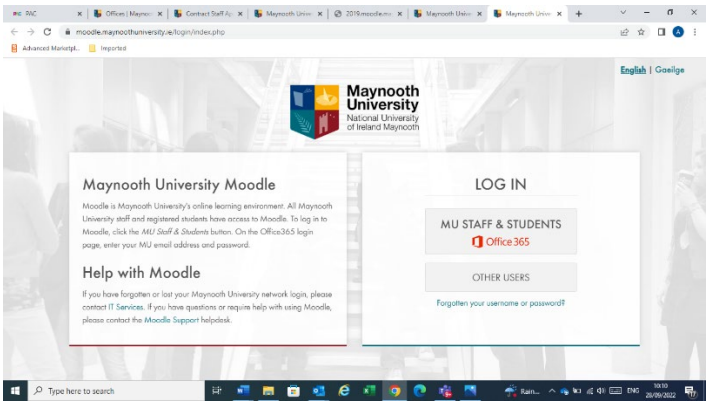
You will use Moodle with your student account to access materials associated with your postgraduate study, e.g. for postgraduate modules you are participating in.
In addition, you will use Moodle with your staff account when you are acting as demonstrator for undergraduate labs (for accessing and grading assignments).

Switching between accounts can be awkward, because your browser remembers your log-in details. The easiest solution is to use two different web browsers (e.g. Chrome versus Bing) to access Moodle with your student versus staff account. You can also self-enrol to the Biology Department Postgraduate Moodle Page with your staff account, so that you have easy access to this page with both accounts.

It is also possible to access the free Moodle Mobile App for iPhone and iPad from Apple iTunes or for android devices on Google Play.

How to access Moodle.

1. Open your web browser and go to the Maynooth University homepage. If using Internet Explorer, you need to ensure you are using version 10 or later.
2. Click the For Current Students link on the top right of the Moodle homepage. Then, click Moodle.
3. You will be brought to the Moodle login page. You may wish to bookmark the page for future visits. ***https://moodle.maynoothuniversity.ie/***. You should enter your Maynooth University login details in the login box.



5. After login, you will see the main Moodle homepage. The middle of the page contains news and updates from the Moodle Support team. There are also useful links to various open resources within the site. To access your modules in Moodle, click the My Courses menu.
6. You should take a look at the **Biology Postgraduate Moodle Page**. Once your registration is complete, you will be automatically enrolled in this page. It contains a lot of useful information and links about your Postgraduate journey and the supports available at MU. You will also use this forum to submit your Annual Progress Form.

Contact moodlesupport@mu.ie if you experience problems. Please use your correct MU email address when communicating with Moodle Support so that they can identify you on the system (staff versus student address).

Maynooth Access Programme (MAP) office

All postgraduate students with a diagnosed disability, including a diagnosed mental illness, are encouraged to register with the Maynooth Access Programme (MAP) office. MAP offer academic and learning supports for all students, including postgraduates, with a disability. Postgraduates from underrepresented groups can also turn to MAP for supports. This includes but is not limited to those from low-income families, the travelling community, the Roma community, single parents, students with convictions and students facing or at risk of facing homelessness.

Postgraduate students are encouraged to contact the department's postgraduate student MAP advisor (currently Lauren Flynn: Lauren.Flynn.2017@mumail.ie) and/or the departmental MAP advisor (currently Dr Joanne Masterson: joanne.masterson@mu.ie) for more information on supports available.

University Creche

The Maynooth University creche is available for children aged 1 year up to school going age. Opening hours are 9.00am to 5.30pm Monday to Thursday and 9.00am to 5.00pm on Fridays. Student rates are €152.50 per week. Please contact the Biology postgraduate MAP advisor or the student budgeting advice service if you need financial assistance.

Student Services

It is important to note that all Maynooth University Student Services are open to Postgraduate research students, e.g. the Student Health Centre, Counselling Service, Budgeting advice, and Homefinder (see full list and more details in the link below).

Student Budgeting Service

Postgraduate students that find themselves struggling financially are encouraged to contact the Student Budgeting Advice Service as financial aid is often available e.g., through the student assistance fund (SAF) and the 1916 bursary fund (see resources document).

Homefinder

Homefinder and the MU StudentPad maintain a list of local accommodation options:

Campus Counselling Service

The Campus Counselling Service is free and confidential, and you can easily request an appointment through this link. You can also contact them by phone on (01) 708 3554 during office hours. You do not have to wait until there is a crisis before contacting the counselling service and all postgraduates are welcome.

You can also text **50808** to receive immediate support (including out of hours). This HSE service provides a safe space where you're listened to by a trained crisis Volunteer. You'll text back and forth, only sharing what you feel comfortable with.

Student Health Centre

All students with illness or who require the assistance of a GP or nurse are encouraged to make an appointment with the Student Health Centre. Please visit their website for further information on services available.

A full list of Student Services can be found at this link.

If you have questions about Student Services or are not sure which services exist or are appropriate for your issue, you can approach the Student Helpdesks in the TSI or Arts buildings or email studenthelp@mu.ie.

Sports Centre

Please visit this link for all enquiries regarding Maynooth University Sports Centre.
https://www.irishultimate.com/f/maynooth-university-sports-centre

Student Clubs and Societies

There are many different student clubs and societies in Maynooth University that are open to postgrads. This can be a good way to meet new people and try other different sporting and other activities. Further information can be found here.

Biology Laboratory Safety

For the protection of yourself and others please follow the departmental safety guidelines at all times.

You have to contact the Chief Technical Officer Austin Power and complete the departmental safety training before starting lab work. The Senior technical Officer Noel Gavin arranges training for the use of autoclaves and centrifuges. Please contact him to register for this training before using these pieces of equipment.

The Biology Department Safety Teams page contains electronic copies of :

- safety induction videos
- lab audit forms (to be completed monthly)
- accident form
- equipment repair form (to be included with any pieces of equipment dropped over to the workshop).
- The Biology Department Safety Statement including SOPs.
- individual lab's chemical inventories (to be maintained on an ongoing basis by lab staff)

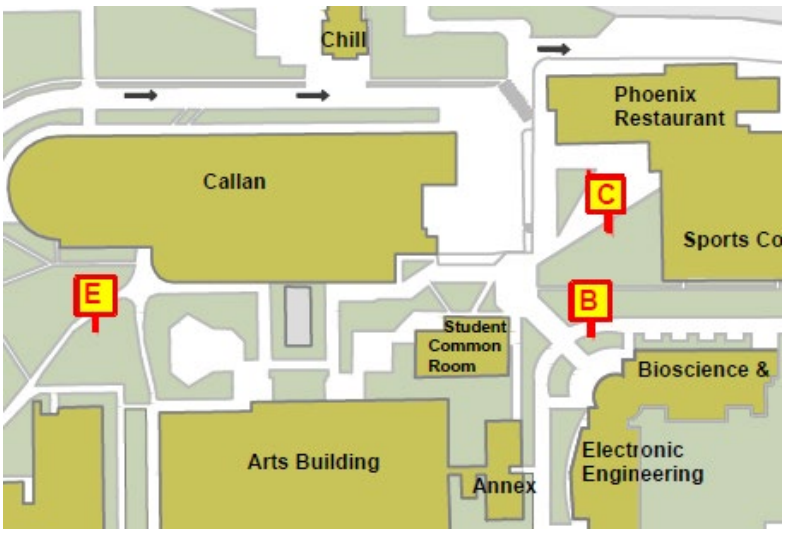
Each lab also maintains hardcopies of the departmental safety statement, relevant SOPs, risk assessments, and safety data sheets in the lab or reading room.

Before starting lab work or new experimental procedures, please make sure you have read and signed the departmental safety policies and all relevant risk assessments.

For work with carcinogens or mutagens, you must complete an individual CMR justification form and maintain a record of use that needs to be submitted to Austin Power.

FIRE:

- On hearing the fire alarm or on discovering a fire, stop what you are doing and raise the alarm.
- If you are using a Bunsen, switch it off.
- Leave in an orderly manner and close the door behind you. **Do not use the lift. Do not stop to collect your belongings.**
- Make your way to the nearest assembly point B, C or E (see the map below).
- Remain at this location until instructed by security staff to return to the building.



PERSONAL PROTECTION:

- Do not smoke, vape, eat, drink or chew gum in the laboratory. University Policy prohibits storage of food and drink and food in all laboratories.
- You are required to wear a Howie style white laboratory coat with all buttons closed and sleeves fully extended at all times.
- You must wear safety glasses when using any chemical or biological agent or equipment where ejected particles are possible.
- You will be provided with gloves for your personal protection. Unfortunately, they only protect the wearer and can easily contaminate surfaces. Remove all gloves before leaving the laboratory, even if for a brief period. Remove gloves while using laboratory equipment unless there are specific hazards present. Do not wear gloves when using Bunsen burners unless instructed otherwise by your supervisor.
- If you need to transfer samples or equipment to another laboratory, remove one glove and used the un-gloved hand to open doors etc.
- Sandals, flip-flops and other open footwear are prohibited when chemical and biological agents are used.
- Long hair must be tied back.
- You must wash your hands when leaving the lab.

PERSONAL INJURY:

- You must cover any cuts or grazes with a plaster before starting any lab work. There are first aid cabinets in all laboratories.
- Report any accident or injury, however trivial, to your supervisor and to Austin Power. Maynooth University uses an online reporting system iProtectU. You will be given access to this system in due course, in the interim, please notify Austin Power of any incidents/accidents and they will advise on the course of action.
- Please inform your Supervisor and/or Austin Power if you have any concerns relating to a pre-existing medical condition, or if chemical/biological agents used in your work may affect any pre-existing medical condition.

Exams Office Thesis Formatting Guidelines

The exams office provides information on thesis submission and formatting on their website:

1. **THESIS**: A statement of investigation or research presenting the author's findings and any conclusions reached, submitted by the author in support of his candidature for a higher degree, professional qualification or other award.

2. **PRE VIVA EXAMINATION**: Students are required to submit a password protected electronic copy of the final draft of their thesis in one pdf file with completed submission forms to research.theses@mu.ie. The copy of the thesis should include an abstract, not exceeding 300 words in length. Submission Forms are available on the Examinations Office website, and this also contains the updated information of thesis submission and formatting.

3. **POST VIVA EXAMINATION NUMBER OF COPIES:** Following examination and corrections of the thesis the THREE hard bound copies and ONE electronic copy (on CD/DVD/USB) should be lodged. The electronic copy should be one PDF file mirroring the hard bound copy. Please DO NOT turn in a separate PDF file for each chapter, or for each item in the thesis (abstract, contents, etc.). The only extra files permitted are multi-media files e.g., audio or visual files.

4. **BINDING**: The thesis shall be bound within boards. The binding shall be of a fixed kind in which leaves are permanently secured. The boards shall have a sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upon a shelf.

5. **COVER TITLE:** If the outside front board bears the title of the work, it should be in at least 24pt (8 mm.) type. The name and initials of the candidate, the qualification and the year of submission may also be shown. If the cover material bears any design, the design shall be clear of any lettering.

6. **SPINE TITLE:** The spine of the work shall bear in at least 24 pt (8 mm.) type, if practicable, the surname and initials of the candidate, the qualification for which the work is submitted and the year of submission. This information shall normally be printed along the spine in such a way as to be readable when the volume is lying flat with the front cover uppermost. If the work consists of more than one volume the spine shall also bear the number of each volume.

7. **TYPE:** Theses shall be presented in a permanent and legible form in typescript or print. Copies presented by xerographic or comparably permanent processes are acceptable.

8. **PAPER:** A4 size paper which is EC standard and specified in BS 400 should be used.

9. **LAYOUT:** Margins at the binding edge shall be not less than 40 mm. and other margins not less than 20 mm. Double or one and a half spacing is recommended in typescripts, excepted for indented quotations and footnotes, where single spacing may be used. Pages can be printed single or double-sided.

10. **PAGINATION:** Pages shall be numbered consecutively through the thesis, including appendices, but excluding photographs and/or diagrams which are not embodied in the text.

Page numbers shall be located centrally at the bottom of the page approximately 10 mm above the edge.

11. **MULTI-VOLUME THESIS:** If there is more than one volume, each volume shall carry its own pagination.

12. **TITLE PAGE:** The title of every volume shall give the following information in the order listed: 1) The full title of the theses and the sub-title if any. 2) The total number of volumes if more than one, and the number of the particular volume. 3) The full name of the author, followed, if desired, by any qualifications and distinctions. 4) The qualification for which the thesis is submitted. 5) The name of the institution to which the thesis is submitted. 6) The department, faculty or organisation in which research was conducted. 7) The month and year of submission. 8) Name of the Head of the Department concerned. 9) Name of the Supervisor of the research. The title should describe the content of the thesis accurately and concisely.

13. **TABLE OF CONTENTS:** The table of contents shall immediately follow the title page.

14. **SUMMARY:** There shall be a summary of the thesis of approximately 300 words.

MS Word Style guide (Dr Abigail Maher)

Dr Abigail Maher in the department has compiled a useful guide for how to use MS Word for formatting your thesis according to the MU guidelines. These documents can be found on the Biology Postgrad Teams Page.

Hints For Research Presentations (Sean Doyle)

1. First of all, it is important to remember that you are presenting work that you have done. Although there may be audience members who have more experience, they will not have done the work, so you will know more about what you've done than anyone in the audience. This should be a source of confidence to you both prior to, and during, the presentation.

2. Practice the talk beforehand and make sure you fully introduce the audience to your talk. Give them all necessary background information and use diagrams where possible. Remember, the audience hasn't done the work you're presenting so it is important to make no assumptions about their level of knowledge. Always aim for the general level of knowledge in the audience.

3. Make sure your slides are readable. Use font size 20+ minimum. Any smaller than this cannot be seen from the audience. Check for typographical errors prior to presentation. Try and avoid putting all you have to say on the slide - use key phrases and bullet points only.

4. Ensure that your introductory slide(s) contain the objectives of the work to be presented – both short- & long-term objectives.

5. At the beginning of your presentation, tell the audience what you are going to talk about, the order in which you'll talk about things and then talk about it!
6. Make sure you fully explain what is on each slide. Avoid the temptation to rush through the presentation or make the assumption that your audience is already aware of the work you have completed.

7. Point results out on the screen using a laser pointer as you speak.

8. When you present data in graphical, tabular or figure form always tell the audience what the axes/labels mean and what effect you are measuring. Try and avoid going directly into discussing the data without a prior explanation of the result format.

9. Direct your presentation to the audience, not the screen. Although this can be one of the most daunting aspects of presenting, you should remember that the audience is made up of individuals and is not a 'group mind' or out to trip you up.

10. Your conclusions should summarise the work done, what it means and where the work leads you now.

11. Try to anticipate questions you may be asked when your presentation is over and think about how you will answer them. You can't think of all questions so a standard technique is to answer an alternative question (or state something like: 'I know this is not directly answering what you've asked but…..') while you're thinking of an answer to the one you've been asked! Ultimately, saying 'I hadn't thought of that, it's a good idea and I'll try it' is flattering to the questioner and will generally shut them up!

Department of Biology Policy on Plagiarism

Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves an attempt to use an element of another person's work, without appropriate acknowledgement in order to gain academic credit. It may include the unacknowledged verbatim reproduction of material, unsanctioned collusion, but is not limited to these matters; it may also include the unacknowledged adoption of an argumentative structure, or the unacknowledged use of a source or of research materials, including computer code or elements of mathematical formulae in an inappropriate manner.

The policies of the University apply within the Department of Biology, as contained on the Maynooth University website. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty and will be **treated with the utmost seriousness** wherever discovered.

Biochemical Calculations Website: Biochemicalc™

http://www.biochemicalc.com

Students in the Department of Biology now have access to Biochemicalc™. This website, developed by Professor Sean Doyle (Biology) and Mr Dermot Kelly (Computer Science), allows students to:

1. Learn the fundamental concepts of biochemical calculations such as:

> What are moles, nanomoles and micrograms? Why do I need to use moles in my calculations? How do I make up laboratory solutions such as buffers? What is molarity?

2. Use online calculators to help solve biochemical problems.

> The online calculators allow students to calculate the weights (in mg or g) of reagents required for making up laboratory solutions of defined molarity, calculate the volume of stock solutions required for preparation of a more dilute reagent, carry out %(w/v) dilutions, work out how to do serial dilutions etc…

3. Practice online questions to test their understanding of biochemical calculations.

> Biochemicalc™ offers a suite of pre-formatted questions to help students judge if they understand key concepts required for becoming proficient at undertaking laboratory calculations. These questions are of varying difficulty and style and are designed for use in association with the online calculators on the Biochemicalc™ website.

Although primarily designed for students in the 3rd and 4th years of our degree programmes, it will also be of assistance to students at earlier and later stages of study. Indeed, it may be of use to students taking Chemistry, or any subject requiring knowledge of laboratory calculations. Postgraduates may also find aspects of Biochemicalc™ beneficial to their own research projects and also find use of its functionalities a useful "double-check" for their own laboratory calculations.

We encourage you to use Biochemicalc™ and please tell others if you're happy with it. If not, please email: biochemicalc@gmail.com

Biochemicalc™ was funded by the Maynooth University CTL Fellowship Programme 2011