



**Maynooth University  
Human Resources  
Office**

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# **Candidate Information Booklet**

Author: Human Resources

## **Maynooth University: A Brief Description Overview**

Formally established as an autonomous university in 1997, but tracing its origins to the foundation of the Royal College of St. Patrick in 1795, Maynooth University (National University of Ireland Maynooth) is in one sense Ireland's newest university, yet it draws on a heritage of over 200 years of commitment to education and scholarship. The last two decades have seen the University grow rapidly in scale strength and stature. Maynooth University is today a university of international standing, renowned for the quality and value of its research and scholarship, for its dedication to excellent teaching, for providing an outstanding learning experience for its 10,000 students, and as a uniquely collegial environment in which to pursue scholarly work.

Maynooth University is located 25 km from the centre of Dublin city, on a campus which reflects the University's 18th century roots and 21st century dynamism. It is Ireland's fastest-growing university, embedded in and engaged with Ireland's fastest-growing and economically most important region.

The University has distinctive institutional capacities, with historic strengths in humanities, social sciences and science and engineering, newly-established departments of business and law, and specific research strengths in spatial analysis and geocomputation, applied mathematics and applied ICT, immunology and chemical biology, historical and cultural traditions, and business innovation.

Maynooth University has a particularly strong reputation for excellent and innovative teaching, and its commitment to liberal education. The University provides an exceptional student experience for all its students, and is a national leader in widening participation, with the highest proportion of non-traditional and first-generation students of any Irish university.

In an important recent development, Maynooth University, Dublin City University and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland have established the 3U Partnership, a new strategic partnership that brings together the distinctive and complementary strengths of the three partner institutions.

Maynooth University is embarking upon the next phase of its development, under the leadership of a new President, with a vision to consolidate the international reputation of Maynooth University as a university known for outstanding teaching, excellent research, a global outlook, effective engagement with enterprise and the community, and a distinctive approach to the challenges facing modern higher education. A University Strategic Plan to 2017 has been agreed by the Governing Authority.

## **Historical Origins**

In 1795, and in accordance with an Act of Grattan's Parliament, a College was established in Maynooth on property obtained from the then Duke of Leinster. The original College functioned as a Catholic seminary and in 1896 it was accorded the status of a Pontifical University. Following the establishment of the National University of Ireland, the institution became a Recognised College of the N.U.I. in 1910. In 1966 the College ceased to be purely a seminary and thereafter the inclusion of lay students led to a significant expansion in numbers, facilities and academic departments.

The Universities Act, 1997 established the University as one of four constituent universities of the National University of Ireland. It was thereby legally separated from the Seminary and Pontifical University which continues to function as a separate entity known as St Patrick's College. Maynooth University is governed by a Governing Authority of twenty-nine members and is similar in composition to that of the other six Irish universities. It has developed an attractive new campus of some seventy-five acres (North Campus) while still retaining shared usage of the original eighteenth century campus (South Campus).

The University has a long and distinguished tradition of scholarship and many of its departments in the Sciences and Arts trace their origins to foundation chairs of 1795.

## **Current Context**

Maynooth University is a vibrant, rapidly expanding third-level institution with approximately 10,000 students. The University offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the faculties of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy; Science and Engineering; and Social Sciences.

Maynooth University is one of four constituent universities of the federal National University of Ireland. The University traces its origins directly to the foundation in 1795 of St Patrick's College, Maynooth. It was given separate legal status under the 1997 Universities Act.

Today Maynooth University is a dynamic and innovative university with students from every county in Ireland as well as an increasing number of international students. Situated 25km west of Dublin, it is located in Ireland's only university town, Maynooth, which combines the historical legacy of its medieval origins with a present day location on the fringes of Dublin, adjacent to the Irish and European headquarters of many multinational high technology companies. It offers a student-friendly environment providing world-class teaching and research facilities and courses, while still retaining a uniquely friendly and personal atmosphere. These qualities are central to the unique "Maynooth Experience" that has become a renowned attribute of the University.

Research activity is central to the mission of Maynooth University. The University's Research Charter provides the institutional framework for developing research activities while the Office of Research and Graduate Studies operates a range of supports for researchers. Across many specialist fields, the University has won an international reputation for the standing of its research expertise in areas as diverse as immunology, and space technology. The establishment of Maynooth University's Office of Commercialisation in 2006 has led to the creation of a substantial flow of spin-out companies, licence and patent applications from the University's research base.

The University has three faculties – Arts, Celtic Studies & Philosophy; Social Sciences and Science & Engineering, which offer programmes from undergraduate to doctorate levels in a range of disciplines including the traditional humanities, music, education, media studies, psychology, basic sciences, social sciences, computer and electronic engineering. The educational reach of the institution stretches far beyond its physical boundaries, and Maynooth University has consistently been to the forefront in the University sector in promoting greater access to education. The University has established an outreach campus at Kilkenny, and in addition it offers a wide range of courses, diplomas, certificates and degrees, both undergraduate and postgraduate, at locations around the country.

The University is committed to providing an environment within which the student can learn, develop and mature. The focus is on ensuring that all students have an experience that will benefit them not just academically but personally as well, and that the environment is truly student-friendly. The ongoing policy of investment in developing new programmes and courses, and in providing new learning and research facilities, is one part of the equation. Equally important is the ongoing investment in expanding and supporting student social and recreational facilities, and in particular in providing the necessary support for all students throughout their academic career, especially for young students for whom the first year at university can be a daunting challenge.

The University consists of two campuses, one of which (The North Campus) is used solely by the University, while the South Campus is shared with St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. A map of the facilities is available at [www.maynoothuniversity.ie](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie).

## **The Academic Environment**

An overview of the Academic environment may be derived from the University's Strategic Plan 2012-2017.

The University has three faculties: The Faculty of Social Sciences, The Faculty of Science & Engineering and the Faculty of Arts, Celtic Studies, & Philosophy. The largest faculty (by FTE) is Social Science (45%), followed by Arts, Celtic Studies, & Philosophy (30%), and Science & Engineering (25%). Approximately 23% of the student body is enrolled in postgraduate studies at diploma, masters and doctoral levels. The total student body is c.8,800 with a further 1,200 extra- mural certificate students studying in a number of centres across the country. The University also provides, on a modular basis, a range of degree and diploma courses in its outreach campus at Kilkenny.

A distinctive feature of Maynooth University is its tradition of welcoming Mature Students. The institution is the national leader in this regard, and currently 17% of full-time undergraduate degree entrants are classified as Mature Students (aged 23 years and over). The University also operates a successful Access Programme (for students from lower Socio-Economic backgrounds) and has structured linkages with a number of designated schools both in Dublin and in rural areas. The University recruits about 5% of its full-time undergraduate degree entrants through the Access Programme and in addition about 5% of entrants have a disability and are supported by the Disability Office.

The University has about 1,000 non-Irish students, including 170 Socrates/Erasmus students. The University plans to significantly increase the number of International students over the course of the current strategic plan.

The University has entered into an agreement with the Froebel College of Education whereby the staff and all 300 students of that institution transferred in 2013 to a new Froebel Department of Early Childhood Education, at Maynooth University and have become an integral part of the University.

The University has also entered into a partnership with Dublin City University and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland to form the 3U partnership ([www.3upartnership.ie](http://www.3upartnership.ie)) to promote research and academic collaboration between the three institutions.

## **Research**

Maynooth University conducts top-level international research in the natural sciences and engineering, social sciences and the humanities, with annual research expenditure from external sources of €21.9M in 2011. The outputs of this research investment are (i) high-impact books and top-tier international journal publications (ii) significant human capital development with over 220 PhD graduates over the last three years; (iii) significant research links with industry and a rapidly developing enterprise culture that has resulted in seven spin out companies over the last three years across a range of areas.

Maynooth University has built its research capacity in a strategic manner, focused on agreed research priorities, specifically spatial analysis and geocomputation; applied mathematics and ICT; immunology and chemical biology; historical and cultural traditions; and business innovation.

The University hosts a range of major national research institutes and centres including:

- National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis
- National Centre for Geo-computation
- Hamilton Institute
- Institute of Immunology
- Callan Institute
- Innovation Value Institute
- An Foras Feasa

In addition, the University is involved in a wide range of collaborative research projects with other universities in Ireland and the EU. We are also recognised nationally and internationally for research in a broad range of fundamental disciplines including History, Geography, Economics, Sociology, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

The Office of Commercialisation, which is part of the Research Office, is among the most active and successful in the Irish university sector, with 3 new spin-out companies, 7 new licenses, 5 new patent, 14 new invention disclosures and 41 new industry links in 2011.

## **University Strategy**

The Maynooth University (National University of Ireland Maynooth) is at a pivotal point in its development; fifteen years since its establishment as an autonomous university, the University has finalised its fourth strategic plan, the *Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2012-17*. The *Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2012-17* highlights the distinctive mission and purpose of Maynooth University, describes a clear vision for the future of the University, and sets strategic goals for the next five years. The fundamental principle informing the strategic plan is that Maynooth University has a very particular profile and distinctive strengths, that its future lies in building on and focusing on those strengths, and through strong partnerships and collaborations, making its unique contribution to the national system of higher education. The strategic plan was developed cognisant of and is aligned with the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*, emphasising institutional differentiation and systemic collaboration, and seeking to enhance the performance both of Maynooth University as an institution and the national higher education system as a whole.

A recurrent theme throughout this submission is that Maynooth University's strategy to position itself as a key contributor to the national system of higher education has two elements. First, the institution is highly differentiated, arguably the most differentiated of all the universities; it intends to remain focused on the further development of its existing strengths, and as such it is uniquely placed to make a distinctive contribution to the system. The second and critical element of the strategy is to connect these institutional strengths into the wider system through a set of strong collaborative relationships. The centrepiece of Maynooth University's collaborative network is a strategic partnership with Dublin City University (DCU) and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) known as the *3U Partnership*.

The distinctive features of Maynooth University are fundamental to all its strategic considerations. Maynooth University, formally established in 1997, is in one sense the newest university in Ireland, yet it traces its origins back to the foundation of the Royal College of St Patrick in 1795. Maynooth University has the features of a new university: it is dynamic, rapidly-growing, research-led and engaged, including an outstanding record for the commercialisation of university research. Yet the ethos and disciplinary mix are characteristic of an older institution: the institutional strengths are in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, teaching and research are equally valued and wholly interdependent, there is a strong commitment to liberal education and to basic research and scholarship, and a deeply collegial institutional ethos. Finally, Maynooth University has some special features: it is a national leader in widening participation, it has a very strong reputation for its commitment to teaching and the quality of that teaching, and it is located in the fastest growing and economically most important region of the country.

The *Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2012-17* states the institutional mission in the following terms:

*"Maynooth University is a university dedicated to people, ideas and culture, where we work together as a scholarly community to inquire and discover, to teach and learn, to create, conserve, disseminate and apply knowledge, and to engage with the problems and challenges that face modern society; through all these things in combination, we are central to innovation, economic growth, social development and cultural vibrancy, and are essential to a free, open, equal, democratic and sustainable society."*

The mission statement naturally shares the commitment to research, teaching and engagement that is common to all universities. However, it also captures the particular mission and approach of Maynooth University, where the humanities, social sciences and sciences are seen as ends in themselves *and* valuable in their manifold applications, where people and ideas are central to the purpose of the institution, and where engagement with the society we serve brings a broad range of benefits.

The *Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2012-17* articulates a vision for the future of Maynooth University over the next 5-10 years.

*“Maynooth University will consolidate its international reputation as a university known for outstanding teaching, excellent research, its global outlook, effective engagement with the society it serves, and its distinctive approach to the challenges facing modern higher education.*

Maynooth University will further enhance its international reputation for:

- the exceptional and distinctive education it offers to students;
- the quality and impact of its research and scholarship;
- the connection between its research and teaching;
- the diversity of its student body and the quality of its student experience;
- the global scope of its teaching and research;
- effective engagement with enterprise, the community, civil society and the state;
- its commitment to excellence, innovation and collegiality;
- its unique and collaborative contribution to the national system of higher education and to the economic, social and cultural life of the region, the nation and the world.”

The strategic plan goes on to state seven strategic goals for the period 2012-2017:

1. to offer students an outstanding university education, the best available in Ireland, an education which challenges and supports all students to achieve their full potential, and prepares students for life, work and citizenship, and for complexity, diversity and change;
2. to be recognised by 2017 as playing a leading international role and being the clear national leader in a number of thematic areas of research that address the major societal challenges of the 21st century;
3. to achieve a step change in its international activities, doubling the number of international students on campus and doubling the number of domestic students spending time abroad, in order to create a truly intercultural and multilingual institution;
4. to strengthen its engagement with all stakeholders through sustained partnerships with enterprises, communities, civil society and public bodies, to build support for the mission of the University, to serve the needs of society, and to open new opportunities for research and learning;
5. to maximise its unique and distinctive contribution to the national system of higher education through a set of purposeful and sustained strategic partnerships at regional and national level, and to extend its international reach through a network of global partnerships;
6. to be an excellent place to work, known for a collegial ethos which empowers all staff to contribute fully to the development of the University;
7. to enable the achievement of ambitious strategic objectives in challenging circumstances through careful planning, excellent services and infrastructure, and sound governance and management.

The vision statement and strategic goals signal specific intent. There are some distinctive aspects of the institution to be consolidated and strengthened. Research and teaching will remain equally valued and equally important. Research is to be further enhanced by focusing on institutional strengths. Teaching is to develop within the tradition of liberal education to provide students with the fundamental intellectual skills required for a changing and challenging future. The institution remains committed to diversity and widening participation. There are also areas where renewed strategic emphasis will lead to significant developments, particularly in the internationalisation of the University and engagement with enterprise, the community, civil society and government.

## The 3U Partnership

The centrepiece of the Maynooth University approach to national collaboration is the strategic partnership with Dublin City University (DCU) and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), the *3U Partnership*. This partnership brings together the complementary strengths of three highly differentiated institutions to create a new force in higher education. There is enormous potential for collaboration between Maynooth University, with strengths in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, DCU with its particular capacities in technology, engineering and basic and applied sciences, and Ireland's largest medical school, the RCSI. The *3U Partnership* captures this potential and as such is envisaged as a broad, deep and comprehensive collaborative engagement across all domains of academic activity, including:

- joint research programmes;
- joint taught programmes;
- collaboration in the delivery of specialised teaching;
- joint internationalisation activities;
- collaboration in knowledge transfer; and,
- shared services.

Furthermore, working together as a deep and sustainable partnership allows each institution to focus on and develop its distinctive strengths, enhancing institutional differentiation, while delivering greater student choice and opportunity, and greater regional, national and global impacts. The partner institutions are committed not only to *collaboration* but to *strategic co-development*, taking a co-ordinated approach to the future development of each institution, and in particular its discipline mix, sub-disciplinary specialisation, educational provision and research capacity. The establishment of strong collaborative teaching links across the *3U Partnership* will eliminate unnecessary duplication and unlock important synergies; it will allow disciplines in each institution to become more specialised and globally competitive in research, yet collaboratively deliver high quality and comprehensive teaching.

The *3U Partnership* was launched on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2012 by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. with the following key initiatives:

- joint research programmes in Biomedical Research (with strands in diabetes, cancer, tissue engineering and proteomics research), in Global Health, and in Societal Challenges (the impact of technologies on people and societies);
- joint Master's programmes in Healthcare Technology, Humanitarian Logistics and Emergency Management, Global Health, and History and Archives;
- co-teaching initiatives in Electronic Engineering and in Physics;
- a joint research and practice initiative to enhance teaching in science and mathematics (3U N-STEP, National Initiative in STEM Education and Practice);
- a joint international foundation and induction programme (3U Global Gateway).

These initiatives are the first wave of a planned programme of collaborative work which will:

- enrich the academic opportunities available to our students by developing a range of joint degree programmes as well as broadening their choice of options;
- provide a framework for collaborative teaching and joint appointments, especially in smaller and more specialised disciplines;
- be more effective in researching solutions to major issues confronting society today in areas such as healthcare, sustainability, globalisation and technology;
- allow enterprise to engage more effectively in knowledge transfer and co-production seamlessly across the three partner institutions;
- attract more international students to study in Ireland and ensure they have an excellent student experience;
- enhance the quality of the learning experience throughout our education system both through our research in education and by sharing advances into best practices in teaching and learning.

## **University Services and Facilities**

### *Accommodation*

Approximately 40% of the University's student population live in either campus accommodation or privately provided accommodation (houses, digs) in Maynooth and surrounding towns. The University has on-campus accommodation for 1,200 students, the majority with en-suite facilities and study space.

### *Campus Amenities*

The campus includes a range of facilities designed to meet the needs of both the residential students and commuting students and staff. It includes a bank, post office (North & South campus), two grocery shops, a bookshop and a student bar. In addition, there are restaurants on the North and South campuses and also three smaller food outlets, in addition to a student common room and a staff common room. There are numerous commercial outlets in Maynooth, few minutes walk from the campus (Supermarkets/Convenience Shops/Restaurants/Café's/Bars/Retail Units).

The University has provided crèche facilities on campus since 1977. The current well-equipped crèche is open to children of students and staff from 9.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m. Within this time there is provision for care of school going children under eight years of age.

The Universities Sports facilities include two sports halls and rooms with cardiovascular training and weights equipment. There are three grass pitches on the North campus for GAA, Rugby and Soccer in addition to three pitches on the south campus. There is an all-weather training pitch and tennis courts on the North Campus, and the South Campus has an eighteen-meter swimming pool.

The Computer Centre provides the academic and administrative staff with technological and advisory support. For students it operates a number of Public Access Computing rooms and also provides introductory courses in computer usage.

The John Paul II Library holds more than 450,000 books and journals, has almost 400,000 ebooks available and, through IReL, has access to 43,000 academic journals. The Russell Library holds rare books and manuscripts dating back several centuries.

## **Governance of the University**

The objects and functions of the University are defined in the *Universities Act, 1997*. Governance is in accordance with that Act, and the Statutes and Policies of the University.

Two Statutory Bodies exist within the University – the Governing Authority and the Academic Council.

### *The Governing Authority*

The Governing Authority is the supreme governance body and oversees the overall strategy of the University and the financial and policy structure necessary to achieve the objectives of the University.

The Governing Authority has a set of formal reserved powers including:

- to control and administer the lands and other property of the University;
- to appoint the Chief Officer and such other employees as it thinks necessary for the purpose of the University;
- subject to the Act, University Statutes and Regulations to determine the membership of the Authority;
- to perform such other functions as required by the Act, the University Statutes and Regulations.



### *Academic Council*

The Academic Council controls the academic affairs of the University, subject to the financial constraints determined by Governing Authority and to review by the Authority. Currently, there are 67 members on Academic Council including the President and Registrar, *ex officio*, Heads of Academic Departments, elected representatives of the faculties, the Deans of Arts and Science and the Dean of Postgraduate studies, The Director of the Computer Centre, The Director of the Language Centre, Librarian, and representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students.

### **University Management**

The President is supported in his role as Chief Officer of the University by a University Executive Team. This group has recently been re-organised and the new composition is as follows:

- President
- Registrar, Deputy President and Vice-President Academic
- Vice-President for Research
- Vice-President for Innovation
- Vice-President for Strategic Performance and Quality
- Dean of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy
- Dean of Social Sciences
- Dean of Science and Engineering
- Bursar and Secretary
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Development
- Dean of International and Graduate Studies

The President is appointed in accordance with the Universities Act and the Statutes of the University. As Chief Officer, the President is charged with managing and directing the University in its academic, administrative, financial, personnel and other activities and for those purposes has such powers as are necessary or expedient. In performing these functions the President is subject to the policies of Governing Authority and is answerable to Governing Authority for the effective and efficient management of the University.

### **University Staff**

The University employs circa 250 permanent academics across a broad range of disciplines with a number regarded as leading experts in their fields. In addition, over 300 researchers are employed in our Research Institutes and academic departments as the University offers an opportunity for all its employees to develop and expand on their intellectual pursuits. This delivery of teaching and research is enabled by the 250 administrative staff supporting academics, researchers and students in their day to day activities. For all of our staff we strive to ensure that the University is an excellent place to work.

### **Funding and capital projects**

The University is funded by means of a block grant provided by the State, student fees, and other income derived *inter alia* from research overheads and income from private sources. The University is assisted in its capital funding by a voluntary group, The Maynooth University Foundation.

The annual accounts of the University are audited by the institution's own auditors and by the Comptroller and Auditor General. The accounts are published and laid before the Oireachtas (National Parliament) annually.

Capital funding has traditionally been secured from a mixture of national Exchequer funds and from philanthropic sources. During the past decade €100M has been invested in developing a new campus and as a result very many of the teaching and research faculties are of a modern and state of the art nature. In addition, many of the older buildings on campus have been refurbished and modernised.

Projects recently completed or currently underway include:

- A €20m major expansion to the John Paul II Library, opened in May 2013
- A €20m ICT Building, due for completion in July 2015
- A €12m Education Building, due for completion in early 2016
- A €24m Student Residences development with 296 bed spaces due for completion by the end of 2015

The University will produce a new Campus Master Plan by mid 2014 which will map out an ambitious and exciting capital investment programme designed to further strengthen the provision of high quality teaching and research over the next decade and beyond.

**Maynooth University is an equal opportunities employer.**