



Maynooth University Ollscoil Mhá Nuad

The Froebel Department of Primary and Early- Childhood Education

Details of the Scholarship Award

The Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education at Maynooth University is pleased to announce that a PhD Scholarship will be available for a suitably qualified and successful applicant intending to commence their PhD studies in September 2025.

We are seeking a PhD student with a strong background in education and the bioeconomy to join our interdisciplinary team, dedicated to advancing bioeconomy education across Europe. Our team is part of BiOrbic and has contributed to several Horizon-funded projects, including BioBeo and AgroCycle, as well as national initiatives aimed at promoting bioeconomy education. The successful candidate will engage with our work for BiOrbic on Education for Public Engagement and collaborate on the publication of peer-reviewed articles. Our research focuses on developing innovative approaches to bioeconomy education, with an emphasis on overcoming institutional and cultural barriers to integrating circular bioeconomy curricula across various educational levels - from preschool through secondary schools -and within local communities. A central aspect of our work is the exploration of the intersection between language, heritage, culture, and bioeconomy, encapsulated in our BioCultúr project.

Our efforts are driven by the belief that bioeconomy education should empower not only young people but also broader communities to actively participate in bioeconomy policy-making and practice. We focus on key themes such as sustainable living, environmental interconnectedness, forestry, marine ecosystems, and food systems, aiming to foster circular lifestyles. Our work is committed to creating inclusive and transformative educational programmes that confront and challenge critical social issues, such as gender bias, while fostering equity, diversity, and social justice in bioeconomy education. The project seeks to explore and address critical issues at the interface of science, sustainability and society. Through interdisciplinary research and active public engagement strategies, the successful candidate will contribute to the advancement of education practices and outreach in the Irish and broader European bioeconomy sector.

Value of the Funding Award

A fixed maintenance award of €25,000 per annum;

Annual tuition fees support;

Funding for research expenses e.g. publication charges or conference travel, will also be available.

Duration of PhD Scholarship Award

The scholarship is awarded for 4 years of study, subject to satisfactory annual academic progress.

Role of the student

- Work under the supervision of Dr Máire Nic an Bhaird and Dr Laoise Ní Chléirigh
- Integrate Irish language and traditional knowledge in sustainable bioeconomic practices and education spaces, especially in rural and Gaeltacht regions.
- Document and valorise cultural heritage (e.g. folklore, land-use customs, farming traditions) that support biodiversity and resource stewardship.
- Collaborate with local communities to co-develop bioeconomy initiatives that respect cultural identity and promote inclusive growth.
- Bridge science and heritage by exploring how cultural values influence public engagement with bioeconomy-related innovations (e.g. peatland restoration, marine resources).
- Advocate for culturally sensitive policies that align national bioeconomy strategies with Ireland's linguistic and heritage preservation goals.
- Work in partnership with the Education for Public Engagement challenge within BiOrbic

Eligibility Criteria for Applicants

Full time research degree students who have a relevant first class or 2.1 honour in their primary degree, or have a relevant Master's degree, are eligible to apply.

Essential

The ideal candidate will hold a PhD or Master's degree in a relevant field, such as Education, Agricultural Science, Biosystems, Food Engineering, Nua-Ghaeilge, or a related discipline and possess a strong understanding of the bioeconomy. Candidates should demonstrate excellent organisational and communication skills, strong academic writing ability, and a keen interest in sustainable education and engaging with the bioeconomy.

Desirable

A background in educational theory or curriculum development, particularly within STEM or environmental education, will be highly valued. Knowledge of the Irish language would be advantageous. Additionally, a strong interest in language, cultural heritage and sustainable living is highly encouraged, as these areas are central to our research and educational initiatives.

Application and Selection Process

Applicants are asked to submit the following to maire.nicanbhaire@mu.ie

- Personal statement
- Curriculum Vitae
- Research Proposal (max 2000 words)
- Relevant academic transcripts
- Names and contact details of two referees.

Applicants who are non-native speakers of the English language must provide written evidence of competency in the English language that satisfy the programme-specific requirements set out by the Maynooth university International Office. All scholarship Awards are conditional on approval for registration by the university

All eligible candidates will be considered for open positions. Applicants may be shortlisted for interview and, if so, will be contacted directly by the Department. Late applications will not be considered.

Informal queries can be sent to maire.nicanbhaire@mu.ie

Closing Date

Please apply by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, 25 June 2025.