



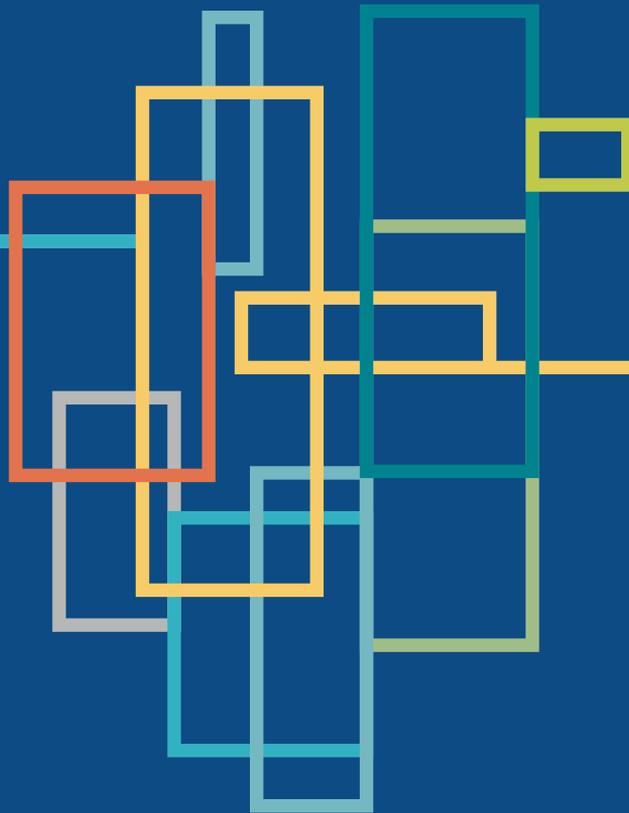
**Maynooth  
University**  
National University  
of Ireland Maynooth

**Oideachas  
Mhá Nuad**

**A Maynooth  
Education**

Maynooth

University





## A Maynooth Education: Reimagining the University Experience

Maynooth University is a proudly modern university which draws on a heritage of over 200 years' commitment to learning and scholarship, tracing its origins to the foundation of the Royal College of St. Patrick in 1795. The University has traditional strengths in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, and has expanded to include computer science, electronic engineering, business, law and teacher education, building an international reputation for research and teaching across these areas.

The last two decades have seen Maynooth University grow rapidly in scale, strength and stature. Today, with more than 10,000 students and extensive research activities, we are Ireland's fastest-growing university, having doubled in size in the 15 years since 1999. The University is a wonderful place to learn. The teaching is excellent, delivered by leading international researchers who are committed and connected to their students. We have strong campus community with a student-centred and collegial ethos. These

characteristics together create a student experience that is uniquely Maynooth.

*A leading university looks to the future.*

We are living through a time of remarkable social and technological change, and we as educators must constantly adapt and evolve what we teach and how we teach if we are to ensure our students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a rapidly-changing world.

We have, therefore, fundamentally re-imagined our undergraduate learning experience. Building on our strengths, we have developed a radically different Maynooth model of undergraduate education which is distinctive and challenging, flexibly designed to meet the individual needs of a diverse student body and which stimulates and supports every student to reach their full potential.



Professor Philip Nolan, President,  
Maynooth University

## Our Vision

Maynooth University has provided generations of students with an excellent university education, that has touched and changed the lives of each one and has enabled and empowered remarkable achievements. The quality of a Maynooth education springs from our deep commitment to teaching, which is driven by, and just as important as, our research.

Yet as we face the challenges of these times and the future, we must continuously enhance the Maynooth experience to even better serve the needs of our students. There is no room for complacency, and so our ambitious goal is to offer students an “outstanding university education...which challenges and supports all students to achieve their full potential, and prepares them for life, work and citizenship, and for complexity, diversity and change.”

It is this question of complexity and change that inspires our new curriculum. Young people graduating today can expect to work until 2060 and beyond. It is hard to imagine what the world will be like towards the middle of the present

## A Maynooth Education: Reimagining the University Experience

century, and our challenge is to prepare graduates for an uncertain future, replete with unknown opportunities and challenges. The best preparation is to concentrate throughout our undergraduate programmes on developing the ability to think clearly and critically, to adopt a broad perspective, to adapt to new situations, to tackle unfamiliar questions, and to frame innovative solutions.

We have critically examined every aspect of our student experience. We have listened to the views of students, parents, employers, guidance counsellors and teachers. We have looked around the world to gather the latest thinking and innovation in university education. The result is a university-wide transformation of our undergraduate curriculum which is intentionally bold, and comprehensive by design. We are building on our strengths, but adapting what we teach and how we teach to ensure our students graduate with the skills and qualities they need to flourish in a world where change is a given and adaptability is essential.

The central elements of our new model of undergraduate education are deep engagement with a student's chosen disciplines; the ability to combine different subjects to create a more tailored educational experience and distinctive degree; time to broaden their perspective through electives, modern languages and multidisciplinary "Maynooth Modules"; and perhaps most fundamentally, the intellectual skills of analysis, reflection, critical thinking and clear communication that prepare students for today's world of work.

I am deeply proud of what Maynooth has done for generations of graduates. I am even more proud of our decision to adapt and change so that we may serve our future students even better. I look forward to you joining us on this exciting journey.



Professor Philip Nolan, President,  
Maynooth University

## Ár bhFís-ne



Tá sár-oideachas ollscoile curtha ar fáil ag Ollscoil Mhá Nuad do na glúnta mac léinn, oideachas a chuaigh i bhfeidhm agus a chlaochlaigh saol gach duine acu agus a cheadaigh agus a d'fhág ar a gcumas éachtaí a dhéanamh. Is toradh é cáilíocht oideachas Mhá Nuad ar ár dtiomantacht dhoimhin don teagasc, atá chomh tábhachtach le, agus atá á spreagadh ag, ár dtaighde.

Mar sin féin, agus aghaidh á tabhairt againn ar an 21ú Céad, ní mór dúinn bheith ag cur de shíor le heispéireas Mhá Nuad, chun freastal níos fearr ar riachtanais ár mac léinn. Níl aon áit don réchúis, agus is í ár n-aidhm uailmhianach chuige sin, “oideachas ollscoile den scoth ... a thugann dúshlán agus tacaíocht do na mic léinn ar fad iomlán a gcumas a bhaint amach, agus a ullmhaíonn don saol, don obair agus don tsaorántacht iad, don chastacht, don éagsúlacht agus don athrú” a thairiscint do mhic léinn.

## Oideachas Mhá Nuad: Cothú na hEisceachtúlachta

Is í ceist seo na castachta agus an athraithe a spreagann ár gcuraclam nua. Is féidir le daoine óga atá ag cáiliú inniu bheith ag súil le hoibriú go dtí 2060 agus ina dhiaidh sin. Is deacair a shamhailt conas mar a bheidh an domhan i dtreo dheireadh an chéid seo, agus is é ár ndúshlán-sa céimithe a ullmhú do thodhchaí éiginnte, lán de dhúshlán agus de dheiseanna folaithe. Is é an t-ullmhúchán is fearr ná díriú i gcaitheamh ár gcláracha fochéime ar chumais na mac léinn – a gcumas machnamh a dhéanamh go soiléir agus go criticiúil, a gcumas peirspeictíocht leathan a thógáil, a gcumas dul i ngleic le cúinsí nua agus le ceisteanna neamhghnácha, agus a gcumas réitigh nuálacha a mhúnlú.

Tá scrúdú criticiúil déanta againn ar gach gné de thaithí ár gcuid mac léinn. Táimid tar éis éisteacht le tuairimí mac léinn, tuismitheoirí, fostóirí, comhairleoirí treorach agus múinteoirí. D'fhéachamar ar fud an domhain chun foghlaim ó na smaointe is nua-aim

sirí agus is nuálaí san oideachas ollscoile. Claohlú ar ár gcuraclam fochéime ar fud na hollscoile atá mar thoradh air seo, claohlú atá misniúil d'aon ghnó agus cuimsitheach ina leagan amach. Táimid ag tógáil ar ár mbuanna, ach ag leasú ár n-ábhar agus ár modhanna teagaisc chun a chinntiú go gcríochnóidh ár gcuid mac léinn leis na scileanna agus na cáilíochtaí a bheidh uathu chun dul chun cinn a dhéanamh i ndomhan a bhfuil an t-athrú ina chuid lárnach de agus gur den riachtanas é bheith solúbtha de shíor.



Professor Philip Nolan, President  
An tOllamh Pilib Ó Nualláin, Uachtarán

## A Maynooth Education: What's Changing?

We have comprehensively redesigned our undergraduate education, building on its existing strengths while introducing exciting new features and much greater flexibility. The aim: To better prepare students for the many opportunities and challenges they will encounter throughout their lives and in their places of work.

We are **changing the way we teach and assess** across all subject areas, so that in addition to learning core knowledge and skills, we challenge students to analyse, reflect, think critically and communicate clearly.

We are introducing **a radically different approach to first year**, with greater choice and additional small-group learning to support students through the transition to university learning, and to reinforce the development of the core skills they will need to succeed in university and beyond.

We are **breaking down the barriers between disciplines**, allowing students the flexibility to combine different subjects in innovative ways.

We are greatly expanding the opportunities to **combine subjects across the arts and sciences**, knowing that the challenges of the future require such broad perspectives.

We are developing **exciting new elective courses** that encourage students to broaden their perspective, develop additional skills, or explore multidisciplinary approaches to important questions and problems.

We are prioritising **engagement with modern languages**, providing all students with the opportunity to study a language as part of their degree.

We are **emphasising thinking and working skills** that employers value, priming graduates to contribute effectively to the modern workplace.

We are providing a much greater range of **learning experiences outside the classroom**, including work placement, volunteering, student leadership and study abroad, helping students develop skills for their careers and build the confidence and leadership to get things done.

We are **empowering students** to become active partners in designing their learning programme, so that they engage with their learning in a meaningful and ultimately more satisfying way.

And we are greatly **reducing the number of different entry routes** to our undergraduate programmes, making it easier to apply to the University and allowing students to specialise in a way that suits their talents and goals.



### Reforming Third Level

We live in a rapidly evolving world and our education system must equip graduates with the critical thinking strengths and interdisciplinary perspective to engage in a meaningful manner with the world around them, professionally and socially. I commend Maynooth University for taking a leadership approach in addressing this challenge through developments to its curriculum, assessment and teaching, and entry system.

Offering flexible degree structures which facilitate interdisciplinary learning and co-curricular activities is a progressive step and will provide students with a rounded intellectual experience which will serve them well. Allowing students to specialise at a later stage provides them with space to choose their path after experiencing a range of subjects and settling into campus life.

I want to see reform across third level institutions, with more commitment to fostering environments where students have increased choice and flexibility, empowering graduates with the skills to succeed in education, work and life.

**Minister for Education and Skills,  
Jan O'Sullivan TD**



### **An important development**

The stress on Leaving Certificate students is compounded by intense pressure to choose the 'right' CAO course before they even step onto a university campus. With its new curriculum, Maynooth University is taking a bold and comprehensive approach, offering students time and flexibility to choose the academic and career path best suited to their interests, talents and goals. Progressive specialisation allows students to keep their options open and will ultimately ensure that more remain in university, are happy with their choice and excel in their chosen field.

The oversupply of specialist entry courses has artificially inflated CAO points and I admire Maynooth University for taking a brave step to address the issue head-on. This is an important development which should be replicated elsewhere.

**Betty McLaughlin, President,  
Institute of Guidance Counsellors**

## A Maynooth Education: Building on our strengths

We can achieve this transformative change in undergraduate education only because its guiding principles are so embedded in our ethos and practice as an institution, and only because of the strength of our existing curriculum, our forefront research and subject expertise, and the quality of our current student experience at Maynooth. While strengthening our curriculum to reflect contemporary needs, the reimagined Maynooth Education allows our students to do more of what Maynooth does best: complement deep knowledge of their subjects with a broad perspective, and learn how to think and work in a way that makes a real difference to the world around them.

We will continue to give students great depth of knowledge in their chosen disciplines informed by the latest research and taught by internationally respected leaders in the field.

We will champion a balanced commitment to teaching and research as equally important aspects of the mission of the university.

We will continue to enhance our student experience, taking pride in the fact that Maynooth is rightly renowned for its inclusive and collegial campus community and its careful attention to the success of each individual student.

We will build upon our historic commitment to outstanding scholarship, teaching and learning to create an educational experience suited to the next generation of exceptional Maynooth graduates.

## Key Components of A Maynooth Education

A **Maynooth Education** helps students become active participants in designing their education and supports them to achieve the high standards expected of a Maynooth graduate. The added flexibility is facilitated in part by restructuring and reducing our CAO entry routes from 50 to approximately 20, allowing students to specialise either immediately or over time so they make the best choice for their future.

**Innovative teaching and assessment that challenges students to analyse, reflect, think critically, communicate clearly and work in teams.**

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**A unique first year programme that combines lectures with small group learning to support students' transition to university.**

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**Fewer and simpler entry CAO entry routes, making choices easier and allowing students to specialise either immediately or over time.**

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**Greater flexibility and choice, with the ability to take major and minor options within most degrees**

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**New and interesting subject combinations, including more opportunities to combine subjects across the arts and sciences.**

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**Ability to pursue a modern language alongside any degree.**

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**Elective options outside a student's core discipline.**

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**Extensive opportunities to learn outside the classroom through accredited co-curricular activities such as work placement, volunteering, or study abroad.**

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**Electronic portfolios to capture students' cumulative achievements over the course of their degree.**

## Oideachas Mhá Nuad – A Codanna Lárnacha

Cabhraíonn **Oideachas Mhá Nuad** le mic léinn a bheith rann-pháirteach go gníomhach i ndearadh a gcuid oideachais agus cabhraíonn sé leo na caighdeáin arda a mbítear ag súil leo ó chéimí de chuid Mhá Nuad a bhaint amach. Is trí athstruchtúru agus laghdú, go pointe áirithe, ar ár mbealaí iontrála CAO ó 50 go thart ar 20, a cheadaítear an tsolúbthacht bhreise seo, a fhágann ar chumas na mac léinn dul le speisialtacht láithreach nó thar thréimhse ama, chun go ndéanfaidh siad an rogha is fearr don saol rompu amach.

**Teagasc agus measúnú nuálach a thugann dúshlán mac léinn anailís, scáthántacht, machnamh criticiúil, cumarsáid shoiléir agus comhoibriú a dhéanamh.**

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**Clár uathúil chéad bhliana comhdhéanta de léachtaí agus de ghrúpaí beaga foghlama chun tacú le mic léinn dul i dtaithe ar an ollscoil.**

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**Níos lú bealaí iontrála CAO, agus iad sin níos simplí, a dhéanann an rogha níos éasca agus a cheadaíonn do mhic léinn dul le speisialtacht láithreach nó thar thréimhse ama.**

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**Breis solúbthachta agus rogha idir príomh - agus mionábhair i bhformhór na gcúrsaí céime.**

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**Comhcheangail shuimiúla nua idir na hábhair, agus deiseanna breise ábhair ealaíon agus eolaíochta a chomhcheangal le chéile.**

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**Cead nua-theanga a dhéanamh le céim ar bith.**

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**Roghanna lasmuigh de dhisciplín lárnach an mhic léinn.**

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**Iliomad deiseanna foghlama lasmuigh den seomra ranga, trí ghníomhaíochtaí comh-churaclaim mar thaithí oibre, obair dheonach, nó staidéar thar lear.**

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**Punanna leictreonacha chun gnóthachtálacha carnacha na mac léinn i gcaitheamh chúrsa a gcéime a thaispeáint.**

## The benefits

**A Maynooth Education** leads to an undeniably special graduate, one with a thorough education in the knowledge, skills, insights and perspectives of the subjects they have studied, but also one who has developed the important intellectual skills of analysis, synthesis, critique and communication. Our new approach brings important benefits.

**By providing a thorough education in the core subjects, delivered by leading international researchers, our graduates are at the cutting edge of current knowledge.**

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**By emphasising critical intellectual skills, our graduates are flexible and adaptable, ready to face the varied and complex challenges they will face over a long career.**

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**By breaking down the barriers between disciplines, and allowing students to combine different subjects in new and interesting ways, our graduates will have a unique range of knowledge and skills.**

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**By providing a wide range of curricular and co-curricular opportunities to learn working skills, our graduates are thinkers and doers, ready to make a real contribution in the workplace and in their communities.**

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**By having fewer and simpler entry routes, with progressive specialisation, students will make better choices and have better outcomes, and we can reduce the pressure of the ‘CAO points race.’**

With a Maynooth University education, graduates leave with more than a degree. They leave with a degree that means more.

Maynooth University – *More than a Degree*

## A Maynooth Education: Connected Knowledge

Underpinning many of the changes in our undergraduate educational experience is the powerful idea of ***making connections***. No important knowledge stands in isolation and, in the future, responses to the challenges we will face will increasingly rely on making new connections between different aspects of knowledge. A Maynooth Education emphasises the concept of ***connected knowledge***.

We are building connections between our academic disciplines through new subject combinations, and new flexible pathways to a degree that allow students to make a greater range of personal choices on what and how they study.

We are making connections through interdisciplinary electives, known as “Maynooth Modules,” which consider societal challenges from the viewpoints of different disciplines, giving students an understanding of how different perspectives contribute to innovation and change.

We are connecting our students to university learning by reshaping first year, to offer the best possible transition to higher learning and instil the critical skills that will be essential for success at university and beyond.

We are strengthening connections between our students and the world of work, through new opportunities for work placements and service learning within our degrees.

We are connecting our students to the learning experiences that take place outside the classroom through greater emphasis on experiential learning and by recognising the importance of student leadership and volunteering.

We are ensuring our learning connects to societal benefit, by focusing on research and teaching on the major challenges that face us today and into the future.



### Why take an elective in a modern language?

In today's world, any degree of familiarity with a foreign language is highly beneficial. Mastered to a high standard of fluency and accuracy, it improves career prospects immeasurably and opens new possibilities of communication and interaction.

Engagement with a foreign language amounts to an engagement with a foreign culture, with the customs, concepts, traditions and lifestyles contained in and conveyed by this language. Language learning removes barriers, and instills openness, curiosity and confidence.

**Professor Florian Krobb, Head of School, Maynooth University School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures**

## First year at Maynooth

The first year in university is a major adjustment for any student. Students take up new subjects, or approach familiar subjects in a completely new way. Students have to adapt to higher academic expectation, to take responsibility for their own learning, to develop their analytical and critical skills to a new level, and to gain confidence in communicating complex ideas clearly.

Our first year programme is designed to help students in this transition. The structure of our programmes allows students to decide whether to specialise from the start, or to take up to four subjects in the first year and focus later. It also includes options to take Critical Skills courses for those who want to develop and hone their skills of critical thinking and analysis. This is intended to help students to think and communicate in the way we expect of graduates, and is a valuable preparation for study in any subject.

## Electives

As different disciplines see the world in very different ways, we think that it is valuable for university students to explore some of the thinking in subjects outside of their specialist area of study. That's why we allow students the option to take an elective stream from a subject outside of their own, usually in their second year. This allows students to explore areas of interest, develop valuable expertise, or simply broaden their exposure to new ways of thinking.

Some of these electives are specifically designed as interdisciplinary studies, drawing on a variety of perspectives to examine a particular issue. These interdisciplinary electives, called "Maynooth Modules," include topics such as:

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### Global Environmental Change

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### Gender and Sexuality in Society and Culture

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### Great Ideas which Changed the World

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### What Makes Us Human

## Languages

Today's globally connected societies and workplaces mean there is tremendous benefit to students in studying a foreign language as part of their university education. Whether it's to attain fluency or a more basic introduction to culture, conversation and custom, Maynooth will offer students the ability to pursue a language to various degrees of competency.

The spectrum of choice ranges from studying a language as a full degree subject, to a language skills option which can be taken as part of any degree programme.

The options:

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**Take a language as a degree subject**

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**Take a language as a minor, and major in another subject**

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**Take a language in first year, and continue with an elective in the language in second year**

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**Take a language skills course as part of the university language programme, along with any specialism**

## Curriculum flexibility

Some students want to specialise in one subject; others want a double major in their degree. Some know exactly what they want; others are less certain and want to explore. Our curriculum structure is designed to allow students the maximum possible flexibility to customise the programme to their own needs.

The first year structure allows students to choose two, three or four subjects, depending on their preferences.

After first year, students can decide to progress to a double major, taking two of their subjects to degree level, or to specialise in a single major.

This principle of progressive specialisation is also reflected in our entry routes. Wherever we can, we offer entry to a broad programme where students can make choices after entry. In our BA and BSc degrees, students can switch subjects at any time in the first month of first year. There are further options to switch at the end of the first semester, and the final choice of degree subjects is not made until the end of first year.

Maynooth will offer the following types of honours degree:

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**Double major – taking two subjects equally to degree level**

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**Major with minor – specialising in one subject, while continuing a second subject**

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**Single major – specialising in only one subject to degree level**

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**Also available to students: Elective streams – an optional study, typically of 10 credits, in conjunction with any of the degree configurations above**

## The Maynooth Effect

A Maynooth Education is built upon a certain ethos, a certain Maynooth way of preparing students for the unknown paths which lay before them.

The next generation of **A Maynooth Education** builds out from this strong educational core. Like the experiences described by some of our alumni below, **A Maynooth Education** seeks to offer our current and future students an even richer, deeper set of skills and pathways that will prepare them to fill the unwritten pages of their life story.

## Our Graduates

**Geraldine Byrne Nason, (BA 1980, MA 1981), Ireland Ambassador to France**

Geraldine Byrne Nason is a career diplomat who served as Ambassador in Ireland's Permanent Representation to the EU, has been an international civil servant and Director for Governance at OECD Paris in the 1990s, and headed up Ireland's National Forum on Europe.

Speaking on her time in University she has said: "It was here in Maynooth that I was given the key to unparalleled opportunities, in the simple act of opening my mind. When I pause to recapture my Maynooth bounty, it is not the degree, the memories of 'Beowulf' or tracts of Old Irish that come rushing through. One of my abiding memories is a quiet word with my Professor of English, who gave me this advice: 'When you leave here, don't forget why you came.' I never have."

**Dermot O’Leary (BA 2002, MA 2003),  
Goodbody Stockbrokers**

Dermot O’Leary is Chief Economist at Goodbody Stockbrokers. He is celebrated in his field as a renowned economist and contributor to public debate both domestically and internationally.

He attributes his success to a solid foundation: “In Maynooth University’s Department of Economics, Finance and Accounting, I was exposed to leading academics with global reputations and perspectives. Maynooth places a huge emphasis on collaborating with your peers, which, at the time, I found highly rewarding both in terms of results achieved and friendships developed; however, its value again became apparent when I entered the professional world. I found that the culture at Maynooth had prepared me perfectly for how we operate as a firm and this gave me the confidence to excel.”

**Tom Browne (BSc 1999, HDip 2000),  
Analyst with the European Union**

Working as an analyst with the European Union on a military base in Paris, Tom Brown is playing a key role in helping to protect Galileo, a civilian Satellite Navigation System developed by the EU, from security incidents such as cyber-attack, network attack and Radio Frequency (RF) jamming.

Tom explains that “at Maynooth University I gained great technical and non-technical skills. The hands-on projects and lab work in Experimental and Applied Physics were of great value. Data and statistical analysis are core skills I continue to use today. Maths and Maths Physics developed abstract thought and problem solving skills that are extremely useful in my current role. Communication skills acquired through presentations and project work have helped me build confidence in my current role too.”



**The Student Perspective**

If you ask anyone around the country about Maynooth students, you will hear that no other students in the country seem to feel the same level of pride in their university than that of the “Maynoothian.”

As President of the Maynooth Students Union, I am 100% of the mindset that the new curriculum will only strengthen the student experience that much more. Students have had a voice in the design of this project from the beginning and have lent many valuable suggestions. Whether it’s allowing flexibility to take different courses outside your chosen subjects, study a language with any degree, or make sure that all of the benefits from experiences like leading a club or society make it on to a student transcript, the changes will only make Maynooth students stand out that much more when they leave.”

**Ben Finnegan, President,  
Maynooth Students Union**



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