

Maynooth MSc in Design Innovation Named 2016 Best New Postgraduate Course



The [Department of Design Innovation at Maynooth University](#) is celebrating the award of 2016 Best New Course for its [MSc in Design Innovation](#). The award was made at the GradIreland Postgraduate Course of the Year Awards 2016 on April 28th in Dublin's Mansion House, where over 500 representatives from across industry and academia came together to celebrate achievement and innovation in the areas of graduate recruitment and postgraduate course provision. On announcing the winner for award, the judges described the course, which was introduced in 2014, as “an innovative programme bridging traditional social disciplines with design, enterprise and technological change”.

The MSc in Design Innovation is offered jointly by Maynooth University's Department of Design Innovation and [Department of Anthropology](#) and is the only postgraduate programme in Ireland dedicated to leadership in design thinking and radical innovation. The course, which has become a huge success during its first two years, is part of an international trend towards design thinking in business and creative MBA type programmes according to [Dr Frank Devitt](#), Head of the Department of Design Innovation and originator of the programme.

“In designing this programme, we have fundamentally re-thought the traditional structure and content of a Masters in innovation as well as its delivery and this has been key to its success and appeal. Rather than just appending design thinking modules to existing traditional courses, here design thinking and modern, human centred, experimental approaches to innovation are built into every element and overall structure of the programme.”

According to Dr. Mark Maguire, Head of the Department of Anthropology, modern businesses are constantly trying to understand customers at a deeper level and have been turning to business anthropology and design ethnography for

help. “We’ve been able to embed these theories and practices into and throughout the MSc so that both students and clients get great value from the insights achieved”, he said.

[Trevor Vaugh](#), Programme Director of the MSc stated that the MSc has been strategically developed to meet a global need for skilled individuals with ability and confidence to apply design based approaches to early stage innovation. He said: “Industry and Government are calling for design-led innovation to be a key part of Ireland's economic recovery and future growth. This is an area where the MSc in Design Innovation has a critical role to play by producing the leaders needed to drive this change.”

According to a Gartner research report in 2015, 89% of companies expect to compete mostly on the basis of customer experience by 2016 - vs. 36% four years ago. This shift towards an experience economy, combined with rapidly shifting global business conditions has created a perfect storm for a unique type of innovator. The participants of this programme are equipped with skills that are now invaluable to organisations.

In the two years enrolled so far, the diversity in the student profile has been a very important achievement of the programme. One of the course’s greatest achievements has been to bring together people of diverse ages and backgrounds in a creative-practice and impact-oriented environment where peer learning thrives. Students range from mid-20s to 60s and from disciplines such as engineering, business management, design, software, social science, accountancy and marketing among others.

Vaugh adds: “This award could not have happened without the hard work and dedication of our excellent students, teaching and administrative staff. We have built a world class team, we have students that are genuinely excited about making a difference in their fields and we have industry partners that are opening their doors because they can see what we are doing works. All of this makes for a very exciting future”.