



# Centre for Teaching and Learning – Autumn 2023 Newsletter

## [Newsletter Introduction](#)

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Centre for Teaching and Learning team, I'm delighted to bring you our Autumn 2023 CTL newsletter.

It has been a busy summer, and in this issue we announce the Fellowship Awards for 2023-24, celebrate the achievements of the Writing Centre and highlight our commitment to developing a Writing Enriched Curriculum (WEC), and share the initial findings from the Observation of Teaching project. This summer also saw the successful upgrade to Moodle 4.1, and in addition to a brief overview you will find opportunities to register for upcoming Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) workshops on Moodle. We also share details about our other forthcoming workshops and events in areas such as Authentic Assessment, digital technologies in practical sciences, Mid-semester Student Feedback, and a dedicated introduction to teaching and learning in Maynooth University for new staff.

We hope you will find this newsletter informative and interesting, and we would also welcome your feedback on news items that would be of most interest and help to you.

With best wishes for the semester,

Lisa O'Regan, Head of Centre for Teaching and Learning.

## CTL Workshops & Events for Autumn 2023

CTL are pleased to announce our Autumn T&L and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) workshops and events series. Many of the events are in collaboration with Maynooth University colleagues, and all are open to all staff. Full information and registration links are available here for the T&L Sessions and the TEL Sessions. The following will be on offer:

**Introduction to Moodle for New Users** | in-person workshop, School of Education IT Room | Monday 11 September, 09:30-11.30. | [Register here](#).

**New Features in Moodle 4.1 - Course Design Essentials**, with guest facilitator Sam Taylor, Senior eLearning Consultant, Catalyst. | in-person workshop, School of Education IT Room | Tue 12 September, 09:30-11.30. | [Register here](#).

**Moodle Assessment Features**, with guest facilitator Sam Taylor, Senior eLearning Consultant, Catalyst. | in-person workshop, School of Education IT Room | Tuesday 12 September, 14.00-16.00. | [Register here](#).

**Moodle Assessment Features** | in-person workshop, School of Education IT Room | Wed 13 September, 09:30-11:30. | [Register here](#).

**New Features in Moodle 4.1 - Course Design Essentials** | in-person workshop, School of Education IT Room | Wed 13 September, 14:00-16.00. | [Register here](#).

**Introduction to Teaching and Learning for New Staff** | in-person event, School of Education SE014 | Thurs 14 September 09:30-16:00. | [Register here](#).

**Introduction to AV & Classhall Technologies for New Teaching Staff** | in-person event TSI 240 | Monday 18 September 14:00-15:00. | [Register here](#).

**Refresher AV & Class Hall Technology Demonstration for Staff** | in-person event TSI 240 | Tuesday 19 September 14:00-15:00. | [Register here](#).

**Approaches to mid-semester student feedback** | online event | Fri 13 October 11:30-13:00. | [Register here](#).

**Rethinking Authentic Assessment** with guest facilitator Dr Jan Mac Arthur, Lancaster University | in-person seminar [*LOCATION TBC*] | Fri 17 November, 11.30-13.00. | [Register here](#).

**Digital Technologies in Support of Teaching and Learning of Practical Science**, with guest facilitators Prof. Denise Rooney, Dr Steffi Thomas, and Prof. Frances Heaney | in-person event, [*LOCATION TBC*] | Fri 8 December, 11.30-13.00. | [Register here](#).

Note: Registration for all sessions is required and places are limited. If you have any queries about any of the sessions, please email [teachingandlearning@mu.ie](mailto:teachingandlearning@mu.ie).



*1 - Rethinking Authentic Assessment will be the subject of the workshop facilitated by Dr Jan McArthur (Head of Educational Research, Lancaster University)*

*(Image adapted from [Sambell and Brown 2022](#))*

## CTL Fellowships 2023-24 Awarded



The CTL T&L Fellowships 2023-24 are a key part of Maynooth University's ongoing commitment to developing teaching, supporting student success, and promoting Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). This academic year, T&L Fellowships have been awarded under two strands.

**Strand 1:** 'Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Teaching, Learning and Assessment' – asked colleagues to propose projects which involve the exploration of Generative AI (GenAI) from a teaching, learning and assessment perspective with a strong focus on practice. The Fellowships are intended to provide colleagues with space and time to learn more about AI in disciplinary contexts, as well as involving sharing that learning with colleagues from across the faculties. The following colleagues have been awarded T&L Fellowships 2023-24 under Strand 1:

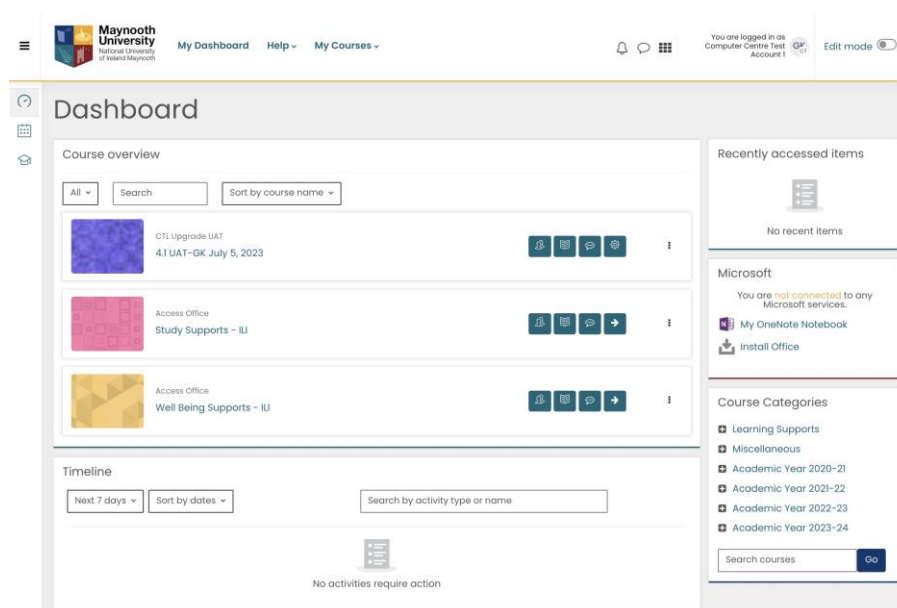
- Dr Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain, Department of Sociology, 'Is Artificial Intelligence Reproducing or Helping to Solve Social Inequality?'
- Dr Shane McLoughlin, School of Business, 'Towards a Triangle of Proficiency for a paradigm of Generative AI'.
- Dr Anthony Malone, Education Department, 'Developing authentic assessment literacy capabilities in the use of AI technologies: An action research study'.

**Strand 2:** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – this cross faculty UDL Fellowship Project will support staff with embedding UDL in their teaching, learning and assessment practices. The focus will be on supporting staff to make small, manageable, incremental changes that strengthen student inclusion. Strand 2 is jointly funded by SATLE 2022 & forms part of the Maynooth University PATH 4 Phase 1 Universal Design in Education project led by MAP. CTL leads Strand 3, which is an introductory project to enable embedding of UDL in teaching, learning and assessment practice and to embed the Moodle Accessibility Toolkit at Maynooth University. The following colleagues have been awarded T&L Fellowships 2023-24 under Strand 2:

- Dr Marian Crowley-Henry, School of Business and Faculty of Social Sciences.
- Professor Denise Rooney, Chemistry Department and Faculty of Science and Engineering.
- Dr Moynagh Sullivan, English Department and Faculty of Arts, Celtic Studies, and Philosophy.

We would like to congratulate this year's T&L Fellows and look forward to bringing you updates about their work during the year.

## Moodle 4.1 Upgrade



2 - Moodle 4.1 Dashboard

Moodle was successfully upgraded to version 4.1 in July. Improvements include a new site and dashboard design and a range of functionality enhancements, including:

- New Edit mode toggle
- Course page Index for easier course editing
- Tabbed Course page Menu
- Completion Tracking Improvements

- Gradebook Enhancements
- Collaborative Question Banks
- Database Activity Enhancements

As part of a whole CTL team effort, all support resources have been updated to guide MU users through the new features. For more information about the new features in Moodle 4.1, please view our [What's New in Moodle 4.1 Guide for Staff](#).

Over the summer, we also launched the *Moodle 4.1 Course Design Essentials* series. Further Moodle webinars and workshops are planned for September (with details above in 'CTL Workshops & Events for Autumn 2023').

## Observation of Teaching Project Update

As part of the CTL Observation of Teaching (OoT) project, we completed a survey with staff in June 2023, the key findings from which include the following:

- Staff, in general, are open to a range of approaches around who ought to be involved in observation of teaching, with the exception of instances where one colleague is Head of Department to another; this pairing received less support from respondents.
- Staff identified pros and cons to the different approaches and pairings, including the advantages of specialist/subject knowledge, T&L expertise, neutrality, the potential to learn, and the drawbacks of bias and potential conflict.
- Engaging in observation of teaching could contribute to learning about one's practice and that of colleagues, to professional dialogue around T&L, and to applying for promotion. It should be developmental, voluntary and mutual.
- A structured, formalised and streamlined approach to observation of teaching including reporting, guidance, and training and support for participants would be very important. Some colleagues might find observation of teaching, as observer/observee, stressful; they may be fearful or nervous about it.
- Time and workload are factors to be considered. Trustworthiness, ability to provide collegial and constructive criticism, T&L expertise, and years of experience are all important characteristics of observers. In time, observation of teaching could become routine and normalised, as an integral part of continuing professional development, which could positively contribute to student learning and could provide institutional touchstones for teaching and learning enhancement.

CTL will share a full report of the survey findings and a more comprehensive report of OoT more broadly with colleagues early next academic year. In turn, CTL will work with the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning early next academic year on a Maynooth University proposal in this space.

**For more information**, see the Observation of Teaching [project webpages](#).

## Writing Centre Transition and Academic Writing Supports Update

The Writing Centre was founded in 2011 to offer free, friendly, non-judgemental writing help to any student, undergraduate or postgraduate, regardless of course, degree or level. Over more than a decade, it has helped thousands of Maynooth University students through taught modules, workshops, creating and curating resources, and in particular one-to-one student-focused writing sessions. The recent academic year was its busiest since its inception, working with over 1,200 students in one-to-one appointments, workshops, writing groups and taught modules, logging over 17,000 student interactions with our Moodle resource space, and dealing with in excess of 1000 email queries and writing-related questions. As with previous years, students registered a high level of satisfaction with the service (rating it 4.6/5.0).

As part of broader restructuring over the last year, CTL has worked collaboratively with Dr Aisling Flynn to effect the transition of student-facing Writing Centre support to [Student Skills and Success](#). This student-facing support will now be known as [Academic Writing Support](#). Academic Writing Support will continue to offer services such as one-to-one student appointments, from its new home in the Arts Building, and can be contacted at [writingsupport@mu.ie](mailto:writingsupport@mu.ie).

The staff-facing function of the Writing Centre, focusing on enabling staff to develop a Writing Enriched Curriculum (WEC), will remain within CTL. This function will:

- support staff with the integration of writing-to-learn into their teaching
- work with staff to develop discipline-specific writing resources
- provide professional development sessions for staff around exploring WEC
- collaborate with staff on module-/semester-/year-long discipline-specific academic writing interventions for students
- engage in research on WEC and related topics.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Alison Farrell, Dr Adeline Cooney and Dr Denis Casey for leading and developing the Centre over the years. We look forward to this exciting new chapter in writing support within the university. If you would like to learn more about our staff-facing support, email us at [teachingandlearning@mu.ie](mailto:teachingandlearning@mu.ie).

**Academic Writing Development in Maynooth University**

Maynooth University offers centrally provided support to complement the **discipline specific student academic writing development** that happens within departments.

**This support is student facing and staff facing.**

**Academic Writing Support** (previously the University Writing Centre) **for students** is now part of **Student Skills and Success**. This support includes:

- one-to-one appointments
- topic-specific workshops
- development and collation of resources
- one-off sessions for students, provided within modules, and organised with colleagues
- postgraduate writers' groups
- postgraduate writing module.

If you would like to learn more about the student-facing Academic Writing Support email [writingsupport@mu.ie](mailto:writingsupport@mu.ie)

**Writing Enriched Curriculum (WEC), working with staff**, remains with **Centre for Teaching and Learning**. This function will:

- support staff with the integration of writing-to-learn into their teaching
- work with staff to develop discipline-specific writing resources
- provide professional development sessions for staff around exploring writing-enriched curriculum (WEC)
- collaborate with staff on module-/semester-/year-long discipline specific academic writing interventions for students
- engage in research on WEC and related topics.

If you would like to learn more about staff-facing support email [teachingandlearning@mu.ie](mailto:teachingandlearning@mu.ie)

## Contact Us

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