



### Introduction

The Department of Applied Social Studies in Maynooth University invites applications to this taught masters programme. The MSocSc (Rights & Social Policy), builds on the two successful Bachelor of Social Science degrees - in Social Policy and in Community and Youth Work – to provide advanced study in key and often challenging issues facing social policy today, providing an opportunity for critical study in the application of social policy theory and techniques to policy and practice.

### Aim

This MSocSc aims to equip graduates with advanced analytical skills in relation to many of the complex social policy issues in contemporary Ireland and beyond. In particular, the emphasis is on themes of rights, equality and inclusion, and associated social policy agendas. The MSocSc (Rights & Social Policy) provides graduates with advanced knowledge and skills in:

- Social policy theory, studies and perspectives
- Social policy analysis
- Social policy research methods
- Writing policy and influencing policy
- Understanding of rights, equality and justice issues
- Equality and inclusion rights, recognition and redistribution

### Intended For

- Graduates of Social Science, Applied Social Studies, Community and Youth Work or a broadly related discipline.
- Graduates wishing to deepen their understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of social policy, advance their social policy analysis skills, and further develop social policy research and communication skills.

### Key Features

- Themes of rights, equality and social justice are embedded within the various modules.
- Reflects the Department’s mission and strengths, with key modules on health and mental health, rights, child & family policies, gender, gerontology, human trafficking, education inequalities, environmental justice, housing and criminal justice.
- Designed to develop critical awareness of the contemporary debates.
- Designed to develop and improve social policy research skills.
- Designed to enhance communication skills –both written and oral.
- Assessment by written assignments including a dissertation and oral presentations.

### Programme Format & Duration

The programme is one academic year full-time (or two years part-time, with the dissertation in Year two).

The full-time programme, and Year one of the part-time programme, require attendance on campus for two day blocks on Fridays and Saturdays. Each block involves a mix of lectures, workshops, on-line, directed, and self-directed study. Students are expected to engage proactively with the programme objectives, on and off campus and to take responsibility for their own learning as critically reflective students.

### **Programme Coverage and Content**

The total credits for the MSocSc (Rights & Social Policy) is 90 ECTS. It is placed at Level 9 on the National Qualifications Framework.

#### **Core Modules (Credits)**

- Critical Theory, Studies & Perspectives on Social Policy (10)
- Advanced Social Policy Analysis (5)
- Social Policy Research Methods & Dissertation (30)
- Writing Policy & Influencing Policy (10)
- Realising Rights: Case Studies, Seminars, Conferences & Workshops (10)
- Equality and Inclusion Rights, Recognition and Redistribution (5)

#### **Optional Modules (Credits) \***

- Health & Mental Health Policy: Perspectives & Debates (10)
- Criminal Justice Studies (5)
- Social Gerontology Policy & Practice (5)
- Human Trafficking: Policy, Perspectives & Debates (10)
- Advanced Child & Family Policy (5)
- Advanced Environmental Justice (5)
- Housing Inequality & Rights (5)
- Gender, Rights & Social Policy (5)
- Education Inequalities: Perspectives & Policy (5)



## **Core Modules**

### **Critical Theory, Studies & Perspectives on Social Policy (10) SP607**

This module will provide students with advanced critical, theoretical perspectives on social policy and welfare states, as reflected in current debates. At the end of this module, students should be able to demonstrate an advanced understanding of a range of alternative critical perspectives in social policy analysis, and identify the policy and practice implications of alternative theoretical perspectives.

### **Advanced Social Policy Analysis (5) SP602A**

This module will develop students' advanced critical understanding and skills for social policy analysis. It will cover social policy making models and practices; policy making, ideology and values; policy cycles; policy elites; policy communities; top down and bottom up policy making; policy consultation and policy participation; policy evaluation; policy accountability; policy scrutiny.

### **Social Policy Research Methods & Dissertation (30) SP614**

This module will provide students with advanced knowledge of and skills in different social policy research methods. It will cover: research philosophy and concepts; design; methods; and policy purposes.

At the end of this module, students should be able to critically evaluate published research and undertake a solid piece of social policy research in an area of interest.

### **Writing Policy and Influencing Policy (10) SP610A**

This module will develop students' understanding and skills in the writing and influencing of social policy. The module emphasises skill development in the fundamentals of drafting policy and will address how to influence the content of social policies "from the inside out" and "from the outside in" through effective interventions in policy consultation and policy formulation phases e.g. parliamentary questions and social policy related speeches.

### **Realising Rights: Case Studies, Seminars, Conferences & Workshops (10) SP608**

This module will develop students' understanding of the practice of realising human rights in the context of social policy change through the exploration of relevant case studies, nationally and internationally. The module will involve participation in a range of case study based events, with a focus on the realisation of rights. The module involves a class study visit to an international human rights related organization e.g. United Nations, Geneva.

### ***Equality and Inclusion Rights, Recognition and Redistribution (5) SP604***

This module will provide students with a critical understanding of issues of human rights, identity based/ recognition issues and socio-economic equality (redistribution).

It will cover theories and agendas of rights, recognition and redistribution; critique of policy proofing; mainstreaming and targeted policy responses; case study examples in areas of age, class, disability, discrimination gender, race, religion or belief, sexuality, integration, cohesion, poverty, social exclusion and inclusion.

### ***Social Gerontology, Policy & Practice (5) SP606***

This module will provide students with critical knowledge of gerontology and its applications in policy and practice. Covering approaches to ageing, such as political economy and life course approaches; critical analysis of the constructions of old age and ageing in the development of pensions and long term care policies; critical examinations of pessimistic and optimistic scenarios related to ageing; explorations of older people as a social welfare movement or as an economic interest group.

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## ***Optional Modules***

### ***Health & Mental Health (10) SP615***

This module covers a wide range of policy issues such as health and mental health care systems, provision, funding, power, players and challenges in comparative context; inequalities in care - causes and consequences; role and support of carers. The rise and influence of social movements e.g. the disability movement; deinstitutionalisation; discovery of recovery; patients, users and survivors.

### ***Criminal Justice Studies (5) SP603***

This module will provide students with an advanced critical understanding of criminal justice policy and practice. It will cover themes of deviance, crime and society; criminal justice system structures; policies and practices; crime and control; penal policy in Ireland; comparative penal policy; penal exceptionalism in the Nordic countries; and white-collar crime.

### ***Human Trafficking: Policy, Perspectives & Debates (10) SP613***

This module guides students through a critical analysis of the issue of human trafficking, exploring trends and the push and pull factors associated with supply of and demand for human trafficking. The module critically analyses the role and response of states through policy, legislation, law enforcement and victim support. The role of the voluntary sector with respect to policy, victim support and awareness raising is also examined.





### ***Advanced Child & Family Policy (5) SP612***

This module critically reviews contemporary Irish child policies and strategies in the context of international obligations to children; and the mechanisms by which these obligations are honoured, monitored. The module follows these international obligations, through European and national policies to local level implementation, mapping the realisation of rights for Irish children.

### ***Advanced Environmental Justice (5) SP618***

The module content will be responsive to current social policy issues and concerns at the time of delivery. An indicative outline of content includes theories and practice of rights and justice in the context of climate change and environmental movements; theoretical and practical contributions focused on linking climate change, environmental justice and social justice in social policy; implications of climate policy for social justice with case study examples in areas of environmental movements in rural Ireland; trade unionism and just transition in the Midlands; fossil fuel infrastructure, international development and climate justice; energy justice in housing and access to energy and workshops on integrating climate action with intersectionality including ecofeminist, anti-colonial and anti-racist approaches.

### ***Housing: Inequality & Rights (5) SP611***

This module provides an analysis of housing policy and comparative housing regimes with consideration of contemporary discourses on the right to housing; the global housing crisis and financialisation. The module considers the development of Irish housing policy and the Irish housing system; neoliberalism, marketisation, and austerity.

### ***Gender, Rights & Social Policy (5) SP616***

The module explores the areas of social policy relating to gendered inequalities. It provides an overview of mainstream theoretical explanations and key perspectives on the structure and evolution of social policies. It analyses the persistent differences experienced by women and men in the economy in paid labour and the dynamic between gender and social policy and politics including feminist critiques and modifications of that literature; the effects of intersectionality of gender with key social dimensions including race, ethnicity, sexuality, (dis)ability and social class.

### ***Education Inequalities: Perspectives & Policy (5) SP617***

This module focuses on the role and function of education in society; barriers and equity of access to education at each level of preschool, primary, secondary, further and higher education; policy developments to address inequalities at each level, current debates and challenges. It focuses on inequalities in access to, participation in, and attainment in education in terms of gender, disability, LGBT, race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status; Irish policy context and contextualization in wider education policy debates at OECD and other international levels; the future of University education and creating an equitable education system, examining meritocracy, instrumentalism alongside the importance of critical education in engaged citizenship.

# Requirements & Application Details

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/applied-social-studies/our-courses/msocsc-social-science-rights-and-social-policy>

## **Requirements & Selection**

Candidates are required to have one of the following:

- A Bachelor of Social Science degree (Social Policy; or Community and Youth Work)(Hons) with an overall mark of at least 55%
- BA Applied Social Studies degree (Hons); with an overall mark of at least 55%
- An Honours degree in a related discipline with an overall mark of at least 55%.

Candidates meeting the above criteria will be invited to a short interview to decide their suitability for the programme.

## **Application Procedure**

Applications are only accepted through the Postgraduate Application Centre (PAC).

Prospective students should make applications via PAC Course Code **MHB56 (full-time)** or **MHB57 (part-time)** [www.pac.ie/maynoothuniversity](http://www.pac.ie/maynoothuniversity)

## **Closing Date**

Closing date for receipt of completed applications is 30 June each year, but applications are welcome before then. Early applications will ensure an early response. Applications are welcomed from students currently in the process of graduating to whom places may be offered pending final degree results.

## **Fees**

Information on fees available from the Student Fees Office, <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/student-fees-grants/postgraduate>

Tel. 01 708 4747/ 3875/3795 e-mail: [fees.office@mu.ie](mailto:fees.office@mu.ie).

International/Non-EU students are facilitated with relevant information via the International Office <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international>

Further information on Graduate Studies is available on the Graduate Studies website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/studymaynooth/postgraduate-studies>

Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland.

Tel: 353-1-708-3743/4574; Fax: 353-1-708-4708

E-mail: [appliedsocialstudies@mu.ie](mailto:appliedsocialstudies@mu.ie)

Web: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/applied-socialstudies>