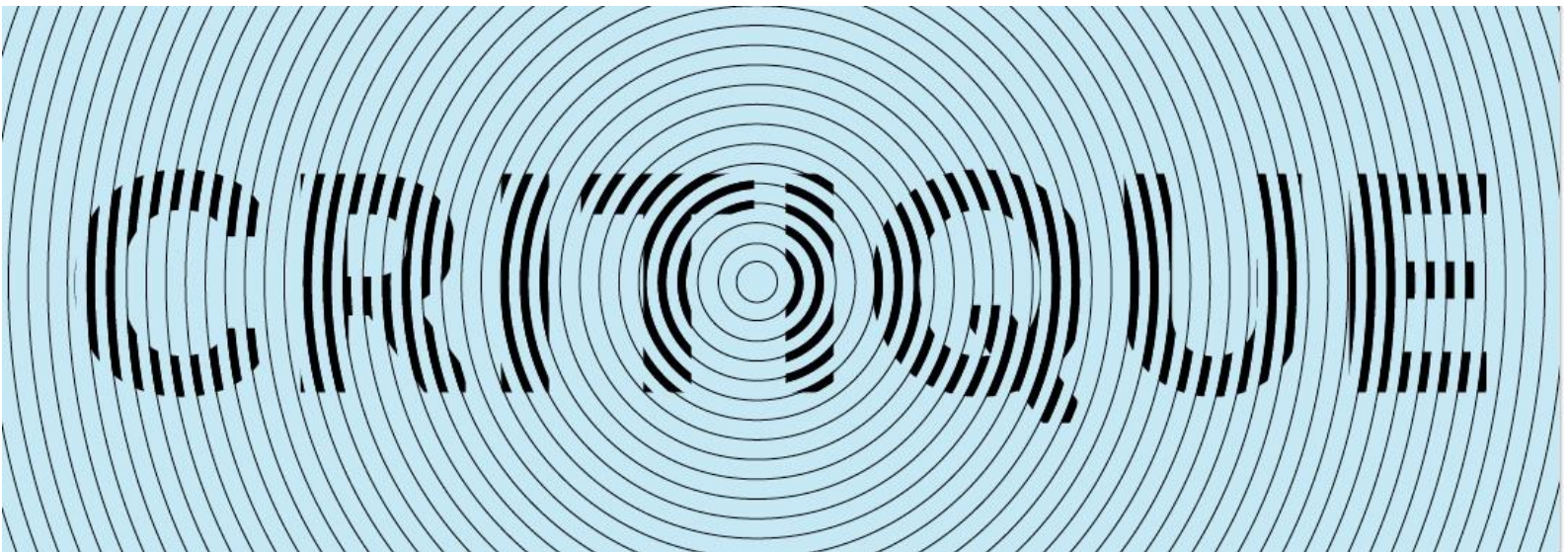




Department of Media Studies



PhD

Student Handbook

2019-2020

Table of Contents

Welcome	3
Contact details	4
Structured PhD Programme Information	6
Student Supports	9
Student Responsibilities	10
Stages of Study and Progression	11
Annual review and progression/non-progression	12
Staff-Student Communications	17
Staff-student policies	20
Useful Resources	24

Welcome to Media Studies at Maynooth University!

Welcome to Maynooth University and the Department of Media Studies.

This 2019-20 Handbook is your guide to the academic year and to the guidelines in place regarding your academic study and practice work. Please read it carefully and refer to it throughout the year. A copy can also be found on our department website, www.maynoothuniversity.ie/media-studies

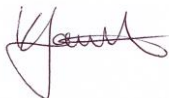
The Handbook provides details of the modules to be completed in year one and lists contact information for administrative and academic staff in Media Studies. Also included are Maynooth University and a link to the University's policy on plagiarism.

Any specific questions you have on these policies and guidelines may be addressed to your supervisor/s during the academic year.

The Department of Media Studies is based in the Iontas Building, on the North Campus. Anne Byrne staffs our department office and Tracey O'Flaherty staffs the English and Media Studies office.

The Structured PhD classes and workshops take place across the university with media studies seminars mainly taking place in the Iontas Building. GST modules will be announced through the Graduate Studies Office. FM8XX modules will be scheduled in consultation with your supervisors. MD8XX modules are centrally timetabled and available from PhD coordinator Gavan Titley – gavan.titley@mu.ie. Details of Structured PhD modules are available through [Course Finder](#) or on the Graduate Studies <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/graduate-studies/modules-research-students> research modules page. Details of regulations and policies are available here: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/PhD-Regulations-Sept-2016-AC-19-09-16_0.pdf.

I look forward to an enjoyable and productive year working with you.



Dr Kylie Jarrett
Head of the Department of Media Studies

Contact Details

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Facebook: Media Studies at Maynooth University

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Structured PhD Programme Module Information

Students in possession of a Masters qualification will take a minimum of 30 credits across the four years of study and to be formed of:

- Subject specific modules (MD8XXmodules): 15 ECTS minimum
- Transferable skills modules (FM8XX, GST and/or modules taken outside of dept.): 15 ECTS

In the first meeting of your PhD- the 'initial meeting'- your supervisor will discuss a plan for your Structured PhD and suggest a suite of modules. This will be listed on your Initial Meeting Record, however, you may change modules following consultation with your supervisor.

Media Studies modules

The following modules are offered through the Department of Media and are formed of schedule taught modules that run in either semester 1 or 2. MD822: Media Research Methods is recommended for all students. Typically, students take this at the start of their studies. Students should also take two additional modules across the course of their studies.

- MD822: Media Research Methods
- MD824: Irish Media History
- MD830: Creative Interactive Computing
- MD831: Writing for Screen Media
- MD826: Media Archives
- MD832: Media Publics: Digital Media, Public Discourse and Political Formations

Graduate Skills modules

The following modules are offered through the Graduate Studies Office and are geared towards your professionalisation. They are typically formed individual workshops, seminar series or short courses. They are timetabled across the academic year. Your supervisor will recommend a suite of these modules to be taken across the course of your PhD studies.

- GST1: Professional Development and Employability
- GST2: Finding Information for your Thesis

- GST 3: Academic Writing Module
- GST4: Research Practice & Integrity
- GST5: Creative Thinking & Problem Solving
- GST6: Social Entrepreneurship: Making a Real Difference
- GST8: Grant Management and Compliance
- GST10: Innovation and Research Commercialisation
- GST11: Professional Skills: Thesis Completion and Career Development
- GST13: Research Funding Application
- GST15: Ethics and Academic Practice for Research Students

Flexibly-defined modules

These modules are not taught but instead are designed in consultation with your supervisor. They allow students to receive credit for engaged learning activities such as academic presentation delivery at the Media Studies Postgraduate Research Colloquium. Your supervisor will recommend which ones to undertake.

- FM801: Conference Organisation
- FM802: Work-Based Placement
- FM803: Research Placement
- FM804: Engaging with the Community: Research, Practice and Reflection
- FM805: Outreach and Communication
- FM806: Advanced Communication Skills: Conference Presentation
- FM807: External Short Course
- FM808: Seminar Series
- FM809: Advanced Communication Skills: Publication

The Centre for Teaching and Learning

The Centre for Teaching and Learning offers a professional certificate for those interested in pursuing experience in tutoring and teaching. This is recommended for those who wish to undertake tutoring during their PhD studies as well as for those interested in pursuing an academic career. These sessions are held throughout the academic year and is more generally recommended for students following their first year of study.

- CLT1: Professional Certificate in Postgraduate Teaching and Learning: Tutors and Demonstrators

Students may also register for modules outside of those listed and offered through other departments (for example, a relevant MA level module offered in an adjacent department). They may undertake modules offered outside of Maynooth University. Students must receive permission from the home and host university in order to do so and complete the relevant forms available through the [Graduate Studies website](#).

Student Supports

If you require advice, assistance or support, you can contact your supervisors as a first port of call. They will be able to provide advice and support regarding academic work, university policies and procedures and to direct you towards the wider university supports. In addition, you can contact the departmental administrator Anne Byrne in Iontas 0.16 for general queries (anne.m.byrne@mu.ie) or Gavan Titley in Iontas 0.23 for queries about your PhD programme (gavan.titley@mu.ie).

[MU Student Services](#): This is an umbrella source for a number of separate services offered to the students by the university. The website contains information on such services as well as contact details if you need to get in touch with someone.

[Students Union](#): The Students' Union organises events for students, hosts talks and information sessions and provides students with support and guidance on issues such as housing and student representation.

[The Health Centre](#): While it is not a registered general practice, the Health Centre does have a GP and nurse, a sexual health clinic and offers travel and lifestyle advice.

[Creche](#): The crèche is located on the north campus and is available to staff and students and for children over one year's old.

[Counselling](#): The Student Counselling Service is a professional, confidential counselling service provided to all registered students of Maynooth University. Counselling provides the opportunity for any student to discuss in private any concerns which may be impacting on academic performance or personal health and well-being.

[Student Support Officer](#): Marianne Dunne is the Student Support Officer. Her office is in the Student Support Centre and she can be contacted on student.services@mu.ie.

Student Responsibilities

Research students' rights and responsibilities are governed by MU policies as published on the university website. Research students are also required to comply with all departmental policies and procedures, typically outlined in a departmental research students' handbook.

Specific responsibilities of research students include the following:

- to advance the progress and complete her/his research study;
- to maintain a professional relationship at all times with the supervising academic members and other university staff;
- to follow the plan of study and research as agreed with the supervisor, and to maintain regular contact with the supervisor;
- to document the progress of work as agreed with the supervisor and present written or other material as requested and on time;
- to inform the supervisor of any proposal to publish or make a presentation in connection with the work;
- to inform the supervisor promptly of any impediment to their work;
- to notify the supervisor of his/her intention to submit at least three months prior to the proposed date of submission; and
- to take the initiative in identifying problems and seeking solutions to them.

The core of a postgraduate research programme is the advancement of knowledge through original research, and the statement of that advancement is the thesis (doctoral or master's). The goal of a structured programme is to provide a high quality research experience and output, with integrated support for professional development.

These regulations are subject to change. In any given academic session, a student is subject to the regulations that are in place at the beginning of that academic session.

Stages of Study and Progression

PhDs are generally four years full-time and six years part-time. Students will undertake modules on the structured PhD as well as supervision throughout their years of study. Your supervisors will set up a plan for research each year and which will culminate in an annual review of research and study discussed further on.

Initial Meeting and Initial Meeting Record

As soon as possible after registration, the student should hold the initial meeting with his/her supervisor(s) / supervisory team. The purpose of the initial meeting is to identify modules that will enhance the student's research programme, to agree a calendar of meetings, and to ensure that the student is aware and agrees to the university regulations. Details of the agreed programme are recorded in the initial meeting record (IMR) which is approved by the departmental research student progress committee (DRSPC). The IMR is forwarded by the DRSPC to the Graduate Studies Office (GSO) by the end of October/February, or within four weeks after first registration for students registering outside of standard registration times, for inclusion in the student record system. The IMR informs the annual progress review subsequently carried out by the student's DRSPC.

Assessment and progression

A student's progress is monitored continuously by their supervisor(s) and formally evaluated on an annual basis by the Departmental research student progress committee (DRSPC). DRSPC's decisions regarding progression of postgraduate research students are ratified by the relevant examination board. Continued registration for a research degree is subject to successful progress. Progression must be recorded on a student's record in order for the student to be able to register for the following year.

Departmental Research Student Progress Committee

The DRSPC is responsible for assessing the academic progress of a student through their research programme. It should therefore have the experience and disciplinary expertise to conduct the assessment. A DRSPC will normally comprise three members of academic staff of the university. Where a research programme spans multiple

departments and/or institutions, the DRSPC may include academic staff from participating departments/institutions. In the case of larger/smaller departments, alternative arrangements may be made depending on particular circumstances. Departments may choose to adopt the same committee membership for all students within the department or to individualise the committee per student. Any member of the committee, whose students are under consideration, should not take part in the progress discussions involving those students. The objectives of the DRSPC are to monitor the student's academic progress and to provide a mechanism for identification and resolution of any problems that emerge in relation to a student's progress.

Annual Review and progression/non-progression

DRSPCs undertake formal annual progress reviews of all research students. The purpose of the annual review is to: assess progression and grant permission to progress based on an assessment of the quality of research output to date; give students the opportunity to indicate their satisfaction or lack thereof with their supervisory arrangements; discuss and record any changes to the student's individualised program ensure that students have passed their required modules before thesis submission and, where appropriate, that waivers have been ratified by the DRSPC. In general, students are automatically progressed into year two of their programme, but a substantive review must be completed on all research students within 12 months and no later than 18 months after initial registration. Thereafter, students are assessed annually for progression by the summer exam board. In the case of a research Masters student, a review should take place before the second year of registration. In exceptional cases, at the request of the supervisor or the student, the DRSPC may meet during the academic year if a student is identified as being unable to make progress or if concerns have arisen during the year

Mode of Assessment

Students will be notified of the annual review procedure and schedule in advance of the meeting. Students will typically be required to submit Form A- evidence of research, modules undertaken and a research plan- to the DRSPC by April/May. They will also submit a confidential statement (Form B). Meetings to discuss their progress

will be schedule to take place a few weeks after this submission and a decision upon progress made thereafter. The meeting will include appointed members of the departmental staff.

Assessment Outcomes

The DRSPC can make one of the following recommendations in respect of each research student's progress:

- satisfactory,
- unsatisfactory.

If the progress of a student is deemed unsatisfactory, the DRPSC may make the following recommendations:

- Progress the student into the next academic year, outlining clear objectives the student must meet before the next annual review. The student will be informed by the DRSPC that if they do not meet the objectives outlined at the next annual review; the student may not be allowed to register in the subsequent academic year. In addition, supervisors should advise students on a stipend of their obligations under the terms of their funding agreement and that they run the risk of scholarship payments being stopped if satisfactory progress is not made.
- Record a result of no progress at the summer examination board.

Students, with the support of their supervisor, may or may not be permitted to re-submit work for assessment prior the start of the academic year. The DRSPC also notes change of registration from master's degree by research to PhD or vice versa where applicable. DRSPCs recommendations are recorded in the Annual progress review form and the form is returned to the Graduate Studies Office. All students and their supervisors will be informed of recommendations of the DRSPC before the results are uploaded for the summer examination board. Students and supervisors have the right at that point to discuss the case with the DRSPC and submit any further evidence that might impact on the recommendation. Failure to progress will be recorded in the summer examination board. Students, with the support of their supervisor, may be given the opportunity to re-submit for assessment prior to the commencement of the following academic year.

Review of students with “No Progress” result and permission to re-submit

Prior to the commencement of the academic year, the DRSPC reviews the status of the students who received a result of no progress at the summer examination board. If the student has not re-submitted for reassessment, the student will be informed that the result of no progress result will be forwarded to the relevant autumn examination board. If the student has resubmitted for reassessment, the DRSPC may make the following recommendations:

- Satisfactory progress. The DRSPC will notify the student. Where applicable, the DRSPC will provide clear objectives the student must meet before the next annual review and indicate that if the student does not meet these objectives at the next annual review, the student may not be allowed to register in the next academic year.
- Unsatisfactory progress. The DRSPC will notify the student of the outcome. The DRSPC will also inform the relevant autumn examination board.
- Change of registration from master’s degree by research to PhD or vice versa.

Student appeals of DRSPC’s decisions regarding progress

A student who wishes to appeal a decision of the DRSPC may do so by writing to their head of department and/or research co-ordinator within one week of receiving formal notification of the DRSPC decision. On receipt of the student’s written appeal the head of department and/or research co-ordinator shall forward the appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The relevant autumn examination board will review the appeals from students to determine:

- Whether or not fair procedures were followed in the progression assessment, and
- Whether or not a fair outcome was reached in the circumstances pertaining to the student.

It is not the function of the autumn examination board to re-assess the student. However, in order to consider appeals, the autumn examination board should be provided with a copy of all documentation pertaining to the student that was available to the DRSPC. The Dean of Graduate Studies will inform the student, in writing, of the

decision. Upon receipt of written notification from the Dean of Graduate Studies, the student may then, if they so wish, initiate a formal appeal to the university in line with the applicable policy

Suspension or withdrawal from studies

In circumstances where there is an unavoidable disruption in studies, the university may allow a student to suspend registration for a specified period of time. While suspended, the student is not a registered student of the university, is not expected to work on the research project, and does not pay fees. During a period of suspension, a student should not be engaged in advancing the research project and should not expect supervision or guidance from the supervisor, or access to university services such as computing facilities, teaching, Library, and other support services. In exceptional cases, a request can be made to the Registrar for continuing access to the Library. Periods of suspension are not considered for the purposes of calculating minimum or maximum durations. Request for suspensions must be approved by the student's DRSPC and by the registrar. Should a student require a break in their studies, the student must complete the relevant form available on Student records website to request a permission to suspend their studies and submit the form to their DRSPC together with appropriate documentary evidence in advance of the intended break. Suspensions can only be obtained for a minimum of one semester and maximum one year. Should a student request a further suspension, a new request must be made. Suspension requests should normally be granted at the annual progress review. Suspensions should not exceed three years cumulatively over the course of the programme. Should a student request a suspension exceeding cumulatively three years, the department may ask the student to reapply to the programme. Suspensions will not be applied retrospectively. Students returning after an unauthorised suspension should request permission to re-join their programme. They can do this by completing and returning a Research and Taught Postgraduate Re-Registration request form, available on the university website. Any outstanding fee liabilities must be settled before a re-registration request will be considered.

Withdrawal from studies

Withdrawal is where a student leaves their programme of study and ends all activity associated with their studies before they have completed the programme for which they are registered. A student should complete the relevant form and submit to the DRSPC and registrar for approval. Any student who wishes to resume their programme after having been withdrawn will be required to re-apply for admission

Staff-Student Communications

Website

The Department of Media Studies website is at www.maynoothuniversity.ie/media-studies. This website includes all programme information, including links to detailed module descriptors showing module outlines and basic assessment information. The website also includes staff contact information and regular news/announcements. Please check the website on a regular basis.

You can also follow us on our Facebook page – Media Studies at Maynooth University – or on Twitter - @MU_MediaStudies.

Email

All Maynooth University students are issued with an email account when they register, and retain the same account until they leave. These Maynooth University email accounts are the primary mode of communication used by the Department of Media Studies to contact students on both an individual and group basis. It is therefore your responsibility to check your email regularly, and we recommend that you do this **at least once a day**.

If you set up your Maynooth University email to forward messages to another email account, you must still regularly access your Maynooth University account to delete old messages. If you do not do this, your account will rapidly exceed its quota, and new messages will not be delivered until it has been cleared out.

Students wishing to make contact with a member of staff should use their Maynooth University email account only to send emails – messages from other email accounts may very well be delayed or removed by the spam-filter. All emails to any member of staff in the university should be treated as professional communications. This means **completing the subject heading of the message, addressing the recipient formally, and writing the message in clear, grammatical English**. Emails sent to any recipient must also be respectful and non-abusive.

Moodle

The Department of Media Studies uses Moodle learning spaces for each module; they contain detailed information on module content and assessment. All students are automatically registered for Moodle access to all the modules they are taking. Please check the Moodle pages for your modules on a regular basis. Any difficulties with Moodle access should be reported to moodlesupport@mu.ie, not to the Department of Media Studies. Before using Moodle, please also consult its Acceptable Use Policy, available after login.

Access to Staff

Students are encouraged to consult with lecturers on academic and other matters relating to a particular module. They should contact the relevant Year Coordinator for matters concerning their work in the university and their general progress as students. In the case of the PhD programme this is Gavan Titley (gavan.titley@mu.ie). All full-time lecturers have specific times set aside to meet students, and these times are posted on their individual pages on the Department's website, as well as on their office doors. If the times posted by a lecturer you wish to see clash with your classes, you can ask for an appointment to see the lecturer at a mutually convenient time. These requests should be made by email. In the case of an urgent need to speak to a lecturer, please contact Anne in the Media Studies Office.

References

Requests for references should be made by formal email, full details being given of the nature of the course or appointment for which an application is being made. Full documentation relating to the course or appointment should be supplied (in the form of web-links where possible). Referees should have details of the applicant's address and telephone number to facilitate communication.

Every request for a reference should specify whether the reference required is a letter, a reference form (printed or online), and whether printed references should be forwarded directly to the applicant or to the institution or employer concerned. In either case, a full postal address must be supplied to the referee.

As much notice as possible should be given to referees, the final date for submission of the reference being clearly specified. **At least two week's notice** before this final date is required.

It is essential that the referee is also supplied with an updated copy of the applicant's CV. It should indicate subjects and modules studied, along with results received to date, and also relevant extracurricular activities, such as voluntary work, relevant work experience, etc.

All of the above information should be supplied in one email to your proposed referee.

An 'open reference' may be of more limited value than the confidential reference relating to a specific application for a specific course or appointment.

Staff members appreciate a brief note informing them of the outcome of applications.

Social Media

You can follow us on Facebook - Media Studies at Maynooth University or on Twitter - @MU_Media Studies - for news and events related to the study of media.



Staff-Student Policies

The Department of Media Studies is committed to creating a safe and productive working environment for all students, faculty and staff of Maynooth University and Kairos Communications Ltd. This Charter is intended to contribute to this aim.

- 1.** All faculty and staff of the Department of Media Studies and Kairos Communications Ltd. undertake to treat colleagues and students with respect. It is understood that all students undertake to treat their fellow students, faculty and staff of Maynooth University and Kairos Communications Ltd. with respect.
- 2. Communication:** The Department of Media Studies often sends important information to students by Maynooth University email, and through Moodle. Please check your Maynooth University email account and Moodle regularly.
- 3. Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all supervisory meetings and timetabled classes. In particular, the following conditions will apply to all students:
 - Students **must ensure that they attend all scheduled supervisory meetings.**
 - For taught modules, all students must attend at least 90% of all Media Studies lectures, labs, seminars or tutorials, unless exempted for documented medical or personal reasons agreed by the module coordinator.

NB: Students failing to meet this standard may be required to repeat the module or have grade penalties applied.

- Students who are unable to attend a meeting or a timetabled class for a legitimate documented medical or personal reason must notify the Department of Media Studies of such absences at the earliest opportunity (if possible, prior to such an absence).
 - Documentation supporting reasons for such absences will not be accepted after the end of the semester in which the absence has occurred.
 - The Department of Media Studies will undertake to ensure that all classes take place as timetabled. Should unavoidable circumstances necessitate the cancellation or rescheduling of a class, every effort will be made to notify students promptly.
- 4. Plagiarism:** The Department of Media Studies has a strictly enforced policy on plagiarism. Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offence in the Department and in the University. Please read the plagiarism and exam checking policies carefully; they are available at www.maynoothuniversity.ie/policies. Students who have a specific question regarding correct referencing should always seek the advice of the relevant lecturer in advance of submitting their work.
- 5. Style and referencing of submissions:** All written assignments should be submitted in Times New Roman, 12pt, 1.5 spacing, have numbered pages, a detailed cover sheet and full references and a bibliography. Referencing should be done according to the Harvard system of referencing, or the system the module lecturer designates.
- 6. Equipment procedures:** When signing out equipment from Kairos Communications Ltd., students undertake to be responsible for such equipment, and to use such equipment in a safe and responsible manner.
- In cases of wilful misuse or gross negligence resulting in loss or damage of equipment, such actions will be reflected in the student's continuous assessment mark. Moreover, the Department of Media Studies may refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee of Maynooth University, which may impose a penalty up to and including withdrawal from the University.

- **Safety:** The Department of Media Studies will undertake to ensure that all students are fully instructed in the safe and correct use of all equipment. Any student can refuse without prejudice to undertake an assignment if that student does not feel capable of making safe and competent use of the necessary equipment.

7. Content of audio-visual material:

- All students will act responsibly when producing visual and audio materials for any programme. In particular, the following conditions will apply to all students: No student will deliberately produce any material that may be subject to legal proceedings (including material that is libellous, pornographic, incites hatred or is in breach of previously existing copyright).
- The Department of Media Studies reserves the right to withhold copyright on all material produced by students as part of their programme.
- The Department of Media Studies will seek to ensure that students are aware of the legal and ethical issues relevant to media production prior to completion of the programme.

8. No provision contained herein contravenes a student's statutory rights, including such rights conferred by virtue of being enrolled as a student of Maynooth University.

9. The Department of Media Studies, acting in conjunction with Kairos

Communications Ltd., undertakes to implement these policies in a reasonable manner, taking due account of any exceptional circumstances not expressly defined herein.

Addendum to contract for services between Maynooth University and Kairos Communications Ltd.

In addition to the obligations on all students of the University encoded in the *Code of The Discipline for Students*, for those students undertaking courses related to the Media Studies Programmes the following may constitute a serious breach of the Code

"Malicious or reckless damage or theft of University property or any other property on the University grounds, *or any property contracted for use of the University*. Misuse of University property, *or any property contracted for use of the University*, including library materials or private material on the campus".

The words in italics indicate the amendment to the relevant clause (bullet point 7) in the *Code of Discipline*.

J. A. Walsh,
Vice-President: Innovation and Strategic Initiatives

21 September 2006

Useful Resources

Remember that we will contact you by email, so please check your Maynooth University account regularly.

Student Support Services

Managing your life at University can be a challenge.

Not only do you have to deal with the new ideas of your subject, you must also find ways to manage the workload among your other activities and keep your finances stable. Negotiating your way around the policies, procedures and processes of the institution can also be a frustrating experience as you may not know who to ask or what you need to know. It is also common for students to experience personal and emotional difficulties that affect their study.

But you are not alone in dealing with these problems. Maynooth University has an array of student services, student support services and offices that can help you manage these or any other problems you may encounter during your studies. See the list at www.maynoothuniversity.ie/current-students page of the University website to find out who can help you.

Maynooth University Library

MU Library is the portal to a vast collection of Media Studies resources that you'll need for your essays and research. The MU [library homepage](#); has excellent information, training, materials, supports and services that will help you in your studies. The library also provide a dedicated [Media Studies Subject Guide](#) (see Fig. 1 below) space on their webpage; it's a great source of subject-specific material and news.



Fig 1. Media Studies subject guide online



Fig 2. The search-box, LibrarySearch, that searches all the content in MU Library

Use **LibrarySearch** (see Fig. 2 above) on the library homepage to discover everything MU Library holds on your subject and topics. It gives you the location and details of thousands of e-books and e-journals you can read online on your devices, as well as information on books, journal articles, and databases on your subject.

You can access the information on LibrarySearch, and e-books, e-journals and databases when you're on or off-campus. If you've any queries about finding material; just ask at the Library desk or live "Library Chat" box on the homepage.

Your **MyCard** (student card) entitles you to borrow material from the Library.

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS:

Links:

- Library homepage: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library>
- Media Studies Subject Guide: <http://nuim.libguides.com/mediastudies>