



**Maynooth  
University**  
National University  
of Ireland Maynooth

**Department of Geography**

**Course Handbook  
Second Year Geography 2023-24**

**September 2023**

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# 1. Welcome

Dear Geography students,

We are delighted to welcome you back to the Maynooth University Department of Geography. As an ever changing collective of staff and research postgraduates, we have been providing programmes in Geography at Maynooth since 1970. So, we call each year on a long and successful heritage of teaching and learning, of world leading research and a commitment to pastoral care. We are all here to ensure your own personal success as you complete your undergraduate studies.

There has never been a better time to study Geography. Many aspects of the subject are on offer in Maynooth, each with its own perspective on the multiple overlapping crises the world faces today and tomorrow. These crises in society, climate, biodiversity etc. are all ones that geographers have shown are unprecedented and demand new ways of caring for each other and our planet.

We wish you every success on your own educational journey, tracing the steps of many who have come before you but each in their own way different. We hope you embrace the diversity and depth that Geography offers through its Second Year programme, and emerge a stronger, active, more engaged citizen at the end. To stay abreast of this active and creative Department, you may want to follow us on Twitter and Instagram and also to sign up for notifications from our blog. You may also want to do some writing of your own either for one of our blogs or for our staff-student journal, Milieu. But, most of all, do talk to us about our research and consider how each part links together to aid our understanding of the Earth, our shared home, and how we can live in it better, together.

Best regards,  
Dr Stephen McCarron,  
Head of Geography,  
Maynooth University.

## 2. Staff in the Department of Geography

All of us who work in the Department of Geography look forward to meeting you this year, and to getting to know you better. There are over 40 people working in the Department of Geography in total, so we wanted to introduce you to the important people for Second Year Geography. You can contact us at any time by email, on Microsoft Teams or by phone, and we are happy to meet you during office hours or by appointment.

### Head of Department

Dr Stephen McCarron [Stephen.McCarron@mu.ie](mailto:Stephen.McCarron@mu.ie) 01-708 6147 R-23B

### Deputy Head of Department

Dr Adrian Kavanagh [Adrian.P.Kavanagh@mu.ie](mailto:Adrian.P.Kavanagh@mu.ie) 01-708 6014 R-6

### Administrators

Neasa Hogan [Geography.Department@mu.ie](mailto:Geography.Department@mu.ie) 01-708 3610 R-23C

Catherine O'Driscoll [Geography.Department@mu.ie](mailto:Geography.Department@mu.ie) 01-708 4760 R-11

Mick Bolger, Technician [Michael.Bolger@mu.ie](mailto:Michael.Bolger@mu.ie) 01-708 4762

### Director of Student Success

Dr Adrian Kavanagh [Adrian.P.Kavanagh@mu.ie](mailto:Adrian.P.Kavanagh@mu.ie) 01-708 6014 R-6

### Staff involved in Second Year Geography

Name	Email	Phone	Office	Modules
Prof Mark Boyle	<a href="mailto:Mark.G.Boyle@mu.ie">Mark.G.Boyle@mu.ie</a>	01-708 3756	R-22	GY222
Dr Kevin Credit	<a href="mailto:Kevin.Credit@mu.ie">Kevin.Credit@mu.ie</a>		MUSSI	GY208
Dr Michelle Curran	<a href="mailto:Michelle.Curran@mu.ie">Michelle.Curran@mu.ie</a>	01-474 7680	R-14	GY205
Prof Rowan Fealy	<a href="mailto:Rowan.Fealy@mu.ie">Rowan.Fealy@mu.ie</a>	01-708 4562	L2.3	GY213
Shirley Howe	<a href="mailto:Shirley.Howe@mu.ie">Shirley.Howe@mu.ie</a>	01-708 3610		GY205; GY216; GY261
Carla Sa Ferreira	<a href="mailto:Carla.SaFerreira@mu.ie">Carla.SaFerreira@mu.ie</a>	01-708 3610		GY217
Dr Adrian Kavanagh	<a href="mailto:Adrian.P.Kavanagh@mu.ie">Adrian.P.Kavanagh@mu.ie</a>	01-708 6014	R-6	GY227
Prof Gerry Kearns	<a href="mailto:Gerry.Kearns@mu.ie">Gerry.Kearns@mu.ie</a>	01-708 6153	R-24	GY206; GY209
Dr Carla Mateus	<a href="mailto:Carla.Mateus@mu.ie">Carla.Mateus@mu.ie</a>	01-708 3610	R-5	GY214

Dr Stephen McCarron	<a href="mailto:Stephen.McCarron@mu.ie">Stephen.McCarron@mu.ie</a>	01-708 6147	R-23B	GY208
Dr Martina Roche	<a href="mailto:Martina.J.Roche@mu.ie">Martina.J.Roche@mu.ie</a>	01-708 4566	R-59	GY223
Louise Sarsfield Collins	<a href="mailto:Louise.SarsfieldCollins@mu.ie">Louise.SarsfieldCollins@mu.ie</a>	01-708 6617	R-9	GY234
Dr Nick Scroxton	<a href="mailto:Nick.Scroxton@mu.ie">Nick.Scroxton@mu.ie</a>	01-708 3546	L-2.5	GY201; GY202
Prof Karen Till	<a href="mailto:Karen.Till@mu.ie">Karen.Till@mu.ie</a>	01-708 4550	R-19	GY206; GY249
Dr Chris Van Egeraat	<a href="mailto:Chris.vanegeraat@mu.ie">Chris.vanegeraat@mu.ie</a>	01-708 4714	R-10	GY221

R=Rhetoric House (South Campus)

L=Laraghbryan (North Campus)

### Tutorial Coordinator

If you have questions about GY201/GY202 allocations, you can email the Coordinator at [geogmethods2@mu.ie](mailto:geogmethods2@mu.ie). Make sure your email includes your name, student number, the Geography modules you are taking, and your other subject(s).

You can find out about all other staff in the Department of Geography on our staff webpage: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/geography/our-people>

### 3. Programme Structure

In Second Year, we have a wide range of degree options and modules for you to choose from. First, we provide details on the different degree options and structures; then we give some information on the different modules that are available this year.

You can study Geography in the following ways:

- As a **Single Major** (60 credits/ECTS)
- As a **Major** (40 credits/ECTS)
- As a **Double Major** (30 credits/ECTS)
- As a **Minor** (20 credits/ECTS)
- As part of **MH203** [Biological and Geographical Sciences] (20 credits/ECTS)

Each degree option has different requirements (see the table below)

	Module	Code	ECTS	Single Major (60 ECTS)	Major (40 ECTS)	Double Major (30 ECTS)	Minor (20 ECTS)	MH203 (20 credits)
SEMESTER 1	Methods of Geographical Analysis 1	GY201	5	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
	Reading Geography	GY209	5	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Climatology	GY213	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✓
	Geomorphology	GY214	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✓
	Economic Geography	GY221	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✗
	Geography of Rural Development	GY223	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✗
	Political Geography	GY227	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✗
	Social and Cultural Geography	GY234	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✗
	Global Environmental Change 1	GY260	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✗
SEMESTER 2	Methods of Geographical Analysis 2	GY202	5	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
	Geography Field Trip (Ireland)	GY205	5	✗	✓	☆	✗	✗
	Geography Field Trip (Overseas)	GY206	5	✓	☆	⊙	⊙	✗
	Field Methods and Data Analysis	GY208	5	✗	✗	✗	☆	⊙
	Hydrology and Water Resources	GY212	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✓
	Hazards and Society	GY216	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✗
	Biogeography	GY217	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✓
	Urban Geography	GY222	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✗
	Geographies of Justice	GY249	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✗
	Global Environmental Change 2	GY261	5	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	✗

- ✓ means the module is **required** for this degree option
- ✗ means the module is **not available** for this degree option
- ⊙ means the module is **optional** for the degree option
- ☆ means the module **may be available** for this degree option. Check with the module coordinator.

## Semester 1 Modules

Required:  
Single Major  
Major  
Double Major

### **GY201 Methods of Geographical Analysis 1 (Staff: Dr Nick Scroxton and others)**

This weekly research methods class covers aspects of research including planning, data collection, analysis, and presentation techniques, using both primary and secondary data sources. GY201 is a practical, hands-on module, with students learning key skills for future success in second and third-year Geography, and future employment.

*Assessment:* 100% Continuous Assessment.

Single  
Majors  
only

### **GY209 Reading Geography (Staff: Prof Gerry Kearns)**

This module offers an introduction to different aspects of life within a University Geography Department, with especial reference to Maynooth Geography Department. Students will see what Geography lecturers/researchers do, what they research and what they write, in addition to gaining a better appreciation of the diverse nature of Geography as a subject. This module will also explore, and begin to develop a critical appreciation of, writings in Geography. It will examine different structures of writing, including book chapters, journal papers and policy reports, and establish how arguments are formulated and constructed. It will draw out the selection of appropriate research methods, which may subsequently inform the students' research dissertations.

*Assessment:* 100% Continuous Assessment

Required:  
MH203

### **GY213 Climatology (Staff: Prof Rowan Fealy)**

This module is designed to impart a basic awareness of atmospheric processes and their function in explaining climatic variation on various area and temporal scales. Major advances have been made in the past few decades in the understanding both of the nature and significance of atmospheric processes and the manner in which regional variations in climate can be understood in terms of the balance between such processes. During the past decade a growing awareness of the climatic dimension to many pressing problems such as food supply, population growth, resource depletion and environmental pollution has also become widespread, as have concerns regarding the impacts of imminent climatic changes associated with anthropogenic effects on the atmosphere. This module examines the main controls on climate at a number of different spatial and temporal scales. *Assessment:* 100% Continuous Assessment

Required:  
MH203

### **GY214 Geomorphology (Staff: Dr Carla Mateus)**

Geomorphology is the scientific study of the Earth's surface. Varied forces of nature (exogenic and endogenic) act to shape the earth's surface over a variety of spatial (e.g. catchment to river meander) and temporal (e.g. daily to tectonic) scales. These forces act upon the physical structure of the Earth to create the physical landscape around us, one that is subject to continual change. This change can be slow or rapid, and can vary over time depending upon key controlling factors/variables such as climate, sea-level, tectonic uplift etc, some principles of physical geography. Geomorphology attempts to understand such processes in different parts of the world today and in the past, and their role in landscape formation. It also aims to allow students who successfully complete the module to be able to interpret how the Irish landscape has come to look the way it has.

*Assessment:* 67% Continuous Assessment; 33% University Scheduled Written Examination (60 minutes)

### **GY221 Economic Geography (Staff: Dr Chris van Egeraat)**

This module provides a grounding into Economic Geography, the longest established and one of the most dynamic sub-discipline of Human Geography. The module starts with the approaches to understanding the spatial organisation of production and consumption. Subsequently the module will explore of a number of current topics of the sub-discipline. The module focuses on the evolution of the

global economic map, the spatial expression of contemporary economic change, with particular reference to globalisation, transnational corporations, the growth of service activities and related social polarisation in cities, new trends in consumer behaviour, shopping malls and the geographies of finance. Special sections are devoted to the impact of these changing processes on Ireland. Enrolment does not require any previous grounding in economics.

*Assessment:* 33% Continuous Assessment; 67% University Scheduled Written Examination (90 mins)

### **GY223 Geography of Rural Development (Staff: Dr Martina Roche)**

The main objective is to enable students to develop an understanding of the principal processes that underpin the restructuring of agricultural production and the formulation of rural development policies and strategies. This module explores contemporary issues in rural geography in both Ireland and Europe. The module examines the main drivers of change affecting rural areas and the how our understanding of the 'rural' has changed over time. Particular attention will be given to existing and emerging challenges for rural areas and the role of public policies, both at European and national levels. Specific thematic areas addressed will include the changing role of agriculture, urban-rural relations, rural poverty and strategies for rural development.

*Assessment:* 67% Continuous Assessment; 33% University Scheduled Written Examination (60 minutes)

### **GY227 Political Geography (Staff: Dr Adrian Kavanagh)**

The objectives of this modules are to give an introduction to the key themes of Political Geography; namely geography of political conflict, electoral geography, geopolitics, as well as a means to encourage students to engage more with current affairs, both in international and Irish terms. Politics impacts on people's lives at a range of spatial scales, extending from the local to the regional, national, European and global levels. Geographers offer a unique perspective on politics and political behaviour and an approach that differs from that offered by the field of political science. This module introduces some of the key themes within Political Geography, namely electoral geography, the process of policy making (using environmental policy making as a case study), geopolitics and the geography of political conflict. One section of the module will focus on key themes within the field of electoral geography, with specific reference to Ireland - electoral systems and the geographies of voter turnout and political support. The next section will offer a brief introduction to the processes of policy making and policy implementation, with a focus on environmental policy making as a case study here. The final section of the module, which is international in scope, focuses on the themes of states, nations and nationalism, geopolitics, and the geography of political conflict. NB: It is not assumed that students will have prior knowledge of politics/political issues coming into this module.

*Assessment:* 67% Continuous Assessment; 33% University Scheduled Written Examination (60 minutes)

### **GY234 Social and Cultural Geography (Staff: Louise Sarsfield Collins)**

This module introduces students to social geography and cultural geography, two of the most dynamic fields of study within human geography. It focuses on the relationship between space and society, expressed through the emergence of social and cultural differences and inequalities. The module also examines key themes such as power, identity and exclusion, and their theoretical and empirical importance within social and cultural geography.

*Assessment:* 50% Continuous Assessment; 50% University Scheduled Written Examination (60 minutes)



## Semester 1 and 2 Modules

### **GY260 Global Environmental Change 1 and GY261 Global Environmental Change 2 (Staff: TBC & Shirley Howe)**

There are few aspects of modernity more striking and significant than the changes that society has made to the physical and biotic environment. These changes have been so significant that we now refer to a new geological age, the Anthropocene, a period in which the primary drivers of planetary change are human actions rather than natural processes. The scale of these climatic and environmental changes becomes ever more evident and urgent, as droughts, floods, species loss, and viral pandemics occur with increasing frequency and intensity. At the same time, the fall-out of this ongoing ecological crisis is not experienced equally – parts of the world and sections of the population that have been historically marginalised carry the greatest burden of climate and environmental breakdown despite being the least responsible. Responding to these pressing challenges requires a critical and interdisciplinary understanding of how social and physical processes interact in a complex world. We need to be informed about earth systems science and planetary boundaries while at the same time understanding the societal forces that have given rise to such an unequal and ecologically devastating global economic system. Geography is the discipline best suited to this task. In this course, students will gain a broad, critical understanding of human and physical geography approaches to global environmental change, as well as reflecting on their own place within a climate-changed world.

#### **Module and Elective Structure:**

The GY260/1 elective stream is run over two modules in semester 1 and semester 2. In semester 1, students will be introduced to key perspectives within human geography for understanding the interactions between nature and society, and how these help us to identify the societal drivers of global environmental change. Key questions include: When did humans start altering environments at a global scale? How do we explain why this happened? What are the key drivers of continued environmental devastation and where are they being challenged? How can we, as students and citizens living in Ireland, best respond to the overwhelming challenge of climate change and biodiversity loss today? In the second semester, module two will explore earth system components and trends and the role that physical geography plays in understanding and assessing global environmental change. Students will also explore in more detail contemporary societal responses to the climate change and related environmental challenges.

Either or both of these modules (GY260, GY261) are available to all Second Year Geography students, but they are designed as a package to be taken together.

*Assessment:* **GY260:** 100% Continuous Assessment

**GY261:** 50% Continuous Assessment; 50% University Scheduled Written Examination (60 minutes)

## Semester 2 Modules

Required:  
Single Major  
Major  
Double major

### **GY202 Methods of Geographical Analysis 2 (Staff: Dr Nick Scroxtton and others)**

This weekly research methods class covers aspects of research including planning, data collection, analysis, and presentation techniques, building on the work carried out in GY201. GY202 is a practical, hands-on module, with students learning key skills for future success in second and third-year Geography, and future employment. Students will carry out a number of projects during the module – each involving different aspects of geography and different research approaches and methods.

*Assessment:* 100% Continuous Assessment.

Required:  
Majors

### **GY205 Geography Field Trip (Ireland) (Staff: Shirley Howe, Dr Stephen McCarron, Dr Michelle Curran)**

Fieldwork is one of the richest learning experiences open to any discipline, and a specialism of Geography. In this module, within the island(s) of Ireland, students will engage in the collection and analysis of data, prepare and make presentations on daytime site visits and independent research.

*Assessment:* 100% Continuous Assessment

Required:  
Single  
Majors

### **GY206 Geography Field Trip (Overseas) (Staff: Prof Gerry Kearns, Prof Karen Till)**

Experiencing another country is a very valuable, enriching learning experience in Geography. It is a chance to apply observational skills in an unknown (at least in the fieldwork context) location. This module will involve travel to an international location to expand the opportunities for observation and reflection, particularly on more familiar and commonly accepted aspects of 'home'. The directed fieldwork activities will involve the collection and analysis of data at field sites and during coach excursions. The emphasis will be on group-based activity and learning experiences.

*Assessment:* 100% Continuous Assessment

### **GY208 Field Methods and Data Analysis (Staff: Dr Stephen McCarron, Dr Kevin Credit, Dr Michelle Curran)**

How do we know about Physical Geography? How do we do research? The fascinating ideas and information about our physical and biological environment that you read about in textbooks and papers are all based on careful and often painstaking data collection and research. It is contributing to this research that excites us as physical geographers. How do you become a Geographer rather than merely studying geography? For students the transition to research starts in your final year when you undertake your own thesis or research project. After this come opportunities in academia, industry, government and consultancies, to investigate geographical problems as a career. Also, if you want to teach geography it helps to have field skills to teach others. This module offers a behind-the-scenes look at what makes effective research in physical geography. You will learn skills in how to do Geography. The module combines hands-on experience in collecting data in fieldwork sessions and analysing that data in computer labs. There will be fieldwork in this module attendance at which is essential. Most of the fieldwork will be local, or on campus, in 2-hour scheduled sessions.

*Assessment:* 100% Continuous Assessment.

Required:  
MH203

### **GY212 Hydrology and Water Resources (Staff: TBC)**

The objectives of this module are to provide an understanding of the distribution, movement and quality of water on and below the surface of the earth. This module focuses on the basic principles of hydrology, which is the study of the occurrence, distribution, movement and quality of water on and below the earth's surface. Focusing on the river catchment, the different flow pathways are defined, to explain how rainfall is transferred from hillslopes to river channels. Each catchment has a unique response to rainfall, influenced by climatic factors and catchment characteristics (e.g., size, topography, land-use). These are

explored, with each student carrying out basic hydrological analysis for a different catchment in Ireland using rainfall and river flow data that are available from Met Éireann and the Environmental Protection Agency. Leading on from this, floods and flood management are considered to examine the appropriateness of a range of management strategies in different contexts. The module also considers water below the surface (soil moisture and aquifers), the environmental consequences of groundwater pollution and over-extraction, and water supply in Ireland.

*Assessment:* 67% Continuous Assessment; 33% University Scheduled Written Examination (60 minutes)

### **GY216 Hazards and Society (Staff: Shirley Howe)**

This module's objectives are to provide an understanding of the dynamics of common hazards and to question if 'Natural Disasters' are entirely natural. Today, the world is facing disaster on an unprecedented scale with more than 255 million people, on average, being affected by disasters globally each year between 1994 and 2003. It is therefore critical that we aim to improve our understanding of natural hazards and the how these hazards interact with societies to result in disasters. The geographer, through understanding the physical dynamics of hazards and key social processes has a lot to offer this field of study. The module will include topics such as; critiques of past approaches to understanding and managing disasters; auditing and examining trends in disasters; understanding the processes giving rise to common hazards; examining theories of vulnerability and resilience; early warning for loss reduction; emerging issues for hazards and disasters such as climate change, and the growth of mega-cities.

*Assessment:* 50% Continuous Assessment; 50% University Scheduled Written Examination (60 minutes)

### **GY217 Biogeography (Staff: Carla Sa Ferreira)**

Biogeography is a key component of the physical environment through its focus on plant and animal distributions and ecosystems. This module will provide an introduction to what is biodiversity, how it is perceived and how it is measured. We will examine patterns of biodiversity at local, regional and global spatial and temporal scales. Changing patterns in the geography of life are at the heart of this truly interdisciplinary subject. The module explores the distribution of plants and animals from an environmental perspective, where climate and habitats dictate the spread of populations. It goes on to examine ecosystem theory and how interactions between organisms contribute to their distribution patterns. The section on historical biogeography considers the age-old processes of evolution, plate tectonics and quaternary environmental change and their effects on biodiversity. Colonisation and extinction are at the heart of island biogeography and their investigation provides an insight into key processes shaping species distribution patterns. The module concludes with an evaluation of the current extinction crisis, the spread of invasive species, the challenges faced by small populations, and conservation management.

*Assessment:* 50% Continuous Assessment; 50% University Scheduled Written Examination (60 minutes)

### **GY222 Urban Geography (Staff: Prof Mark Boyle)**

Considering that we now live in a predominantly urban world and that levels of global urbanisation are set to increase, the study of cities and urban places is of major significance. This module introduces students to some of the key themes, concepts and debates characterising historical and contemporary urban geography. Among the topics covered initially are conceptualisations of the urban condition, theories of urban evolution and processes of historic and contemporary urbanisation. The course then focuses on urban geographies of the global north through an examination of contemporary shifts in urban structure, urban form and urban economy, the crisis of the inner city and cities as key sites of accumulation in the global economic system. Finally, the module carefully considers themes of conflict and contestation in urban environments through an exploration of inner-city regeneration policies, processes of gentrification and new approaches to city governance. Case studies for this module will be drawn primarily from cities in Europe, North America, Australia and China.

Required:  
MH203

**Assessment:** 100% Continuous Assessment

### **GY249 Geographies of Justice (Staff: Prof Karen Till)**

How might we think about justice, resistance and solidarity at a time of social, political, and environmental crises? How can we create better futures together? This five-credit lecture module discusses what geographical approaches to justice offer beyond existing Western models of criminal and social justice. Thinking geographically about justice means considering more than laws and political theories. A geographical approach to justice is place-based, multi-scalar and relational. It means to acknowledge how historical and current power geometries and geopolitics, varying environmental and cultural circumstances, and social-ecological axes of difference have affected people's (and other species') lives and environments. It also means to imagine and enact forms of resistance to injustice and work together in solidarity at different scales. In this class, we will find inspiration from activist, community- and place-based movements that seek to care for more just, inclusive, sustainable and healthy environments for people, other species and our earth. We adopt an anti-colonial, feminist and anti-racist geographical approach to consider historical examples of in/justice, resistance and solidarity in Ireland and North America in the past and present (some examples from other parts of the world may be introduced). By learning about the historical geographies of colonialism, students can begin to acknowledge past wrongs, consider challenges to ongoing forms of oppression, explore appropriate forms of reparative and healing justice, and begin the work of creating healthier futures together. The module draws insights from North American Indigenous, feminist and Irish activist social movements, and considers different subfields of human geography (cultural, social, historical, political and environmental) to examine: the importance of local knowledges, placenames and cultures; communal forms of land ownership and management; legacies of colonialism, slavery, capitalism and other processes in the present that produce and affect current-day uneven geographies and power relations; activist movements that challenge oppression and offer alternative approaches to justice. Thinking geographically about justice also means starting the work of resistance and solidarity where you live. The module is intended to empower students to begin identifying possible 'Geographies of In/Justice' in their own hometowns and cities through a project based upon student's original research, including documenting placenames, analysing historic maps, interpreting landscapes, and imagining more just futures at home.

**Assessment:** 67% Continuous Assessment and 33% Exam

## **4. After Second Year**

We hope you enjoy your experience in Second Year Geography, and that it has made you interested in other places. If so, we wanted to draw your attention to the Study Abroad Options that are available to you after Second Year.

### **Erasmus and North American Exchange Opportunities**

One of the greatest opportunities presented at university is the possibility of spending an academic year in a university overseas. At Maynooth University, a wide range of destinations in Europe and North America is available to students through Erasmus and international bilateral exchange agreements. Not only does the study-abroad option provide students with greater diversity in terms of their academic experience but it also exposes students to different cultures and to different administrative, social, economic and political systems, experience which can be a significant advantage when seeking employment after college. The study-abroad option is particularly relevant for students of geography, where students can gain practical experience of subjects covered in lecture modules through being immersed in a different cultural system.

The Erasmus programme aims to promote European cooperation and to improve the quality of education through partnership across national boundaries. While finding the academic experience very valuable, participating students also find the social and cultural aspects of the exchange very rewarding. The Geography Department has student exchange agreements with the University of Lund (Sweden), the University of Amsterdam (the Netherlands), Roskilde University (Denmark), the University of Uppsala (Sweden) and the University of Bremen (Germany), each of which offers courses through English, representing an excellent opportunity for a nine-month study-abroad option.

Major and Double Major students of Geography and a language subject are also encouraged to consider an Erasmus exchange and should consult the International Coordinator in each Department. Maynooth University geography students have their Erasmus exchanges at, amongst others, the Université de Paris-Nanterre (Paris X), the Universidad de Valladolid, Universidad de Alcalá (Madrid) and the Universidad de Alicante.

One of our most popular North American exchange programmes is with the University of Kentucky (Lexington) and we would encourage students to consider availing of this student exchange programme, which, to date, has been a very positive academic and cultural experience for visiting students. We are also building upon our links with other North American universities.

### Procedures

Students applying to spend a year abroad will transfer from the B.A. degree to the B.A. International degree with the study-abroad year taking place in year 3 and students return to complete their 4th (final) year in Maynooth University. No tuition fees are payable and under the Erasmus programme there is a student grant available to cover part of the costs of living abroad. Students applying must do so in their second year.

For the full list of possible European and North American study-abroad destinations and for details on application and other procedures, see the International Office website at [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international). Students interested in applying should make contact with the International Office Departmental Coordinator: [Carla.Mateus@mu.ie](mailto:Carla.Mateus@mu.ie)

## 5. Resources for Student Success

In Second Year, the intensity of study and assessment increases. In this section of the Second Year Handbook, we want to provide you with pointers to many of the resources available to help you succeed at Maynooth University. You will find all this information on our webpage

(<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/geography/handbooks>) and on Moodle.

### 1. Keeping in touch with the Department of Geography

You can keep in touch with the Department of Geography on Moodle, by email, by Microsoft Teams, during drop in/office hours, and through the Department of Geography website. Click [here](#) for a quick guide on how to communicate with staff in the Department.

Drop-in/office hours are times that your lecturers have reserved for you. They are the best time to contact your lecturer for a quick chat about any questions or concerns you have. Every lecturer has drop-in/office hours every week, so we encourage you to use them.

### 2. Using Moodle

Moodle is the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) used by Maynooth University. We use Moodle to provide information about each year of study, and about each individual module. You can learn more about using Moodle [here](#). Each of your modules has its own Moodle page, and there is also a Moodle page for [Second Year Geography](#)

### 3. Using Microsoft Teams

Maynooth University uses Microsoft Teams, and so you will have access to Teams: you can use it to send a message to your lecturer or classmates, to set up online meetings, and to attend online meetings, tutorials and lectures (if necessary). You can learn more about Microsoft Teams [here](#).

### 4. How to do well in Assignments

Your lecturers will give you detailed instructions on assignments. You should read these carefully and follow them closely. Sometimes, lecturers will provide you with 'grade-related criteria': this gives information on what is expected if you are to be awarded a particular grade. If the instructions or grade-related criteria are not clear to you, you can contact your lecturer to ask for clarification. Make sure you are fully familiar with academic standards of referencing and citation, and how to avoid plagiarism and collusion.

The Department of Geography policy is that, unless a member of the teaching staff explicitly gives you permission for a specific assignment, you are not permitted to use '**generative AI**' software or services (such as Chat-GPT) to create any text, in part or full, for any of your assignments. Failure to follow this ruling will be considered, and treated as, plagiarism. In line with university policy, where there is any suspicion of plagiarism, the examiner will have the opportunity to examine the student in an oral examination, which will then be a compulsory part of the examination process for that student.

Click [here](#) for *The Reference Point*, and click [here](#) to learn more about plagiarism and collusion.

We understand that life is complicated, and sometimes you may miss an assignment deadline or tutorial or examination, or you may be unable to attend class. Because of this, we have set up a system called **Personal and Medical Circumstances (PMC)**, which you **should** use if you have missed deadlines, classes or are experiencing other issues that are making it difficult for you to do your best. Click [here](#) for more information about the PMC system, including how to submit a PMC form.

## 5. Marks and Standards

'Marks and Standards' is the term Maynooth University uses to indicate what you need to pass a year of study, and what grade you will be awarded. You can learn more about marks and standards for the University by clicking this [link](#). You can learn about 'grade-related criteria' in the Department of Geography [here](#).

## 6. Using the Library

The Library has a wide range of study spaces for you to work on your own or with others. It has resources that include laptops, books, journals – some physical, some online – and it has a range of tutorials and training courses to help you find the support you need for your studies. Your MyCard (student card) gives you access to the library and allows you to borrow material, and you can also access library resources off campus by logging in.

To get familiar with the Library, you should explore the Library homepage: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library>; and sign up for [LIST \(Library & Information Skills Tutorials\)](#). You should also check out the Subject guide for Geography: <https://nuim.libguides.com/geography>

## 7. University Resources

We wanted to highlight the different supports that Maynooth University provides to help you during your time here. There are two types of support that are available to all students: Academic Supports; and Student Supports.

### Academic Supports

- The [Academic Advisory Office](#) provides general help for students who are encountering difficulties. You can email [advisory.office@mu.ie](mailto:advisory.office@mu.ie) or completing the enquiry form [here](#)
- The [Programme Advisory Office](#) helps students with programme-related decisions. The email is [programme.choices@mu.ie](mailto:programme.choices@mu.ie)
- The [Maths Support Centre](#) offers help with Maths to undergraduate students. Check out the services and resources available [here](#).
- [Academic Writing Support](#) offers help with writing to any students. You can make an individual appointment online. Details on how to book an appointment are [here](#).

### Student Supports

Student Services offers a wide range of supports from their base in the Student Services Building on the North Campus. The full range of supports is detailed on their [website](#).

- To make an individual appointment with the Student Support Officer, email [student.support@mu.ie](mailto:student.support@mu.ie) or click [here](#)
- The Student Counselling Service has self-help resources and information on making an appointment with a counsellor on its [website](#).
- Information about the Health Centre, including how to make an appointment, is available [here](#).
- You can book an appointment with the Student Budgeting Advice Service [here](#); you can also find out about the Student Assistance Fund, laptop and emergency loans and other financial supports.
- Learn about the supports and resources provided by the Chaplaincy [here](#).

In addition, there is specific support for particular groups of students, including International Students, Mature Students, HEAR and DARE students, and Maynooth Access Programme students. The 2023/24 Access representative for the Department of Geography is Dr. Conor Cahalane (Email: [Conor.Cahalane@mu.ie](mailto:Conor.Cahalane@mu.ie), Tel: 01-708 3748; Rhetoric House Room 7).



## **8. Getting involved with the Department of Geography**

There are lots of opportunities for you to get involved in the Department of Geography, such as the Geography Society and the Staff-Student Committee. Find out about these opportunities [here](#).

## **9. Careers in Geography**

A degree in Geography opens up all kinds of possible careers. We've prepared a guide on careers for Geography graduates, and you can access it [here](#). You can also read about the diverse careers of (just some) of our Maynooth Geography graduates here: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/daro/our-graduates>

## **10. What to do if you have a problem?**

[In this guide](#), we provide information on what to do if you have a problem that we in the Department of Geography can help with.

## **11. Athena Swan**

The Athena Swan Charter is a national strategy to promote gender equality in higher education and was launched in Ireland by the Higher Education Authority in 2015. The Department of Geography has committed itself to the Athena Swan process. You can read more about Athena Swan in the Department of Geography [here](#).