

Maynooth University Academic Systems

A brief guide for University Staff
Version April 2019

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Introduction

This is intended as a guide to the University academic systems for academic staff. It is not intended to cover all the detail of each process, as that would make the guide too long to be useful. Instead, it is intended to provide an outline of the processes, and information about where to go to find out more.

This guide is mainly focussed on Registry systems, and specifically:

Curriculum management: Managing the record of the academic curriculum on the Academic Database, normally referred to as 'ADB', including the modules available, and the structure of academic courses and programmes. The ADB is the system of record for all programme structure information.

Academic Timetable: Planning and managing the academic timetable for the University. This system is called Syllabus+, normally referred to as 'S+'. All programme information necessary for timetabling is extracted to S+ from the ADB.

Student Records: Maintaining accurate records of the academic progress of every student. This information is held in the student records system called ITS Integrator, normally referred to as 'ITS'. It is on this system that students register each year. Individual student transcript information is generated from ITS.

Examinations: Organizing university-managed examinations, and processing of student results. Grading is conducted on ITS and it is from ITS that individual judgement sheets are generated.

External Examiners: Managing the external examiners for courses and for individual research theses.

Conferring: Organizing and managing conferring and awards ceremonies for graduates.

This document will change as processes change, people move roles, and as more detail is added. Each version has a version date, so if you find you have multiple versions, please delete the older ones.

1 . The basics

ECTS system:

Maynooth University uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). A credit is a unit of student work, and one credit is calculated as 20-25 hours of student effort. A full time academic year of study over two semesters (9 months) is the equivalent of 60 credits. A full time calendar year of study (12 months) may accumulate up to 90 credits.

National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

Maynooth University Awards are assigned a level according to the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. In this framework the main university awards are classified as follows:

Award	Level
Honours Degree Higher Diploma	8
Master's degree Postgraduate Diploma	9
Doctoral degree	10
Certificate	Multiple levels

<http://www.nfq-qqi.com/>

Terminology

Module	A module is unit of study. Each module has a credit weight indicating the volume of work involved. Maynooth University uses standard module sizes which are multiples of 2.5 credits. A module may be graded , in which case the result is a numerical mark, or ungraded , in which case the result is either passed or not passed.
Programme	A programme is a course of study leading to an award of the University. Each programme has a unique qualification code in the Registry systems. The qualification code is associated with a programme specification which indicates the number of credits required, the modules which may be studied, and the modules which must be studied.
Subject	In some cases a programme includes multiple subjects. A subject is a subset of a programme of study, normally focussed on a specific discipline. A subject may have defined requirements which must be met in order to progress in that subject, or graduate with an award in that subject.
Period of Study	A multi-annual programme may be divided into periods of study, normally coinciding with academic years. Students are normally required to reach a certain standard in each period of study before progressing to the next. A PoS is normally referred to as a "year", for example "First year". The term Period of Study is used in the system to avoid confusion in cases where a student repeats, and therefore registers for a PoS in more than one academic year.

2. Curriculum management: The Academic Database (ADB)

The University has a central record of the curriculum including details of all modules on offer, and all academic programmes. This database (known as “the Academic Database” or ADB) is the system of record for the University curriculum. The information is used for a number of purposes:

- i) It feeds the Course Finder website, which is available to the public and informs students and prospective students about the content of programmes and modules. Course Finder is accessed via ‘For staff’ or ‘For Current Students’ on the main University website.
- ii) It defines the programme structure for the student records system and so regulates student registration. Students cannot register online for a module unless it is linked with the programme they are studying. Special permission is normally required if a student is to be permitted to register for a module not linked to their programme.
- iii) It informs registration as it indicates if modules are compulsory or optional and if they have a quota. Module information is synced between the ADB and ITS in advance of annual online registration.
- iv) It informs the timetable, as it indicates which modules are on offer in each semester.
- v) It informs the examinations system, as it indicates which modules have centrally organised exams, and which modules allow resit opportunities. It also informs annual examination grading with information relating to module assessment breakdown, capping, and graded (numeric value) and ungraded (passed/not passed) modules.
- vi) It feeds the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment, and drives the creation of a Moodle space for each module.
- vii) It holds undergraduate and postgraduate admissions data including application closing dates and entry requirements.
- viii) The ADB is also the source of programme data on department websites and the University’s Web Courses. The Communications Office updates these website based on data extracted from the ADB (normally twice a week).

Departments are given editing access to the ADB annually, usually with a closing date in March. This closing date is used to facilitate preparation of the lecture timetable, to allow necessary work in advance of registration and to allow students to have full information in advance of making module choices. Qualification level updates are not available to departments; these can only be updated by the Academic Database office.

The ADB is also opened to departments to facilitate updates to postgraduate Admissions level information. This normally occurs in December-January each year.

It is very important to ensure that the information in the Academic Database (ADB) is accurate, as it is used as the system of record in dealing with student programme complaints, and it feeds

registration and timetable and other systems. The information is carried over year on year so careful checking is needed if a programme is being modified or discontinued

At module level, the person responsible for the module should check that:

Section	Key things to check
Description	Module description is accurate and appropriate for prospective students and external readers seeking to assess a transcript. Ensure that the text is properly proof-read.
Teaching and Learning	Contact hours are accurate, and total hours (including independent study) are approximately 25 hours per credit. The workload in the module descriptor is used by Timetabling when scheduling lectures and classes.
Assessment	Indicates whether or not there is a University Scheduled Examination. Note that a University Scheduled Examination means an examination managed by the Exams Office. Tests administered by departments are classified as Continuous Assessment.
Repeat options	Repeat options are accurate. The normal expectation is that any University Scheduled exam can be taken as a resit in autumn, and that this is not normally capped. Departments may decide whether or not to allow resit options for Continuous Assessment, and may decide whether or not to cap the mark in these.
Learning outcomes	Ensure description is accurate and appropriate for external readers seeking to assess course content.

At programme/subject level, the person responsible for the programme should check that:

Topic	Key things to check
Current modules	Ensure that modules on offer are active, are in the correct semester, have the correct credit weighting, and are linked to the correct subject. Ensure that modules not on offer are "inactive". Ensure that the title accurately reflects the content. The module title in the system is limited to 43 characters.
Curriculum	There should be sufficient modules for a student to meet the programme requirements. There should be sufficient modules in each semester to allow an even distribution of workload. For example, a subject that comprises 30 credits in one year should have at least 15 in each semester.

Compulsory modules	<p>Modules should be tagged as compulsory only when they are core content without which the subject/programme is not defensible.</p> <p>Over-use of compulsory modules restricts student choice. For example, in second year Arts, a student doing a double major in a subject may do 25-30 credits of that subject. In order to allow that there should be no more than 10 credits of compulsory material in each semester.</p>
Required modules	<p>If a module is required, this means that the module must be passed without compensation in order to progress in the subject/programme. Required modules should only be used when there is a strong academic justification.</p> <p>Note that “required” is a characteristic at subject level, so a module may be required for one subject, and not required in another subject.</p>
Timetable conditions	<p>In multi-subject degrees, each subject is assigned core timetable slots. A core curriculum, including all compulsory modules, must be provided in these core times, as it must be assumed that any other time will clash for some students.</p> <p>Optional modules may be offered outside of core time, once it is clear that a student will never be forced to take these. It must be assumed that the student could have a compulsory module in another subject at that time.</p>
Modules from other departments	<p>Modules from other departments may be listed as part of a subject. However, based on the timetable principle above, if the module is in a different timetable group it should only be an option.</p>

For curriculum issues please contact curriculum@mu.ie

For timetabling issues, please contact timetable@mu.ie

3. Registration

The Student Records Office manages student registration. Students coming through from the CAO (undergraduate) and PAC (postgraduate) will receive email instructions from the Student Records Office to register online for their programme of study. Note that **all** students, including research postgraduates, are required to register at the beginning of each academic year and will receive an email to this effect from the Student Records Officer.

Within their programme, every student who is taking a module should be registered for that module. This applies even to repeating students, visiting students, and students who are fee exempt. Students can normally register on-line, but at the start of a programme are normally required to attend in person to verify their identity. Students should receive instructions from the Student Records Office telling them where and when to register. For those who register late, there is a late registration fee of €100.

First year students can change their choice of modules on-line during the first 3 weeks of semester 1, and the first 2 weeks of semester 2. All other students can change their choice of modules in the first two weeks of semester one and again in the first two weeks of semester two. After that, any changes require written approval from the Head of Department, and the student is charged a late amendment fee of €50. Note that students are not able to de-register themselves from compulsory modules online. They are also not able to de-register themselves from a yearlong module at the beginning of semester two.

Students who are repeating a year of study must register in person with the Student Records Office in September; they cannot register via online registration.

Once registered, students are issued with a student card. If a card is lost, a replacement can be issued in the Student Records office (Humanity House). A replacement charge of €20 applies.

Once students are registered, staff can see their details through the Staff Workbench.

<https://apps.maynoothuniversity.ie/workbench/>

- The “classlist” function allows you to generate a list of all students registered for any module.
- The “Student Biographical” function shows current students and displays contact details, registration status and timetable.
- The “Student history” function displays all modules taken, and results (even for students no longer registered).

To enable these functions on your computer, contact the IT Services Helpdesk.

De-registration: A student withdrawing from a programme must de-register (with the Student Records Office). This is particularly important for undergraduates who are availing of the free fees scheme, as the time spent registered reduces the eligibility for free fees in future. Students often think that simply by telling the academic department, they have formally deregistered. This can be

an expensive mistake. If a student tells you of an intention to leave, please make sure to stress the need to deregister properly.

Extension, suspension and re-registration: Postgraduate students should be registered continuously until they complete the programme. Students frequently ask to extend or suspend their registration – often using the two terms interchangeably.

- Extension means an extra period of time (usually to finish a thesis). There is a standard form available from the Registry website. <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/registry> An extension must be approved by the Head of Department and the Dean of Graduate Studies or Registrar. The student normally pays a continuation fee (about 60% of the credit weighted fee) for each extra semester of registration.

In exceptional cases, the fee for extension can be waived. This is normally allowed when there has been a serious illness, and where the normal fee for the course has been paid (if it is a two year course the student should have paid for two full years before any waivers are applied). To seek a waiver the Head of Department should write to the Fees office. Fee waivers need approval from the Bursar or Dean of Graduate Studies and usually take a few weeks to be considered.

- Suspension means a time away from study. While a student is suspended there is no fee, but the student is not expected to have access to the library, or the supervisor, or to be working on the thesis. A suspension must be requested using the dedicated form (available from the Registry website) and approved by the Head of Department and the VPA/Registrar. They should be requested in good time as retrospective suspensions will not be considered. A student in receipt of scholarship funding should also ensure to notify the funding body of the break in their studies.
- Re-registration: postgraduate students who have not been continuously registered, and who have not been granted a formal suspension must apply to re-register to their programme. The re-registration (via a dedicated form available on the Registry website) must be approved by the Head of Department and the Registrar. On their return, they are normally expected to follow the current programme as displayed on Course Finder.

Suspensions and re-registration requests are normally only considered if there no fees outstanding on the student's record. Both types of requests must also be signed by the Fees and Grants Office before final approval.

Uneven registration: A full time student taking 60 credits is normally expected to take 30 credits in each semester. A student may choose to take an uneven workload, but a maximum of 35 credits is allowed in any one semester.

Extra credits: A student in a full time undergraduate programme is normally expected to take 60 credits. A student may take up to 10 extra credits, bringing the total to 70. This is allowed under a number of different circumstances:

- a) If the student has a credit deficit, and therefore needs extra credits to complete the degree.

- b) If the student has permission from the Registrar or the relevant department to take extra credit.
- c) If the student is taking extra credit outside of the degree. In this case these extra credits are treated as a separate registration, and do not contribute to the calculation of the marks for the degree.

In all cases extra credit can result in an additional fee.

Contacts:

Student Records Office: ext 3813 records.office@mu.ie

Graduate Studies Office (re. scholarships): ext 6018, graduatestudies@mu.ie

Forms for withdrawal, deferral etc, available at:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/registry/registry-forms>

The underlying principles of the different request types are detailed at the beginning of each form.

4. Timetabling

The main teaching spaces in the University are timetabled centrally. As there is always pressure for space, departments are asked not to request space that they do not need. A full list of the venues on campus, and the capacity and facilities in each is available at:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/campus-services/theatres-classhalls-av-equipment>

The Timetabling Office is located within the Examinations Office, and schedules rooms for the times from 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday. Outside of these times or outside of term, rooms can be booked through Campus Conference and Accommodation.

After undergraduate students register, they will be able to view an individual timetable from the Timetabling application. This can take up to three days following online registration.

The Timetabling Office is also responsible for scheduling the main University examinations in January, May and August each year.

Timetable information:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams/academic-examination-timetable>

Contacts:

Timetable office: timetable@mu.ie

Campus Conference and Accommodation, ext 6400, reservations@maynoothcampus.com

5. Taught modules

The Head of Department has a responsibility for oversight of the quality of the courses in the department.

There should be a clearly identified person responsible for each module. Some modules are taught by one staff member, in which case the module leader is obvious. For team taught one of the team should be designated as coordinator or module leader, to ensure coordination within the team. This should be clear to the students and the staff as the module co-ordinator name displays on Course Finder.

Where modules are taught by people who are not staff members (occasional staff, adjunct staff, or visitors), a member of staff should have oversight of the module. This is not intended to demean the occasional staff, but simply to ensure that there is a member of staff with oversight of each module.

Each module should be assessed regularly to ensure that it is meeting the requirements. This may be done through the central student evaluation system (SELE) or by an alternative method. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to oversee the review of modules.

Student complaints: Where a student is unhappy with a module and wishes to raise a concern, the normal first step is to make the complaint within the department (to the lecturer, course coordinator, or Head of Department). If a student wishes to escalate the complaint outside the department, the normal sequence is to bring the issue first to the Dean (Faculty Dean for most matters, and Dean of International Affairs or Dean of Graduate Studies for matters related to postgraduate processes), and then to the VPA/Registrar.

Students do not always follow this sequence, but in general, students should be encouraged to raise issues within the department before going outside the department. However it should always be clear to students that they have the possibility to escalate an issue outside the department if they feel they need to.

See the University Teaching and Learning Guidelines at:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies/academic-policies-procedures>

Student behaviour: Where there is a concern about a student's behaviour, the HoD may invoke the University disciplinary process (see the link below). The HoD does not have the authority to expel a student.

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies/university-regulations>

Plagiarism: Where plagiarism is detected, there is a specific procedure which should be followed. See the Maynooth University policy on Plagiarism:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies/academic-policies-procedures>

6. Subject external examiners

Subject external examiners are normally appointed for a three year term, which may be renewed once (a maximum of 6 years). The extern is initially contacted by the Head of Department, and then the HoD proposes this person to the Faculty. The completed “external examiner appointment form” is sent to the Dean’s Office to be brought to Faculty for approval.

Once the external examiner is approved, the Registrar’s Office sends documentation to the external examiner (with copy to the HoD).

External examiners are expected to provide a written report to the Registrar. These are forwarded to Heads of Department, usually late in the first semester, and departments are expected to consider the comments of the extern and provide a written response to the Registrar. The Registrar normally brings a distillation of these comments, and the responses, to the Teaching and Learning Committee of Academic Council.

The external examiner office manages the payment of external examiners, receives the external examiners’ reports, and compiles an annual synthesis report.

For details, including criteria for selection of external examiners, see the external examiner policy at:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies/academic-policies-procedures>

Contact: External Examiner Correspondence extern@mu.ie

7. Assessment and Examinations

The assessment of each module should be designed to reflect the intended learning outcomes and the level of the module. A range of assessments is used, and for administrative purposes these are classified into two categories:

- University scheduled examinations: The exams office arranges the venue, arranges the timetable, provides invigilators, and provides supports for students with specific needs. Academic departments are asked to provide the exam papers (the appropriate number for each exam, plus surplus), in a “ready to go” pack. University scheduled examinations are restricted to standard durations, and may be 60, 90, 120 or 180 minutes in duration.
- Continuous assessment: This is a wide range including essays, assignments, interviews, and locally-organised examinations. In a locally-organised examination, the academic department arranges its own test, and arranges the venue, invigilation and supports.

The Exams Office draws its information from the ADB (to identify the modules which require exams) and the student records system (ITS) (to identify which students are registered for the exams).

Note: If using a locally-organised test, consider this as “continuous assessment” for the purposes of the ADB. If a University-scheduled exam is indicated, it will be scheduled automatically, and will appear on the students’ exam timetables.

The exams are organised in three main periods, at the end of semester 1, at the end of semester 2, and in the autumn (for resits). There are typically three exam sessions per day at 9.30, 12.30 and 15.30.

Examination papers are prepared by the academic departments. In most cases the examination papers are reviewed by the external examiner in advance (this is the NUI policy). Once the paper has been finalised it is the responsibility of the department to ensure the correct number of copies are prepared, and to provide these in a “ready to go” package to the Exams Office.

On the day of the examination, the relevant academic is asked to be available to take a call in case of urgent questions.

Marks and Standards

The University standards for awards and progression, and the calculation of results, are defined in the University Marks and Standards. These are available at:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies/academic-policies-procedures>

Note that a revised set of Marks and Standards was introduced in 2016, and will apply to all students from the 2018/19 academic year. However, students who began their degree in 2015 or before may be eligible for a review of their marks under the old rules if blocked from progression or completion.

Results and Exam Board Meetings.

Once the exams are complete, it is the responsibility of the department to ensure that the student work is marked accurately and that the marks are returned on time.

Contact: Examinations Office: ext 3820 exams.office@mu.ie

The exam marking process

Module marks	Marks for each module entered into a spreadsheet downloaded from the system, pre-loaded with student names. Marks are entered in whole numbers and as marks out of 100. Marking is in accordance with NUI grade descriptors. Marks are uploaded by the first upload date.
Internal board	Once all of the module marks are available, a subject mark can be calculated. For most departments, this calculation is done using an excel formula. Departments compile and review the results, usually at an internal board meeting. Any difficulties are identified and adjustments made. The Examinations Office can provide guidance on this.
External examiner	Results are reviewed by the external examiner. The extern usually discusses the results with the department staff, at an external board. External examiners may recommend changes to individual marks, or more general changes to standards.
Final commit	Final module and subject results are “committed” after the departmental external board.
Broadsheets	Exams office prepares broadsheets showing the results for each student, and the overall award for the year/degree. These are available to download in advance of the University board meeting. HoDs are asked to review and verify these results and to identify any remaining issues or changes.
University exam board	Each HoD is invited to the University exam board. This is the final step in the process. Ideally issues are resolved before this board, and the main function is to consider borderline cases arising when more than one subject mark is involved. There are three main exam boards in the year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In June to consider the summer exams. • In September to consider the repeat exams and courses finishing over the summer. • In November to consider some courses which cannot provide results in time for the September board, typically taught masters programmes which run for one calendar year. These will be conferred in spring (probably March).
Release of results	Results are released to students, normally within two days of the University exam board. Any results released to students in advance of this date should be clearly marked as provisional.
Consultation day	After the summer and Autumn exams there is a designated consultation day, where students have an opportunity to review their exam scripts, or arrange to do so, and discuss their results with the academic staff of the department. This is required under the Procedures for the Discussion, Checking & Appeal of Examination Results. Students are not allowed to take away their work, but may review it in the department. Please note that students can be given a copy of their work if they make a formal application under the Freedom of Information legislation. In the case of multiple choice questions, students do not have an entitlement to take away the questions.

8. Rechecks and appeals

If a student is unhappy with the result, he/she can:

- a) Request a check: This has to be requested within 2 weeks of publication of the results, and there is a fee of €25 per subject. The formal request by the student is made to the Supervisor of Examinations through the Registrar's Office, who will then communicate with the department. The fee should be attached to the request. Heads of Department are responsible for oversight of the check. The regulations require that: "The formal check shall ensure that all parts of the examination have been marked and that no errors occurred in the recording, collating or combining of marks which determined the result." If an error is discovered, the Head of Department can approve a change in the result, and notify the Examinations Office.
- b) Appeal: Must be done within 3 weeks of the results or 2 weeks of recheck result, and there is a fee of €60 per subject. The grounds for appeal are clearly laid out, and these should be made clear to students seeking to appeal. The student must send the completed appeal form, fee and relevant documents to the Supervisor of Examinations, c/o the Registrar's Office which then forwards the appeal to the Examination Appeals Board.

Grounds for Appeal:

An appeal of an examination result shall be considered

- (a) if there is evidence of substantive irregularity in the conduct of the examination
- (b) if there are circumstances which the Programme Examination Board was not aware of when its decision was taken.

Please note:

Students who are appealing under ground 3(b) above must outline the steps taken to notify the department concerned of the circumstances relevant to their appeal, and the response to any such notification. If no steps were taken in this regard, please explain why this was the case.

Details are available at:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies/academic-policies-procedures>

9. Research students

Heads of Department have responsibility for ensuring the proper supervision of postgraduate research students (research masters, taught doctorates and PhDs) in their department. The process of supervision is documented by the Graduate Studies Office, and requires that the department should keep records of student progress, and follow a systematic pattern of supervision, as outlined below. Research student should normally have a supervisory team, with a clearly designated principal supervisor.

Supervisors of Doctoral research should normally be permanent members of the academic staff of the University. Academic staff on contract appointments of three or more years duration may be allowed to supervise, with the approval of the head of department, with a permanent members of staff as a co-supervisor.

There is a minimum duration for research degrees. This is intended to prevent students remaining “off the books” while doing the research and registering for a short period. Students who seek to submit in a shorter period need special permission, and must pay the full fee for the minimum period.

	Normal duration	Minimum duration with approval from head of dept.	Minimum duration with approval from Academic Council (must pay the minimum fee)	Maximum duration
PhD full time	4	3	2	6
PhD part time	6	4.5	3	9
Research master full time	2	1	1	3
Research master part time	3	2	2	5

Departments have developed their own unique programme, with a minimum /maximum amount of credits. The minimum/maximum number of credits is given in the table below:

	Minimum Credits	Maximum Credits
If students have completed a four-year undergraduate programme	30 Credits (15 Generic/Transferable & 15 Subject Specific/Advanced Specialist)	90 Credits
If students have completed a three-year undergraduate programme and Taught Masters	30 Credits (15 Generic/Transferable & 15 Subject Specific/Advanced Specialist)	90 Credits
If students have completed a three-year undergraduate programme	60 Credits (at least 15 Generic/Transferable & 15 Subject Specific/Advanced Specialist)	90 Credits

Typical system for documentation and review of supervision

Start of Year 1	Initial Meeting Record agreed by Student and Principal Supervisor	Approved by the Departmental Supervisory Committee *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Meeting Record sent to the Graduate Studies Office
End of Year 1	Annual Progress Review Record Form Year 1	Reviewed by the Departmental Supervisory Committee *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automatically Advance to Year 2 ** Not Progress: Failure to progress will be recorded in June. Student given opportunity to produce work to Dept by end of August. If grade needs to be amended Dept can inform Exams Office to change result Change of Registration from Master's by Research to PhD: Written request to Registrar Suspension: Form available on Graduate Studies Website
End of Year 2	Annual Progress Review Record Form Year 2	Reviewed by the Departmental Supervisory Committee *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress to Year 3 Not Progress: Failure to progress will be recorded in June. Student given opportunity to produce work to Dept by end of August. If grade needs to be amended Dept can inform Exams Office to change result Change of Registration from Master's by Research to PhD: Written request to Registrar Suspension: Form available on Graduate Studies Website
End of Year 3	Annual Progress Review Record Form Year 3	Reviewed by the Departmental Supervisory Committee *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress to Year 4 Not Progress: Failure to progress will be recorded in June. Student given opportunity to produce work to Dept by end of August. If grade needs to be amended Dept can inform Exams Office to change result Change to European Doctorate Suspension: Form available on Graduate Studies Website
End of Year 4	Final Annual Progress Review Record Form	Reviewed by the Departmental Supervisory Committee *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission and Examination of Thesis Progress to Year 5: Extension of PhD Registration. Form should be forwarded to Records Office Not Progress: Failure to progress will be recorded in June. Student given opportunity to produce work to Dept by end of August. If grade needs to be amended Dept can inform Exams Office to change result Suspension: Form available on Graduate Studies Website At this point, confirmation should be given that the Individual customised programme has been completed and if necessary, waivers have been ratified by the Graduate Studies Subcommittee
<p>* Requests for waivers/exemptions must be sent from the Departmental Supervisory Committee to Graduate Studies Subcommittee.</p> <p>** A substantive review must be completed on all research students no later than 18 months after initial registration. This will provide students with the opportunity for the identification and rectification of any problems which may arise in relation to a student's progress. Where difficulties are identified at a review, students will be afforded the opportunity to address those difficulties at a subsequent annual review at the end of year two.</p>			

Joint/External Supervision

Joint supervision is encouraged where the research spans different areas or disciplines. Joint supervision typically occurs in three circumstances

- a) in research institutes where students are also registered in an academic department,
- b) where work is interdisciplinary departments are co-supervising, and
- c) where there is a co-supervisor in another institution.

The Graduate Studies Office can advise on the arrangements for joint supervision and for change of supervisor.

Joint/Dual Programmes

The University participates in a number of joint/dual programmes, both taught and research, and establishment of new programmes of this kind with high quality partner institutions is encouraged. These programmes always involve a formal agreement on arrangements for sharing responsibility between the concerned institutions.

Contacts:

Graduate Studies Office, graduatestudies@mu.ie

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies/academic-policies-procedures>

10. Submission of research theses

Research theses (research masters' and doctoral theses) are submitted to the Examinations Office.

In advance of submission, the department should consider suitable external examiners. Once a suitable external examiner has been identified, the appointment of external examiner for thesis form (available from the Exams Office website) should be completed and returned to the Dean's Office for approval at Faculty.

Prior to submission, the student should complete the thesis submission form (available on the Exams Office website). The supervisor and the HoD are required to sign this form to certify that the thesis is ready for examination. In addition, the Fees Office will countersign the form to certify that there are no outstanding fees. If there are outstanding fees, these must be settled before the thesis is submitted. The Student Records Office must also sign the form to confirm the student is registered for the correct qualification and in the current academic year. The thesis can then be submitted to the Examinations Office who sends it out for examination. Note that the thesis will **not** be accepted if the student is not currently registered.

For theses where there is a viva examination, once the thesis is submitted and the examination panel has been approved by faculty, an independent chair for the viva is appointed by the Registrar. The department is responsible for making contact with the external examiner, and arranging the logistics of the viva.

Contacts:

- Graduate Studies Office: graduatestudies@mu.ie
- Examinations office: exams.office@mu.ie
- Registrar's office: registrar@mu.ie
- Deans Office, deans.office@mu.ie
- <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams/postgraduate-information>

11. Conferring and Prizes

Conferring is arranged by the Conferring Office. There will be three conferring periods in each academic year:

- In September (for results approved at the June boards).
- In November or late October (for results approved at the September boards).
- In March (for results approved at the November boards).

Undergraduate students taking autumn repeat examinations will not graduate until October.

In addition there is an annual prize giving ceremony in late spring. Departments are asked to notify the Conferring Office of any prizes or awards that they wish to present at this event well in advance.

Contact: graduation@mu.ie

12. Non-standard requests and non-routine cases

At times students may seek permission to deviate from a part of the University regulations. Any non-standards cases or requests for exceptions to Registry rules are considered in Registry, based on written requests, and with supporting evidence where appropriate. Non standard academic requests are managed by the Registry Policy office. The Policy office will consult with the Heads of Department, and Dean where appropriate.

For any unusual or non standard academic issue, the Registry Policy office can advise on who to contact.

For exceptions to Marks and Standards, such as:

1. Requests to repeats a period of study more than once.
2. Requests from a final year student to repeat more than 15 credits of passed modules.

Students submit their request, via Registry form RE1, to the Registry Policy Office who makes an initial assessment. Viable requests are sent to the student's Head(s) of Department for review and recommendation. More serious requests, and those where there is a difference of opinion between Heads of Department, are sent to the appropriate Faculty Dean. Note that students are expected to submit supporting documentation including medical certificates and details of the extenuating circumstance.

A student has the right to appeal a request that is not approved to the VPA/Registrar. Any appeals must be submitted in writing to the Registrar's Office.

The RE1 process also allows students to make an 'unusual' request that they don't necessarily have supporting medical or formal documentation for. This could include permission to repeat a year of study **and** to change pathway type, e.g. from a double major to a major with minor pathway **or** permission to repeat a previously passed module to qualify for postgraduate study.

For non-standard postgraduate entry or recognition of prior learning, the student should complete form R8, and send it to the Registry Policy office.

For more information:

Registry Policy office: policy@mu.ie

Registry forms: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/registry/registry-forms>

13. Confidentiality, data protection and freedom of information

Students have a right to expect that we will treat information about them as confidential, and therefore it is important that any information that is personal to students is handled with care. Academic departments often have sensitive information about students, which might include personal contact details, academic results, information about health issues, and information about aspects of personal lives. Key guidelines for data protection are:

- a) We should not disclose information about students to third parties, even parents, without explicit permission from the student. This sometimes causes surprise to parents, who may phone seeking information about their family members.
- b) Personal data should be kept secure. Electronic data should not be kept on unencrypted memory sticks, or on unencrypted home computers.
- c) Personal data should only be shared with the people in the University who have a legitimate reason to need the information.
- d) Personal data should be deleted when no longer needed. The University has an agreed record retention schedule which can be seen at:
<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/freedom-information/records-management/records-management-records-retention-schedule>

The University is also subject to the Freedom of Information legislation. This gives an individual wide ranging powers to access almost anything written that relates to him/her. It is prudent to write all notes and comments about a student with the assumption that these could be released to him/her at a later date.

For more information:

Data protection: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection>

Freedom of Information: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/freedom-information>

Contact: Ann McKeon ann.mckeeon@mu.ie

14. Student Recruitment

Undergraduates: Most undergraduates are admitted through the CAO system. Most of the work in managing undergraduate admissions is the responsibility of the Admissions office. The key things that academic departments are asked to do to support this are:

- Ensure that the course descriptions are well written and available on time for the academic database and the publicity materials including the annual Prospectus.
- Work with the Admissions Office to identify key messages for use in school visits and other promotional events.
- Assist the Admissions Office in Open Days, Higher Options, and other promotional events.
- Assist the Admissions Office in interviewing mature applicants.

Students can sometimes arrange to transfer to other degrees within the University, after their initial admission. The key criteria are (i) that the student should have the sufficient points to gain access to the course they wish to enter, (ii) that there is space in the programme, and (iii) that the receiving department is prepared to accept the student. This process is managed by the Admissions Office.

It is possible for people to register as “occasional students” for a small number of modules. Occasional students pay a fee that is approximately credit weighted (where 60 credits = the full fee). Occasional students have the option of taking assessments. Applicants should contact the Admissions Office for details of how to apply.

Garda Vetting: In some courses, normally those where the programme will involve contact with children and young adults, there is a requirement that applicants undergo a Garda Vetting procedure. This may also be a requirement for students undertaking research projects involving young people. This process is handled by Student Vetting Office which is located in Humanity House.

Contact:

- Dr John McGinnity, Admissions Officer/Assistant Registrar, john.mcginfinity@mu.ie
- Admissions Office, ext 3430, admissions@mu.ie
- Student Vetting Office, ext 6598, student.vetting@mu.ie

Postgraduate students: Postgraduate students normally apply online through the Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC). PAC is a central application system, but is very different from the CAO. While CAO uses a scoring system to rank applicants and allocate them to places, PAC is a mechanism that allows applicants to apply and submit documents. PAC does not make allocations – it simply makes the applicant information available to the individual institutions. (There is one exception in secondary teacher education, where PAC is responsible for ranking of applicants to the PME).

The responsibility for accepting postgraduate applicants lies with the academic department. The Head of Department has primary responsibility for this task. In some departments this is delegated to another staff member (such as a postgraduate coordinator). Where this is done, the Head of Department must authorise this delegation of responsibility in writing to the Graduate Studies

Office. It is very important that applicants on PAC receive a quick response, as many apply to multiple institutions, and by delaying we can miss the best applicants.

For Maynooth University the key interface with PAC is the Graduate Studies Office (GSO). Academic departments are asked not to contact PAC directly, as they work with one contact point in each institution.

The key responsibilities for academic departments are:

1. **Accurate information:** Postgraduate course descriptions are derived from the Academic Database, and are displayed on the Maynooth University website, with a short summary displayed on the PAC website. Departments are asked to review the PAC website and consider whether the information presents the correct information and tone for prospective applicants. Changes to the descriptions can be made by updating the academic database. Changes to the PAC closing dates and course codes can be arranged through the Graduate Studies Office.
2. **Verification of qualifications:** Academic departments are expected to check that the applicants have the required entry qualifications before making an offer of a place. It is important that the HoD or Postgraduate Co-ordinator has properly assessed an individual's application and is satisfied that the applicant meets the entry requirements for the programme before a "Firm Offer" is made to the applicant. "Conditional Offers" should be made if the applicant is awaiting final results or language competency results and in these instances it is important that the rating is updated to either a Firm Acceptance rating or a Refused Offer rating depending on the outcome of the results. The International Office should review the transcripts of all international students before a Firm Offer is made. If the department wishes to admit an applicant who does not have the required qualifications, the process for non-standard applicants should be used (see below).
3. **Timely responses:** Academic departments are encouraged to make responses to applicants as quickly as possible, but within a four week period. If we are slow to respond to an applicant, we risk losing students to more responsive institutions. Departments should monitor activity in PAC regularly, and seeks to make responses as quickly as possible.
4. **Promotion of postgraduate courses:** Departments are asked to work with the Graduate Studies Office to identify key messages about new and existing postgraduate courses and assist the Office with postgraduate recruitment events, student profiles and other promotional activities, including talks for final year undergraduate students regarding postgraduate options.
5. **Research Masters/PhD Funding Opportunities:** Work with the Graduate Studies Office to support prospective postgraduate students to apply for key postgraduate funding opportunities including Irish Research Council and John Hume Scholarships

Once a student accepts a firm offer through PAC, their details are fed into ITS. From there, a record is created and they will receive formal notification to register from the Student Records Office. Note that apart from individual programme entry criteria, all postgraduate applicants must have a primary undergraduate degree, details of which must be uploaded to PAC online. Details of their degree (result achieved, university and conferral date) are subsequently recorded on ITS.

Non-standard applicants: Where there are applicants who do not meet the normal academic qualifications, but have academic qualifications which may be considered equivalent, they are

processed as non-standard entrants. The steps are that (i) the department reviews the qualifications and makes a recommendation, (ii) the HOD approves this recommendation, (iii) this is sent to the Registrar for comment, and (iv) this is then brought to the relevant faculty for approval.

Where a non standard applicant seeks to make a case for entry to a programme based on professional experience (as opposed to academic qualifications), it is normal that the applicant is asked to prepare a portfolio of work, which is assessed by the department, the relevant Faculty Dean and the Registrar, as part of the process. The non-standard entry form is available at:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/registry/registry-forms> and should be submitted in the first instance to the Registry Policy Office.

Contacts:

- Graduate Studies Office, ext 6018, graduatestudies@mu.ie
- Registry Policy office, ext 6581, policy@mu.ie
- Registrar's office:, ext 3579, registrar@mu.ie

15. International students

Roughly 10% of the current student population is from outside Ireland. About half of those are from other European countries, the other half from outside Europe. A small number of international students are here gaining their full undergraduate degree. There is a larger and growing number pursuing postgraduate courses. The largest group are visiting students, those that come for one semester or one year from partner universities within Europe (ERASMUS) and beyond (USA, Canada, Australia, China, Korea, Japan, Mexico, South America). See Maynooth University's partner list at: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international/partner-universities>

The International Office facilitates international student recruitment, admissions, incoming and outgoing study abroad and international student support (in conjunction with the wider student support services).

International Recruitment – International Officers engage in various recruitment activities currently concentrated in North America, India, China and Brazil. Collaboration with departments is important to ensure our knowledge of courses is current and it is extremely helpful for academic staff to engage in key recruitment initiatives where possible.

International Admissions – Prospective students from countries outside the EU are assessed by the International Office. For some programmes the International Office has delegated authority to offer places to students who meet the agreed criteria. In other cases the International Office assesses the qualifications, and refers the decision to the relevant academic department.

Study Abroad and Exchanges – Numbers of MU students going abroad for one year is certainly rising. Undergraduate students are encouraged to consider this option to broaden their perspectives and improve employment prospects. Currently all students going abroad do so for a full year at a partner university and gain “International” in the title of their degree. 3 year courses become 4 years. For 4 year programmes, study abroad is still possible but credit transfer must be approved by the department.

Erasmus: A large number of incoming Erasmus students are hosted each year. Departments are asked to make as many modules as possible available to these visitors. Erasmus students visiting for a full year generally have the same module assessments as other students. Erasmus students visiting for one semester (especially the first semester) often require a separate assessment of equivalent standard, which can be completed before they leave.

Note that Maynooth University students going abroad for Erasmus and Study Abroad or Exchange must register online for their year abroad and pay the registration fee.

International Coordinators – Each department appoints an academic staff member as their International Coordinator. This person assists in evaluating and approving MU students that apply for study abroad. They also assist in assessing any particular needs of international students in their department and engage with the International Office and wider community to input into international student support and internationalisation initiatives. Each Head of Department is asked to carefully consider an appropriate person for this role each year.

International Student Support – The International Office provides a range of additional support for students. There is a special arrivals and orientation programme for international students each semester to help with acclimating to the environment and culture. Additionally on a day-to-day basis the IO assist students with various assistance, information, guidance and support.

Examinations for international students: Assessment of Erasmus/International students visiting for the 1st semester only must be completed before the end of the teaching semester. Where a module grade is based partly or wholly on an examination, the examination should take place in the final week of the teaching semester. Individual departments are responsible for administering the examination. Departments may decide to replace the examination by an alternative but equivalent assessment due no later than the last day of the semester.

Erasmus/International students visiting for a full year or 2nd semester only have exactly the same module assessments as other Maynooth University students.

Contact:

- Claire Doran, Director of Internationalisation, ext 7196, claire.doran@mu.ie
- International Office, ext 3868, international.office@mu.ie

International Office Website: www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international

16. Transfer to different qualifications

Students sometimes seek to transfer their registration from one qualification to another. Transfers fall into three broad categories:

Routine transfers (with progression):

These are transfers that do not require approval and are allowed if the student meets agreed criteria. Examples include:

- a) Transfer from BA to BA International.
- b) Transfer from BA to BCL.
- c) Transfer from BA to BBS.

A student can arrange a routine transfer by contacting the Student Records office. In these transfers the student continues to progress (e.g. transfer from first year BA to second year BCL) and the prior credits earned are transferred automatically into the new qualification.

Contact: Student Records Office: ext 3813 records.office@mu.ie

Non-routine transfers:

These are transfers that require special permission. They often mean restarting the degree, as only some of the credits taken may transfer. For example, a student may complete first year B.Sc. and seek to transfer to the BA (or vice versa). These transfers typically involve a restart, so the student will transfer from first year B.Sc. and start first year B.A., perhaps with some exemptions based on the work done prior to transfer.

Undergraduate non-routine transfers are managed by the Admissions Office.

Postgraduate non-routine transfers are usually managed by the department involved, with advice from the Graduate Studies Office.

Contact:

- Admissions Office, ext 3430, admissions@mu.ie
- Graduate Studies Office, ext 6018, graduatestudies@mu.ie

Transfers from other institutions:

A student who has completed part of a programme in another institution may apply to transfer into a programme in MU. Such requests are handled by the Admissions Office, which will assess the suitability of the student and make a recommendation about exemptions to be allowed on the basis of prior work.

Contact: Admissions Office, ext 3430, admissions@mu.ie

17. Developing new courses

Proposals for new courses, and significant modifications to existing courses, are processed as follows:

1. The proposing department develops the course, consults with other departments which may be involved or have an interest in the course, and consults with the Dean.
2. An outline proposal is sent to the VPA/Registrar for comment (usually using the course proposal document available from academic.council@mu.ie and the Academic Council Office website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/academic-council>
3. Following feedback, the proposing department develops the course, and prepares the new course proposal document. Note that this form must be signed by the HoD. The costing/fee sections of the form should be discussed with the Bursar's Office.
4. This form is sent to the Academic Programmes sub-Committee, with copy to the VPA/Registrar, and to the relevant Faculty. Postgraduate proposals are also sent to the Dean of Internationalisation and the Dean of Graduate Studies.
5. The Academic Programmes sub-Committee will normally refer the proposal to external reviewers, and consider the comments of the Faculty, before making a recommendation.
6. The recommendation of the committee is presented to Academic Council, which approves the programme.

The development of new programmes should ideally commence at least one academic year prior to the intended start date and even earlier for graduate programmes to allow for advertising and any necessary recruitment of staff.

It is normally advisable to discuss new programme proposals with the Dean at an early stage in the process.

Following approval, Academic Council confirms and sends details of all approved new programmes and modifications to existing programmes to the appropriate offices, including Registry. The programme is then created on the different systems. Internal qualification codes are agreed between Registry offices (and GSO in the case of PAC codes) and the programmes are created, first on the ADB and then on ITS. Moodle support and IT Services pick up this information from the ADB and Syllabus+ and a Moodle space is generated for each module. The Fees and Grants Office updates its website based on how a programme is coded in the ADB and ITS.

Offices alerted to the approval of a new programme include: The Academic Database Office, Student Records Office, Graduate Studies Office, Admissions Office, Institutional Research Office, the Conferring Office.

Contact:

- Academic Council Office, ext. 4647, academic.council@mu.ie
- Registrar's Office, ext. 3579, Registrar@mu.ie
- Curriculum Office, ext 6581, curriculum@mu.ie
- Graduate Studies Office, ext 6018, graduatestudies@mu.ie