



Maynooth University Ollscoil Mhá Nuad

Department of Physics Professor of Observational Astrophysics or Cosmology (Permanent)

The Senior Academic Leadership Initiative

Ireland recognises that for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to perform to their full potential, they need to address the persistent under-representation of women at senior academic levels and increase the numbers of female senior academics in decision-making processes in HEIs. Ireland aims to be a 'world-leading country for gender equality in higher education by 2026' as stated in the government's Gender Equality Taskforce Action Plan 2018-2020.

Now, Ireland is leading the drive to accelerate gender balance at the highest point of the academic career path through a government-backed scheme, focused on attracting outstanding female academics in Ireland and globally to avail of this unique opportunity to experience working within the higher education sector in Ireland.

The Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) aims to help achieve equality of outcome in the higher education sector. New and additional senior academic leadership posts have been funded in areas where:

- there is clear evidence of significant gender under-representation;
- where this appointment will have significant impact within the faculty/department/functional unit and the HEI;
- where they would be a proportionate and effective means to achieve accelerated and sustainable change within an institution.

These posts are new and additional to the sector, and they will be funded through new and additional funding provided specifically to help progress gender balance among academic staff at senior levels.

The key objective of this initiative is to attract **outstanding female applicants** both nationally and internationally. In securing posts under this initiative, Maynooth University has demonstrated its commitment to gender equality. Our institution has demonstrable plans for future developments in this area and has outlined the organisational and cultural initiatives in place to support the newly appointed staff.



In line with the objectives of the Higher Education Authority SALI Call 2020, applications from highly qualified female candidates will be prioritised within the boundary of what is legally permissible, in order to address their underrepresentation. In exceptional circumstances, applications from candidates who are in a minority or protected under Irish social legislation, or who also belong to an underrepresented minority in academic posts may be considered if the institution can clearly articulate reasons worthy of legal protection as to why they should be considered.

Additional information on the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative is available at Appendix 1.

The Role

Maynooth University is seeking to appoint an outstanding academic as Professor in Observational Astrophysics or Cosmology. The successful applicant will contribute to, and strengthen, existing capabilities of the Department of Physics. As this post is at a senior academic grade, applicants should have a demonstrated record in both research and teaching, and a clearly articulated and ambitious program of research and teaching that aligns with strategic priorities at University, national and international level and Ireland's membership of the European Space Agency and the European Southern Observatory. The role will carry significant leadership responsibilities commensurate with the level of the post.

The recruitment of a high-profile academic to this strategic area of Observational Astrophysics and Cosmology will augment our international reputation in research and teaching by drawing together, consolidating, and building upon existing Maynooth University strengths in areas of Astrophysics and Cosmology. Candidates who combine these areas of study with teaching skills are also welcomed. Current astrophysics research expertise in Maynooth University includes instrument design, observations of star forming regions, theoretical modelling of black hole formation and the large-scale structure of the Universe. Candidates working in any of these, or related areas, are encouraged to apply.

Applicants must demonstrate that they can operate at professorial level, in terms of research and research leadership, including a track record of attracting significant research funding.

Maynooth University is committed to a strategy in which the primary University goals of excellent research and scholarship and outstanding education are interlinked and equally valued. Professors will be expected to provide significant intellectual leadership, through a demonstrated commitment to both education and research, and to contribute to the effective leadership and management of the physics department, faculty and the University.

Principal Responsibilities

A Professor of the University is expected to:

- Be an international research leader and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field;
- Secure substantial external research funding from national and international sources;
- Provide leadership in research within the Department, Faculty and University;
- Promote excellence in teaching and learning, and encourage innovation in teaching and learning amongst staff;
- Contribute to the teaching of undergraduate and postgraduate students, including lecturing at all levels, consultations with individual students, and supervision of research students;
- Contribute to the development of the curriculum and academic programmes within the discipline and more generally;
- Assume responsibilities for management and administrative tasks associated with the Department, Faculty and University;
- Be an active member of the University and contribute to the work of the University in outreach, collaboration, internationalisation, engagement and policy development.

Professors at the University are required to serve as Head of Department or similar when requested to do so by the President.

The ideal candidate will have:

Essential

- An outstanding record of research, reflected in an excellent publication profile;
- A strong track record of external research funding;
- The capacity to offer strong academic leadership within the Department, and across the University;
- A strong academic record as a university teacher and educational innovator;
- Demonstrated management and administrative skills;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- The ability to build effective relationships with a wide variety of internal and external colleagues;
- Demonstration that they are eligible to be considered for the role under the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative.

The University

Maynooth University is a very distinctive university, a collegial institution focused on science and engineering, humanities, and social sciences, and equally committed to research, teaching and community engagement. Located in Ireland's only university town, its distinctive features and character owe much to its unique history and heritage. It provides a high-quality educational experience to over 15,000 students on a campus with 18th century roots and 21st century dynamism.

The strategic trajectory and accomplishments of Maynooth University, in the 28 years since its establishment as an autonomous public university, are exceptional, and a source of great pride to the university community, staff, students and alumni. Maynooth University is now acknowledged to be one of the leading young universities in the world, ranked in the top 100 Times Higher Education (THE) Young University Rankings. Maynooth University's growing global reputation is based on the originality, quality, importance and impact of its research and scholarship, commitment to teaching and learning, the quality of academic programmes, and its leadership in widening participation in higher education. The sources of success are the dedication of its staff and the energy and engagement of its students.

Maynooth University is a place of lively contrasts – a modern institution, dynamic, rapidly growing, research-led and engaged, yet grounded in historic academic strengths and scholarly traditions. With over 15,000 students, Maynooth offers a range of programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level in the humanities, science and engineering and social sciences, including business, law and education. The University also offers a range of international programmes and partnerships.

Maynooth's unique collegial culture fosters an interdisciplinary approach to research, which its world-class academics bring to bear in tackling some of the most fundamental challenges facing society today. The University's research institutes and centres consolidate and deliver this impact as vibrant communities of learning, discovery and creation. Research at Maynooth also is very much central to its teaching and the University prides itself on placing equal value on its research and teaching missions.

Principles and Values

Maynooth University is committed to the following values:

- Scholarly rigour;
- Academic freedom;
- Integrity and ethical behaviour;
- Collegiality, transparency and trust;
- Equality, inclusiveness and social justice;



- Operational excellence, organisational flexibility and responsiveness;
- Dignity, respect and care for the individual.

Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028

The University's Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028 builds on our rich academic history and strong foundations to set out an ambitious and forward-looking path for the future of our University. This roadmap underscores our commitment to adapt to a changing world while staying true to our values.

Our vision is to be a university of excellence, opportunity and impact, having a significant stake in all three.

For more information about Maynooth University's future direction, please visit:
<https://strategy.maynoothuniversity.ie/>

Plean Straitéiseach Ollscoil Mhá Nuad 2023 - 2028

Tógann Plean Straitéiseach na hOllscoile 2023 - 2028 ar ár stair acadúil shaibhir agus ar ár mbunchlocha láidre chun conair uaimhianach agus cheannródaíoch a leagadh amach do thodhchaí ár nOllscoile. Soiléiríonn an treochlár seo ár dtiomantas do dhul i dtaithí ar dhomhan atá ag síorathrú agus ár ngníomhaíochtaí a chur in oiriúint dó, agus san am céanna a bheith dílis dár luachanna Ollscoile. Is í an fhís atá againn a bheith mar ollscoil feabhais, deiseanna agus tionchair, agus lámh láidir a bheith againn i ngach ceann de na trí ghné seo.

Léigh anseo le haghaidh breis eolais faoi thodhchaí Ollscoil Mhá Nuad:
<https://strategy.maynoothuniversity.ie/?lang=ga>

Faculty and Research Institutes

The Faculty of Science & Engineering comprises the Departments of Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics & Statistics, Psychology, Engineering, Computer Science, and Sports Science & Nutrition. The role of the Faculty is to co-ordinate the academic activities of individual departments, to oversee the strategic development of departments, and to support interdepartmental activities and programmes. The University has also developed a number of interdisciplinary Institutes to support excellent research and to build research capacity across disciplines, such as the Hamilton Institute that is dedicated to providing a bridge between mathematics and its applications in Information and Communication Technology and other disciplines.

The Department of Physics

The Department of Physics was established in 2024 by the merger of the Departments of Theoretical Physics and Experimental Physics and this post is a key pillar of the future strategy of the Department building on a tradition of natural sciences in Maynooth that stretches back to the founding of the college in 1795.

As well as staff in other areas, such as climate science, and quantum physics, the Department includes 8 permanent academic staff working in theoretical astrophysics and cosmology, as well as observational astrophysics and astronomical instrumentation. Overall, the Department comprises 16 full-time faculty members, 3 PDRAS, 5.5 technicians, 2 administrative staff, and 23 PhD students. The student-staff ratio in the Department is about 15:1.

On the theoretical side, the Department's work encompasses cosmology, the large-scale structure of the Universe, relativistic astrophysics, black holes, gravitational waves, and star formation. This work also includes aspects of data analysis as applied to cosmological observations. Members of the Department are involved in the European Space Agency's *Euclid* mission aiming to understand the nature of dark energy and in preparations for the LISA gravitational wave mission.

On the observational and instrumentation side, there are active research groups in star and planet formation, cosmic microwave background observations, cryogenic detector development and terahertz space optics. We have members of several international consortia designing ground- and space-based instruments and make observations using ground-based telescopes such as the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope and space observatories such as the James Webb Space Telescope and Chandra.

The astrophysicists in the Department of Physics are also heavily involved in outreach and public engagement.

Selection and Appointment

- Only shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend for interview;
- Candidates may be required to make a brief presentation as part of the selection process;
- Appointments will be made by the President based on the report of the selection board;
- It is anticipated that interviews will be held during May or June 2025;
- The appointment is expected to be effective as soon as possible thereafter.

Equality and Diversity

Maynooth University actively works to ensure equality, celebrate the diversity of our community, and promote inclusion. To learn more about our commitment to Equality and Diversity, please read the Maynooth University [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) / [Polasaí Comhionannais agus Éagsúlachta](#), our policy on the [Employment of People with Disabilities](#), and our [Gender Equality Action Plan 2023-2026](#). We aim to reflect the diversity of the community we serve and welcome applications from all individuals across our society.

Terms and Conditions

Tenure	This a full-time, permanent post. The appointment will be made at Professorial level, of which there are two: Professor A and Professor B. The professorship will be a permanent appointment to the academic staff and subject to the Statutes of the University.
Salary	Professor A: €140,067 – €177,079 (6 points) Professor B: €101,445 – €135,597 (6 points) Appointments will be made in accordance with public sector pay provisions. The decision to appoint as Professor A or Professor B is made by the President based on the report of the Selection Panel and the experience and track record of the successful candidate. To be appointed at Professor A level, the successful candidate will have an excellent record of published work of international quality and demonstrated leadership in their field, will be an excellent teacher and academic innovator, and will normally have experience and demonstrated capacity in administrative as well as academic leadership.
Location	The place of work is the campus of Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

University policies and schemes	<p>Employees of the University will be subject to the terms of the University policies and schemes, available on the University website at:</p> <p>https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies</p> <p>https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/policies</p>
Pension	<p>This is a pensionable post. Employees of the University will enter into a public sector pension scheme, details of the schemes are available at:</p> <p>https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/pension-information</p>
Eligibility	<p>Applications from non-EEA citizens are welcomed, applicants should note that eligibility is determined by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Further information regarding eligibility is available at:</p> <p>https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/what-we-do/workplace-and-skills/employment-permits/employment-permit-eligibility/</p> <p>Non-EEA applicants are responsible for ensuring they can secure a visa to travel to Ireland. Any offer of employment is conditional on applicants securing the appropriate employment permissions.</p> <p>Former Irish Public Service employees - Certain Restrictions on Eligibility</p> <p>Eligibility of applicants formerly employed by an Irish Public Sector body, and who availed of an Irish Public Service Redundancy or Incentivised Retirement Scheme under the Schemes below, may be affected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants • Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) • Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010) • Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013) <p>Applicants should ensure that they are eligible to be re-engaged in the Irish Public Service under the terms of such Schemes. Applicants should address queries with their former Irish Public Sector employer.</p>
Garda vetting	<p>Garda vetting or clearance may be required by the University.</p>
Medical	<p>The University may require a medical examination as a condition of employment.</p>

Data Protection Law

Applications to the University will be treated in accordance with the University Data Protection Policies. For information on the University's Data Protection Policies and Privacy Notice, please see our website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection>

Application Procedure

Closing Date:

23:30hrs (local Irish time) on **31st March 2025**.

As this is a dedicated Call under the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative it is an open competition for which both internal and external candidates will be eligible to apply.

Applicants will be required to submit a statement, not exceeding 300 words, outlining how they meet the stated objectives of Senior Academic Leadership Initiative, or detail any exceptional circumstances as to why they should be considered for this post, see section 3 of Appendix 1 for further details. The statement provided will form part of the initial eligibility screening process for this particular post.

A complete application requires the following to be submitted by the closing date:

- Applicant's personal details;
- Curriculum Vitae;
- Cover letter;
- Statement, not exceeding 300 words, articulating why the candidate should be considered under the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative;
- A statement of proposed research (5 pages max)
- Qualification details;
- Reference details.

Please note all applications must be made via our **Online Recruitment Portal** at the following link:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/vacancies>

Applications must be submitted by the closing date and time specified above. Any applications which are still in progress at the closing time on the specified closing date will be cancelled automatically by the system.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Maynooth University is an equal opportunities employer

The position is subject to the Statutes of the University



Appendix 1 – Details of the Senior Academic Leadership

Section 1: Introduction

1.2 Call for applications

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for two new Professor posts under the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) Call 2020 in line with the requirements set out in the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Call document; https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2019/06/Senior-Academic-Leadership-Initiative_Call-for-Applications-2020-2.pdf

This SAL Programme is managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). Following a competitive process based on an annual Call for applications from higher education institutions (HEIs), the HEA approved two new and additional senior academic leadership posts for Maynooth University in the areas of:

- Observational Astrophysics or Cosmology
- Intersectional Humanities

to assist in accelerating gender balance at senior levels.

1.2 Background

Diversity is a key strength of Irish higher education. In recent decades our universities, institutes of technology, and colleges have been transformed, from predominantly national institutions catering primarily for school-leavers, to internationally oriented institutions engaged with an increasingly diverse student body, of all ages, backgrounds and gender identities.

Higher education legislation requires institutions to promote gender-balance among students and staff, and for the HEA to promote the attainment of equality of opportunity. The *HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions (2016)* was an important first step in highlighting the gender inequality that existed at senior academic levels in our HEIs. The HEA Expert Group report outlined a number of recommendations for the HEIs, HEA, research funding agencies and other key stakeholders. However, since the publication of the HEA Expert Group report, progress has remained exceptionally slow.

The DES proposed that a targeted and proportionate positive action should be taken to accelerate the achievement of gender equality objectives. Such an approach is consistent with a range of Government strategies and policies including, for example:

- National Strategy for Women and Girls
- Equality Budgeting Initiative

The Gender Equality Taskforce identified significant measures that could accelerate progress in achieving gender equality in the Irish HEIs. Their Action Plan 2018-2020 encompasses a suite of initiatives to bring about sustainable organisational change and to empower a culture of gender equality in the HEI's for all staff, academic and professional, as well as management and support staff at all levels. Ambitious targets for the proportion of academic and professional, management and support staff of each gender to be in senior positions in 1, 3 and 5 years will be agreed with the HEA and monitored annually through the Strategic Dialogue process. Their report is available here; <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2018/11/Gender-Equality-Taskforce-Action-Plan-2018-2020.pdf>

The HEA Expert Group and Gender Equality Taskforce both recognised that in addition to the organisational and culture change initiatives needed, a significant targeted positive action initiative was required in order to effect change within a reasonable timeframe at the highest academic level in both sectors. Analysis of recruitment trends by the Gender Equality Taskforce highlighted that rate of change, over the period 2013 – 2017, at the most senior grades is slower than at other grades.

International evidence is that the establishment of new and additional gender-specific posts would be a proportionate and effective means to achieve rapid and sustainable change, and on that basis has the potential to be transformative for the higher education sector in terms of securing gender equality goals.

As part of the launch of the Gender Equality Taskforce Action Plan, it was also announced that a new Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) would be established.

Section 2

2.1 Objective of the Initiative

The Senior Academic Leadership Initiative aims to help achieve equality of outcome in the higher education sector. New and additional senior academic leadership posts have been funded in areas where:

- there is clear evidence of significant gender under-representation;
- where this appointment will have significant impact within the faculty/department/functional unit and the HEI;
- where they would be a proportionate and effective means to achieve accelerated and sustainable change within an institution.

These posts are new and additional to the sector, i.e. they are in addition to the existing Employment Control Framework (ECF), and they will be funded through new and additional funding provided specifically to help progress gender balance among academic staff at senior levels.

The key objective of this Initiative is principally to attract outstanding female applicants both from within the sectors currently and internationally. The Initiative will also assist in increasing the number of women involved in the decision-making processes in the institutions, as advocated in the *EU Commission Strategy on Promoting Equality in Decision Making*.

In securing the two posts under this initiative, our institution has demonstrated our commitment to gender equality. Our institution has also demonstrated plans for future developments in this area and has outlined the organisational and cultural initiatives in place to support the newly appointed staff.

While this Initiative gives priority to highly qualified female candidates within the boundaries of what is legally permissible, in order to address their underrepresentation; preferential consideration of female candidates is excluded if other reasons worthy of legal protection prevail. In exceptional circumstances, candidates who are in a minority or protected under Irish social legislation, or who also belong to an underrepresented minority in academic posts may be considered if the institution can clearly articulate reasons worthy of legal protection as to why they should be considered.

Section 3: Call criteria and application guidelines

3.1 Applicant eligibility

Two SALI posts have been approved for Maynooth University by the HEA and applicants can only be appointed within these specific areas.

Only applicants who are suitably qualified will be appointed. If applicants do not meet the normal competition rules for appointment at Professorship, then appointment will not be made.

This is a dedicated Call under the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative and is an open competition for which both internal and external candidates will be eligible.

In line with the objectives of the HEA SALI Call 2020, applications from highly qualified female candidates will be prioritised within the boundary of what is legally permissible, in order to address their

underrepresentation. However preferential consideration of female candidates is excluded if other reasons worthy of legal protection prevail. In exceptional circumstances, applications from candidates who are in a minority or protected under Irish social legislation, or who also belong to an underrepresented minority in academic posts may be considered if the institution can clearly articulate reasons worthy of legal protection as to why they should be considered.

3.2 Applicant assessment process and guidelines

Normal Maynooth University recruitment procedures apply for appointment at Professor level.

In line with the HEA Expert Group recommendation 1.16, institutions are required to review the recruitment and assessment procedures currently being used to ensure that such processes are gender-proof. For example, institutions should consider how best to factor in time spent away from an academic career when asking for measurable outputs, e.g. asking applicants to identify their top 3–5 publications/outputs with no time limits would negate periods of time spent away from an academic career, however asking for the publications/outputs over the last 5 years would disadvantage someone who has spent time away from their academic career.

A key objective of the Initiative is to strengthen diversity at senior academic leadership level in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) given the benefits that increased diversity would be expected to generate for HEIs as set out in the report of the Gender Equality Taskforce. Consequently, other capabilities and life experiences which have been acquired by applicants outside of the academic environment can be taken into account in assessing candidates, in so far as they are of importance for the suitability, performance and capability of applicants to perform senior academic leadership roles in higher education and to underpin the achievement of increased diversity at that level.

Section 4: Funding & Duration

The successful applicants will be permanent employees of Maynooth University under our standard terms and conditions.