



Maynooth University Ollscoil Mhá Nuad

School of Law & Criminology, & ALL Institute Postdoctoral Researcher (*PatentsInHumans* Project) (Specified Purpose Contract)

Overview of the ERC PatentsInHumans project:

PatentsInHumans is a 5-year European Research Council Starting Grant funded project led by Principal Investigator, Professor Aisling McMahon. The rapid pace of scientific developments has led to significant advances in health-technologies, such as medicines, vaccines, and medical devices which are often patentable or have patentable elements. How patents are used over such technologies can impact how we treat, use and modify the body, with knock-on bioethical implications. PatentsInHumans aims to develop a deeper understanding of such bioethical implications, and how they are, or could be better, engaged with by relevant decision-making systems in Europe. Ultimately, it seeks to bridge the disconnect between patent law and bioethics in such contexts,

The project commenced on 1st November 2022, and we are currently seeking to appoint a candidate with *excellent knowledge and experience of empirical research methods* to join this dynamic team.

PatentsInHumans (www.patentsinhumans.eu) explores two key research questions:

1. To what extent can the grant and/or use (i.e. licensing and enforcement) of patents over technologies related to the human body, impact how we treat, use and modify the body, and what are the bioethical implications that can arise in such contexts?
2. To what extent, if any, are such bioethical issues considered in current systems for the grant and use of patents in Europe? And relatedly, to what extent if any, can such considerations be further incorporated within relevant decision-making systems in Europe?

To investigate these questions, the project develops a novel cross disciplinary analysis combining desk-based and empirical methods to evaluate the key legal, structural and cultural considerations around how bioethics are considered in European patent decision-making. It aims to radically reconceptualise the current system to formulate pathways to assimilate bioethics within patent decision-making systems for such technologies with important and timely policy and conceptual implications.



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The Role

As part of this project, we are seeking to appoint a Postdoctoral Researcher which excellent empirical/participant research skills to explore complex and important empirical questions at the interface of health innovation, bioethics and patent law. The candidate will work primarily on the *empirical strand* of the project, and for this role, we are looking to appoint a candidate with a background in using empirical methods and analysis, such as **semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups**.

It is also desirable that the successful candidate has relevant knowledge of, at least one area related to the project, such as, bioethics, an area of law related to the project, for example, health law, human rights, or intellectual property law, or broader areas considered by the project, including institutional influences on decision-making, theories of governance etc.

The successful candidate will work with Prof Aisling McMahon (Principal Investigator) on the empirical strand of the project. They will work with the PI to conduct semi-structured interviews and focus groups with relevant experts and stakeholders to gain qualitative understandings of the potential bioethical implications posed by patents over such technologies and to develop deeper understandings of any challenges to engaging with these under the current decision-making systems in Europe.

More specifically, as part of the project we aim to conduct expert semi-structured interviews to gain insights over the institutional influences which may impact how decision-making actors engage with potential bioethical issues posed by the grant and use of patents over technologies related to how we treat, use and modify the human body. It will aim to develop a deeper understanding of, whether and to what extent such bioethical issues are currently considered, if at all, within the relevant legal and other decision-making systems in Europe. In addition, as part of this role, the candidate will assist with conducting focus groups with technology users, including members of the public and patient representatives, to deepen our understanding of potential bioethical issues at stake, and to deepen understandings of how the public view patent law.

Together with the Principal Investigator the successful candidate will analyse such data and will contribute to project deliverables and publications. They will also support the Principal Investigator in carrying out other research tasks related to the project, including developing publications, conducting desk-based research, literature reviews and writing of project reports.

The Postdoctoral Researcher will join a dynamic, well-supported multidisciplinary team within the research-intensive School of Law and Criminology in Maynooth University. They will be supported in their personal career development plan throughout the project by Professor McMahon.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101042147.

Principal Duties

Research and other duties will include:

- Working under the supervision of Principal Investigator Prof Aisling McMahon, and in collaboration with a team of researchers in Maynooth University;
- Conducting qualitative research and analysis, including semi-structured interviews and focus groups with relevant stakeholders as part of the project;



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- Conducting desk-based research in areas related to the project, which will include research related to areas such as, institutional influences on decision-making, theories of governance, health law, patent law, human rights law and/or bioethics;
- Contributing to project tasks in collaboration with the Principal Investigator and project team;
- Conducting literature reviews and writing reports;
- Contributing to the preparation and timely delivery of high-quality project deliverables;
- Presenting project research and findings at workshops and international conferences;
- Actively contributing to the writing of academic papers for publication;
- Supporting the project team in the organisation of project events;
- Complying with all University policies.

The ideal candidate will have:

Essential

- A PhD in law, or a PhD in a related discipline such as political sciences, bioethics, criminology, anthropology or sociology;
- An undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline, such as law, political science, bioethics, sociology, criminology, with a minimum 2.1 grade or higher;
- Knowledge and demonstrable experience of conducting empirical research and analysis, including for example semi-structured interviews or focus groups;
- Excellent research skills;
- A record of scholarly work/publications appropriate to career stage;
- Willingness to undertake travel in Europe for research purposes;
- Excellent writing and presentation skills in English.
- Excellent attention to detail, flexibility, initiative and good problem-solving abilities.
- Ability to work with a great degree of autonomy, manage workloads, deadlines, and responsibilities.
- Excellent computer skills, including proficiency in NVivo or comparable software, Word, Powerpoint, Adobe Acrobat;
- Excellent interpersonal, teamwork and communication skills.

Desirable

- Relevant knowledge of, or interest in, at least one area related to the project, such as: bioethics; areas of law related to the project such as intellectual property law, health law, or human rights law; or broader issues examined by the project, such as theories of governance, institutional influences on decision-making, etc
- A record of peer reviewed publication(s), appropriate to career stage;
- Demonstrable experience of conducting interdisciplinary and/or socio-legal research;
- Previous experience of working as part of a team on interdisciplinary research projects.

Faculty and Research Institutes:

The post holder will be based in the School of Law and Criminology in the Faculty of Social Sciences, and affiliated to the ALL Institute.



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The School of Law & Criminology

[Maynooth University School of Law and Criminology](#) is one of the newest academic units within the University. The School has 50 staff members, is the fastest growing Law School in Ireland, and amongst the largest common law academic units in the European Union. It offers a number of popular undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, educating over 2000 students.

The School places a strong emphasis on research and is currently home to two European Research Council (ERC) awardees. Staff members regularly publish in leading international academic journals, and with leading international publishing houses. The School has particular research strengths in the areas of international justice, law and technology, EU Law and policy, global business perspectives, criminology and criminal justice, and comparative legal theory. In addition, our programmes highlight the practical application of legal study, and underline the importance of legal skills, such as negotiation and advocacy.

The School is student-focused and outward-facing; it collaborates widely with colleagues within the University and beyond. The School of Law and Criminology has undergone a period of rapid expansion of its range of programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It offers, amongst others, the LLB and a suite of BCL degrees at undergraduate level (including Ireland's first BCL (Law and Criminology) degree), and a suite of postgraduate programmes, including the LLM programmes in International Business Law, International Justice, and Global Legal Studies, and the MA in Comparative Criminology and Criminal Justice. The School was one of the first two Law Schools in Ireland to successfully secure an Athena SWAN Bronze award, which recognises work undertaken to advance gender equality for staff and students in Higher Education.

The ALL Institute

The [ALL \(Assisting Living & Learning\) Institute](#), a cross-faculty institute established in 2017, is involved in a number of large-scale research projects concerned with ageing, disability and long-term illness where people may benefit from human, technological, systems or policy assistance or support of some kind, and where the inclusion, participation, empowerment and rights of the person are seen as a central aim. ALL is involved in projects globally, with strong connections to civil society organisations, United Nations agencies, and industry. By thinking through the context and meaning of people's lives, ALL seeks to assist them to enhance their quality of life, and we provide an unparalleled interdisciplinary environment to achieve this.

The Faculty

The Faculty of Social Sciences comprises the School of Business; Departments of Design Innovation; Economics, Finance & Accounting; Adult and Community Education; Anthropology; Applied Social Studies; Education; Geography; Law; Sociology; the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education; and International Development. Collectively we are members of the Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute (MUSSI), which provides shared research services and an environment supportive of funded research projects and inter-disciplinary research. 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 programmes. The University has also developed a number of interdisciplinary institutes to support excellent research and to build research capacity across disciplines.



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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 25 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 in 2024 ranked in the top 90 global Times Higher Education (THE) Young University rankings, placing 86th in the world. 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.

Maynooth University's Values

Our values define who we are, what we believe in and how we act as a community. They underpin our future success and guide our expectations of ourselves and each other. Our values apply to everyone in the University community:

- Integrity
- Collegiality
- Responsibility
- Freedom of expression
- Ambition

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.



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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 uaillmhianach agus cheannródaíoch a leagadh amach do thodhchaí ár nOllscoile. Soiléiríonn an treochlár seo ár dtiomantas do dhul i dtáithí 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>

Selection and Appointment

- Only shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend for interview;
- Candidates invited for interview will be required to make a brief presentation;
- Candidates invited for interview will be required to provide a writing sample;
- Appointments will be approved by the President based on the report of the selection board;
- It is anticipated that interviews will be held in May 2025;
- The appointment is expected to be effective from 1st June 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Equality and Diversity

Maynooth University is committed to being a community that promotes and advances equality, respects and values diversity, and develops a collegiate environment of excellence with equality, in which the human rights and diversity of all are recognised and respected. We value the enrichment that comes from a diverse community and seek to promote equality and diversity, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of each individual. We aim to reflect the diversity of the community we serve and welcome applications from all individuals across our society.

To learn more about our commitment to Equality and Diversity, please read the Maynooth University [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) / [Polasáí Comhionannais agus Éagsúlachta](#), and our policy on the [Employment of People with Disabilities](#). Additionally, as an [Athena SWAN Bronze Award](#) Institute, we are committed to advancing gender equality across the University.



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Terms and Conditions

Tenure	<p>This a full-time, temporary post, for a specified purpose, anticipated to be 24 months duration.</p> <p>Project end date is 31/10/2027. Depending on date of commencement, duration may be shorter.</p>
Location	The place of work is the campus of Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.
Salary	<p>Post-Doctoral Researcher Level 1 (2024): €44,847– € 45,441 p.a. (2 points - with increment)</p> <p>Appointments will be made in accordance with public sector pay provisions.</p>
Hours of work	<p>A 37-hour working week is in operation in respect of full-time positions (pro-rated for part-time positions).</p> <p>This can be reviewed or adjusted from time to time through national agreements.</p>
Annual Leave	<p>Annual leave and public holidays are provided for in the University policy: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/policies/annual-leave-policy</p> <p>Annual leave will be allocated on a pro-rata basis for part-time and temporary positions.</p>
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, and as such, applicants must ensure they are eligible to become a member of a public sector pension scheme for the duration of the appointment. Details of the public sector pension schemes are available at: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/pension-information</p>
Eligibility	<p>Applicants should note that eligibility is determined by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Further information regarding eligibility is available at: 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>



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	<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	Garda vetting or clearance may be required by the University.
Medical	The University may require a medical examination as a condition of employment.

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 **Thursday, 24th April 2025**

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



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