Ollscoil na Gaillimhe
University of Galway

Coláiste na nDán, na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta & an Léinn Cheiltigh
College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies

Archaeology

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Subject Overview

Archaeology is a synthesis of the humanities and the sciences and this makes it one of the great frontiers of knowledge creation today. Archaeology provides unique insights into the long-term story of ourselves and our interactions with the world around us.
Archaeology at University of Galway is committed to delivering high quality education in a student-focused environment, based on innovative research and a strong ethical foundation.

We engage with local community interests in archaeology and we are strong advocates for heritage protection. Staff and graduate research is innovative and ground-breaking, and we have the highest success rate in achieving Irish Research Council (IRC) scholarships. We are at the forefront of Irish archaeology, producing quality graduates who succeed across the full spectrum of the heritage profession in Ireland and abroad.

Studying how human beings have adapted to every conceivable environment and cultural circumstance, how different peoples grappled with challenges as basic as survival and as abstract as the mysteries of the cosmos, archaeology is about understanding the forces that have shaped human civilisation across the globe, and how this story is of relevance today.

Subject Name:	Archaeology
Course Code:	GY101
CAO Entry Points 2026:	337
Duration:	3 Years BA, 4 Years BA (International)
Entry Requirements:	Minimum Grade H5 in two subjects and passes in four other subjects at O6/H7 in the Leaving Certificate, including Irish, English, another language and three other subjects recognised for entry purposes.

Career Opportunities

Now is an excellent time for students to embark on a career in Archaeology. Ireland's National Development Plan calls for continued expansion of large public infrastructure projects (housing, transport, green energy) for the foreseeable future, and all of these projects will incorporate archaeological assessments and excavations. The heritage consultancy companies that undertake this archaeological work need large numbers of skilled graduates to fill positions as excavators, artefact specialists, surveyors, archaeological scientists, graphic illustrators, technical report writers, underwater archaeologists etc. In addition to employment with a heritage consultancy, there are also opportunities with the National Monuments Service, museums, and heritage tourism.

An undergraduate degree in Archaeology also provides excellent training in critical analysis, interpretation, and effective communication. These are all widely applicable and flexible skills that allow our graduates to adapt to the ever-changing social and economic conditions that characterize today's job market. In addition to careers in archaeology, typical career sectors for graduates include heritage, tourism, education, environment, culture, and media, but any industry where sustainable development and environmental impacts are concerns are potential employers.

What Our Students Say:

"The best thing about studying Archaeology in Galway for me was learning how to interpret archaeological sites and finds. There's also a lot of employment available - a number of us went straight into work after the course finished. For people concerned about the job opportunities of an Arts degree, that's not a problem in Archaeology. Now is the time to sign up." BA in Archaeology graduate, Brendan Winters.

Study Abroad

The Erasmus student exchange programme offers you the opportunity to study abroad in Year Three. Archaeology has an Erasmus agreement with Charles University (Czech Republic). Students taking a modern language can also study archaeology overseas. Our staff have international research links with universities in Europe and the USA, sit on the boards of a number of international research bodies, and have a teaching exchange with Lund University (Sweden).

Course Outline

First Year

•Prehistoric Ireland and Europe
•Material Culture and Museums
•Medieval Ireland and Europe
•Sites and Monuments in the Landscape

Second Year

•Ancient Civilisations
•Interpretation in Archaeology
•Archaeology in practice
•Introduction to Archaeological Excavation
•Archaeology and Irish Identity - Celts, Christians, and Vikings
•Space, Place, and the Irish Landscape

Final Year

•Public Archaeology and Analyses
•The Bronze Age Roots of European Civilisation
•Landscape and Archaeology: Context and Practice
•Early Kingship: From Chaos to Cosmos
•Palaeoecology - Reconstructing Past Environments
•Training Excavation •Introduction to Sustainability •Archaeological Post-Excavation

From First Year through Final Year, students can benefit from practice-based learning with modules designed to prepare graduates for careers as archaeologists. Students get to handle, process, and study artefacts, visit sites in the field, visit museums, and train on an active research excavation. Specialists from across the profession also contribute to the learning experience.

Find Out More

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