



OÉ Gaillimh  
NUI Galway



## Online Diploma in Irish Archaeology

Archaeology is the study of the material remains of past human societies. The discipline covers a remarkable span of time and investigates some of the most profoundly important developments of the past. The wide scope of archaeology, in time, space and methodology is one of the features which makes the subject so attractive to professional and amateur alike. There is something to interest everyone - whether their interests lie in outdoor fieldwork and exploring ancient monuments, the study of artefacts, the history of technology, local studies, or simply in the rich heritage of Ireland's past.

Archaeology is a constantly changing discipline, fed by new discoveries, new theoretical approaches and new analytical methods. These discoveries continue to revolutionise the subject's potential to inform us about the past and to give us a valuable long perspective on how this past has shaped our present. Exciting aspects of the practical side of archaeology, such as excavation, are familiar to everyone, but excavation is only one aspect of a discipline that combines humanistic interest with scientific method. For the interested student, archaeology offers a stimulating opportunity for intellectual enquiry.

This programme is delivered entirely online and is, therefore, available internationally. Work is completed on a weekly schedule, with all assessments submitted digitally. Participants are not required to travel to NUI, Galway, rather are free to fit course-work in around their daily activities, making this a very flexible programme. Modules run from September to April for two years. Successful completion of all six modules earns a diploma in Archaeology.

# Programme Structure

## Year 1

### *Module 1: Mesolithic to Megalithic: Ireland in the Stone Age*

The module starts with an overview of the Irish past and its chronological periods, progressing to an examination of the early prehistory of Ireland. The first section deals with the earliest settlers in Ireland in the Mesolithic, the landscape they found and how they interacted with it. The latter part turns to the arrival of farming and the associated changes associated in the Neolithic. Emphasis is also placed on death, burial and ritual, discussing, for example, the great megalithic tombs of Ireland. Some of the sites that will be mentioned include the Mesolithic settlement at Mount Sandel, the megalithic tombs of the Boyne Valley and the preserved field systems of the Céide Fields.

### *Module 2: Metal and Warriors: Bronze and Iron Age Ireland*

This module considers the many developments that marked the transition to the Bronze Age, from the introduction of metallurgy to changes in the structure of society and ritual practices. The arrival of Celtic influences to Ireland and the process of Celticisation in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age are explored, alongside a general study of Iron Age remains. Evidence to be discussed includes the earliest bronzework in Ireland, Bronze Age goldwork and the royal sites at Tara and Rathcroghan.

### *Module 3: Saint, Scholar, Viking, Norman: Medieval Ireland*

This module provides an introduction to Early Medieval and Medieval Ireland from the first Christian communities in the fifth century AD. The first part looks at Early Medieval and Viking



Ireland up to the twelfth century AD, covering topics such as settlement, economy and art, the early Christian Church, and Ireland and the Viking world. The second part focuses on Anglo-Norman and Gaelic Ireland in the Medieval period, covering topics such as the archaeology of medieval castles, churches and towns.

## Year 2

### *Module 1: Key themes in Irish Prehistoric archaeology*

This module picks up key research themes and debates in prehistoric archaeology (Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages) illustrated by in-depth case studies of well-known landscapes, artefact types and monuments in Ireland, building on the general information acquired in Year 1. It may include topics such as the introduction of farming and associated monuments, prehistoric settlement in the Burren in County Clare, the emergence of elite landscapes and early Irish art.

### *Module 2: Key themes in Irish Medieval archaeology*



This module highlights key research themes from the Early Medieval, Medieval and Post-Medieval periods, illustrating these themes with in-depth case studies of well-known landscapes, artefact types and monuments in Ireland, building on the information acquired in Year 1. It may include early urban settlements, the development of Irish castles and the relationship between different social and cultural groups (e.g. Gaelic and Anglo-Norman). Case studies may include detailed studies of the Early Medieval royal sites of Lagore and Garranes, the early monastic site at Clonmacnoise, and Medieval settlement in Gaelic areas such as Roscommon and Clare.

### *Module 3: Irish Archaeology project*

This module allows students to work with selected and alternating topics from Irish Archaeology, to increase insight into the material evidence as well as methodological and interpretative approaches. Topics are based on ongoing research by staff from NUI Galway, providing a unique opportunity to engage in current debates and perspectives in the discipline. Possible topics include Neolithic ritual landscapes; the organisation of Bronze Age societies in Western Ireland; Gaelic and colonial society; Irish castles in their landscapes; community archaeology in Ireland.

#### **To apply:**

<http://www.nuigalway.ie/adult-learning/how-to-apply/online-applications/>

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