



MIC Departmental Assistantship Scheme

Information Sheet AY2024/25

INTRODUCTION

The terms and conditions of the Mary Immaculate College (MIC) Departmental Assistantship Scheme are approved by the College's Executive Team (ET). Through the Departmental Assistantship Scheme, the College makes provision for the appointment of a number of registered postgraduate research students (PGRS; MA by research & thesis and PhD only) as Departmental Assistants (DAs). DAs benefit from the financial support afforded to them and gain valuable experience through teaching and working with academic colleagues. DAs in turn make a valuable contribution to the academic activities of Departments, Research Institutes, Faculties, and the College in general.

The Scheme is managed by the Research and Graduate School (RGS) on behalf of the College's ET, including management of appointment contracts, annual renewal and discontinuation of DA Awards.

Selection of DAs, induction, definition and apportionment of duties, monitoring and evaluation are the responsibility of Academic Departments.

1 Overview of the MIC Departmental Assistantship Award Scheme

One new DA per annum is available to each Department. DA contracts are annually renewable for up to 3 years (2 years for MA by research & thesis students) subject to satisfactory performance as determined by the Head of Department. Each DA is offered by open and publicly advertised competition. All current and prospective PhD and MA (research & thesis) students may apply for a DA Award, but the Award can only be taken up by PGRS once they are registered in MIC.

Departments can also compete for one additional DA Award in the same Academic Year (AY) under the Floating Departmental Assistantship (FDA) Scheme (see separate information sheet).

A DA Award currently provides for a stipend of €6,900.00 per annum (AY2024/25) along with a fee waiver for a maximum of three years within the normal duration of programme for PhD students. Where a DA Awardee who has received funding for three years enters a 4th year of studies, a fee waiver is provided, but no stipend is payable in Year 4 and no duties are required in Year 4. MA (research & thesis) students who receive a DA Award are entitled to a stipend of €6,900.00 (AY2024/25) with a fee waiver for a two-year period. A fee waiver consists of a contribution to defray tuition fees for a student

for the normal duration of their programme (4 years for a PhD student; 2 years for a Research Masters student). Students outside of the normal duration of their programme may not avail of a DA or associated fee waiver.

The amount of a fee waiver is at the discretion of MIC and it is not guaranteed that a fee waiver will defray the full fees in the case of all programmes. Stipend instalments are normally paid monthly beginning in September and ending in May (9 instalments per academic year).

DAs are required to provide up to a maximum of 120 hours of assistance to their home department across the academic year or an average of 5 hours per week per semester. DAs may not exceed 10 hours duties in any given week during the semester.

In compliance with the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2018, the allocation of these duties must be recorded by the Head of Department on the DA Contract Request Form AY2024/25. This form must be deposited with the RGSO before DA contracts can be processed.

2 Departmental Assistant Roles and Responsibilities

DAs may be required to provide:

- Tutoring on timetabled tutorial sessions
- Preparation for tutoring/seminars/workshops
- Assistance with tutorial/lecture/seminar/workshop activities
- Recording of lecture/seminar/workshop attendance
- Supplementary lecture, seminar, and workshop activities
- Field work supervision and assistance with activities
- Research assistance
- Attendance at training sessions organised by the Research and Graduate School (RGS) and the Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Centre (LEAD).

Examples of work that DAs may not be required to provide include:

- Curriculum design and review
- Selection of teaching styles and modes of delivery
- Any involvement in examinations
- Creation of unapproved teaching materials
- Covering / substituting for academic and professional staff
- Covering / substituting for academic office hours
- Supervision and/or management of DAs

DAs are required to work under the close and monitored supervision of the Head, and are not expected to have full responsibility for management, administration and / or control of any assigned task. Heads must maintain a record all duties conducted by DAs on a week to week basis and make these available to the College on request.

3 Selection and Recommendations for Departmental Assistants

Through its Postgraduate Awards Committee (PAC), each department will select DAs annually. Minimally, each PAC will be composed of the Head and two other members of the department. All offers must be approved by ET via the RGS.

The receipt of recommendations is normally required by the RGS by the deadline for the last ET meeting of the Academic Year.

4 Call for Applications

The Head seeks the widest field of applicants through promotion and advertising in the print and electronic media inside and / or outside MIC, in consultation with Strategic Communications & Marketing (SCM).

5 Application

Applicants make an application in writing directly to the Head of Department.

6 Offer of an MIC Departmental Assistantship Award

Following ET approval, Heads may notify the successful and unsuccessful applicants.

Before August 31st, the RGS will notify Student Academic Affairs (SAA), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), LEAD, and the Finance Office of the list of approved DAs for the next academic year.

The duration of each DA Award is for one academic year with the possibility that it may be renewed subject to satisfactory academic progress and satisfactory performance, as determined through the MIC Annual Research Review (Progression) and DA Annual Review processes.

7 MIC Departmental Assistantship Award Contract

The DA contract includes information on all of the Terms and Conditions. Each Awardee must provide bank account and relevant tax certificate details before a payment cycle can be activated by the Finance Office.

Only MIC PGRS who have been accepted onto the MIC Postgraduate register and completed the registration process may benefit from these awards. Awardees are bound by the postgraduate academic rules and regulations of MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures.

International Awardees will not be able to receive scholarship payments until they have arrived in Ireland, set up an Irish bank account and applied for a PPS number.

The College reserves the right to deduct any outstanding fees/other sums due from bursaries payable.

8 Discontinuation of a Departmental Assistantship Award Contract

In addition to unsatisfactory academic progress, a DA contract may be discontinued where any one of the following circumstances arise:

1. The Awardee is awarded an Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship or similar.
2. The DA decides to withdraw from their programme in consultation with their Research Supervisor.
 - On submission of the PGR Exit Form via the RGS, the Postgraduate Research Subcommittee (PRSC) notifies the Dean of Faculty, Head of Department, SAA and the Finance Office, and payment is ceased. The Awardee remains responsible for repayment of any outstanding fees.
3. The DA completes and graduates from their programme.
4. The Head / Dean of Faculty / Graduate School Director, in consultation with Vice President Research, requests the discontinuation of the DA Award.
 - Discontinuation of a DA Award Contract must be dealt with in accordance with prevailing MIC Policies and Procedures for dealing with disciplinary issues.

9 Annual Leave

Requests for annual leave must be dealt with in accordance with prevailing MIC Policies and Procedures for Annual Leave. Annual leave requests must be approved by Heads of Department.

10 Leave of Absence

Requests for Leave of Absence must be dealt with in accordance with prevailing MIC Policies and Procedures for Leave of Absence. Leave of Absence requests must be supported by the Supervisor and Head of Department and require approval from the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee and Student Status committee.

11 Publishing and Dissemination of Research

It is required that all publications or disseminations of research on the thesis topic must acknowledge the financial support of MIC.

12 Support Services for Departmental Assistants

In accordance with the RGS's commitment to the professional development of DAs, the following support mechanisms are made available:

- The RGS is committed to supporting postgraduate researchers to develop the skills they need to progress with their research and to plan for the next stage in their careers, whether in academia or elsewhere. Transferable Research Skills Seminars cover topics such as research skills development; career management; research ethics and integrity; communication skills;

personal effectiveness; project management and applying for funding. In addition, regular seminars on Thesis Examination and 'Surviving the Viva' encourage students to plan and prepare for degree completion.

- The relevant Department provides induction on how to perform and develop as DAs.
- The Head provides written details of the tasks to be undertaken before work commences and ensures that DAs fully and comprehensively understand their role and responsibilities. This must include a reasonable written estimate of the number of hours expected of the DAs on each task, and the distribution of hours across each semester and the academic year.
- The Head keeps a record of the DA's performance in relation to the duties performed.
- Both the Head and the DAs are required to monitor and record total hours worked, along with any annual leave availed of, and ensure that agreed time commitments relating to the DA's duties are not exceeded.

13 Departmental Assistants Annual Review

- The Head records the outcome of the Annual Review as satisfactory or not satisfactory.
- The outcome of the Annual Review should be sent in simple email message to the GSD, normally by the deadline for the last ET meeting of the Academic Year.
- Only DAs with a satisfactory review outcome will be offered a contract in the forthcoming academic year.