

Deaf Studies

B.St.Su. Honours Bachelor Degree (NFQ Level 8)

Course Code	CAO Points 2019	Places 2020	Duration
TR016	337	20	4 years



What is Deaf Studies?

The Centre for Deaf Studies in Trinity affords students the opportunity to develop insights into, and genuine appreciation for the culture, contributions, and contemporary issues related to Deaf people in Ireland and worldwide. The undergraduate programme is the only one of its kind in Ireland. Irish Sign Language (ISL) is the indigenous language of the Deaf Community in Ireland and is the working language at the Centre for Deaf Studies.

ISL is a language like any other language, but it happens to be expressed in a different modality – sign languages use signs while spoken languages use sounds to express words. There are many different sign languages in the world in the same way as there are different spoken languages.

ISL is the third language of Ireland, recognised in the Irish Sign Language Act (2017). It is also one of the many signed languages recognised by European Institutions and is recognised along with British Sign Language in Northern Ireland. During this four-year course students develop fluency in ISL. As a student you may choose to specialise as an ISL/English Interpreter or an ISL teacher, or to focus on Deaf Studies. Students entering the Deaf Studies programme will explore a range of educational, social, cultural, linguistic, and psychological issues and their application to Deaf people, as individuals, as a community, and as a linguistic and cultural minority.

The multi-disciplinary approach to your studies is led by a strong academic team, many of whom are Deaf. The degree programme will provide in-depth training preparing you for a number of exciting career options working with Deaf people, in education, community and a range of other service settings, e.g., as a disability officer, resource officer, research assistant or as an administrator in Deaf community organisations. With this foundation, graduates frequently go on to complete postgraduate study.

Deaf Studies: The course for you?

Deaf Studies is the right course for you if:

- You are interested in studying Irish Sign Language (ISL), Deaf culture and aspects of the Deaf community
- You wish to acquire an understanding of the Deaf community as a part of human diversity
- You wish to spend your professional or social life after graduation in the Deaf community, or to make further contributions in a chosen academic discipline
- You are hearing, Deaf or hard of hearing – all are encouraged to apply and no prior knowledge of sign language is required

WHAT OUR GRADUATES SAY

Elizabeth Quinn
Graduated in 2019

From the first day I walked into the Centre for Deaf Studies I knew I had chosen the right course for me. I loved the intimacy of the course, which kept us all engaged. Learning about Deaf culture really prepared us for work placement where we had the opportunity to ‘test’ our ISL and get to know the Deaf community. This was an invaluable experience for when we entered the workforce. My four happy years in Trinity flew by and it is now my privilege to be working as a social care worker with children in the Deaf community.



Deaf Studies at Trinity

The Centre for Deaf Studies in Trinity has an international reputation for its work: we bring approaches from across many disciplines (linguistics, equality studies, psychology, education, disability studies, gender studies, interpreting studies, social policy and digital humanities) to bear on our work with Deaf communities.

We engage closely with the Irish Deaf community and students will have the opportunity to learn from many of the world’s leading scholars in this discipline who collaborate with the Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS) staff.



Do you think you will enjoy...

Learning to communicate through ISL?

Learning a language in a small group setting?

Working with a minority community?

Special entry requirements

Leaving Certificate	H4	English
	O6/H6	In a language other than English
Advanced GCE (A Level)	Grade C	English Literature (A or B) or English Language (A or B)
GCSE	Grade C	In a language other than English
International Baccalaureate	HL Grade 5	English
	SL Grade 5	In a language other than English



Pathways

The pathways available are Single Honours and Major with Minor. See page 26 for further information.

Graduate skills and career opportunities

Graduates frequently work in Deaf organisations, for example as a resource officer or combined with another skill set, such as teaching, ISL interpreting, child care, social work, public service bodies, the Civil Service or the media. There is also scope for further study or research in areas such as linguistics, communications, anthropology, multiculturalism, gender studies or law.

Your degree and what you'll study

The programme in Deaf Studies draws on a core faculty with interests in Irish Sign Language and Deaf Studies, as well as other faculty within the University and the School of Linguistics Speech and Communication Sciences, with expertise in bilingualism, biculturalism, reading, literacy, linguistics and applied linguistics, cognitive and language development, language teaching, special education, and counselling. This course gives an in-depth understanding of the Irish Deaf community and of the experience of Deaf people internationally, historically and in contemporary society. Core courses detailing the history, education, literature and language of the Deaf will be taught by both Deaf and hearing staff.

ISL is studied across the programme. In years two and three, themes such as ethics, Deaf people in the media, the legal and political standing of signed languages and access to critical public health services are explored, along with understanding of the structure

of ISL, the sociolinguistic context and the path to acquisition of a signed language for deaf children. For ISL/English interpreting students, translation theory and the practical skills of interpreting, guided by ethical practice, are emphasised in third and fourth year.

For students taking the ISL teaching route, guidance on planning and implementing a curriculum and assessing student performance are introduced. Students in the third and fourth year complete a Capstone research project.

Across the four years of the degree you will develop a high level of competency in ISL skills. Language teaching is mapped to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe), so you will be able to map your progress against your knowledge of other languages. Competence in Irish Sign Language is fundamental to gaining an in-depth understanding of the Deaf community and is a requirement of the programme.

There are QQI/FET routes available for this course. Please see www.cao.ie for details.

Theoretical Component

Theoretical courses introduce you to aspects of language acquisition, linguistics, sociolinguistics, social policy, and social studies. Each theoretical course involves two hours of lecture time per week plus an expectation of self-study.

Assessment

The course employs a wide range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies. Both continuous assessment and end of semester exams are undertaken across the four years. The range and diversity of assessment formats account for varying student learning styles.

Study abroad and internship opportunities

Students undertake practical placements in their fourth year and whilst students are usually placed in an Irish organisation, it is possible to arrange a placement abroad. Students can also consider completing an Erasmus exchange visit for this semester.

WHAT OUR CURRENT STUDENTS SAY

Aoife Price

I chose to study Deaf Studies as I always had an interest in sign language, and working with Deaf colleagues and clients in the past cemented my interest in the area. The course sounded interesting and quite broad as there are three strands to choose from – Interpreting, Sign Language Teaching, and Deaf Studies, which you decide on in second year. This means you cover not only a new language, but everything from linguistics to Deaf people in the media, class planning, and different perspectives on deafness. In addition you are introduced to a whole new culture and community.



Get in touch!

Further information and contact details: Centre for Deaf Studies, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

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