



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

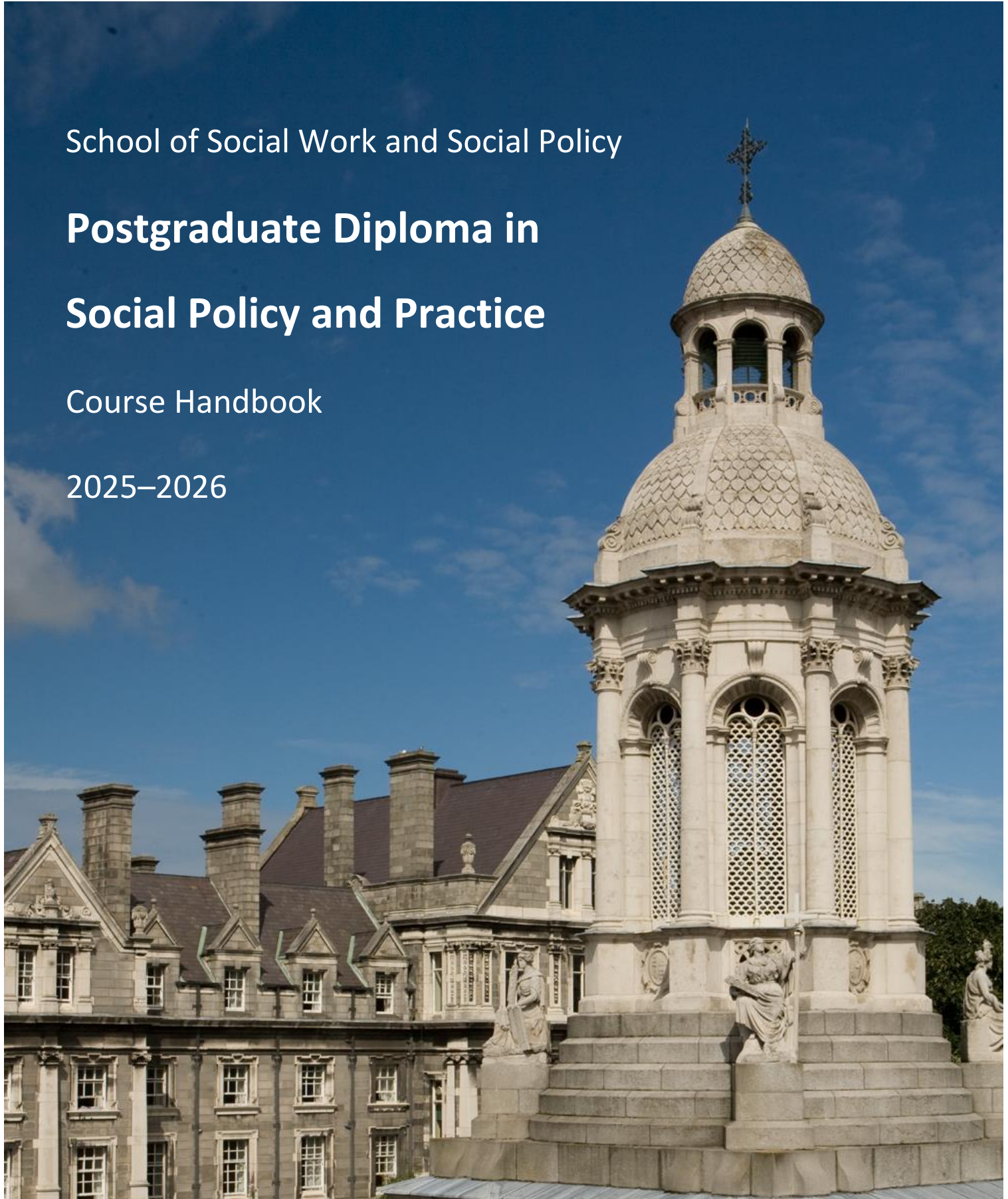
The University of Dublin

School of Social Work and Social Policy

# **Postgraduate Diploma in Social Policy and Practice**

Course Handbook

2025–2026



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Alternative formats of the Handbook can be made available on request.

In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the General Regulations published in the University Calendar <https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/> and information contained in programme of local handbooks, the provisions of the General Regulations in the Calendar will prevail.

## WELCOME MESSAGE

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We would like to warmly welcome you to Trinity College Dublin and to the School of Social Work and Social Policy. We are delighted that you have chosen the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Policy and Practice. Online learning may be new to many of you. Whilst it may feel strange at first, I would encourage you to throw yourself into the experience - click on the links, post your thoughts on the forum, turn on your microphone and reach out! When you combine a high level of engagement with the flexibility, structure and support offered on the course you can expect to get the best from this way of learning. This handbook aims to provide a comprehensive guide to your course structure, essential information, and college regulations.

Postgraduate studies are both challenging and rewarding, providing an opportunity to explore and develop new information and insights about the world through engagement with empirical data and literature. Over the coming year we hope your interactions with staff and fellow students will enhance your academic learning, lead you to further career opportunities and help you contribute to positive change in society. If we in the school can be of assistance along the way, please just let us know.

Best wishes for the year ahead



**Dr Catherine Elliott O'Dare**  
Course Director

## CONTACT DETAILS

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Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate	Dr Eavan Brady Email: <a href="mailto:BRADYE3@tcd.ie">BRADYE3@tcd.ie</a> Telephone: +353-1-896-2009
Module Leader: Disability and Human Rights: Global Perspectives	Vitalis Bengano Email: <a href="mailto:benganov@tcd.ie">benganov@tcd.ie</a>
Module Leader: Leading Human Service Organisations	Dr Julie Byrne Email: <a href="mailto:byrnej18@tcd.ie">byrnej18@tcd.ie</a> Telephone: +353-1-896 4648
Module Leader: Responding to Homelessness: International and Irish Experiences	Dr Sarah Sheridan Email: <a href="mailto:sheridsa@tcd.ie">sheridsa@tcd.ie</a>
Module Leader: Contemporary Social Policy Debates and Analysis	Dr Louise Caffrey Email: <a href="mailto:louise.caffrey@tcd.ie">louise.caffrey@tcd.ie</a> Telephone: +353-1-896-3908
Module Leader: Family and Society	Professor Stephanie Holt Email: <a href="mailto:sholt@tcd.ie">sholt@tcd.ie</a> Telephone: +353-1-896-3708
Course Administrator	Emma Quill Email: <a href="mailto:quill.emma@tcd.ie">quill.emma@tcd.ie</a> Telephone: +353 1 896 4579
Office Location	School of Social Work and Social Policy Room 3063, Arts Building Trinity College Dublin Dublin 2 Ireland
Blackboard	<a href="http://mymodule.tcd.ie">mymodule.tcd.ie</a>
Trinity Online Services	<a href="mailto:helponed@tcd.ie">helponed@tcd.ie</a>

## 1. COURSE COMMUNICATION

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On all course related matters, we will communicate with you primarily using the Blackboard learning environment and your TCD email account. In Blackboard we use the Announcements and Discussion Forum in the module *SS760 Course Information* to interact with you about course issues.

Lecturers will also use email and the Announcements and Discussion Forum in their modules to communicate with you about their individual modules.

From time-to-time other services in college may use email address, your telephone number or postal address.

You can communicate with the course staff and lecturers using the 'Discussion Forum' channels, email and telephone. We will endeavor to reply to your communication promptly. Unless otherwise advised you can expect staff to respond to queries in normal business hours i.e. 9.00am – 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

On occasion, students may wish to discuss something on an individual basis with a lecturer or the course director outside of the scheduled tutorial time. To arrange a meeting, please email the staff member to arrange a time to meet, either online in a one-to-one Blackboard Collaborate session or in person.

## 2. STUDYING ONLINE

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Online learning is a flexible and effective way to study. It is different to traditional classroom-based learning and as such it requires some different skills. Successful online learners are organised, connected, engaged and motivated. Developing these skills and building good habits early on will allow you to get the most out of your studies.

### Developing your Online Skills and Habits

#### #1 Get organised

Online learning requires more self-organisation than traditional classroom-based learning. Developing good organisational habits early will help your learning journey.

- Learn how to organise your study time
  - Have a regular time for studying and stick to it
  - Become familiar with the syllabus and plan for the work
  - Review when assignments are due and plan for them.
- Create a specific study place
  - Preferably a quiet location
  - Avoid games or web surfing
  - Have good lighting and a comfortable environment.
- Be prepared
  - Work your way through each week's learning materials ensuring that you open each folder
  - You will get the best value from the live tutorials when you are prepared.

#### #2 Stay Connected

Online students can sometimes feel a bit isolated. To overcome this, you should stay connected with your fellow students and academics. A healthy online class community will benefit every student on the course.

- Login into the online environment at least three times a week
  - Allows you to stay up to date with announcements
  - Participate in ongoing discussions.
- Recognise that you are in a class with fellow students
  - They are a great resource for both learning support and camaraderie
- Communicate with your peers regularly.
  - Successful online learners are those that communicate with their fellow students online – become a respected contributor to the online discussions
- Use the communication facilities in the online learning environment
  - Be polite and respectful online.
- Turn on your camera at the start and end of live tutorials so students and lecturers can see you.



### #3 Be Engaged

Successful online learning is an active process so be engaged and be heard. If you have questions or problems arise, talk about them.

- Ask questions
  - Use the live tutorial to ask your lecturer questions. This will hopefully address gaps in your knowledge and any concerns that you might have.
  - Post your responses to the tasks set each week so that lecturers can see how you're getting on and give the class feedback during the tutorial to address any issues with learning.
- Use the course and College supports outlined in your induction and Course Handbook if needed. If you are not sure what a college service can offer you, drop an email to the service contact person and they will advise you.

### #4 Balance Personal Obligations

Many online learners take online courses as the flexibility allows them to meet their personal commitments such as family or work. Recognise the obligations and commitments you have and plan for them.

- Tell family and friends about your course and how you are going to manage expectations.
- If necessary, negotiate your working schedule to free up time for study.
- Being available to attend the live tutorials, as outlined in your timetable and submit assessments, is particularly important and may require some rearrangement of your work, family or social commitments.

## Developing a Schedule

The flexibility afforded by online learning does not mean that you can or should let things drift. As you may be working or caring for family alongside your studies, it is crucial that you develop both a weekly and term schedule that takes into account both regular and periodic learning requirements of the course as well as the other commitments in your life.

- Your weekly schedule should cover all weekly learning requirements e.g. watching pre-recorded lectures, finding and reading reference materials, posting to your learning journal or to the discussion forum. To develop a weekly schedule, you should take into account the release of materials and the live tutorial by which all weekly learning tasks should be completed. Between these days, alongside your other commitments in life, you need to find the time to engage with course materials and complete the tasks set out.
- Your term schedule should take into account the periodic learning requirements e.g. the time to research, consider, write and edit assignments. Pay careful attention to the submission date for assessments as you will be penalised if you are late. For many students the time around assessment submission is associated with a high intensity of work so if you can, reducing other commitments at these times may be of benefit.

Putting your schedule down on paper or in a Word or Excel document rather than keeping it in your head can be very helpful. This can allow you to reschedule tasks you didn't manage to achieve when planned. It can also be helpful to make note of the reasons your schedule slipped e.g. *watching TV, too tired, had to help a child with homework*. Some of these reasons may be re-occurring in which case it would make sense to adjust the schedule.

Without the physical stimulus of sitting in class a few times a week, online students need to be particularly aware of the sources of distraction when studying. Aligning your schedule with your motivation will help to reduce these distractions. Actively contributing to the online community on



your course is also advisable as colleagues can help you to benchmark your progress, help you over any learning bumps and share successful strategies for managing your time and learning.

## Online Student Code of Conduct

As a student in a post-graduate course at Trinity College, you are expected to behave appropriately when communicating and interacting with colleagues and staff. This expectation applies to all students, including those completing their courses online. While the standards set out below will not be onerous for the vast majority of students, those who exhibit inappropriate behaviors when interacting with colleagues and staff are liable to face disciplinary measures.

Two key elements to keep in mind when studying online are netiquette and privacy.

### Netiquette

Netiquette is a term coined to describe the commonly accepted norms and behaviors used when communicating in online environments.

At one level, the same rules of regular communication apply when communicating online. By adopting the same respectful manner that you would expect in all communications, you are unlikely to encounter many issues.

That said, it must be recognised that the online environment lacks some of the face-to-face element of regular discussions and interactions, where people can rely on body language and tone of voice to capture the full meaning. In the online environment, without these visual cues, miscommunications and misunderstandings can occur and some extra care when interacting can be warranted.

Netiquette has slowly developed into an informal standard that helps transmit tone and emphasis when online and helps to address many of these communication issues.

Keeping the few simple rules of netiquette in mind will help ensure that what you say will be better understood by those listening and reading.

1. Typing in 'all caps' (all upper-case letters) denotes anger when communicating online. A message delivered in all caps is likely to be read as if sent in an aggressive tone. When possible, refrain from using all caps, even when emphasising certain words in sentences (italics may be used as an alternative for emphasis).
2. Emoticons, also known as emojis, are commonly used in online chat box communication to transmit the tone in which the message was sent. Emoticons/emojis can take the form of a series of characters or be little images of faces which aid in the transmission of the sender's facial expression when communicating. For example:
  - 'I got a great result in my first assignment. Yay! 😊'
  - 'I am unable to attend this evening due to work commitments, sorry. :-(

These can be more useful than it first seems as they help to ensure messages are received in the spirit in which they were sent.

3. Be careful when using irony and sarcasm online. This can be easily misinterpreted by those receiving your message.
4. Conduct debates and discussions in a respectful manner. Do not attempt to provoke personal debates and remember that it's better to reply when calm should you ever feel

provoked. If you feel angry it is often best to take a moment to think about what you are posting online. Keep all messages on the topic and aim to never get personal. Healthy disagreement can be very informative and lead to key learning but be constructive in any criticism you give and always aim to be respectful.

### *Other tips for effective online communication*

Some tips for engaging with other students online to have a healthy and engaging online classroom experience include:

- Participate! Interact with other students and don't just 'lurk' in the background. This helps create a community of learners and allows you to get to know your class better. This will be very useful in terms of support as you progress through your course.
- Include a picture in your Blackboard profile so that your fellow students and lecturers can put a face to your voice and contributions.
- Thank other students for their comments. Be mindful of the time and effort that has gone into posting comments.
- Acknowledge other students before disagreeing with them.
- Help other students. Some students may not have as much experience in communicating online.
- Comment using your own perspective (i.e. It is my opinion) rather than being dogmatic ('it is a fact that').
- Quote other messages when replying to them. This helps other students follow the thread of conversation.
- Stay on topic. Don't post irrelevant links, comments or pictures.
- Read all of the comments in the discussion before replying. This helps avoid the same questions or comments being repeated.
- Write full sentences with correct spelling and grammar when communicating with other students and lecturers.
- Remember that online comments will shape how other students and lecturers will perceive you. Think about what you are going to post before submitting.

### *Privacy considerations*

Considerations of privacy are critical when completing your course online. Remember the permanence of online communications. It is for that reason and your own protection that we employ an anonymity policy for posts, assessments etc. It is good practice to anonymise all those who you mention in any tasks or assignments that you complete. Please do not mention any real organisation names or disclose the names of any real individuals in your course. Be mindful that you do not know the personal histories of all your classmates, and all your academics who may be in view of your communications.

Note that information presented or shared throughout the course, from the academics and fellow students, should not be used for any purpose other than the course itself. Do not present others' opinions as your own and make sure not to present content shared on the course for any other purpose outside of the course. Those deemed to have transgressed these privacy measures are liable to be disciplined by the School.

## Student Services

Students can see a full range of the services available to them at [www.tcd.ie/students/supports-services/](http://www.tcd.ie/students/supports-services/). This includes library services, careers advisory, etc. Seven key student services for online postgraduate students are: 1) Trinity Online Services; 2) the Library; 3) Student Learning Development; 4) the Postgraduate Advisory Service; 5) the Graduate Students Union; and 6) Graduate Studies 7) Support for Students with Disabilities. More information about student services can be found at <https://www.tcd.ie/students/orientation/> Please be sure to introduce yourself in the first few weeks

### 1) Trinity Online Services

Trinity Online Services are responsible for the quality and the delivery of the content to the online students. They will also be the point of contact for resolving any issues relating to the online environment that arise throughout the running of the course. Issues that can arise include access to material, submission of assignments etc. The preferred way of contacting Trinity Online for issues regarding the use of the online learning environment is through the discussion forum dedicated for this purpose in *SS760 Course Information* module on Blackboard. They can also be contacted at [helponed@tcd.ie](mailto:helponed@tcd.ie). These channels are monitored regularly during College business hours.

### 2) Library

The library supports the learning and research needs across all disciplines of the College; it is a major research library of international repute; it provides services to a wide range of external users and institutions.

As a student of the university, you have a dedicated Subject Librarian, Caroline Montgomery (CMONTGOM@tcd.ie), who can support your learning and research needs throughout your time in Trinity. Make sure you attend any search skills workshops that are organised for you and check out the social policy and practice library resources available on your library portal <https://libguides.tcd.ie/social-work-social-policy/guide>

The library has developed some quick video guides on lots of topics, including searching the library catalogue, accessing your library account, finding books from your reading list, finding journal articles/e-books etc.. You will find links to the library's 'quick guide' videos here: <https://www.tcd.ie/library/support/tutorials/>

As an online student there is no requirement to visit the library but if you happen to be in Dublin, you are very welcome to. Please see the 'Plan Your Visit' guide: <https://libguides.tcd.ie/plan-your-visit>

### Off Campus Access

Access is available to licensed electronic resources (books, databases and journals) to registered students and staff, irrespective of where they are located. Please note that off campus access is not available for UK electronic legal deposit, eLD (UK), material. In these cases, the library catalogue will indicate that the electronic resource is only available from Library Reading Room computers.

College members linking to an electronic resource from outside Trinity College Dublin campus locations will select a resource from Stella Search. When they click on the link to the resource, they will be directed to a secure login page to authenticate with their College username and network login password. Please see the website for more information <http://www.tcd.ie/Library/using-library/off-campus.php>.

## **History of the Library**

The Library's history dates back to the establishment of the College in 1592 and it is the largest library in Ireland. Today it has over 6 million printed volumes with extensive collections of journals, manuscripts, maps and music reflecting over 400 years of academic development. The most famous of its manuscripts, the [Book of Kells](#) and the Book of Durrow, were presented by Henry Jones, Bishop of Meath and former vice-chancellor of the University, in the 1660s. The library was endowed with Legal Deposit privilege in 1801 and continues to receive copies of material published in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

## **3) Student Learning Development**

Student Learning Development are here to help you achieve your academic potential while studying in Trinity. They have a range of online resources for postgraduate students – see <https://student-learning.tcd.ie/postgraduate/>

As a postgraduate student, you will have demonstrated your ability to produce well-structured and organised written responses to assignment topics based on evidence which is critically analysed. It can be challenging to produce written work for academic purposes, particularly if it has been a while since you last had to do so. Support, additional to that in the course, is available from Student Learning Development on a wide variety of topics including, for example, academic writing, study strategies, reading and note-making, time management, motivation and procrastination, using stress positively, writing strategies, structuring and referencing/plagiarism. Learning Resources, individual appointments and webinars are available at the link above.

## **Blackboard Student Learning Development Module**

The Student Learning Development Blackboard Module provides a range of resources to supplement your learning on the course and help you develop your independent learning and academic skills. These resources are available 24/7 from wherever you are. In this module you will find audio and video files, downloadable documents as well as interactive websites and useful links on topics such as Essay Writing, basic Critical thinking, Literature Reviewing and much more. You can also find copies of presentations for all the workshops that are run over the Academic year.

The module is a self-enrol module on Blackboard. Instructions to enroll are available at this link: <https://student-learning.tcd.ie/blackboard/enrolment/> It only takes about 30 seconds!

## **4) Postgraduate Advisory Service**

The Postgraduate Advisory Service is a unique and confidential service available to all registered postgraduate students in Trinity College. It offers a comprehensive range of academic, pastoral and professional supports dedicated to enhancing your student experience. The Postgraduate Advisory

Service is led by the Postgraduate Support Officer who provides frontline support for all Postgraduate students in Trinity. The Postgrad Support Officer will act as your first point of contact and a source of support and guidance regardless of what stage of your Postgrad you're at. In addition each Faculty has three members of Academic staff appointed as Postgraduate Advisors who you can be referred to by the Postgrad Support Officer for extra assistance if needed.

The PAS exists to ensure that all Postgrad students have a contact point who they can turn to for support and information in college services and academic issues arising. Representation assistance to Postgrad students is offered in the area of discipline and/ or academic appeals arising out of examinations or thesis submissions, supervisory issues, general information on Postgrad student life and many others. All queries will be treated with confidentiality. For more information on PAS please see their website [https://www.tcd.ie/Senior\\_Tutor/postgraduateadvisory/](https://www.tcd.ie/Senior_Tutor/postgraduateadvisory/)

### *5) TCD Student Union*

The Students' Union is an independent body which represent all postgraduate students in Trinity. More information about the SU can be found at <https://www.tcdsu.org/>

### *6) Graduate Studies*

The Graduate Studies Office offers centralised information on admissions, assessment, progression and funding. For more information about their services please see <http://www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies/>.

### *7) Postgraduate Support for Students with Disabilities*

Postgraduate students (both taught and research) who have a disability are encouraged to apply to the Disability Service for reasonable accommodation.

Supports for Postgraduate Students includes:

- Academic Support
- Assistive Technology
- Occupational Therapy
- Support on Placements and Internships
- Preparation for Viva Voce examinations

An application can be made through my.tcd.ie via the 'My Disability Service' tab. Additional information is available in a step-by-step How to apply for Reasonable Accommodations guide.

Any postgraduate student in Trinity (or prospective student) is welcome to contact the Disability Service to informally discuss their needs prior to making a formal application. Please email [askds@tcd.ie](mailto:askds@tcd.ie) or visit the Disability Service Contact page.

<https://www.tcd.ie/disability/contact/>

<https://www.tcd.ie/disability/current/Postgrad.php>

## Co-Curricular Activities

### *1) Central Societies Committee*

The Central Societies Committee (CSC) is the sole body on campus with the power to grant recognition to societies. As the governing body of societies the CSC represents their interests in dealings with College authorities. More information about College Societies and the CSC can be found at <http://trinitysocieties.ie/>.

### *2) Dublin University Central Athletic Club*

Dublin University Central Athletic Club (DUCAC) is the governing body for Sport Clubs at Trinity. DUCAC is responsible for the overall administration of DU Sports Clubs in cooperation with Club Officers and for their interests and development in Trinity. More information about DUCAC can be found at [http://www.tcd.ie/Sport/student-sport/ducac/?nodeId=94&title=Sports\\_Clubs](http://www.tcd.ie/Sport/student-sport/ducac/?nodeId=94&title=Sports_Clubs).

### 3. DATA PROTECTION FOR STUDENT DATA

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Trinity College Dublin uses personal data relating to students for a variety of purposes. We are careful to comply with our obligations under data protection laws and have prepared a short guide at [https://www.tcd.ie/info\\_compliance/data-protection/student-data/](https://www.tcd.ie/info_compliance/data-protection/student-data/) to help you understand how we obtain, use and disclose student data in the course of performing University functions and services. This guidance note is intended to supplement the University's Data Protection Policy which can be found at [https://www.tcd.ie/info\\_compliance/data-protection/student-data/](https://www.tcd.ie/info_compliance/data-protection/student-data/).

Further information is available on the School of Social Work & Social Policy Website: <https://www.tcd.ie/swsp/privacy/>

### 4. COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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The overall objective of this course is to provide students from all disciplines with the opportunity to develop their understanding of the social policy options open to governments and how the implementation of social policy can impact on practice in areas such as personal social services, family, disability, work and housing. By the end of this programme students will have demonstrated an ability to:

- ❖ Bring to bear an evidence-based perspective on social policy formulation.
- ❖ Apply social science theories and social research evidence to the critical analysis and evaluation of contemporary social policies and their implementation.
- ❖ Implement documentary research techniques and methods in the analysis of social policies.
- ❖ Critically analyze interventions by the state and civil society to address social problems.
- ❖ Identify improvements to the delivery and practice of social and public services and voluntary sector social service activities.

The course carries 60 ECTS credits. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is an academic credit system based on the estimated student workload required to achieve the objectives of a module or programme of study. It is designed to enable academic recognition for periods of study, to facilitate student mobility and credit accumulation and transfer. The ECTS is the recommended credit system for higher education in Ireland and across the European Higher Education Area.

The ECTS weighting for a module is a measure of the student input or workload required for that module, based on factors such as the number of contact hours, the number and length of written or verbally presented assessment exercises, class preparation and private study time, laboratory classes, examinations, clinical attendance, professional training placements, and so on as appropriate. There is no intrinsic relationship between the credit volume of a module and its level of difficulty.

The European norm for full-time study over one academic year is 60 credits. 1 credit represents 20-25 hours estimated student input, so a 10 credit module will be designed to require 200-250 hours of student input including class contact time, assessments and examinations.



## 5. COURSE MODULES

	Module Code	Module Title	ECTS	Module Leader
	SS760	Course Information	0	Emma Quill
Term 1	SS765	Contemporary Social Policy Debates and Analysis	10	Dr Louise Caffrey
	SS761	Principles of Social Policy	10	Kasia Wodniak
Term 2	SS776	Family & Society	5	Dr Stephanie Holt
	SS775A	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Policy and People.	5	Dr Catherine Elliott O'Dare
Term 3	SS773	Disability & Human Rights. Global Perspectives	10	Vitalis Bengano
Term 4	SS769	Leading Human Service Organisations	10	Dr Julie Byrne
	SS772	Responding to Homelessness: International Perspectives	10	Dr Sarah Sheridan

## 6. COURSE STAFF

### **Dr Julie Byrne**

Julie is Assistant Professor in Online Education & Development and the School Director for Global Engagement. She was Trinity's Academic Lead (2019-2021) on the national *Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning* project and part of European Commission funded *Leading European Advanced Digital Skills* consortium [2022-2024]. She led the development of Trinity's first fully online postgraduate programme which she directed and was part of Trinity's first micro-credentials pilot, offering an online micro credential in *Digital Technologies in Human Services*. Julie studied human resource management and development at Dublin City University and University College Dublin. Her doctoral thesis at the University of Limerick focused on professional careers. The career as a concept spans many occupations and professions and this has facilitated Julie's work with a variety of professions including lecturers, engineers, managers and health and social care professionals. Julie was previously Director of Academic Programmes at National College of Ireland where she lectured in Human Resource Management, Human Resource Development and Business Management. While at NCI, she was a founding director of the Institute of Managers in Community and Voluntary Organisations. Alongside her part-time academic role in Trinity, Julie provides consulting services to professional bodies and professional regulators on education, training and continuing professional development matters. Her research explores the use of digital technologies in human services, online learning and education, developing digital skills, the leadership and management of human service organisations and professional careers.

**Profile:** <https://www.tcd.ie/research/profiles/?profile=byrnej18>

### **Dr Louise Caffrey**

Louise is an Assistant Professor in Social Policy in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin and Course Coordinator of the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Policy and Practice. She holds a PhD in Social Policy as well as a Full Post-Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching (PGCHE) from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Prior to joining TCD, Louise worked as a Research Fellow in the Division of Health and Social Care, King's College London, and prior to entering academia she worked as a research consultant, delivering numerous reports for government and NGO clients in Ireland and the UK. Louise's research interests centre on substantive areas of social policy as well as questions of research methodology. Substantively, Louise's research focuses on the challenges organisational complexity presents for policy implementation and organisational safety; theorising service-user engagement; and investigating the intended and unintended consequences of public management approaches. Louise's research has investigated these issues in both child & family services and health services. Louise has published in the areas of child protection, child contact, inter-professional working, domestic violence, health research systems, welfare to work policy, public management and gender equity initiatives. Methodologically Louise specialises in conceptual frameworks that seek to address organizational complexity, including systems approaches and Realist Evaluation.

**Profile:** <http://peoplefinder.tcd.ie/Profile?Username=CAFFRELO>

**Dr Kasia Wodniak**

Kasia is a sociologist and an Assistant Professor in Social Policy in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin. Her work focuses mainly on ecosocial policy, governance and alternative institutional arrangements in the context of inequality and climate change. Research methods are one of her main fields of expertise, with the most recent article concerning the issue of positionality in ethnically diverse contexts. In SWSP, she teaches a range of social policy and methods modules.

Profile: <https://peoplefinder.tcd.ie/Profile?Username=KWODNIAK>

Website: <https://katarzynawodniak.academia.edu/>

**Vitalis Bengano**

Vitalis Bengano is a fourth-year PhD student in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin (TCD), supervised by Edurne Garcia Iriarte and Michael Feely. He joined TCD in 2021 as a recipient of the TCD Postgraduate Studentship (1252) Award. His PhD research explores how in/accessibility experiences are re/produced among students with disabilities in higher education in Zimbabwe. Vitalis graduated with a BSc in Social Work and an MSc in Social Work in 2017 and 2020, respectively, from the University of Zimbabwe. He also graduated with an MSc in Social Policy from University College Cork (UCC) in Ireland in 2021. His PhD study builds on his previous postgraduate research and firsthand experience in the formulation of Zimbabwe's National Disability Policy of 2021 while working in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in Zimbabwe. His research interests primarily focus on access to higher education for people with disabilities, social policy, disability policy, disability rights, participatory research, New Materialism, the Assemblage approach, and the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Global South. Vitalis received the Ireland Fellows Programme-Africa Award in 2020 and the TRiSS Postgraduate Research Fellowship in 2023. He was also awarded the Government of Ireland International Education Scholarship for the 2024/25 academic year.

**Dr Sarah Sheridan**

Sarah is an Independent Researcher and a Visiting Research Fellow in the School of Social Work and Social Policy, TCD. Sarah has a particular expertise in homelessness research and she has published widely on the topic. Her doctoral thesis was a longitudinal, qualitative research study on women's homelessness in Ireland and prior to this, she worked as researcher on a major biographical and ethnographic study on women's homelessness with Dr Paula Mayock, TCD. She has worked in research management roles in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission as well as Focus Ireland. She currently serves as a Board Member with the charity Threshold. Her passion is using robust research methods to uncover real-world problems and providing grounded solutions that are specific and practical.

**Profile:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sarah-sheridan-phd-30088362/>

**Dr Catherine Elliott O'Dare**

Dr Catherine Elliott O'Dare is Assistant Professor in Social Policy at the School of Social Work and Social Policy. Catherine earned her doctorate at Trinity College Dublin, awarded in 2019. As a social scientist, Catherine's research interests include intergenerational solidarity, friendship, the social aspects of ageing - work, society and ageism (with an overarching emphasis on equality and social inclusion) and qualitative research methods. Catherine's recent research on intergenerational friendship and ageism have generated high impact publications including lead-authored articles in Canadian Journal on Aging/La Revue Canadienne du vieillissement, Journal of Aging Studies, Ageing and Society, Social Inclusion and two co-authored methodological papers published in Qualitative Health Research, and International Journal of Qualitative Methods. Catherine's current research focus is on ageism and intergenerational relations in the workplace, and older LGBTQI+ people's intergenerational friendships. In addition to publications, Catherine has participated in international conferences [including in Finland, Germany, UK, and Norway] and nationally. Catherine has also engaged with enterprise and interest organisations on the topics of ageism and intergenerational relations in the workplace and society.

**Profile:** <https://people.tcd.ie/Profile?Username=ELLIOT>

**Dr Stephanie Holt**

Stephanie is Professor in Social Work, Head of the School of Social Work & Social Policy and Course Director for the Postgraduate Diploma in Child Protection and Welfare. Following her graduation from the University of Ulster in 1991, Stephanie spent the next decade working as a social worker in a number of areas including Adolescent Residential Child Care, Children and Families and Family Support. Stephanie developed a Family Support Service and directed that for six years before taking up her lecturing post. Stephanie also spent one year in the Children's Research Centre conducting research on family support and educational disadvantage. Stephanie was successful in securing a prestigious Health Research Board scholarship in 2006, enabling her to take a three-year leave of absence from her lecturing post in order to undertake research leading to the award of a PhD. She has previously been the Director of the Master in Social Work programme and the School's Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning. She has conducted research and published on a wide range of issues related to gender based violence, child contact, intimate partner homicide and related areas including the experiences of children in State care. Stephanie is a member of the recently established Irish branch of BASPCAN.

**Profile:** <https://www.tcd.ie/research/profiles/?profile=sholt>

## 7. COURSE CALENDAR

TERM 1	
Tutorials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start 2 September, 2025</li> <li>• Finish 21 October, 2025</li> </ul>	Course and Online Inductions Library and Academic Writing Inductions Term 1 modules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contemporary Social Policy Debates and Analysis</li> <li>- Principles of Social Policy</li> </ul>
Week beginning 28 October, 2025	<b>Study Week</b>
Week beginning 04 November, 2025	<b>Study Week</b>

TERM 2	
Tutorials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start 11 November, 2025</li> <li>• Finish 9 December, 2025</li> </ul>	Term 2 modules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Policy and People</li> <li>- Family and Society</li> </ul>
Week beginning 15 December, 2025	<b>Christmas Period</b>
Week beginning 22 December, 2025	<b>Christmas Period</b>
Week beginning 29 December, 2025	<b>Study Week</b>

TERM 3	
Tutorials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start 06 January, 2026</li> <li>• Finish 03 February, 2026</li> </ul>	Term 3 modules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disability &amp; Human Rights: Global Perspectives</li> </ul>
Week beginning 9 February 2026	<b>Study Week</b>

TERM 4	
Tutorials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start 17 February, 2026</li> <li>• Finish 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2026</li> </ul>	Term 4 modules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leading Human Service Organisations</li> <li>- Responding to Homelessness: International Perspectives</li> </ul>
Week beginning 6 April 2026	<b>Study Week</b>
Week beginning 13 April 2026	<b>Study Week</b>

A detailed weekly schedule is published at the start of each term in the module *SS760 Course Information* in Blackboard. This includes the dates for submission of assessments.

Live tutorials take place from 6.30-7.25pm and 7.30-8.25pm on Tuesday during each week of term apart from study breaks, public holidays and the Christmas period.

The material for each week is released on the Wednesday before the tutorial. Tutorials may occasionally be rescheduled, or additional sessions organized. Where this happens, an announcement will be made in Blackboard.

Times for this course are given in *Irish Standard Time up to 30 October 2023 and from 26 March 2023 and in Greenwich Mean Time otherwise*

## Additional Information Sessions

In addition to teaching sessions, students can choose to attend information sessions that might be of interest for further study in the School of Social Work & Social Policy and careers workshops.

Further details on the careers service are available at the following link where you will find other services and information available to you from the careers team: <https://www.tcd.ie/Careers/>

Session title	Date	Delivered by
Avoiding Plagiarism workshop ( <i>recommend all students attend</i> )	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> October 6.30-7.30pm	Student Learning Development - Maeve
TCD Masters in Social Work Information Session	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> Oct 8.30-9pm	Dr. Susan Flynn
Career Planning and Decision Making	30 <sup>th</sup> Sept 6.30-6.35 pm Recorded information session available on Blackboard	Career Service , Sarah Jones
TCD MSc Social Policy & Practice	Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan 8.30-9pm	Dr Kasia Wodniak
TCD MSc Applied Social Research Info Session	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 8.30-9pm	Dr. Louise Caffrey
Labour Market Intelligence, making applications and interview skills	Recorded information session available on Blackboard	Career Service , Sarah Jones

## 8. MODULE DETAILS

SS765

*Contemporary Social Policy Debates and Analysis*

Module Details	
Module Code	SS765
Module Title and Credits	Contemporary Social Policy Debates and Analysis (10 ECTS)
Module Leader	Dr Louise Caffrey
Module Overview and Objectives	
<p>The overarching objective of this module is to develop students' core social policy skills: critical analysis and argument development. It does so by introducing students to key social policy issues, focusing on the topics of work, social security and gender income inequality. These topics are used to facilitate students' critical engagement in contemporary social policy debates using a critical analytic, evidence-based approach. Students are supported to critically appraise how explanations of, and solutions to social issues may be influenced by conceptual interpretations, competing perspectives and a complex web of inter-related factors.</p>	
Learning Outcomes	<p>Having completed this module, you should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recall knowledge on key debates in the areas of work, social security and gender income inequality.</li> <li>2. Identify competing perspectives on social policy issues.</li> <li>3. Critically evaluate competing explanations using evidence.</li> <li>4. Develop balanced, evidence-informed arguments on social policy debates.</li> </ol>
Indicative Content	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging Debate: Critical analysis &amp; argument development</li> <li>• Using Evidence</li> <li>• The Changing Context of work</li> <li>• Labour Market Activation Policies</li> <li>• Universal Basic Income</li> <li>• Gender Income Inequality</li> <li>• Contemporary Debates &amp; Analysis: key themes</li> </ul>	



Module Details	
Module Code	SS761
Module Title and Credits	Principles of Social Policy (10 ECTS)
Module Leader	Dr Kasia Wodniak
Module Overview and Objectives	
<p>The Principles of Social Policy module will introduce you to the field of social policy and provide you with a critical knowledge and understanding of the principles underpinning social policy. You will develop an appreciation of the influences that have shaped the development of social policy to allow you contemplate future directions. The module will critically examine definitions of social policy to facilitate appreciation of the breadth and hybrid nature of the subject, while introducing parameters and frameworks guiding social policy analysis, research and investigation.</p> <p>You will be equipped to recognise the extent to which ideology, politics and values influence and shape social policy and encouraged to question patterns, assumptions and normative concepts and constructs generated by social policy. An understanding of the multiple contexts shaping social policy across international, supra-national, national and local levels will be developed. Students will be given an appreciation of the key skills of rigorous analysis and critical reflection informed by continuously evolving political, ethical, theoretical, and material contexts that shape social policy making. The module will equip students for deeper exploration of specific policy issues and debates as they progress in their study of social policy.</p>	
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>At the end of this module the student should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conceptualise social policy and identify the parameters and frameworks guiding social policy measures, analysis and investigation;</li> <li>2. Understand how history, ideology and politics come together to form normative concepts shaping social practices and policy measures.</li> <li>3. Articulate the contested nature of rights, entitlements, equality, poverty and social justice, while identifying emerging issues and challenges in social policy;</li> <li>4. Recognise how social policies are influenced by social and political values and ideologies that operate on a continuum from left to right, and identify new political movements, bilateral and multilateral influences that cross-cut the conventional ideological spectrum;</li> <li>5. Recognise key ideological, social, cultural and political factors which shape social policy in welfare states.</li> </ol>
Indicative Content	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Field of Social Policy</li> <li>• The Remit of Social Policy: Need, welfare, well-being, flourishing</li> <li>• The Evolution of Social Policy</li> <li>• Founding Ideologies in Social Policy</li> <li>• Welfare States Explained and Conceptualised</li> <li>• Current Ideologies in Social Policy</li> <li>• The Process of Policy Formulation and the development of Evidence-based Policy</li> </ul>	

Module Details	
Module Code	SS769
Module Title and Credits	Leading Human Service Organisations (10 ECTS)
Module Leader	Dr Julie Byrne
Module Overview and Objectives	
<p>Human service organisations, such as schools and hospitals, have a direct impact on the welfare and wellbeing of citizens. As such they provide us with a setting to observe the impact of social policy in areas such as health and education. However, human service organisations are also subject to public policy. As such, these organisations, which possess distinctive features and operate in dynamic and demanding environments, present a particular leadership and management challenge. We all have a stake in human service organisations- as service users, funders and perhaps, as staff. Therefore, the leadership and management of such organisations impacts us all.</p> <p>This module explores the nature and context of human service organisations and their link to both social and public policy. Using organisation and management theory the module considers current leadership and management issues impacting on stakeholders such as service users, staff and funders.</p>	
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>At the end of this module the student should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the nature and purpose of human service organisations and how they differ from other organisation types.</li> <li>2. Analyse the policy context within which human service organisations operate.</li> <li>3. Analyse current leadership and management issues impacting stakeholders such as service users, staff and funders.</li> <li>4. Explain relevant leadership and management theories, models and concepts.</li> <li>5. Identify, select and analyse relevant evidence to enhance their understanding of leadership and management in human service organisations.</li> </ol>
Indicative Content	
<p>The module covers the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature and purpose of human service organisations</li> <li>• Distinctive features of HSOs</li> <li>• Effectiveness, efficiency, equity</li> <li>• Policy context of human service organisations</li> <li>• Social policy</li> <li>• Public policy</li> <li>• Key leadership and management issues for human service organisations e.g.</li> <li>• Staff: recruitment, retention, training and development</li> <li>• Regulation and standards: quality assurance and improvement</li> <li>• Using technology: service models, access</li> <li>• Leadership: culture</li> </ul>	
Assessment & Reassessment	
Written Assignment (100%) [LO1, 2, 3, 4, 5]	

Module Details	
Module Code	SS764
Module Title and Credits	The Family and Society (5 ECTS)
Module Leader	Stephanie Holt
Module Overview and Objectives	
<p>This module explores and challenges assumptions about the nature of family and its relation to society, allowing students to critique ideas and beliefs about families and to gain a deeper understanding of the contraindications and complexities of family life.</p> <p>The module will look at the sociological approaches to the family over time. It will highlight the diversity and multiplicity of contemporary family life; drawing comparisons with traditional, homogenous practices and recognising that conventional understandings of 'alternative' family composition are becoming ever-more common-place and normalised.</p> <p>In addition, the module will attempt to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extrapolate the implications of different family arrangements.</li> <li>• Explore the developmental trajectory of social policy as it relates to the family, including that of childhood.</li> </ul> <p>Examine children's rights in the context of contemporary theoretical frameworks on childhood, parenting and family life.</p>	
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>At the end of this module the student should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand and describe the complexity of modern families.</li> <li>2. Examine how policy on the family continuously develops, while appreciating that development within a social constructionist framework.</li> <li>3. Develop a critical awareness of the sociological knowledge base for understanding the contemporary family and the experiences and perspectives of children.</li> <li>4. Appreciate the complexity of children's human rights within the framework of parenting and families.</li> </ol>
Indicative Content	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding human rights</li> <li>• Understanding Families</li> <li>• The Irish Policy Context on the Family and Society</li> <li>• Conceptualising Childhood</li> <li>• Children's Rights</li> <li>• Parenting – A Sociological Analysis</li> <li>• Family and Diversity</li> </ul>	

Module Details	
Module Code	SS773
Module Title and Credits	Disability and Human Rights: Global perspectives (10 ECTS)
Module Leader	Vitalis Bengano
Module Overview and Objectives	
<p>This module situates disability as a human rights issue within a global context. The module provides a general understanding of disability from different frameworks (disability models) and key constructs (normalcy and diversity) and explores the influences that they, in particular the human rights-based approach, have in developing disability policy internationally. A key milestone in the advancement of rights for disabled people is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted by the United Nations in 2006. The module centres around three of its articles: 12 <i>Equal recognition before the law</i>, 19 <i>Living independently and being included in the community</i>, and 31 <i>Statistics and Data Collection</i>. A critical analysis of core ideas underpinning the articles, policy developed in each of the areas, and research evidence on the experiences of disabled people allows students to evaluate the potential and limitations of the CRPD. As part of the module, students become familiar with tools to evaluate disability policy.</p>	
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>Having completed this module, students should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critically analyse the impact of a human rights-based approach to the development of disability policy internationally.</li> <li>2. Evaluate the potential and limitations of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) for disabled people to achieve dignified lives</li> <li>3. Understand key debates in relation to decision making, independent living and research</li> <li>4. Use a multi-dimensional approach to understand disability</li> </ol>
Indicative Content	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding Disability: A global perspective</li> <li>• Disability models</li> <li>• The social construction of “normalcy” and “diversity”</li> <li>• From framing disability as a health issue to disabled people’s right to health</li> <li>• Using a human rights-based approach to analyse disability policy</li> <li>• Decision-making and the right to legal capacity</li> <li>• Independent living and the Right to live in the community</li> </ul>	

Module Details	
Module Code	SS772
Module Title and Credits	Responding to Homelessness: International Perspectives (10 ECTS)
Module Leader	Dr. Sarah Sheridan
Module Overview and Objectives	
<p>The number of people experiencing homelessness is rising in the majority of the countries of the Global North. Policy responses to these rising numbers are variable across these countries, but broadly include elements of congregate emergency accommodation, some long-term supported housing, survivalist services such as the provision of soup and blankets, and varying degrees of coercion. Attempts to prevent homelessness in the first instance have gained prominence in some countries and there are some examples where homelessness has actually decreased in recent decades, for example Finland.</p> <p>This module will provide an overview on the history of homelessness; the contemporary drivers and demographics of homelessness both in Ireland and elsewhere; the different types of policy and service responses and critically evaluating the effectiveness of these different responses; the impact of research evidence and data on how we understand and respond to homelessness; the role of new street-level organisations in constructing contradictory public images of homelessness; and why, despite increased policy prominence and expanded service provision, homelessness continues to rise.</p>	
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>Having completed this module, you should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appreciate the different definitions and means of measuring homelessness in a comparative context.</li> <li>2. Recognise the importance of understanding homelessness in a historical context.</li> <li>3. Understand the different theoretical frameworks that aim to explain homelessness.</li> <li>4. Identify the contemporary drivers and demographics of homelessness.</li> <li>5. Assess the role of emergency accommodation and street level services in responding to homelessness.</li> <li>6. Evaluate the impact of different models of intervention with people experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>7. Be familiar with policy and practice responses to homelessness in comparative perspective.</li> </ol>
Indicative Content	

- Defining and Measuring Homelessness
- History of Homelessness
- Is Homelessness Complex?
- Street Homelessness: Coercion and Care
- Is it possible to end homelessness?
- Ending Homelessness in Denmark, Finland and Ireland
- Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and responding to homelessness

Module Details	
Module Code	SS775A
Module Title and Credits	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Policy and People (5 ECTS)
Module Leader	Dr Catherine Elliott O'Dare
Module Overview and Objectives	
<p>The aim of the module is to engage learners in an introductory understanding of, and critical engagement with, the area of social policy and equality, diversity, and inclusion infrastructure in the Irish and international context. Learners will explore how social policy is constructed; and constructs, intersects, understands, and addresses the needs (or not) of diverse social groups through the lens of equality, diversity, and inclusion: through a critical interrogation with empirical evidence, policy document analysis, advocacy 'voices' and experiential/ observational critical reflection.</p> <p>The overarching aim of this module is that learners, on completing the module, will be to apply their learning and understanding in their workplaces, organisations and their communities, to support and promote EDI principles, constructs, and policy outcomes for the benefit of all in society.</p>	
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>At the end of this module the student should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand how social policy constructs and recognises the risks and needs of a variety of social groups.</li> <li>2. Critically interrogate how/if social policy contributes and promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion for all in society across a variety of policy domains, and relevant to the learner's field of interest.</li> <li>3. Be equipped with the knowledge to debate the underpinning purpose, delivery, and outcomes of policy measures in the context of the lives of the groups of people they were intended to benefit.</li> <li>4. Evaluate current and possible alternative policies, grounded in reflective analysis, self-directed learning and marshalling of literature and empirical evidence, in the national and international policy context.</li> </ol>
Indicative Content	
<p>Session 1: Understanding Concepts and Terms</p> <p>Session 2: Social Policy and Older People</p> <p>Session 3: Social Policy and Gender</p> <p>Session 4: Social Policy and Ethnicity</p> <p>Session 5: Intersectionality</p>	



## COURSE REGULATIONS

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### College Calendar

As well as containing key dates, part 3 of the College Calendar contains all information concerning graduate studies in Trinity College, Dublin including all general regulations.

<https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/>

### College Policies

Students are expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the College's policies. Details available at <http://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/>.

### Participation

It is well established in educational research, especially involving adult learners, that members of a group learn a great deal from their peers. Without physical interaction it can require extra effort for members of an online class to feel like members of a group. To build an effective group and enhance everyone's learning it's important that each individual makes an effort to participate in group discussions whether on the discussion forum or during tutorials. This will involve sharing your experiences and opinions. Students are encouraged to be prepared for group interactions by studying the relevant materials and thinking about their contributions and those of others. Fulfilling these commitments will enhance the learning experience.

### Peer Support and Respect

Along with academic staff, every student shares the responsibility to help create a supportive and respectful learning environment. This involves accepting that there will be different learning needs in every group, allowing peers to contribute and treating colleagues and lecturers with respect. For effective group learning, class members need to know that interactions will be conducted in a safe and confidential environment. Please be respectful of others' contribution and don't discuss individual details outside of the class. Refer to section 3 of the handbook for information on netiquette and privacy.

### Non – Satisfactory Report

Students are expected to attend scheduled tutorials each week and to complete all course work assignments on time. All students must fulfil the course requirements as communicated in this handbook and on Blackboard with regards to course work and attendance. Where specific requirements are not stated, students may be deemed non-satisfactory if they miss more than a third of their course of study or fail to submit more than a third of the required course work in any term.

At the end of the teaching term, students who have not satisfied the School requirements may be reported as non-satisfactory for that term. This may mean that the student is required to repeat some or all of the term. **If illness or severe domestic upheaval are affecting your participation on the course you should inform the Course Director.** More information about the College Policy on Attendance can be found in the College Calendar – Part III. Page 22 Attendance and Off – Books

## Problems, Complaints and Grievances

If you have an academic-related problem you should discuss it first with the lecturer concerned and the module leader in the case of guest lecturers. If you have a course administration problem, e.g. submitting assessments you should contact the Course Administrator who may refer it to the relevant service. If you have a problem with a Trinity service, you should contact the relevant service. General issues affecting the class should be channelled through your student representative to the Course Director.

If you have a complaint which, after discussion with the relevant Lecturer, Course Administrator or Trinity Service has not been resolved, you should contact the Course Director. If the problem remains, you should consult the Head of School or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, is committed to excellence in teaching, research and service provision. The University aims for the highest standards of quality in all its activities. It takes legitimate student complaints seriously and aims to resolve them in a clear, fair and timely manner. Information about the Student Complaints Procedure can be found at [https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/160722\\_Student%20Complaints%20Procedure\\_PUB.pdf](https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/160722_Student%20Complaints%20Procedure_PUB.pdf).

## Academic Policies

Information about the Universities Academic Policies can be found at <https://www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/academic-policies/>

## Dignity and Respect Policy

Trinity is committed to supporting a collegiate environment in which staff, students and other community members are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment (including sexual and racial harassment) are not tolerated in Trinity. Information about the Dignity and Respect Policy can be found at <https://www.tcd.ie/equality/policy/dignity-respect-policy/>.

## 9. ASSESSMENTS

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Assessment of your learning will take numerous forms. Assessment has two purposes: (i) to optimise learning and (ii) generate evidence that you warrant the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Social Policy and Practice. Module leaders will inform you of the specific assessment requirements for their modules on the Module Home Page and during live tutorials. We expect you to address the assessment brief set by the module leader. If you have any questions about the assessment brief you should ask the module leader during tutorials.

### *Assessment Deadlines*

To optimise your learning and well-being and to ensure fairness and comparability between students, considerable importance is attached to the submission of assessments according to the deadlines set. These deadlines are set carefully to allow you time to engage with the weekly materials, consolidate your learning and receive timely feedback. Late submission of even one piece of work will affect this learning cycle and can place you under pressure for the remainder of the course.

To allow you to plan for the on-time submission of assessments, we ensure that you receive information about assessment deadlines by:

- Including assessment deadlines on the course schedule you receive at the beginning of each term
- Posting assessment deadlines on each Module Home Page

**Students are expected to complete and submit all course work assignments on time.**

### *Late Submission of Assessments*

Given the importance of assessment deadlines for learning, wellbeing, fairness and comparability, extensions to a published assessment deadline are extremely unusual. An extension request from an individual student will normally only be considered if the student emails **the appropriate lecturer/module leader**, submitting the reasons for the extension, along with supporting documentation, and copy the Course Director ([elliott@tcd.ie](mailto:elliott@tcd.ie)) and Course Administrator ([quill.emma@tcd.ie](mailto:quill.emma@tcd.ie)) into the email.

To summarise, extension requests must be:

- i. emailed to the appropriate lecturer, copying in the Course Administrator and Course Director.
- ii. made on the grounds of illness or severe domestic upheaval
- iii. received well in advance (preferably two weeks) of the deadline
- iv. supported by documentation in the case of illness
- v. accompanied by appropriate supporting evidence on ad misericordiam grounds (bereavement, family issues, unexpected demands of full-time work).

A response to an extension request may take up to 5 days. Students should be aware that until he/she receives a response the original assessment deadline applies. If the request is refused, the original submission date applies. If an extension is not possible (or where a long extension is requested), the course may consider granting a deferral of the assignment to the reassessment period. No more than 20ECTS may typically be deferred for assessments in any academic year.

**The late submission of an assessment without an approved extension will be penalised in the interest of fairness to all students. Work handed in late will be penalised with reference to the Blackboard date stamp. A penalty of 10% will be applied for each day exceeding the stated deadline including extensions up to 5 days. Submissions received more than five days late, including weekends, without a pre-agreed extension, a medical certificate or documented evidence of significant extenuating circumstances may be refused marking.**

- For example, if course work due on Monday is submitted on Tuesday (anytime) and earns a mark of 50%, 10% will be deducted from the mark, bringing the mark down to 45%.

Students are fully responsible for submission of their assessments via Blackboard and are advised to give adequate time to complete the online assessment submission procedure correctly. Please see the information on submitting using Blackboard in the SS760 Course Information materials.

Where a student submits an incorrect version of their work via Blackboard, they will be permitted a second upload. Please contact the Course Administrator ([quill.emma@tcd.ie](mailto:quill.emma@tcd.ie)) directly if you submit an incorrect version of your work to Blackboard. However, a penalty for late submission may apply to the second upload if the student did not inform the Course Administrator of the error before the deadline.

## Plagiarism

### What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is viewed as a form of academic dishonesty and may be defined as stealing or borrowing from the writings or ideas of others and passing them off as your own. Any failure to acknowledge other people's ideas and statements in an assessment is seen by the University as academic fraud. It is regarded as a major offence for which a student may be referred to the Disciplinary Committee of the University and may be expelled from the University. It is important to understand that stating that your intention was not to cheat and that you did not understand what constituted plagiarism will not be accepted as a defense. It is the action and not the intention that constitutes plagiarism. A summary of the University's disciplinary procedures for plagiarism is available here:

<https://libguides.tcd.ie/plagiarism/levels-and-consequences>

Acts of plagiarism include copying parts of a document without acknowledging and providing the source for each quotation or piece of borrowed material. This applies whatever the source of the work. Similarly, using or extracting another person's concepts, experimental results or conclusions, summarising another person's work or, where there is collaborative preparatory work, submitting substantially the same final version of any material as another student without due acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism.

Every submitted assessment is checked by Turnitin, which is a plagiarism detection package.

### Avoiding plagiarism

Avoiding plagiarism is the responsibility of every student. To help you avoid plagiarism please do the following:

- Read the detailed guidance on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. You must familiarise yourself with these processes prior to submitting assessed work:  
<https://libguides.tcd.ie/plagiarism>

- Read the section below on referencing guidelines, follow the links and ensure you understand how to reference correctly.
- By **30<sup>th</sup> September** you must have completed the online 'Ready, Steady, Write' tutorial. You will find the tutorial here: <https://libguides.tcd.ie/plagiarism/ready-steady-write>
- By **30<sup>th</sup> September** you **must** upload the plagiarism declaration form to Blackboard, you will not be able to submit an assignment if you have not completed this declaration.
- The plagiarism declaration must be uploaded to Blackboard by 30<sup>th</sup> September and included on the cover sheet for all assessed assignments.
- As noted above, all assignments are checked for plagiarism using Turnitin software. Prior to submitting your assignment, you can check your assignment's Turnitin in score and, particularly if you receive a score over 20%, please ensure you have addressed any instances of plagiarism before you submit.

Please note: Turnitin highlights text that *may* be a plagiarism concern and so, as well as highlighting instances of plagiarism, it will highlight text that is not in fact plagiarism (e.g. direct quotes, correctly cited with a page number). Only instances of actual plagiarism are a concern.

- Contact the Course Director or Lecturer if you are unsure about any aspect of plagiarism.

### Referencing guidelines

All assignments in Higher Education must be referenced. The Discipline of Social Policy uses 'in-text' Citation style (also known as in-line/APA/Harvard Referencing) and this style must be used for all assignments. Full details on how to correctly reference using this style is available at the following link. Please be sure to click the tabs to see the format for each source e.g. books, edited books, journals etc: <https://libguides.ncirl.ie/referencingandavoidingplagiarism/apa>

As described in detail in this guide, all assignments must include in-text citations (e.g. (Smith, 2006)) throughout the assignment as well as the list of full references at the end of the assignment.

### University regulations on Plagiarism for Postgraduates

The full University regulations on plagiarism are contained in the 2022/23 Calendar entry on plagiarism and the sanctions which are applied which is located at <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/calendar> . You should familiarise yourself with these regulations:

#### ***Calendar Statement on Plagiarism for Postgraduates - Part III, 1.32 General***

It is clearly understood that all members of the academic community use and build on the work and ideas of others. It is commonly accepted also, however, that we build on the work and ideas of others in an open and explicit manner, and with due acknowledgement.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the work or ideas of others as one's own, without due acknowledgement.

Plagiarism can arise from deliberate actions and also through careless thinking and/or methodology. The offence lies not in the attitude or intention of the perpetrator, but in the action and in its consequences.

It is the responsibility of the author of any work to ensure that he/she does not commit plagiarism.

Plagiarism is considered to be academically fraudulent, and an offence against academic integrity that is subject to the disciplinary procedures of the University.

### ***Examples of Plagiarism***

Plagiarism can arise from actions such as:

- (a) copying another student's work;
- (b) enlisting another person or persons to complete an assignment on the student's behalf;
- (c) procuring, whether with payment or otherwise, the work or ideas of another;
- (d) quoting directly, without acknowledgement, from books, articles or other sources, either in printed, recorded or electronic format, including websites and social media;
- (e) paraphrasing, without acknowledgement, the writings of other authors.

Examples (d) and (e) in particular can arise through careless thinking and/or methodology where students:

- (i) fail to distinguish between their own ideas and those of others;
- (ii) fail to take proper notes during preliminary research and therefore lose track of the sources from which the notes were drawn;
- (iii) fail to distinguish between information which needs no acknowledgement because it is firmly in the public domain, and information which might be widely known, but which nevertheless requires some sort of acknowledgement;
- (iv) come across a distinctive methodology or idea and fail to record its source.

All the above serve only as examples and are not exhaustive.

### ***Plagiarism in the context of group work***

Students should normally submit work done in co-operation with other students only when it is done with the full knowledge and permission of the lecturer concerned. Without this, submitting work which is the product of collusion with other students may be considered to be plagiarism.

When work is submitted as the result of a Group Project, it is the responsibility of all students in the Group to ensure, so far as is possible, that no work submitted by the group is plagiarised.

### ***Self-Plagiarism***

No work can normally be submitted for more than one assessment for credit. Resubmitting the same work for more than one assessment for credit is normally considered self-plagiarism.

### ***Avoiding Plagiarism***

Students should ensure the integrity of their work by seeking advice from their lecturers, tutor or supervisor on avoiding plagiarism. All schools and departments must include, in their handbooks or other literature given to students, guidelines on the appropriate methodology for the kind of work that students will be expected to undertake. In addition, a general set of guidelines for students on avoiding plagiarism is available at <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism>.

If plagiarism as referred to in paragraph (1) above is suspected, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) or his/her designate will arrange an informal meeting with the student, the student's Supervisor and/or the academic staff member concerned, to put their suspicions to the student and give the student the opportunity to respond. Students may nominate a Graduate Students' Union representative or PG advisor to accompany them to the meeting. The student will be requested to respond in writing stating his/her agreement to attend such a meeting and confirming on which of the suggested dates and times it will be possible for them to attend. If the student does not in this manner agree to attend such a meeting, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), or designate, may refer the case directly to the Junior Dean, who will interview the student and may implement the procedures as referred to in Section 5 (Other General Regulations).

If the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) forms the view that plagiarism has taken place, he/she must decide if the offence can be dealt with under the summary procedure set out below. In order for this summary procedure to be followed, all parties noted above must be in agreement and must state their agreement in writing to the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) or designate. If one of the parties to the informal meeting withholds his/her written agreement to the application of the summary procedure, or if the facts of the case are in dispute, or if the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) feels that the penalties provided for under the summary procedure below are inappropriate given the circumstances of the case, he/she will refer the case directly to the Junior Dean, who will interview the student and may implement the procedures set out in Section 5 (Other General Regulations).

If the offence can be dealt with under the summary procedure, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) will recommend one of the following penalties:

- (a) Level 1: Student receives an informal verbal warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. The student is required to rephrase and correctly reference all plagiarised elements. Other content should not be altered. The resubmitted work will be assessed and marked without penalty;
- (b) Level 2: Student receives a formal written warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. The student is required to rephrase and correctly reference all plagiarised elements. Other content should not be altered. The resubmitted work will receive a reduced or capped mark depending on the seriousness/extent of plagiarism;
- (c) Level 3: Student receives a formal written warning. The piece of work in question is inadmissible. There is no opportunity for resubmission.



Provided that the appropriate procedure has been followed and all parties in (6) above are in agreement with the proposed penalty, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) should in the case of a Level 1 offence, inform the Course Director and, where appropriate, the Course Office. In the case of a Level 2 or Level 3 offence, the Dean of Graduate Studies must be notified and requested to approve the recommended penalty. The Dean of Graduate Studies will inform the Junior Dean accordingly. The Dean on Graduate Studies may approve or reject the recommended penalty or seek further information before making a decision. If he/she considers that the penalties provided for the summary procedure are inappropriate given the circumstances of the case, he/she may also refer the matter directly to the Junior Dean who will interview the student and may implement the procedures as referred to under conduct and college. Notwithstanding his/her decision, the Dean of Graduate Studies will inform the Junior Dean of all notified cases of Level 2 and Level 3 offences accordingly. The Junior Dean may nevertheless implement the procedures as set out in Section 5 (Other General Regulations).

If the case cannot normally be dealt with under summary procedures, it is deemed to be a Level 4 offence and will be referred directly to the Junior Dean. Nothing provided for under the summary procedure diminishes or prejudices the disciplinary powers of the Junior Dean under the 2010 Consolidated Statutes.

## Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

### **School of Social Work and Social Policy on Generative AI**

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) refers to artificial intelligence systems capable of generating new content, ideas, or data that mimic human-like creativity. It uses deep learning algorithms to produce outputs ranging from text and images to music and code, based on patterns it learns from vast datasets. GenAI uses large language models to analyse and understand the structure of the data it's trained on, enabling the generation of novel content. Examples include ChatGPT, Google Bard, CoPilot, Grammarly and Notion.

The University recognises that GenAI offers new opportunities for teaching, learning, assessment and research. It also recognise that these technologies present challenges and risks, including to academic integrity, ethics, student learning, privacy, impartiality, intellectual property and sustainability.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the core principles of the School of Social Work and Social Policy's approach to student use of GenAI. This policy compliments the College level policy on GenAI while taking into account the unique needs and demands of our School.

## **Encouraging the development of GenAI literacy**

In line with College policy, the School is committed to supporting the opportunity for students and staff to become GenAI literate and fluent, thereby helping them to navigate and respond to the challenges and risks of GenAI in order to harness the potential of GenAI to enhance teaching, learning, assessment and research – and to be prepared for future challenges as these technologies evolve.

## **Appreciating what GenAI is and is not good for**

Within a research context there are some tasks which GenAI is particularly useful for. For example, generating statistical code or as an aid when brainstorming questions to ask participants in a survey or interview.

GenAI may be useful when undertaking discursive writing such as an essay but only when used with discretion and understood as an assistive tool.

For a research literature review for a Capstone, Masters or PhD dissertation it is advisable to use GenAI sparingly, if at all. It may be useful as a way to check grammar and spelling and may sometimes be used to generate ideas but the deep knowledge of the literature that comes from systematic searching, independent reading and the exertion involved in shaping it into your final review are important parts of the research process and will play an important role in deciding the aims and value of your research.

Using GenAI is not recommended for reflective writing, which is often deeply personal and requires use of self, or for applied case study analysis (both very relevant for our School).

## **Understanding the limitations of GenAI**

A crucial part of GenAI literacy is understanding the risks and limitations of these technologies, particularly when used for academic purposes.

While GenAI tools can generate very eloquent, convincing text, they do not store facts and knowledge, rather they generate outputs based on probabilities. Thus, GenAI is prone to making factual errors (called ‘hallucinations’) which are nonetheless very convincingly presented. This is where academic/professional judgement and domain expertise are very important. If you are using GenAI, you need to double check the information it is giving you as it will present information which is simply not true. Therefore, it is crucial for any user to fact-check any output from a GenAI tool. Bear in mind that your module coordinator will be a domain expert and hence very likely to spot non-existent or miscited sources.

As well as factual errors users should be aware that GenAI tools can exhibit bias as a result of bias embedded in its training data. GenAI does not engage in systematic and rigorous evaluation of research evidence and should not be used as a substitute.

GenAI has proven to be a very effective tool for exploring information, suggesting activities or plans appropriate to a problem or task, or generating ideas or materials through interactive dialogue.

### **Ensuring that GenAI use does not impede student learning**

Inappropriate use of GenAI can impede student progress in terms of acquiring the Trinity education graduate attributes (independent thinking, effective communication, responsible action, and continuous development) and achieving the learning outcomes of any given module. For their own benefit, it is strongly recommended that students follow the advice of module leads about when to use and not use GenAI tools.

### **Ensuring that GenAI use complies with academic integrity**

Aligned with the [College Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research \(2024\)](#), the use of GenAI is permitted unless otherwise stated. Where the output of GenAI is used to inform a student's document or work output, this usage should be acknowledged and appropriately cited, as per [Library guidelines on acknowledging and referencing GenAI](#). From an academic integrity perspective, if a student generates content from a GenAI tool and submits it as his/her/their own work (i.e. fails to acknowledge and appropriately cite the use of GenAI), it is considered plagiarism, which is defined as academic misconduct in accordance with College [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Note any long verbatim quotation (e.g. more than one paragraph), even with citation, may be considered inappropriate or poor practice in student assessment documents and publications.

### **Awareness of ethical issues in the use of GenAI**

The use of GenAI tools can have important ethical implications which users should be aware of.

The training and use of GenAI systems consume significant amounts of energy and resources, leading to sustainability concerns.

Many GenAI tools are trained on vast amounts of data gleaned from a wide variety of sources. However, the training of such tools is not transparent and the exact extent of their training data and sources remains unknown. Some major GenAI providers have been sued for copyright infringement.

Some GenAI tools that have been trained on material on the open web are likely to have ingested protected personal data, copyright-protected content, copyright-infringing content, misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, defamation, and all manner of other unlawful content. Additionally, some GenAI tools harvest information from user prompts including contextual information from users'

interaction with GenAI tools, leading to privacy and intellectual property concerns. GenAI tools vary in regard to the extent of these concerns.

### **Avoiding unlawful ways of using GenAI**

Given the nature of the work of the School of Social Work and Social Policy it is very important that all staff and students understand the ways in which GenAI can be used unlawfully. For students this is important both for their time in College and in employment afterwards.

Most GenAI tools harvest inputs and use interactions with users for their systems development. Therefore personal, private or sensitive information about colleagues, students or clients / service users should never be used as part of inputs, prompts, queries, instructions and other interactions when using GenAI tools. Even where sharing such private information is not necessarily unlawful, it is against College regulations.

Student work (submitted assessments and contributions) are considered private information, and are not allowed to be uploaded into a third-party GenAI tool for any reason. Similarly, content which is confidential in Trinity or confidential to your user's studies or work (research, teaching or administrative) or for which you do not own the copyright, or which is not publicly available, should not be used in creating inputs, prompts, queries, instructions, contextual information, and other interactions for GenAI.

### **Using GenAI appropriately on work placement**

Students on placement outside of the university should familiarise themselves with and adhere at all times to policies on the use of GenAI in their host organisations.

When preparing placement related coursework, students should never, for any reason, input confidential service user information including, names, locations, case notes or any identifying information into any GenAI tool.

### **RESOURCES:**

Trinity's Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Hub

[https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/resources/generative\\_ai/](https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/resources/generative_ai/)

College Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research

<https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/assets/pdf/college-statement-on-genai.pdf>

TCD library guide on using GenAI

<https://libguides.tcd.ie/gen-ai>

College statement on academic integrity

<https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/academic-policies/academic-integrity/>

UNESCO (2023) Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/guidance-generative-ai-education-and-research>

### *Word Counts*

**Each assessment will have a maximum word count. Writing to this limit is part of the assessment task and we expect you to adhere to it. If the word count is in excess of the maximum set, the lecturer may apply a penalty. You should provide a word count on the front page of each assessment. The word count should include all sections of the assessment including headings, tables but excluding the cover page, reference list and appendices.**

### *Pass/Fail*

- The pass mark for each assessment is 50%
- In cases where a student fails to achieve a pass grade, a second attempt may be permitted.
- The maximum mark awarded for the second attempt of an assignment is capped at 50%.
- Failure on the second attempt of an assessment will result in a 'Fail' grade for the module
- A 'Fail' grade in any module will result in the student failing the course overall

Second attempts may not be considered by the Summer Court of Examiners and affected students may have to wait for their marks to be considered by the Supplementary Court of Examiners in Autumn.

### *Marking Conventions*

The Court of Examiners is composed of the Course Director, Head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy, the Director of Teaching and Learning (Post-Graduate), the teaching staff on the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Policy and Practice and the External Examiner. The External Examiner Dr Micheál L. Collins, Assistant Professor of Social Policy and Head of Social Policy at the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin (UCD). Marks given throughout the course are provisional marks only until such time as the external examiner has approved them at the corresponding Exam Board. Under the regulations of the University, the external examiner can raise or lower the marks of students.

For the purpose of assessment feedback, lecturers may use the following grading scheme:

- Distinction: 70-100%
- Pass: 50-69%
- Fail: 0-49%

Students will receive an average of their marks on a transcript given when the Court of Examiners has met.

Assessment and Progression Regulations can be found in the College Calendar, Part III, Section 3.8 <http://www.tcd.ie/calendar/graduate-studies-higher-degrees/introduction-and-general-regulations.pdf>.

## Submitting Assessments

All written assignments should be submitted electronically via Blackboard. Please refer to the instructions in SS760 Course Information for detailed information on the Blackboard submission procedure and ensure that you are familiar with the procedure.

**It is your responsibility to learn how to accurately submit your course work via Blackboard.**

**We will not accept submissions via email, post or hand delivery.**

You are strongly advised to give yourself an adequate margin of time when you are submitting via Blackboard. This is particularly necessary when you are submitting for the first time.

If you submit the incorrect version of your assessment, you may request permission to upload a second version by emailing the Course Administrator. However, please be aware of the penalty policy for late submission of assessments (above). If you request permission to upload a second version after the deadline has passed, the appropriate penalty will be applied to your mark.

Assessments can be read by the lecturer, any moderators, staff on the course and the External Examiner.

All Assessments should use size 12 'Times Roman' font. Please include a cover sheet on each assessment with your name, student number and assessment title (you may choose your own format). The cover sheet should also include the following declaration:

"I have read and I understand the plagiarism provisions in the General Regulations of the University Calendar for the current year, found at <http://www.tcd.ie/calendar>.

I have also completed the Online Tutorial on avoiding plagiarism 'Ready Steady Write', located at <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/ready-steady-write>."

Further important details on plagiarism and referencing are contained in Section 11 of this handbook 'Assessments'. Students **must** ensure they have read this section before submitting any assignments.

## 10. COMMENCEMENTS

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All diplomas and certificates are publicly awarded to those who have successfully completed a diploma. These College awards are bestowed in the student's registered name within class, by the Registrar of the College and University.

Those eligible are automatically scheduled for the award following publication of results confirming the satisfactory completion of the final examination. Students are assigned to an award ceremony on the basis of the schedule of ceremonies drawn up annually. The Academic Registry subsequently issues a letter of invitation to the student to attend the award ceremony assigned.

These award ceremonies are conducted in English, and take place in the Public Theatre, in the Front Square of Trinity College.

More information is available from [academic.registry@tcd.ie](mailto:academic.registry@tcd.ie)

**If you are attending an Award Ceremony, please notify Emma Quill of the date of the ceremony. Members of the course committee would like to accompany you on that day and look forward to the opportunity of meeting you face to face.**

