

Outdoor Education



Challenging and inspiring students to connect with themselves, others, and the environment through adventure experiences.

Course	Degree Options	Delivery	Campus
BA (Hons) Outdoor Education	Level 8 (4 Years)	On Campus	ATU Mayo
BA (Hons) Geography and Outdoor Education	Level 8 (4 Years)	On Campus	ATU Mayo
BA Outdoor Education and Leisure	Level 7 (3 Years)	On Campus	ATU Mayo



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What is Outdoor Education?

Outdoor education involves many aspects including challenge, personal growth, journeys in nature, reflection, and adventure. It is widely recognised as having a therapeutic, educational, developmental, and social effect on participants and for fostering general wellbeing.

Outdoor learning experiences are utilised within many sectors in Ireland, such as schools, social care organisations, community development, youth services and adventure tourism. Outdoor Education students at ATU gain an in-depth understanding of the varied role of outdoor learning and develop experience in designing, running, and facilitating educational programmes.

Through fieldtrips, expeditions and lectures, students explore and examine Irish landscape, heritage and ecology and realise the potential of adventure tourism, green exercise, and nature therapy. Graduates will be empowered to promote careful use and management of an increasingly threatened natural world and to educate others in wise use and sustainable practice.

Why Study Outdoor Education at ATU Mayo?

Running since 1996, the Outdoor Education course at ATU Mayo is the only specialist third-level course in Outdoor Education in Ireland. The degree in Outdoor Education contains an exciting combination of academic work, experiential workshops and practical training for Governing Body level qualifications in adventure sports. Our lecturers are some of the most experienced adventure sports practitioners in Ireland.

We have an excellent stock of modern outdoor equipment such as kayaks, windsurf/surf boards, climbing, caving and orienteering equipment for student use, in addition to an Indoor Bouldering Wall and a purpose-built Willow Outdoor Classroom, the first of its kind in Ireland. ATU Mayo gained Irelands first Green Campus Flag, and sustainable practices are embedded in our Outdoor Education programmes.

With a vibrant clubs and society's scene on campus, from surfing to mountaineering, yoga to chess, you are guaranteed to find the ideal activity to help you strike the balance with the academic side of campus life.

Mayo is an internationally recognised destination for adventure activity and the campus is within easy reach of pristine surf beaches, white water rivers and mountains along with, Ballycroy National Park, Wild Nephin Wilderness, Mayo International Dark Sky Park and The Wild Atlantic Way.



What will I study?

There are modules from six core areas:

- Adventure Sports Leadership and Safety Management
- Developmental Psychology and Teaching/Facilitation Skills
- Expedition Planning and Guiding
- The Irish Geological and Cultural Landscape
- Environmental Science and Ecology
- Health and Fitness, First Aid and Water Safety

Elective modules to choose from such as:

- Outdoor Play
- Adventure Therapy
- Health Promotion
- Languages

Students on the Geography and Outdoor Education course complete modules such as Digital Mapping, Geographical Information Systems, Rural Development and Society and Nature.

Study Abroad

We have an exchange programme with Western Carolina University, USA and students have an opportunity to study Parks and Recreation for a year in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains. Western Carolina is an excellent location for whitewater kayaking and a variety of other adventure sports. We also have Erasmus links with the University of Galva in Sweden and students can spend a semester there studying Arctic Ecology. In addition we have Erasmus links with two universities in Norway where students can study the Nordic approach to outdoor expeditions and landscape management.

Garda Vetting

It is a requirement that all students are Garda Vetted for this programme by ATU on commencement of their studies.



“This course has been a great experience for me. It’s really varied and interesting and it has opened my mind to all the potential the outdoors has to offer to a wide range of groups. You learn how to teach and help others, how the landscape was formed, how to respect nature, the skills of the sports and lots more. You get to challenge yourself and push your limits. There are lots of opportunities to go on trips and see some amazing places.”

Geoffrey Hannon

Course Information

One day a week of your classes involves taking part in adventure sports on the local mountains, lakes, rivers, and sea. In year 1 the focus is on gaining personal skills in sports and then on leadership level training in the following years. There are also optional trips throughout Ireland and further afield which allow specialisation in a range of adventure sports.

The remainder of the week involves lectures, experiential workshops, or fieldtrips with an emphasis on active learning.



Career Opportunities

Outdoor Education graduates follow a diverse range of careers. Graduates are employed as managers, instructors, guides and environmental educators in outdoor education centres and organisations offering adventure sports, adventure tourism, outdoor learning, and environmental education.

There are employment opportunities within educational and environmental organisations, social services, sporting bodies, and youth services as facilitators, development officers and managers. Forest schools, green exercise and nature therapy are significant growth areas. Graduates are employed in the area of Rural Development, Countryside Recreation, Trail Design and Eco/Rural tourism. In addition, graduates have embarked on careers as entrepreneurs, joined uniformed services and completed a wide variety of postgraduate programmes which have expanded their employment opportunities. Graduates of the Geography and Outdoor Education course can apply to a Professional Master's in Education to teach at second level.



**I want to know more.
Who can I talk to?**

Orla Prendergast
Lecturer ATU Mayo

E orla.prendergast@atu.ie



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