

Outdoor Education

Learning through adventure



Outdoor Education at ATU Mayo Campus

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

Course	Level	Duration	CAO Code
BA (Honours) Outdoor Education common entry	Level 8	4 Years	AU699
BA (Honours) Geography and Outdoor Education	Level 8	4 Years	AU693
BA Outdoor Education	Level 7	3 Years	AU590



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What is Outdoor Education?

Outdoor education involves learning outdoors, 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 and a connection with the natural world.

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, ATU Mayo is nationally and internationally recognised for running high quality undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Outdoor Education.
- 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.
- 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 Wild Nephin National Park, Mayo International Dark Sky Park and The Wild Atlantic Way.
- We have excellent modern store of 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 greenhouse.
- ATU MAYO gained Irelands first Campus Green 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 Accommodation prices are more affordable than most college towns.
- Your lecturers are some of the most experienced adventure sports practitioners in Ireland.



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

There are also a range of elective modules to choose from such as Outdoor Play, Health Promotion, and Languages. Students on the Geography and Outdoor Education course complete modules such as Digital Mapping, Geographical Information Systems, Rural Development and Society and Nature. You can also specialise in the therapeutic aspects of nature and adventure with modules in Adventure Therapy, Therapeutic Gardening, Psychology and Mental Health.

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 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.



Student Stories

“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 have 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 the 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

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 governing bodies, Sports Partnerships, Coilte, National Parks, 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 range of postgraduate programmes. Graduates of the Geography and Outdoor Education course can apply to a Professional Masters in Education to teach at second level.



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

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