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## **Press Release on new Blended Learning format for the Higher Diploma in Theological Studies at St Patrick's College Maynooth**

As part of our long-term planning at St. Patrick's College Maynooth, last year we decided to reformat our highly successful Higher Diploma in Theological Studies. From autumn 2020 the programme will be delivered in a Blended Learning format. This means that students will no longer have to travel to the Maynooth campus twice a week, but will take most of the content from the comfort of their homes. This new format allows students from all over Ireland to enrol in the programme.

In the new format, the students will be expected to be on campus for 6 weekends over the year (Friday into Saturday). This is when the face to face classes will take place and when students have a chance to meet their lecturers and each other. Additionally, it is a good time to take advantage of the many resources that the historic campus offers (and the amenities of Ireland's only university town). Students are not obliged to stay on campus but those enrolled in the programme you can avail of the very competitive discounted room rates provided by the Conference and Accommodations' Office.

Then the bulk of the classes will take place on two evenings a week during term time. On Wednesdays there will be 3 hours of "live" on-line classes which the students can attend from the comfort of their homes. Additionally another evening's worth of learning material will be provided each week that the student can do in their own time.

The HDip was set up for secondary school teachers who want to teach Religious Studies at post-primary level, and it meets all of the Teaching Council of Ireland's Requirements. While many secondary school teachers continue to avail of the programme, in recent years many others have attended out of personal interest, a desire to study their faith or a desire to return to learning. In certain cases graduates of the HDip can enter a Master's Programme in Theology.

More details of the programme are available at: <https://maynoothcollege.ie/courses/higher-diploma-in-theological-studies>

For admission to the course or other details, please contact Barbara Mahon, at the SPCM Admissions Office at: [admissions@spcm.ie](mailto:admissions@spcm.ie) ; +353 (0)1 708-4772

N.B. in the case that COVID-19 restrictions make the weekend residentials impossible, these will be held virtually.