

Maryvale Institute



Higher Institute of Religious Sciences

**Ecclesiastical Bachelor of Divinity
Programme**

validated by

*The Ecclesiastical Theology Faculty
of The Ecole Cathédrale, Paris*

Information Folder

2021-2022

Our Aim:

Maryvale House was Saint John Henry Newman's first home as a Catholic. This is what he said:

What I desiderate in Catholics is the gift of bringing out what their religion is. I want a laity ... who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold and what they do not, who know their creed so well that they can give an account of it, who know so much of history that they can defend it.



I want an intelligent, well-instructed laity. I wish you to enlarge your knowledge, to cultivate your reason, to get an insight into the relation of truth to truth, to learn to view things as they are, to understand how faith and reason stand to each other, what are the bases and principles of Catholicism I have no apprehension you will be the worse Catholics for familiarity with these subjects, ...

You ought to be able to bring out what you feel and what you mean, as well as to feel and mean it; to expose to the comprehension of others the fictions and fallacies of your opponents; to explain the charges brought against the Church, to the satisfaction, not, indeed, of bigots, but of men of sense, of whatever cast of opinion.

The Present Position of Catholics in England, 1851.

What Our Graduating Students said:

'The material covered on the course, its delivery in such a prayerful setting and the professionalism of the instructors was awesome. ... Each module was like a chapter of the most exciting book I had ever started.'

'The overall quality of the Maryvale Course has been wonderful for me. The Coursebooks have presented a clear presentation of the faith which is comprehensive and orthodox.'

'Distance learning has been very beneficial and Maryvale has facilitated it very well.'

'The last five years have been a journey that, looking back, has had its ups and downs, its smooth and rocky patches but one that has shaped my outlook on life and deepened my faith. I can't imagine my life before I started this course and it has inspired me to proceed further.'

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1. Historical Introduction

Maryvale Institute

The Archdiocese of Birmingham Maryvale Institute is an international, Catholic college offering programmes in Catholic Studies, from Basic Skills to PhDs.

The main aim of the Institute is to educate and train men and women in Catholic Theology, Scripture, Religious Education, Catechesis, Liturgy, Spirituality and other related disciplines in order to equip them intellectually, personally and spiritually for their personal and professional lives. Based on a methodology pioneered by the Open University, Maryvale's collaborative-learning method is a unique form of distance learning with short residential periods specially adapted in accordance with the pedagogical principles outlined by the Holy See.

In 1989, Maryvale Institute was granted official recognition by the Holy See through the Catechetical Office of the Congregation of the Clergy and authorised to grant certificates of catechetical competence. In 1990, it began a postgraduate diploma course validated by the University of Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations. Also in 1990 Maryvale was recognised by the Congregation for Catholic Education as an Institute affiliated to the Pontifical University, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Ireland and the distance-learning, five-year **B.A. (Divinity)** degree in Theology was launched, validated by Maynooth, and ran successfully until 2013.

Many more programmes followed. In 1998 a Cert. HE in Applied Theology was validated by the OUVS in two pathways, 'Parish Catechesis' and 'Diaconal Ministry' and revalidated by the OUVS in 2000 as a **B.A. (Hons) in Applied Theology** with the same two pathways. In 2006, the same two pathways were re-validated by the OUVS with the highest commendations.

On 25 March 2011, the Solemnity of the Annunciation, Maryvale Institute was erected by the Holy See as an Ecclesiastical Institute, known as a *Higher Institute of Religious Sciences* (HIRS) according to the Norms laid down for such institutes by the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome. This allowed the establishment of the **Ecclesiastical Bachelor of Divinity Degree** Programme recognised by the Church. On 29 September 2016 the Congregation renewed its approval of the HIRS and confirmed its Statutes as an entity within but distinct from the rest of Maryvale.

The B.Div. is a five-year, part-time, collaborative-learning programme leading to a Bachelor of Divinity degree validated by the Ecclesiastical Theology Faculty of the Ecole Cathédrale de Notre Dame, Paris, as authorised by the Congregation for Catholic Education of the Holy See. It gives its students a thorough grounding in all areas of theology.

In previous years Maryvale provided two 'pathways': the first a traditionally organized theology course which was the successor of the Maynooth B.A. (Divinity) Degree Programme; and the second which was the successor of the OU B.A. in Applied Theology, oriented to formation for ministry and services in the Church including Parish Catechesis and academic formation for the permanent diaconate.

The former second pathway will continue to be provided for the intellectual formation of candidates for the permanent diaconate and will be shaped more specifically for their needs.

The Programme is delivered in English and evidence of competence in the language may be required of those for whom English is not their first language.

This degree meets the requirements of the Bologna Convention by which there is co-recognition of undergraduate degrees across EU countries.

In addition to the B.Div Maryvale offers a range of qualifications by distance learning at both degree and postgraduate level, and is a sponsoring establishment for research degrees (M.Phil and Ph.D.) in Catholic Studies. These qualifications include a B.A. (Hons) in Philosophy in the Catholic Tradition and an M.A. in Pastoral and Educational Studies (with specialisms in Religious Education and Catechesis, Faith and Culture, Spiritual Formation, Marriage and the Family and Catholic Apologetics). The Institute also offers a range of Further Education courses at adult level, particularly in the areas of scripture, catechesis, ministry, and evangelisation.

The HIRS also offers an Ecclesiastical Licence in Divinity with a pathway in Catechetics and a forthcoming one in Marriage and the Family.

The Archdiocese of Birmingham and Maryvale Institute merged on 31 July 2019 and became one charity effective from 1 August 2019.

Maryvale House

Maryvale House has been a centre for religious education in the Archdiocese of Birmingham since 1980 but it can trace a continuous connection with the Archdiocese and its antecedents back to the late seventeenth century. The present building, the oldest part of which replaced the original house in 1752, was known as Oscott House and was renamed 'Maryvale' by Saint John Henry Newman in 1846. Prior to the seventeenth century, it is possible to trace the existence of a chapel here at Oscott in the tenth century and a record exists of a priest serving it in the thirteen hundreds. The Catholic faith survived in this area at the time of the Reformation.

The present House has been successively a priest's residence and centre for the local Catholic mission; the first home of Oscott College, which was the first Catholic seminary to be established in England after the Reformation; the first home of Blessed Saint John Henry Newman and his community after their conversion to Catholicism and the place where Newman first established the Congregation of the Oratory in Birmingham; a seminary for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate; and an orphanage managed by the Sisters of Mercy. It was when the sisters finally departed in 1980 that Maryvale House was made a centre for religious education by Archbishop George Patrick Dwyer.

Saint John Henry Newman was canonized on 13th October 2019.

2. Introduction to the Programme: Aims and Objectives

General

This is a five-year, part-time, collaborative-learning programme leading to a Bachelor of Divinity validated by the Ecclesiastical Theology Faculty of the Ecole Cathédrale, Paris. There are two 'pathways', the first provided at Maryvale (Pathway 'A'), the second (Pathway 'B') oriented to formation for diaconal ministry. Both pathways provide formation in catechesis and apologetics.

Although based in Birmingham, the Programme is intended to attract students from the whole of United Kingdom and abroad. The distance-learning and part-time characteristics of the Programme make it accessible to those in part-time or full-time employment. The student is expected to be able to study approximately 15-20 hours per week.

Whilst it is an education in academic theology, it is not merely so. It is designed and delivered so as to promote the religious and theological formation of the students so that they may participate more fully in the life and mission of the church.

The Maryvale Programme is open to any adult capable of learning at an academic level and who wishes to advance his or her theological education. It aims to enable students to:

- *Develop an understanding of Christian Doctrine through study of the Sacred Scriptures, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and the documents of the Magisterium*
- *Discover and realise their vocation in the Church*
- *Nourish their spiritual life through growth in understanding*
- *Develop a critical sense and academic judgement so as to evaluate theological positions*

This does not mean that only those who are members of the Catholic Church will benefit from the Programme. While the general rule is that ecclesiastical degrees are intended for Catholics, it is possible for non-Catholics to be accepted and in fact over the years students from many different backgrounds have enjoyed the Programme and benefitted from it.

The Catholic orientation of this Programme means that, as a first degree specialising in Catholic theology, academic discipline is combined with the life of Christian worship. Students from all backgrounds are invited (but never compelled) to share in this. They will also become aware of what the Catholic Church actually teaches, as opposed to incorrect versions of its teaching. This will increase their understanding of Christianity.

This approach does not demand any lowering of academic standards, which are rigorously monitored by Maryvale Institute and by Faculté Notre Dame. It demands that the context and dynamic of learning is a living faith-community. This, we believe, is a particular advantage in our approach.

Exit Awards

It is possible to leave the Programme before the end of the full five years and still receive a Maryvale award.

- After two years of part-time study by collaborative learning the student reaches the level of a Certificate in Higher Education, equivalent to the first year of a BA (Hons) and can exit the programme with a *Maryvale Certificate* of credit.
- After four years of part-time study, equivalent to the second year of a BA (Hons), you can exit the programme with a *Maryvale Diploma* of credit.

3. Teaching and Learning Strategy

The Programme is a part-time, distance-learning programme of five years duration. It involves a ten-month academic year consisting of directed home-based study assisted by Teaching Weekends. The teaching and learning strategy adopted within Maryvale Institute derives from the Open University distance-learning methodology, which has been adapted to the specific situation of Maryvale Institute over twenty-five years with the guidance of the Open University and then through the training and experience gained in developing and delivering collaborative-learning courses at all levels.

Many elements make up the complete collaborative-learning strategy which all help to enable students to use the system effectively in their lives. These include written modules or course books, study guides and handbooks, residential weekends, introductions to staff, fellow students and Maryvale's facilities for supporting students at a distance such as the library services, the email/telephone helpline.

i) Course Books

The Coursebooks, prepared by specialist staff, are the teaching texts which provide the basis for the local, home-based study, portfolio and assignment work. Authors prepare texts in the specialised style that good distance-learning requires in order to maximise the involvement of the student. This involves course book authors pointing the students to specific texts to read, recognising what, in the reading, needs commentary or careful explanation and showing how students can consolidate and expand their learning through tasks and exercises. The course books are written, therefore, not as learned monographs in which the author has the *subject* at the forefront of his mind but as self-contained teaching and learning manuals, in which the author keeps the *student* at the forefront of his mind.

The Coursebooks then, are not books in the normal sense of the word, but are written lessons of a much larger and cohesive programme; they are learning aids; tutorials in print; guided ways into fields of knowledge.

ii) Teaching Weekends

The Degree Programme has always involved residential periods at Maryvale House for teaching, social contact, and experience of liturgy, but the events of the last year have shown that academic teaching can be provided very effectively online. This online provision will therefore continue to be the normal method of teaching, and it will be developed to provide more opportunity for interaction with lecturers and among students, as well as the element of social contact and liturgy that has already been introduced.

Because Maryvale has experienced the great encouragement that residential periods give to students on all its Higher Education courses, it remains committed to preserving the face-to-face teaching as part of its educational method. There are also some kinds of teaching, for

example trips to places such as the Cathedral and Harvington Hall that are very desirable for effective teaching of Church History but not easily possible to provide online.

Maryvale Institute will therefore do its best to create opportunities for staff and students to come together and would anticipate each student visiting at least once during the five-year Programme. Students may also be expected to attend the final oral examination in person.

iii) Programme Director

The role of the Programme Director is to guide students through the course and to monitor both their progress with their studies and the effect of the course on them. He or she monitors all the students' assessed work. He or she also acts as a tutor and operates an email/telephone helpline for all the students of the course. Tutorial and evaluation discussions are held at all residential sessions. Students are encouraged to contact the Programme Director with any questions or problems concerning the course. There is also a Pathway Leader for Pathway 'B' who is an expert in catechesis.

iv) Academic Tutors

The Academic Tutor is responsible for marking the assignments and providing reports, a copy of which is retained at Maryvale and the original sent to the student concerned. The role of the Academic Tutor is both to assess the work and to provide substantial tutorial feedback on the assignments and advice on academic progress. The method of marking assignments, by detailed annotation, is specifically designed to be of maximum help to the student at a distance.

v) Advisers

Designated recent graduates are available as Advisers to help students with everyday problems.

vi) Study at home

Students are expected to devote approximately 15–20 hours per week studying. There are two months of vacation each year. Students can obtain advice and help about study techniques and methods and good time-management skills from designated programme staff, especially during the first year.

vii) Other Resources

- Students are provided with lists of additional recommended books and articles. These may be purchased or borrowed from libraries.
- Students have access to library facilities at the Institute for reference purposes. The Librarian is available to offer advice and guidance, for example in searching for local theological libraries. Student cards are provided to identify students wishing to use other libraries.
- Advice from the Librarian can also be given to students on relevant academic internet sites, as also on online library subscriptions and audio-visual resources.
- Maryvale library has access to many online resources and collections.

4. Assessment

Each academic year of the degree programme, a student submits assignments electronically via an online facility within a prescribed Academic timescale. There are examinations at the end of the academic year, usually at the end of June. All assignments should be completed before the exams. The assignments are marked and feedback is given electronically also within a prescribed Academic timescale. Students are assessed at the end of each academic year through a grade derived from the marks awarded for assignments and the examination and these results are released in the September of the next academic year.

All examinations, except possibly the final oral examination, will be conducted online, either by open-book tests or orals.

Assignments, written examinations are initially assessed by academic tutors and examiners. Assignments are monitored and moderated by the Programme Director. Any student receiving consistently poor grades will be counselled at an early stage concerning the appropriateness or otherwise of continuing with the Programme. At the end of the academic year, samples of all work are scrutinised by an external examiner.

The Holy See requires that each student show some competency in a foreign language and in the final year submit a dissertation and take an oral examination. The foreign language requirement may be satisfied either by already having a qualification in a modern language or by a one-day course provided at a Residential in Year 4 or 5.

All reports and grades are presented for approval by the Examination Board which is responsible for final decisions.

Maryvale Institute currently uses the normal degree classification followed by most universities in the UK: First Class Honours, Second Class Honours – Grade One (2:1), Second Class Honours – Grade Two (2:2), Third Class Honours and Pass. The final assessment is calculated from the marks obtained over the five years.

5. Programme Structure and Content

The Maryvale Institute Bachelor of Divinity structure relates to the aims and learning outcomes of the Programme and its elements should be understood as an integrated whole.

There are four modules to each year except the last, with an examination on each at the end of the academic year. Each module has two assignments and each half-module has one assignment. Students are required to complete **six** of the eight assignments set including at least one from each module and half-module. The curriculum is as follows:

YEAR ONE

- (1) Faith (HALF-MODULE).
- (2) The History of the Church
- (3) Philosophy
- (4) History of Philosophy
- (5) Revelation (HALF-MODULE)

YEAR TWO

- (1) Introduction to the Sacred Scriptures: Old Testament I
- (2) Old Testament II
- (3) Introduction to the New Testament and the Gospels
- (4) The One and Triune God

YEAR THREE

- (1) Christology
- (2) Paul and Acts
- (3) Fundamental Moral Theology
- (4) Fall and Redemption

YEAR FOUR

- (1) Ecclesiology and Mariology
- (2) Grace and Glory
- (3) Special Moral Theology
- (4) Biblical Catechesis (HALF MODULE)
- (5) Canon Law (HALF MODULE)

YEAR FIVE

- (1) Sacraments
- (2) Apologetics (HALF MODULE)
- (3) Liturgy (HALF MODULE)
- (4) Spiritual Theology
- (5) Dissertation

6. Entry Requirements

Academic requirements are

- A degree passed in any subject given by a recognised University, **OR**
- Entrance qualifications to university which are so recognised by academic authorities in the UK, **OR**
- Any other qualification and/or work and vocational experience deemed by Maryvale Institute to be sufficient for a student applying to begin the Programme.

The Institute participates in credit transfer arrangements. Those interested in further information concerning these arrangements should contact the Director of the Programme.

Maryvale Institute welcomes students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties and chronic medical conditions, who are selected for courses according to the same academic criteria as other candidates. We will endeavour within its limited capacity to ensure that all individual requirements are met so that each student has an enjoyable, positive and fulfilling experience during their academic studies.

The Institute appreciates that deciding to disclose any accessibility needs can be a difficult choice for students applying to Further & Higher Education. Whilst we accept that this is a personal decision, we strongly recommend that students inform us in order that their individual requirements can be addressed.

The Institute continues to develop a range of services for students with accessibility needs that is overseen by the Accessibility Coordinator who can indicate support that is already in place or work towards developing a reasonable adjustment.

7. Admissions Process

Before applying formally, you are most welcome to arrange an informal online meeting with the Programme Director.

An application form must be completed and accepted, together with a 500-word explanation of the reasons for applying for the course. You must also arrange for references to be sent to Maryvale (these references are treated as confidential between the referee and the Institute) and enclose payment of an application fee. The application will then be considered by the Admissions Committee of Maryvale HIRS. If necessary you might be asked to a formal online interview but this is not usual. You will be informed when you apply about when a decision will be made about your admission.

Assuming that your application is successful you will be sent an Acceptance Pack including further information about Maryvale Institute and the course, details of how to apply for a student card, an invoice and some indication of preliminary reading. You will be asked to sign a statement agreeing to abide by the Regulations and support the ethos of Maryvale Institute, and you will be sent an invoice.

Once we have received your fees for the first year, which must be paid before the start of the Programme, and your signed statement you are formally enrolled as a student of the Institute.

If for any reason your application for a place on the course is not successful, the Institute reserves the right, because of the elements of confidentiality involved in the admissions process and the collection of references, not to give the reasons for this decision. If at any stage you are dissatisfied with the admissions process we would advise you to follow the complaints procedure of the Institute: a copy of this can be found on the Institute's website. We shall ensure that your questions are dealt with promptly and professionally.

8. Fees

(a) Cost per annum

The cost per annum for the B. (Divinity) Programme for 2021 is presently £2900* for all students, home or overseas, with no increase since last year and the elimination of differential fees for EU and non-EU students. The fee includes tuition, examinations registration, office administration, and the resources for the Library and other facilities provided, but **not** accommodation or travel: students are responsible for funding and arranging that themselves.

The course fees are non-refundable 14 days from the date of your acceptance letter.

*While the Institute endeavours to keep the course fees at a reasonable level, it cannot guarantee that fees will remain the same throughout the duration of the programme. The Institute reserves the right to amend its course fees at any time to reflect inflation and any other financial changes which may impact on the efficient and economic running of the Institute.

Healthcare in the UK is not free to overseas visitors and students visiting the Institute are expected to ensure that they have adequate health insurance cover before visiting. The Institute cannot accept responsibility for students' personal health, all students are expected to take reasonable precautions to safeguard their own health and wellbeing.

(b) Grants

Fees charged do not represent the actual cost of running the degree programme. No government grants are available to Maryvale Institute unlike, for instance, the Open University. Maryvale is funded by its course fees, any projects undertaken and by a grant from the Archdiocese of Birmingham and from any projects or courses it offers. The Institute will support applications of students to any source of grants.

Students would be well advised to investigate the possibility of obtaining grants from other educational sources. In addition, local dioceses, deaneries and parishes may well be prepared to fund part of a student's fees, especially if the degree programme is seen as training for a more effective catechetical and pastoral work in the church. The Institute will also support applications of students who propose to make such arrangements with their local church which may give help with fees to students in return for vocational service either rendered in the present, or promised in the future.

9. Programme Management

(a) Maryvale HIRS Council

The B.Div Degree is provided by Maryvale HIRS which is affiliated to the Faculté Notre Dame de Paris (FND) in accordance with the Norms for such Institutes issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education which approved its Statutes.

The Council of the HIRS, presided over by the Director of the HIRS, oversees all the undertakings of the HIRS. It is also responsible for the oversight of the content, delivery and standards of the ecclesiastical degree programmes. Membership of the Council includes the President of FND or his delegate, the Director of the HIRS, the permanent faculty of the HIRS, two representatives of the non-permanent staff of the HIRS, **two student representatives**, the Academic Registrar and any co-opted person or persons.

(b) The Programme Board

Maryvale HIRS participates in the Institute's quality assurance structures. This means that there is a Programme Board which oversees the running and development of the Programme. The Committee is drawn from the Faculty of the Programme and includes student representatives. The Programme Board reports to the Maryvale Academic Board which has also established a number of other committees for the effective delivery of the various degree and other programmes – especially the Academic Standards Committee. There are also an Examinations Board and an Assessment and Examinations Committee.

(c) The Director and Staff of the Programme

The HIRS Director is appointed by the Archbishop of Paris with the prior approval of the Archbishop of Birmingham and FND. The HIRS Faculty is appointed by the Archbishop of Birmingham. The appointment of permanent faculty requires the approval of FND.

The Programme Director, **Revd Dr Michael Cullinan** is responsible for establishing and developing all aspects of the Programme. The Academic Administrator is **Mrs Viktoria Meszaros**. There is a large Associate Staff comprising Academic Tutors, Lecturers, Examiners, Moderators, and Advisers.

(d) Regulations and Complaints

The **Institute Regulations** and the **Complaints** policy and procedures can be found on the Maryvale website under 'About'.

Annual Programme cycle for students

The following chart summarises the learning cycle process that has been freshly developed. There may be further improvements:

