

Interdisciplinary PhD Scholarships on the Theme of AI & Society

Have you recently completed or expect very soon to complete, a taught MA, LL.M (Master of Laws) or MSc by research in Philosophy or Law? Are you interested in carrying out interdisciplinary research on AI and disability over the next four years, commencing in September 2023?

The School of **Theology, Philosophy and Music** and School of **Law and Government** is offering a fully funded, four year fees waiver + stipend (19,000 per annum for four years) scholarship in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences at Dublin City University. The student will be registered in the School of **Theology, Philosophy and Music**. The project will be supervised by **Dr Fiachra O’Brolcháin** ([link](#)), **Dr Aisling de Paor** ([link](#)), and **Dr Lorraine Boran** ([link](#)). This is one of four interdisciplinary PhD Scholarships being offered in the Faculty from 2023. Note that candidates may apply for **one** of these thematic scholarships only.

TITLE:

Artificial Intelligence, Disability and Society – an interdisciplinary examination of the emerging ethical, legal and regulatory issues

DESCRIPTION:

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in relation to persons with disabilities will bring with it multiple challenges and opportunities. AI is likely to transform the 21st century in profound ways, but will bring with it significant ethical challenges, as well as many legal and regulatory concerns. The negative impact of such technologies is most likely to be felt by the vulnerable in our societies, such as persons with disabilities, who form the world’s largest minority (with approximately 10% of the world’s population have a disability) (United Nations, 2006).

However, AI has huge potential to support the participation of People with Disabilities to live independently and be included in their communities as articulated by Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (United Nations, 2006). It is already playing a role in determining questions of care, cognitive ability, fitness for work and distribution of resources. It is essential then that the “norms” used by AI systems are analysed and adapted so that persons with disabilities are not excluded or become victim to algorithmic bias. Ensuring AI does not reproduce and entrench the marginalisation, stigmatisation and neglect of persons with disability is a condition of a just society.

This interdisciplinary project will look at the potential for the AI revolution to produce more positive outcomes for persons with disabilities and explore its use/abuse within a continuum from rehabilitation (restitution of function) all the way up to enhancement (elite performance). This project will be informed by abstract ethical principles, legal theory, regulatory frameworks and empirical science in order to make a practical contribution to the development of ethical legislation underpinning the use of AI for persons.

Candidate profile

The ideal candidate must have recently completed or expect very soon an **MA taught or MSc by research in Philosophy or Law**, or a closely related area. The candidate is expected to have first

class or upper second-class honours bachelor's (or equivalent) degree. In addition, the applicant should:

- Have a strong interest in **Philosophy, particularly ethics or political theory, Law or legal theory, social impact of novel technologies**
- Have a strong background in **Philosophy or Law**
- Have excellent skills in **analysis, argument, writing, comprehension**
- Have excellent knowledge of written and spoken English (See [DCU's requirements](#) for English language skills; applicants must ensure that they meet these requirements **before submitting an application**.)
- Meet DCU's entry requirements in general (see general entry requirements [here](#))

Desirable

- Have completed research and/or published at conferences/peer-reviewed journals/other, as appropriate for stage of scholarship;
- Have strong analytic skills and willingness to engage with quantitative and qualitative research methodologies;
- Be familiar with AI and machine learning;

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

Deadline:

The strict deadline for application is: **April 24th, 5 pm Irish Time**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview around the middle of May.

What to submit:

Candidates should email their applications in a **single pdf file** to **both** fiachra.obrolchain@dcu.ie and aisling.depaor@dcu.ie with "Artificial Intelligence, Disability and Society – an interdisciplinary examination of the emerging ethical, legal and regulatory issues" in the subject line. This application must include:

1. A brief cover letter outlining your motivation for applying
2. A complete version of [this form](#)

Note: Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.

Process:

Applications will be reviewed by the supervisory panel and short-listed. Short-listed candidates will be called for interview (online). If successful at the interview stage, candidates will then be invited to make a formal application to DCU via the [Student Application Portal](#). Applicants are expected to read the information available [here](#) on the general process for PhD applications to DCU. Please note that the offer of a scholarship is not a formal offer of a place for PhD studies at DCU. The latter is made only after successful application via the Student Application Portal and verification of eligibility.

For queries contact: fiachra.obrolchain@dcu.ie; aisling.depaor@dcu.ie