

Post Title: PhD Studentship in 'Governing Artificial Intelligence in Practice'

Location: Maynooth University, Ireland.

Anticipated Start Date: January 2023.

Closing Date: Sunday 4th of Dec. 2022 before midnight Irish time.

Apply by uploading your documents to: <https://forms.gle/qksZ7YmiMfd1H1b3A>

ADAPT at Maynooth University is offering a four-year funded PhD studentship in '**Governing Artificial Intelligence in Practice**'. The PhD will be registered in the Department of Sociology, working with [Prof. Aphra Kerr](#), and co-supervised via the Department of Law and Criminology by [Dr. Ciara Bracken-Roche](#).

Research project:

Ireland has made significant progress in terms of digitalisation over the past decade. Ireland is well connected to advanced networks, and public sector services are increasingly available online. The next phase of digitalisation will increasingly involve the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies as tools to support, or in some cases to automate, human activities in different areas of society. To develop an inclusive digital society, it will be important that we ensure that these AI technologies are not only developed ethically, but that they are also applied ethically. It will be important to develop systems of responsibility and accountability which facilitate the exercise of individual and collection rights.

Europe-wide high-level principles and legislation are providing ethical and legal frameworks to guide the development of AI and multiple bodies are involved in standards development. In 2021, Ireland published its national strategy for AI. These policies set high expectations for the development, use, and governance of AI in Ireland.

But how is AI being applied in everyday contexts in Ireland? How is AI being used by the media, the police, and other public sector bodies? Will AI exacerbate or help to mitigate inequalities? How can we ensure that the governance of AI is transparent and works in the public and citizen interests?

Within this topic the successful candidate may choose their theoretical approach (e.g., political economy, data justice, surveillance studies, digital policy) and their empirical case studies may come from different domains of interest. The project may include an international comparative element.

The candidate will be co-supervised by Prof. Aphra Kerr (Sociology and ADAPT) and Dr. Ciara Bracken-Roche (Law and Criminology and ADAPT).

The candidate will be part of a structured PhD programme at Maynooth University where they can choose to follow a minimum of three postgraduate taught modules including theoretical and methodological modules appropriate to the thesis theme.

They will also be part of the Science Foundation Ireland funded ADAPT research centre within the Transparent Digital Governance strand. Via ADAPT they will have an opportunity to research alongside an interdisciplinary cohort of PhDs, postdocs and full-time staff across 8 Irish universities.

Minimum qualifications:

- A Primary Degree (2:1 minimum) in Sociology or a Social Science related subject (including Criminology, Media, Communications) or equivalent primary degree internationally.
- High level written and spoken English. Minimum (IELTS: 6.5 minimum overall score, TOEFL (Paper based test): 585, TOEFL (Internet based test): 95, PTE (Pearson): 62. Maynooth University's TOEFL code is 8850.

Preferred qualifications:

- MA, or postgraduate diploma, in a relevant social science discipline.
- Prior research project experience using social science methods, including qualitative, quantitative and/or digital social science methods
- Some previous knowledge of the following topics (science and technology studies, technology ethics, surveillance studies, critical data studies, digital policy, privacy and technology law).

Application Process

Each application should consist of the following 5 elements.

1. A one-page cover letter:
 - a. In the letter, please state why you believe you are suitable to do a PhD at Maynooth University and ADAPT and why this topic is of interest.
2. A detailed curriculum vitae, including the following information as applicable:
 - a. Details of your final year undergraduate thesis – topic, methods
 - b. Details of your MA/MSc/Postgraduate Diploma thesis (if applicable) – topic, methods
 - c. Details of any relevant modules previously taken, at undergraduate and/or Masters level (methods and theory)
 - d. Details of any relevant work experience (if applicable).
 - e. Any publications (academic or for the general public)
 - f. The name and email of two academic referees (not full references at this point).
3. An outline PhD proposal (typed, double spaced, 1750-2500 words):
 - a. Central research topic you would like to focus on within the broad topic outlined above (including draft aims, objectives and research questions),
 - b. Central sociological and/or social science literature you would situate your topic within (key theories and theorists)

- c. Methodological approach and methods that would be used.
4. Transcripts of degrees
5. Where English is not the first language, English language certification

Funding:

ADAPT is offering a funded PhD studentship. Specifically, we offer:

1. A funded 4 year PhD postgraduate studentship which includes a stipend of (€18,500 per annum - non taxed), along with equipment (computer) and annual travel funding
2. Funding for annual EU fees. *To be eligible for EU fees applicants must have been resident in an EU member state for 3 out of the last 5 years.*
3. A solid career pathway through formalised training & development, expert one-on-one and co-supervision and exposure to top academics and specialists.
4. Opportunity to build your profile at international conferences and global events.

Informal Questions and Queries

If you have informal questions, please contact aphra.kerr@mu.ie or Ciara.BrackenRoche@mu.ie

Diversity

ADAPT is committed to achieving better diversity and gender representation at all levels of the organisation, across leadership, academic, operations, research staff and studentship levels. ADAPT is committed to the continued development of employment policies, procedures and practices that promote gender equality. On that basis we encourage and welcome talented people from all backgrounds to join ADAPT.

Why ADAPT?

As an ADAPT PhD researcher you will have access to a network of 85 global experts and over 250 staff as well as a wide multi-disciplinary ecosystem across 8 leading Irish universities.

ADAPT is funded by [Science Foundation Ireland](#) and the research centre focussed on human centric AI and Digital Content Technology. It is hosted by Trinity College Dublin. ADAPT's partner institutions include Dublin City University, University College Dublin, Technological University Dublin, Maynooth University, Munster Technological University, Athlone Institute of Technology, and the National University of Ireland Galway.

ADAPT's Research Vision (2021-2026)

Governments and civil society are starting to recognise the need for urgent and concerted action to address the societal impact of the accelerating pace of digital content technologies and the AI techniques that underpin them. ADAPT provides an ambitious, ground-breaking, integrated research programme that assembles three interlocking Strands that together can address this challenge.

1. Digitally Enhanced Engagement Strand

From the individual perspective, research within this Strand will deliver proactive agency techniques that sense, understand and proactively serve the needs of individual users to deliver relevant, contextualised and immersive multimodal experiences which also offer them meaningful control over the machine agency delivering those experiences.

2. Digital Content Transformation Strand

From the algorithmic perspective, new machine learning techniques will both enable more users to engage meaningfully with the increasing volumes of content globally in a more measurably effective manner, while ensuring the widest linguistic and cultural inclusion. It will enhance effective, robust integrated machine learning algorithms needed to provide multimodal content experiences with new levels of accuracy, multilingualism and explainability.

3. Transparent Digital Governance Strand

From the enterprise and societal perspective, new structured knowledge frameworks and associated practices for AI data governance will be required to balance the needs and values of individuals, organisations and society when it comes to rich digital experiences. This requires the advancement of research in the areas of data ethics, data quality, data protection, data value, data integration, and multi-stakeholder governance models.