



MSc/Graduate Diploma Digital & AI Policy

One Year Full Time or Two Years Part Time

Introduction

The MSc/Graduate Diploma is designed to offer graduates the opportunity to study some of the core topical, theoretical and methodological Digital Policy issues arising today. The programme puts a special emphasis in emerging technologies - such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) - including their regulation, governance and social impact. We employ a wide range of theoretical frameworks including digital sovereignty, ethics, and platform political economies. We also explore diverse interdisciplinary methods including interface critiques, data analytics and auditing. Together these approaches allow us to critically examine the risks and opportunities of technologies like AI and digital platforms.

This programme allows students to study the underlying social conditions (economic, political, and cultural) that give rise to and influence digital technologies and their governance, as well as the multiple public sector and commercial contexts where policy is made and enacted. In particular, we investigate the institutional and public policy dimensions of a wide range of topics such as the regulation of AI, media, safety and rights.

Through this interdisciplinary approach, we introduce basic concepts and issues relating to digital policy, including AI policy, providing historical, contextual, regulatory and critical knowledge on how to theorise technological systems and assess their impact in society.

Programme Highlight

With support from Microsoft Ireland, UCD's School of Information and Communication studies commenced the Digital Policy Programme in 2020 with the goal of building digital policy training and capability. Our content flows from our school and the **UCD Centre for Digital Policy**. Our approach is to build on existing expertise and infrastructure across government, industry, civil society and academia to address the increased demand for digital policy knowledge and skills.

Now, in 2026, we are responding to the particular demand for AI expertise by integrating this technology throughout our programme. We welcome expert speakers from government, industry and civil society on discrete topics including data protection, platform governance, cybersecurity and surveillance.

Programme Content and Structure



Core Modules:

- Research Theory and Practice
- Cultures of Digital Media
- Digital Policy I
- New Tech & Regulation
- Digital Policy II
- Digital Policy Thesis

Option Modules: (choose 3)

- Language Models and Methods
- Quantitative Data Analysis
- Platform Governance
- Digital Methods Research
- AI & Ethics
- AI & Digital Cultural Heritage
- Research Methods
- Social Networks Online and Off
- Future Tech: Speculation and Information Technology

The Graduate Diploma is 60 credits with no thesis requirement. Choose optional modules alongside the core modules.

All modules are subject to change. Please see www.ucd.ie/graduateadmissions for a full list of modules.

Why study at UCD?



Graduate Education

Ireland's leader in postgraduate education with over 12,000 graduate students



Graduate Employability

Ranked no. 1 in Ireland in QS Graduate Employability ranking



Global Careers

Dedicated careers support; 2 year stayback visa to work in Ireland for international students



Global Community

Over 9,000 international students and over 310,000 alumni networked across 185 countries



Global Profile

UCD is ranked in the top 1% of higher education institutions worldwide



Sustainability

Modern parkland campus with 24hr security; wide range of facilities, clubs, societies and supports



Career Opportunities

Our MSc degree and Graduate Diploma aims to produce future professionals with a deep understanding of both theoretical and applied issues in digital policy. On graduating, our students will be able to embark on a variety of careers in IT and the Tech industry, government and civil society roles and non-governmental organisations in Ireland, the EU and globally. The degree paves the way towards a PhD in this area or careers in government, civil society and tech industry. We also encourage and help our students to turn their theses into publications.

Our Digital & AI Policy programme is designed to prepare graduates for careers in evaluating, implementing, and studying core topical, theoretical, and methodological issues that arise in digital policy today.

Applicant Requirements

- Applicants should present with a primary (bachelor's) degree in any subject with an overall score of 2.1 or higher.
- Names and contact details of two referees who can assess their intellectual ability, maturity and motivation.
- Applicants whose first language is not English must also demonstrate English language proficiency of IELTS 6.5 (no band less than 6.0 in each element), or Equivalent.
- While applications are accepted up to August of the year of entry, offers are made to suitably qualified candidates on a first-come-first-served basis. Early application is recommended as entry to the programmes is very competitive and the number of places is limited.

CONTACT US

EU Students

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w: www.ucd.ie/ics/study

✉ @DigitalPolicyIE  UCD Centre for Digital Policy

Programme Testimonies

The MSc Digital & AI Policy at University College Dublin has been an incredible academic experience. It built on my background in technology policy research and gave me a strong global perspective. The modules were engaging, with many practical assignments that let me dive into my individual policy interests. I really enjoyed getting to learn from both academic experts and industry leaders, whose insights on emerging technology trends helped us understand the perspectives shaping the global innovation ecosystem.

Throughout the year, I always felt supported by my lecturers and the whole UCD community, which made a huge difference. The program helped me forge connections that have led to amazing job opportunities where I could put my learning into practice even ahead of graduation.

Molly Newell
Graduate

"Microsoft is delighted to support the UCD Digital & AI Policy Masters programme as it brings a unique mix of academic disciplines, government expertise, industry insights and crucial civil society voices to the conversation. Numerous Microsoft colleagues and other industry and Trade Association executives have taken the courses and all have positive feedback"

Ciarán Conlon
Director of Public Policy, Microsoft Ireland/WE

Fees and Scholarships

Tuition fee information is available on www.ucd.ie/fees. Please note that UCD offers a number of graduate scholarships for full-time, self-funding international students, holding an offer of a place on a UCD masters programme. Please see www.ucd.ie/global/scholarships for further information.

Our Centre offers a number of scholarships for EU students applying to the MSc.

International Students

e: internationalenquiries@ucd.ie

w: www.ucd.ie/global

Academic Profiles



Dr Elizabeth Farries
Programme Director

Dr Elizabeth Farries (she/her) is the Director of the MSc and Graduate Diplomas in Digital and AI policy and the Director of the Professional Certificate in Digital Policy. She is also the Director of the UCD Centre for Digital Policy, Senior Fellow for the International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations (2020 - present) and the Principle Investigator of the EU Horizon FORSEE project (2025 - 2028).



Dr Ariadna Matamoros-Fernández
Deputy MSc director

Dr Ariadna Matamoros-Fernández (she/her) is Deputy MSc director of the MSc, Graduate Diploma and Professional Certificate programmes in Digital and AI Policy and an Associate Professor in the School of Information and Communication Studies at UCD. Ariadna is also a chief investigator at the Australian QUT Digital Media Research Centre (DMRC) and associate investigator at the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society. Her research looks at online harms, platform governance and algorithmic systems.

Related Educational Offering

Professional Certificate in Digital Policy
Running in the autumn term from September to December, this one term module is offered fully online and in person Wednesdays from 2 - 4 pm. It is developed as both an introduction to Digital 4.0 policy concepts or an opportunity to upskill.

APPLY NOW

This programme receives significant interest so please apply early online at:

www.ucd.ie/apply