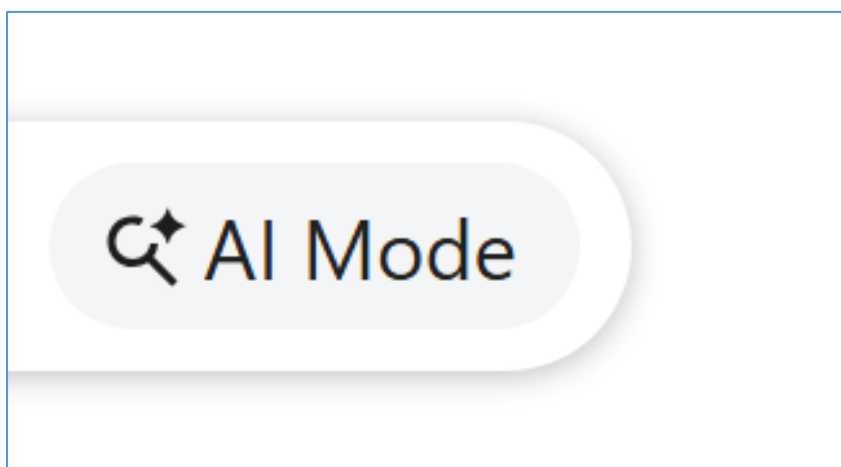




Influencing and Supporting Policy



Regulating the future

How can we effectively regulate in sectors where innovation is reshaping those sectors at such a rapid rate? Artificial intelligence, quantum computing and other emerging technologies are testing the limits of traditional regulation and legislation development.

Professor Deirdre Ahern's work attempts to square that circle through 'anticipatory governance', i.e. ways in which governments can learn what is needed as technologies are developing, though mechanisms like regulatory sandboxes, strategic foresight,

policy experimentation and iterative regulation.

In tandem with her considerable research work, she contributes to Government advisory processes, sits on the AI Advisory Council, serves on the board of the AI Office and chairs the Company Law Review Group. She has also contributed to consultations on implementation of the EU AI Act and appeared before an Oireachtas Joint Committee to explain how Ireland could implement it. She is also a member of the National Science Advice Forum.

This work showcases how Trinity is changing public attitudes to a societal issue through multiple approaches, such as evidence-informed programmes, deliberative processes and media engagement.

Prepared by Trinity Civic Engagement for Societal Impact, September 2026

Professor Deirdre Ahern

SCHOOL

School of Law

PARTNER AGENCIES

AI Advisory Council
National Science Advice
Forum AI Office of Ireland
 Europol's Quantum Safe
Financial Forum Company
Law Review Group
European Commission's
Informal Group of Company
Law Experts

FUNDERS:

Research Ireland

SUBJECT AREAS

Boards of Directors
Business Law Corporate
Law Comparative
Company Law Corporate
Governance FinTech
Regulation Gender
Quotas on Boards



AI Advisory Council

Established at the start of 2024, the Irish Government's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Advisory Council are tasked with providing expert guidance, insights, and recommendations while also engaging in public communication about the responsible use of AI.

Professor Ahern, as a member of the Council, has contributed greatly on implementation considerations for the EU AI Act. Speaking at the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Artificial Intelligence in June 2025, she argued that Ireland needed a properly resourced AI Office and a dedicated regulatory sandbox where companies, particularly start-ups, could test AI systems under regulatory supervision.

Such a sandbox, she argued, could allow innovators to understand their obligations under the EU legislation before bringing products to market, while allowing regulators to learn about technologies in practice.

The AI Office of Ireland

The AI Office of Ireland has created a national central structure for AI governance and coordination. As a board member of the new Office, Professor Ahern will now help to guide and translate Ireland's obligations under the EU AI Act into an administrative reality.

She joins a board as an expert in law but with a research profile that reaches across disciplinary boundaries, collaborating with physicists, computer scientists and ethicists. The board also has representatives from public administration, technology, consumer protection, ethics and industry, which is an

indication of the complexity Ireland faces in encouraging innovation while also regulating development.

Company Law Review Group

In July 2026, Professor Ahern was appointed chair of the Company Law Review Group (CLRG) for the 2026–2030 term, becoming only the third person to occupy the chair in the group's history.

The CLRG advises the Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. on the development and review of Irish company law. Its remit includes maintaining a functional company-law infrastructure, promoting enterprise and commerce, improving corporate governance and streamlining of the operation of the Companies Acts.

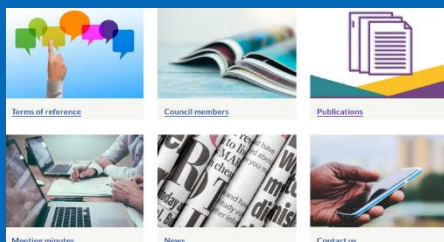
She brings to the role both her scholarship on directors' duties, corporate governance and the responsibilities of companies, as well as her international experience. Since 2020 she has advised the European Commission on its company-law work programme, including issues surrounding the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. She has also been appointed to the Commission's Informal Company Law and Corporate Governance Expert Group for 2025–2028.

National Science Advice Forum

Professor Ahern is also one of a twelve-member body established to support Government Science Advisor Professor Aoife McLysaght with cross-disciplinary evidence for national policy.

In this role, Professor Ahern's work on anticipatory governance speaks meaningfully to its relevance for all science policy across the research sector.

Outputs



Helping to Shape Ireland's AI Future (2025)

As part of the AI Advisory Council, Professor Ahern helped to shape these and other recommendations for the Irish government around the use and regulation of AI.

Responsible AI: is it mission impossible? (2025)

Professor Deirdre Ahern moderates a discussion on Responsible AI for the Royal Irish Academy with Professor Barbara Prainsack, University of Vienna and Professor David Winickoff, OECD. They explore issues like algorithmic opacity, public value assessment and guardrails for innovation.



The Adoption of AI in Financial Services (2024)

Professor Ahern appeared on the Legal Business Podcast from LK Shields, as part of a panel discussing the use of AI in financial services.

Appearance at Oireachtas Joint Committee on Artificial Intelligence (2025)

Professor Ahern appeared, along with Patricia Scanlon, Alan Smeaton, Bronagh Riordan and Sean Blanchfield, in front of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Artificial intelligence to address the topic of 'An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence.





Professor Deirdre Ahern's research engages with the societal and legal expectations of companies and their directors, including their ethical and regulatory challenges. She is Director of Trinity's Technologies, Law and Society Research Group. From her work on quantum technologies in society, she was one of the founding team for Rinn Quantum, Research Ireland's €30 million multi-institutional centre.

She is on the editorial board member of the Law and Financial Markets Review and a contributing editor to Gore-Browne on Companies, and was a former member of the editorial board of the Journal of Business Law.

She is a Fellow of Trinity and of the Information Society Law Centre at the University of Milan. She has also held visiting positions at the European University Institute, Duke University and the University of Cambridge. She is a member of the Royal Irish Academy's Ethics, Politics, Law and Philosophy Committee.

For More Information

Professor Deirdre Ahern

Professor in Law, School of Law

dahern@tcd.ie

<https://www.tcd.ie/research/profiles/?profile=dahern>



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin