



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

Structured PhD Studentship Position in Statistics and Higher Education (4-years full-time)

Project title: Exploring students' engagement with generative artificial intelligence tools in higher education

Project location: Discipline of Statistics and Information Systems, School of Computer Science and Statistics, Trinity College Dublin (TCD), The University of Dublin, Ireland. This project is in collaboration with the TCD School of Education. The PhD student will be expected to be a resident in Ireland for the duration of the PhD.

Project supervisors: Dr. Emma Howard (TCD School of Computer Science and Statistics) and Dr. Aibhín Bray (TCD School of Education)

Application deadline: 23rd July 2026

Start date: Anticipated start date is the 1st September 2026

PhD structure: This is a full-time 4-year structured PhD project. The funding for the project includes a tax-free stipend of €25,000 per annum. In addition to the stipend, EU/non-EU fees will be covered for four years. This PhD is funded by the Trinity Research Doctorate Award (TRDA).

PhD topic: Generative artificial intelligence (genAI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT) are widely used by students. However, how students engage with these tools is unclear. There is some evidence that inappropriate use of GenAI may be detrimental to students' long-term learning, confidence and social development. This project seeks to examine students' use of genAI tools and provide evidence-based guidance on how genAI tools can be responsibly integrated into Higher Education to support students' long-term learning as AI-literate learners; thereby aligning to Trinity College Dublin's THRIVE strategy and wider European education guidance.

GenAI tools are a multi-dimensional resource as they can provide information, engage in a conversation, or create interactive examples to demonstrate concepts. This project will examine when, why, and how students engage with genAI tools. To examine how genAI tool use impacts students, data will be combined from surveys, resource usage, module information, and interviews. This mixed-methods study will employ statistical (e.g., structural equation modelling) and qualitative (e.g., thematic analysis) methods for analysis. In addition, the project may involve

designing and testing interventions to strengthen students' sense of belonging and reduce their reliance on genAI tools.

The Institution: The School of Computer Science and Statistics at Trinity College Dublin is a collegiate, friendly, and research-intensive centre for academic study and research excellence. The School has been ranked 1st in Ireland, top 25 in Europe, and top 100 Worldwide (QS Subject Rankings 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2023).

Essential Requirements:

1. Applicants must meet criteria a) or criteria b):
 - a. Applicants should have at least a 2.1 honours degree or equivalent in the area of statistics, data science, data analysis or similar. Applicants must also have some experience with statistical computing (e.g., R, SPSS, and Python) and demonstrate engagement with (STEM/higher) education research.
 - b. Applicants should have at least a 2.1 honours degree or equivalent in the area of education, psychology or similar. Applicants must also demonstrate proficiency in statistical/data analysis, and have some experience with analysing data computationally (e.g., R, SPSS, and Python).
2. Applicants for whom English is a second language will be required to demonstrate their competence in the English language in line with Trinity College Dublin requirements as appropriate.

Desirable Requirements:

- A Master's degree in a relevant field
- Experience of mixed-methods research (i.e., of both quantitative and qualitative research)

Application Instructions:

Please submit a single PDF document consisting of:

1. **Cover letter (two pages maximum)** indicating how your skills and experience make you a suitable candidate and your motivation for applying.
2. **Curriculum vitae (two pages maximum)** including at a minimum your name, educational institution, qualification stating overall grade/percentage (predicted grades are acceptable for those still studying) and contact details of two academic referees.
3. **Academic transcripts of degree/degrees.**

Applications and informal queries about the position should be submitted to Dr. Emma Howard (emhoward@tcd.ie). Please include "[TRDA PhD Stat & HE] Your name" in the subject line.