



UNIVERSITY

APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS
TO EARN MASTERS BY RESEARCH (MPHIL)



UNITED AGAINST ONLINE ABUSE

GLOBAL COALITION TO STOP

HATE SPEECH IN SPORT



DCU BUSINESS SCHOOL



FOUNDATION

#UNITEDAGAINSTONLINEABUSE

INTRODUCTION

The FIA invites researchers worldwide to collaborate with it against online abuse in sport, while earning a Masters by Research (MPhil) from Dublin City University (DCU) Business School, covered by the FIA research scholarships.

The Masters by Research is undertaken by distance learning, meaning you remain in your home country and work independently (2 years part-time starting September 2026), with the support of an academic supervisor, on a thesis based on the topic of online hate and sport.

This is your opportunity to contribute to the FIA's global movement United Against Online Abuse, while earning a degree at a leading European university, one of the top 5% of Business Schools in the world.

Launched by the FIA in 2023, United Against Online Abuse welcomes research on the subject of online hate and sport, including motor sport.



ABOUT DCU BUSINESS SCHOOL

Dublin City University (DCU) Business School is an internationally focused, triple-accredited business school, placing it among an elite group of institutions worldwide. Its globally ranked Master's programmes offer clear pathways to career progression across a wide range of business disciplines.

The School has a strong track record of impactful research and is a recognised leader in the study of online harms, including online abuse in sport. It is home to the International Network for Online Harms, a global research initiative bringing together scholars, industry partners, and policymakers to address pressing digital challenges.

DCU Business School combines academic excellence with real-world relevance, maintaining deep connections with industry and stakeholders. As part of a leading European university, ranked among the world's top institutions, DCU is committed to transforming lives and societies through research that addresses global challenges.



ABOUT THE FIA

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), founded in 1904, is the governing body for world motor sport and the federation of the world's leading mobility organisations which brings together 243 international motoring and sporting organisations from 147 countries on five continents.



ABOUT THE FIA UNIVERSITY

The FIA University is the education and research arm of the FIA, whose mission is to support the FIA's strategy of being a knowledge-led organisation. Open to FIA members and professional staff, FIAU will offer a range of courses designed to advance the education and competency standards of FIA personnel.

In addition, as exemplified through the publication of its White Paper on Online Abuse in March 2023, FIAU aims to publish empirical research to inform policy and strategy and for the benefit of practitioners, including our global network of clubs and members.



ABOUT FIA FOUNDATION

The FIA Foundation is the independent charitable arm of the FIA and supports the safety and development of motor sport from grassroots up, invests in the charitable activities of the national members; and has an activist role in global public policy, working with multilateral institutions, regional NGOs and member clubs to promote an agenda of road safety, sustainable mobility and climate action.





WHY WE ARE UNITED AGAINST ONLINE ABUSE IN SPORT

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) recognises that online abuse of its athletes, personnel, officials and volunteers represents a blight on its sport, and has committed to adopting a leadership position in addressing this issue in the motor sport ecosystem, in the first instance, and the wider sporting environment thereafter.

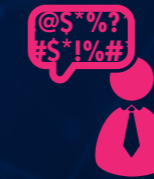
The FIA has instigated detailed dialogue with social media platforms, EU and governmental representatives, fellow sporting bodies and other stakeholders operating in this field, to forge effective collaboration and inform joint action. The FIA has committed to mobilising its 243

motoring and sporting organisations in 147 countries across 5 continents in pursuit of this aim, advocating that media, teams, drivers, and fans take a stand against online abuse, too.

The FIA will invest significant funding to support research via the FIA University, the Federation's corporate education and research facility, to examine digital hate and associated toxic commentary specific to sport. This will provide a much-needed platform for knowledge sharing, education and, in the fullness of time, prevention of this scourge within wider society, let alone sport.

SOME FACTS

It is not just athletes that receive abuse. Fans, coaches, commentators, journalists, referees, sporting administrators, among other stakeholders, also regularly receive online abuse **as a result of their involvement in the sporting context** (Kearns et al., 2022)



Ethnic minorities are far more likely to be targeted by, and exposed to, online abuse (Microsoft Digital Civility index, 2020)



Sporting events have been increasingly identified as **significant flashpoints** for online abuse and hate (Kearns et al., 2022)



Over a third of young people in 30 countries report being cyberbullied, with 1 in 5 skipping school because of it (UN.org, 2023)



On Facebook and Twitter, **sexist messages** were the most common type of harassment or abuse experienced (Arwen.ai, 2022).



Appearance is the leading cause of online abuse **for teenagers and females**, being responsible for 38% of such incidents (Microsoft Digital Civility index, 2020)

About 28% of children around the world have experienced cyberbullying that is **racially motivated** (Pew Research Centre, 2022)

In the 2019/2020 Premier League season, the Professional Footballers Association found that 43% of EPL players had 'experienced **targeted and explicitly racist abuse** on public Twitter' (PFA, 2020)

During the 2022 World Championships, **female athletes** received **60%** of all online abuse via Twitter and Instagram (World Athletics, 2022)

19,636 posts confirmed as abusive, discriminatory or threatening have been reported to platforms during FIFA WORLD CUP QATAR 2022 (FIFA/FIFPRO Social Media Protection Service, 2023)

WHO CAN APPLY?

In line with the FIA's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, we are searching for research talent worldwide.

We recognize that there are economic barriers for access to education in Europe.

With the support of the FIA Foundation, the FIA is offering scholarships to cover the entire cost of study to 6 researchers from Africa, Asia, Europe, MENA, North and South America.

Each scholarship is valued, on average, at EUR 10,000 in total.

The FIA will grant 2 MPhil scholarships through DCU during the period 2026-2028



TITLE OF AWARD

Masters by Research (MPhil)

STRUCTURE

Students will work on projects related to online abuse. They will be supervised by an academic member of staff who specializes in the field and will enroll upon any modules that are deemed necessary and complete these remotely.

DURATION

2 years part-time

STARTING TIME

1 September 2026
(or as soon as possible thereafter)

INDICATIVE RESEARCH TOPICS

Abuse Patterns, Wellbeing, Inequality, Governance, Fan Cultures, Prevention, Methods...

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

1 A primary (undergraduate) degree classification in a demonstrably relevant field equivalent to second-class honours, grade two (2:2), or above, from an approved University or an approved equivalent degree-awarding body,

Students on the Master's register may apply for transfer to undertake a PhD under the same conditions, and using the same procedure, as PhD-track candidates requesting confirmation on the PhD register.

OR

approved equivalent professional qualification in an area cognate to the proposed research topic;

OR

Students possessing diverse prior learning experiences, which meet DCU Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy to prove they are suitably prepared for the study.

The following competencies / learnings are required: discipline specific knowledge and know-how, transferable skills, research competency and personal effectiveness.

2 Students must meet the English language requirements for the course, as set by DCU as the degree awarding body, typically IELTS overall 6.5 and above or TOEFL overall score 580 and above.

3 Highly motivated individuals with passion for media and sport with excellent research and communications skills.

HOW TO APPLY

1 / APPLICATION

Applications open on 6 April 2026 and close on 6 June 2026 at 5pm CEST

2 / CONTACT

Interested candidates may contact the UAOA team at uaoa@fia.com to confirm they meet the entry requirements and to share the proposed research topic. To achieve the latter, candidates should include a research proposal that includes title, research aims, relevant review of published literature, proposed methodology, and indicative impact of findings, including plans for dissemination.

Total research proposal should not exceed 4 x A4 typed pages (1.5 spaces, Times New Roman font). All proposals must be submitted in English and name and contact email address on the cover sheet.

For research proposals, we typically require five sections:

- **SECTION ONE:** Background to the Proposed Research (max. 500 words)
- **SECTION TWO:** Preliminary Literature Review (max. 1,000 words)
- **SECTION THREE:** Proposed Research Methodology (max. 750 words)
- **SECTION FOUR:** Justification for Proposed Research (max. 750 words)
- **SECTION FIVE:** References 2 **SHORTLIST** The FIA and DCU Business School will review applications and students will be shortlisted for an interview on the basis of the strength of the application (including, importantly, that they meet the minimum entry criteria as identified above) and relevance of research proposal. These interviews will take place during June & July 2026.

3 / SHORTLIST

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4 / ANNOUNCEMENT

We will announce the two successful scholars by August 2026.

5 / JOURNEY BEGINS

Your student journey will begin on 1st of September 2026.

FIA MEMBERS SUPPORT

We want to ensure that sport researchers in every country have an opportunity to apply for this scholarship opportunity and earn a degree at a leading European university with the FIA support.

We are calling for FIA member Clubs to share this opportunity:



WITH LOCAL
ACADEMIC PARTNERS



STAFF MEMBERS,
VOLUNTEERS, OFFICIALS
AND COMPETITORS



LOCAL MEDIA



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