ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

Special Regulation for the Implementation of E-Learning

Amendment of Decision No. 78656/19-6-2023 of the Senate of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Government Gazette 4084/Issue B΄/23-6-2023) concerning the approval of the Regulation of Postgraduate Study Programs of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (A.U.Th.)

Organization of the Educational Process through Distance Learning Methods
(for Postgraduate Study Programs conducted fully or partially via distance learning using Information and Communication Technologies, Government Gazette 1079/Issue B΄/28-2-2023)

Special Regulation for the Implementation of Distance Learning in Postgraduate Study Programs of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (A.U.Th.)

1. Readiness of the P.S.P. of A.U.Th. for the Use of an Integrated Distance Learning System

A.U.Th. operates a comprehensive **distance learning system** supporting both synchronous and asynchronous participation to facilitate the organization of the educational process using either synchronous or asynchronous methods.

Specifically, the integrated distance learning system supports the use of **teleconferencing technologies** and a **virtual classroom**, enabling instructors and students in different locations to receive real-time feedback and access discussion spaces (chat rooms) for interaction between instructor and students, as well as collaboration, exchange of ideas, and joint project work among students.

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2. User Access, Authentication, and Permissions for P.S.P. Participants

- The integrated distance learning environment is available in **Greek and English**.
- The system is fully accessible to people with disabilities and special educational needs.
- A.U.Th. provides institutional accounts, authentication, and **Single Sign-On (SSO)** for seamless access to academic resources and applications according to user category (instructor, student, administrator, etc.).
- Each P.S.P. organized via distance learning appoints **one responsible administrator** of the integrated system, with the necessary expertise to support instructors and students. Their contact information is communicated to all users. Technical support personnel are granted additional access rights upon request.
- Initial identity verification for institutional accounts is carried out during application submission, following procedures defined by P.S.P. Secretariats. The **A.U.Th. Digital Governance Unit** utilizes ICT tools and support from the system administrators.

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3. Technological Infrastructure and Services

The integrated distance learning system supports **horizontal services and infrastructures** of the University usable for synchronous, asynchronous, or blended learning:

Service/Infrastructure 1: Integrated Learning Management System (LMS) (elearning.auth.gr), implemented via Moodle, allowing creation and hosting of virtual classrooms.

Service/Infrastructure 2: Synchronous distance learning environment for real-time interaction (Zoom, MS Teams, Google Meet, BigBlueButton).

Service/Infrastructure 3: Classrooms equipped with audiovisual systems for hosting fully or partially remote P.S.P. sessions.

Service/Infrastructure 4: Website creation for each P.S.P. (websites.auth.gr).

Service/Infrastructure 5: Support for multimedia educational material (podcasts, videocasts) via A.U.Th. educational content production studio (Studio).

Service/Infrastructure 6: Live streaming and recording of lectures (Streaming).

Service/Infrastructure 7: Electronic registrar service (SIS) for managing students, instructors, and courses.

Service/Infrastructure 8: Institutional accounts and SSO for seamless access.

Service/Infrastructure 9: Library system (Koha) and public catalog (search.lib.auth.gr).

Service/Infrastructure 10: Institutional Repository (IKEE) (ikee.lib.auth.gr), including postgraduate theses and dissertations.

Service/Infrastructure 11: Access to digitized historical, cultural, and archival collections (digital.lib.auth.gr, archives.lib.auth.gr).

Service/Infrastructure 12: Plagiarism detection tool **Turnitin**.

Service/Infrastructure 13: User training on literature search, bibliography, and copyright practices.

Service/Infrastructure 14: Support services for persons with disabilities (AmeA).

Maintenance and upgrades of Services 1–14 are centrally managed by the University. Technical staff of the hosting department support instructors, while the central University services provide additional expertise and best practices.

3.1. eLearning Educational Support Service

The horizontal **eLearning support service** (elearning.auth.gr) allows digital organization and distribution of course material and provides communication tools between instructors and students.

It also:

- Connects with synchronous distance learning tools.

- Manage roles and access rights.
- Integrates with central University IT maintenance and support.
- Offers plagiarism checking tools.
- Supports accessible educational material for people with disabilities.
- Complies with A.U.Th. data protection policies.
- Is hosted on ISO 27001:2013-certified University infrastructure.
- Interfaces with the electronic registrar (SIS) for student registration and issuance of standardized certificates in Greek and English.

If a different platform is chosen, it must meet the same standards for maintenance, upgrades, and infrastructure support.

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4. Educational Support Procedures

To prevent student dropout caused by isolation, lack of oversight, time management challenges, or difficulty assessing workload, P.S.P.s implement **study guides** and **schedules**, which:

- Outline course content and key connections between sections.
- Provide navigation for learning material and assessment methods.
- Include summary information on the following, accessible via SIS and/or LMS:
    - Course description
    - Learning objectives (overall and per unit)
    - Course structure (units, chapters, workload)
    - Academic calendar with key dates
    - Grading scale and evaluation rules
    - Evaluation forms (assignments, exams, participation, formative/summative)
    - Weight of each evaluation type
    - Educational material and supplementary resources
    - Synchronous online platform access instructions
    - Feedback and assessment methods
    - Recommended bibliography

Study schedules indicate indicative workload per unit (e.g., weekly) and define key milestones. Both guides should accompany each course and be updated regularly based on internal/external evaluations and developments in the field.

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5. Pedagogical Framework for Distance Learning and Student Assessment

The pedagogical framework:

- Serves as a **general guideline** for program design while preserving academic freedom.

- Follows two main dimensions: disciplinary requirements and evaluation per internal quality assurance (MODIP).

Key Elements:

A. **Pedagogical Philosophy:**

- Links beliefs about knowledge, learning processes, and student engagement.
- Supports strategies like exploratory learning, collaborative knowledge construction, and engagement with static/dynamic online content.
- Content may include electronic resources, multimedia, and AI-based platforms.

B. **Educational Framework:**

- Differentiates between **tasks** assigned by instructors and **student activities** as the transformed output demonstrating learning outcomes.
- Learning environment: type of program (e.g., postgraduate), implemented by the University.
- Learning tools: online interactive activities, problem-solving scenarios, forums, simulations, interactive games, and scenario-based decision-making exercises.

Evaluation Guidelines:

- Define monitoring, assessment, and evaluation methods per activity.
- May include written/oral exams (in-person or remote), assignments, practical tests, formative assessments.
- Encourage continuous interaction via assignments, presentations, and mid-terms.
- Ensure exam integrity with authentication, supervision, and necessary technical tools. Results communicated via LMS or other electronic means.

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6. Evaluation and Enhancement of Instructors' Digital Skills

- Instructors can improve skills via guides and training material from the **Center for Electronic Governance (KEDE)** and the **Center for Teaching Support and Learning (KEDIMA)**, including self-assessment tools.
- Special training programs may be provided.
- Evaluation criteria are defined annually by **MODIP**, aligned with internal quality assurance and European/National standards (ENQA, HQA).

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7. Plagiarism Checking Procedure

- LMS (elearning.auth.gr) provides **Turnitin** access for instructors.

- Students can use **Turnitin Draft Coach** via Microsoft 365 online.

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8. Data Protection and IT Security Policy

- A.U.Th. complies with GDPR (https://www.auth.gr/gdpr/)
- Central services follow IT security policy (https://it.auth.gr/information_security/), certified ISO 27001:2013.
- Third-party platforms (Google, MS, Zoom) adhere to respective terms (https://it.auth.gr/thirdpartycloudterms/).

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9. Internal Evaluation Criteria for Distance Learning P.S.P.s

- Ensure program content is current and aligned with research.
- Ensure program design suits distance learning, promoting student interaction.
- Assess instructors' training in distance learning.
- Monitor workload, progress, and completion using distance methods.
- Evaluation framework for assignments and exams with clear criteria.
- Collect student feedback and satisfaction data.
- Maximize use of available distance learning technologies and support services.

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10. Student Enrollment Procedure

- P.S.P.s may use the **electronic registrar** to manage students from application to graduation.
- All requests for certificates, confirmations, and course registrations are processed via:
    - https://enrollment.auth.gr/
    - Registrar Guide
    - Instructor Guide
    - Student Guide

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11. Required Actions

The P.S.P. authority may:

- Define pedagogical framework and evaluation methods.
- Establish educational support for students.
- Document feasibility of distance learning for the program, with examples if available.

- Analyze organization of teaching methods (in-person, synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid) per activity, including workload distribution.
- Define digital learning material and assessment methods.

All other provisions remain under **Senate Decision 78656/19-6-2023 (Gov. Gazette 4084/Vol. B΄/23-6-2023)**.

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Internal Distribution:

- Rector and Vice-Rectors' Offices
- Academic Units Coordination Directorate
- P.S.P. Support Service
- Academic Affairs Department
- MODIP (Quality Assurance Unit)
- Senate Secretariat
- General Archives

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