ΔΗΜΟΚΡΙΤΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΘΡΑΚΗΣ
DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE

# Special Regulation on the Implementation of E-Learning

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According to Annex 5 (Regulation of Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies of the Democritus University of Thrace) of the Internal Operating Regulation of DUTH (Government Gazette, Series B, 4751/20-8-2024), the following apply:

## Article 4

**Pedagogical framework for the design and implementation of activities through distance education methods and student assessment**

Postgraduate distance education is not exclusively based on technologies intended to substitute face-to-face teaching. It is primarily defined by a pedagogical philosophy that places interactive actions at the core, promoting learners' engagement in activities of meaningful learning. Based on this perspective, the design of postgraduate distance education presupposes:

- in-depth knowledge of the subject area
- detailed organization of educational–teaching processes
- selection and/or development of educational material
- design of appropriate learning activities (assignments) to be implemented by learners
- continuous learner support
- establishment of bidirectional communication and a positive learning climate
- existence of technological environments that effectively support individual educational–learning activities
- valid and reliable assessment of the educational outcome.

E-learning relies on interaction between student and educational resources, student–instructor, and student–student. Moreover, it offers learners enhanced opportunities for revisiting difficult or complex points and for reflection, leading to deeper analysis of educational material, inquiry, critical thinking, and ultimately, knowledge consolidation.

Synchronous and asynchronous technologies are utilized by instructors in multiple ways to encourage and foster active student participation in learning rather than passive attendance.

At DUTH, postgraduate courses must be appropriately structured into modules. Modules may correspond either to thematic areas of subject matter or to weekly study and workload.

Each module should include:

– the outline of learning outcomes (syllabus), with reasonable workload and educational requirements, allowing participants to follow effectively and reflect on what they are learning,
– educational and supporting material,
– learning activities (asynchronous and synchronous) and an implementation schedule, utilizing good teaching practices in online/virtual environments such as recorded lectures, virtual laboratories employing VR technologies, and suitable teaching techniques (e.g., flipped classroom),
– guidelines for participation, study, time management, and collaboration,
– deliverables/assignments expected to be completed within the module, accompanied by relevant instructions, with emphasis on feedback between instructor and learner.

Regarding student assessment, the institutional Regulation of DUTH applies.

For each thematic module, the use of multiple digital educational resources is recommended, such as:
–lecture slides,
–instructor's notes,
– articles or book chapters in digital form,
– multimedia material (images–graphics, concept maps, videos, simulations, etc.),
– online educational content sources and repositories,
– video lessons, podcasts, and other digital media.

Supporting material of an e-learning course includes:
– general study guidelines for students and instructions for participation in individual and group activities,
– advice, learning support, and guidance for the implementation of learning activities and assignments,
– technical support material related to the use of online or other digital tools,
– assessment procedures and methods.

## Article 5

### Establishment of Postgraduate Programmes (MSc) operating through distance education methods

1. DUTH establishes and organizes MSc programmes through distance education methods

when the conditions set by current legislation are fulfilled, specifically:

a) DUTH possesses a comprehensive e-learning system. In particular, DUTH provides systems that cover the needs of both synchronous and asynchronous e-learning.

For synchronous e-learning, MS Teams (Microsoft) is used, offering the following features:
– video conferencing with camera, microphone, and speakers or headphones for real-time audiovisual communication,
– virtual classrooms accommodating multiple participants where instructors and students can interact regardless of location,
– seamless operation under both high and low network speeds,
– application and text sharing,
– shared storage space accessible to all class members for file exchange,
– shared as well as private communication messages (chat) between instructor and learners, and among learners themselves.

For asynchronous e-learning, Open e-Class is used, providing the following features:
– educational content management system,
– course development and authoring application,
– material management (uploading, editing, etc.) per course or educational activity,
– multiple types of material such as notes, presentations, exercises, and other activities,
– feedback both from student and instructor,
– indicative solutions and examples of exercises,
– multimodal material.

Both platforms provide all necessary tools for compliance with legislation, as well as tools for monitoring the dissemination of information and personal data. These systems are available in both English and Greek and include technologies ensuring full accessibility for persons with disabilities and those with special educational needs.

The synchronous e-learning system is part of a suite of tools and software provided free of charge to all university community members via DUTH's paid subscription to the vendor. The asynchronous e-learning software is distributed free of charge by GUNET, of which DUTH is a member, and is actively supported by the provider.

b) DUTH operates a Digital Governance Unit.
c) The present Regulation of Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies exists.

2. The establishment of an MSc programme organized through distance education methods follows the procedure of Article 3 of this Regulation and the subsequent paragraphs of this article.

MSc programmes are organized exclusively through distance education methods, provided the subject area is adequately supported by this mode of educational process. Part of the educational process may be organized through asynchronous distance education, provided that the total number of ECTS credits of activities organized through this method does not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the total ECTS of the MSc. If the MSc includes student internships as an educational activity, these may also be conducted remotely, provided the host institutions support teleworking methods and supervision of the internship is ensured.

3. The establishment decision specifies the method of conducting the educational process (face-to-face, synchronous distance education, asynchronous distance education, or blended system) for each educational activity of the curriculum, the student assessment procedure per educational activity, and the technological equipment required of each student for programme participation and assessment.

4. In addition to the provisions of Article 3 of this Regulation, the establishment decision is accompanied by a detailed report, which includes at minimum:
a) substantiation of the feasibility and appropriateness of the MSc subject area to be organized through distance education methods,
b) analysis of the proposed methods for organizing the educational process (face-to-face, synchronous, asynchronous, blended) for each educational activity of the curriculum, allocation of teaching hours per method, and percentage of any asynchronous distance education per educational activity and in total,
c) substantiation of DUTH's infrastructure, particularly the adequacy and suitability of digital infrastructure for organizing MSc programmes via distance education methods,
d) substantiation of the digital skills and expertise of academic staff in the use of Information and Communication Technologies,
e) digital educational material,
f) possible methods of digital student assessment.