



DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME
«SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS AND
ENVIRONMENT IN AGRICULTURE»

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT,
SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY SCIENCES,
DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY

M4.3
SPECIAL REGULATION FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF E-LEARNING

15/1/2024

In accordance with the Regulation of Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies of the Democritus University of Thrace (Government Gazette B' 6466/13-11-2023), the following apply:

Article 4

Pedagogical framework for the design and implementation of activities using distance education methods, and for the evaluation of students

Distance postgraduate education is not based exclusively on technologies called upon to replace face-to-face teaching. It is defined, first and foremost, by a pedagogical philosophy that places at its centre interactive actions promoting the participation of learners in meaningful learning activities. Based on this approach, the design of distance postgraduate education presupposes:

- an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter
- the detailed organisation of the educational-teaching processes
- the selection and/or preparation of educational material
- the design of appropriate learning activities (assignments) to be carried out by the learners
- the continuous support of learners
- the establishment of two-way communication and a positive learning climate
- the existence of technological environments that effectively support the individual educational-learning activities
- the valid and reliable assessment of the educational outcome.

E-learning is based on the interaction between the student and educational resources, between the student and the instructor, and among students themselves. In addition, it offers learners increased opportunities to review difficult or hard-to-grasp points, as well as to reflect, leading to a deeper analysis of the educational material, to inquiry and questioning, and ultimately to a deepening of knowledge.

Synchronous and asynchronous technologies are used by the instructor in many ways, so as to encourage and promote the active participation of students in learning rather than passive attendance.

At DUTH, postgraduate courses must be appropriately structured into units. Units may correspond to thematic areas of the subject content or to the weekly study and workload time of students.

Each unit should include:

- ✓ the outline of learning outcomes (syllabus), with a reasonable workload, and educational obligations, so that participants can follow the programme smoothly and reflect on what they are learning,
- ✓ the educational and support material,
- ✓ the learning activities (asynchronous and synchronous) and implementation timetable, making use of good teaching practices in an online/virtual environment, such as recorded lectures, virtual laboratories using modern VR technologies, and appropriate educational techniques such as, for example, the flipped classroom,
- ✓ suggestions-guidelines on ways of participating, studying, allocating time and collaborating,

- ✓ the deliverables/assignments that students are expected to complete in this unit, together with any instructions for carrying them out, with emphasis on feedback between the instructor and the learner,
- ✓ with regard to the evaluation of students, DUTH's institutional Regulation applies.
- ✓ For each thematic unit, it is recommended that multiple forms of digital educational material be used, such as:
 - Lecture slides
 - Instructor's notes
 - Articles or book chapters in digital form
 - Multimedia material (images/graphics, concept maps, videos, simulations, etc.)
 - Web-based educational content sources and resources
 - Video lessons, podcasts and other digital media.

The support material for an e-learning course includes:

1. General guidelines for students' study and their participation in individual and group activities
2. Suggestions, learning support and guidance for carrying out learning activities and completing assignments
3. Technical support material concerning the use of online or other digital tools
4. Evaluation procedure and evaluation methods.

Article 5

Establishment of a Postgraduate Programme operating with distance education methods

1. DUTH establishes and organises Postgraduate Programmes using distance education methods, as the conditions set out by current legislation are met, and specifically:

a) DUTH has an integrated distance-learning system. Specifically, DUTH has systems that cover the needs of both synchronous and asynchronous distance learning.

For synchronous distance learning, Microsoft's MS Teams is used. MS Teams has the following features and capabilities:

- Videoconferencing with camera and microphone and speakers or headphones for real-time visual and audio communication.
- An electronic virtual classroom for multiple people, where instructors and students can interact regardless of their physical location.
- Uninterrupted operation at both high and low network speeds.
- Sharing of applications and texts.
- Shared storage space for all class members for file exchange.
- Shared as well as private chat messages between the instructor and the students, and among students themselves.

For asynchronous distance learning, Open eClass is used, which has the following features and capabilities.

- Educational Content Management application.
- Course Development and Authoring application.
- Management of material (uploading, editing, etc.) per course or educational activity.
- Multiple types of material such as notes, presentations, exercises, and other activities.
- Feedback from both the student and the instructor.
- Indicative solutions and example exercises.

- Multimodal material.

Both platforms provide all the necessary tools for compliance with legislation, while also offering a range of tools for tracking the dissemination of information and personal data. These systems are offered in both English and Greek and incorporate technologies that make them fully accessible to people with disabilities and people with special educational needs.

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

b) DUTH operates a Digital Governance Unit.

c) this Regulation of Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies exists.

2. For the establishment of a Postgraduate Programme organised using distance education methods, the procedure set out in Article 3 of this Regulation is followed, together with the following paragraphs of this Article.

Postgraduate Programmes are organised exclusively using distance education methods provided that the subject matter is appropriately and adequately supported by this method of educational process. Part of the educational process may be organised using asynchronous distance education methods, provided that the total number of credits of the educational activities organised using this method does not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the total credits of the Programme. If the Programme includes the conduct of a student placement, as an educational activity of the programme, this may be carried out remotely, provided that the host organisations support the method of teleworking and supervision of the placement being conducted is ensured.

3. The founding decision specifies the method of conducting the educational process (in person, synchronous distance education, asynchronous distance education, or a mixed system) for each educational activity of the curriculum, the procedure for evaluating students per educational activity, as well as the technological equipment that each student is required to have in order to follow the programme and be evaluated.

4. In addition to the matters referred to in Article 3 of this Regulation, the founding decision is accompanied by a detailed report, which includes at least the following elements:

- a) documentation regarding the feasibility and suitability of the Programme's subject matter for being organised using distance education methods,
- b) an analysis of the proposed methods of organising the educational process (in person, synchronous, asynchronous, mixed system) per educational activity of the study programme, and the allocation of teaching hours of each educational activity of the Programme per method of implementation, as well as the percentage of any asynchronous distance education per educational activity and overall in the programme,
- c) documentation regarding DUTH's material and technical infrastructure, and in particular the suitability and adequacy of the digital infrastructure for organising a Programme using distance education methods,
- d) documentation regarding the digital skills and know-how of the teaching staff in the use of Information and Communication Technologies,
- e) digital educational material,
- f) any methods of digital assessment of students.