

# General Study Regulations

for the Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence  
at the Swiss Distance Learning University, Switzerland (DistanceUniversity (Rg-MAI))

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dated 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2019

The Board of Trustees

- having regard to the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HEdA) of 30 September 2011;
- having regard to the University Education and Research Act of 2 February 2001;
- having regard to the Regulations on Implementation of the University Education and Research Act of 27 March 2002;
- having regard to the Ordinance on University Courses of Study of 5 June 2002;
- having regard to Art. 23, sub-paragraph 9 of the Statutes of the Distance Learning University Foundation, Switzerland, of November 11, 2005 according to which *"The Board of Trustees is responsible for all areas of competence, unless they are assigned to another body. In particular, the Board of Trustees has the following powers: [...] Sub-paragraph 9: determines the regulations and any other necessary provision as regards implementation and approves them subject to their validation by the cantonal authorities."*
- having regard to the Organisation Regulations of DistanceUniversity of 4 July 2018

adopts the following:

**This text is for information purposes only. The language of the original documents (French) takes precedence.**

## Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>General provisions</b>	<b>1</b>
Art. 1	Object	1
Art. 2	Distance learning	1
Art. 3	Definitions	1
<b>II.</b>	<b>Admission and Fees</b>	<b>2</b>
Art. 4		2
<b>III.</b>	<b>Studies</b>	<b>2</b>
A	Structure of studies	2
Art. 5	Commencement and duration	2
Art. 6	ECTS credits	2
Art. 7	Progress and organisation of studies	2
Art. 8	Teaching modules	3
Art. 9	Participation in modules	3
B	Form of studies	3
Art. 10	Individual learning	3
Art. 11	Online Learning	3
Art. 12	Group sessions	4
Art. 13	Work-based learning	4
Art. 14	Studies in English	4
C	Assessment of understanding	4
Art. 15	Dates	4
Art. 16	Methods of knowledge assessment	4
Art. 17	Awarding of marks	5
Art. 18	Repeat assessments	5
Art. 19	Absence during tests/assessments	6
Art. 20	Cheating	6
D	Granting of equivalences	6
Art. 21		6
E	Success in attaining the Master's	6
Art. 22		6
F	Registration, leave of absence, deregistration	7
Art. 23	Registration	7
Art. 24	Leave of absence	7
Art. 25	Deregistration	7
G	Special hardship	7
Art. 26		7
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Legal Remedies</b>	<b>8</b>
Art. 27	Bodies	8
Art. 28	Objections and appeals	8
<b>V.</b>	<b>Final Provisions</b>	<b>8</b>
Art. 29	Entry into force	8
Art. 30	Transitional Provisions	8

## I. General provisions

### Art. 1 Object

These regulations govern the Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence course offered by the Swiss Distance Learning University Foundation Switzerland (hereinafter DistanceUniversity) in collaboration with the IDIAP Research Institute.

### Art. 2 Distance learning

<sup>1</sup> The form of education offered by DistanceUniversity is distance learning.

<sup>2</sup> Distance learning consists of teaching modules (see Art. 8 and 9), work and exercises with online supervision (see Art. 11), a plenary group session in person (see Art. 12), virtual classes as well as work-based learning assignments (see Art. 13).

### Art. 3 Definitions

The following definitions apply:

- a. *The Executive Board*: Art. 24 and 25 of Organisation Regulations (OrgR).
- b. *Rector*: Art. 26 and 27 of Organisation Regulations (OrgR).
- c. *Vice-rector education*: Art. 28 and 29 of Organisation Regulations (OrgR).
- d. *Dean*: Art. 38 of Organisation Regulations (OrgR).
- e. *Head of the study course*: Art. 40 of Organisation Regulations (OrgR).
- f. *Faculty Manager*: The person who assists the Head of the study course, in the same field. This person acts as a link between the faculty and the organisation.
- g. *Student Services*: The service that guarantees the administrative support of the study programme and of the students.
- h. *Academic Supervisor*: The person responsible for the supervision of a module. The Academic Supervisor assumes the scientific and educational responsibility for his/her module and, in principle, personally leads the group sessions and virtual classes.
- i. *Learning Manager*: The person who supports the Academic Supervisor in the supervision of a module. He/she works according to the instructions of the Academic Supervisor. S/he is personally responsible for online supervision and for students' self-directed learning phases.
- j. *Partner company*: The company within which the student is employed and carries out the work-based learning assignments.
- k. *Company Supervisor*: The person, within the partner company, in charge of the administrative supervision, the follow-up, the organization and the smooth-running of the work-based learning. The company supervisor can supervise several projects within the partner company. The company supervisor should be familiar with the corporate strategy, have project management skills and a general understanding of the field of artificial intelligence.
- l. *Project Supervisor*: The person, within the teaching team, in charge of scientific supervision, monitoring, organization and smooth-running of the work-based learning. The project supervisor can supervise several students' projects.
- m. *Project Coordinator*: The person, within the teaching team, in charge of the coordination, optimal organization and the follow-up of all the work-based learning.
- n. *Work-based Learning Committee*: This consists of the Project Coordinator, the Project Supervisor and the Company Supervisor. It is responsible for ensuring the validation of the work-based learning.
- o. *Work-based learning*: all the professional activities, including the Master's dissertation, carried out within the partner company for which ECTS credits are obtained. The terms of the work-based learning are defined in Appendix 6.
- p. *IDIAP*: The IDIAP Research Institute based in Martigny and national centre of competence in artificial intelligence.
- q. *Student*: The person registered for a study course.
- r. *Module*: A subject taught in a course. The modules are listed in Appendix 1.



- s. *Trimester*: period of 12 weeks. The Master's course is divided into six trimesters. The modules of the basic courses and of the elective courses last for one trimester.

## II. Admission and Fees

### Art. 4

<sup>1</sup> Holders of a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science (IT) from a Swiss or foreign university or higher learning institution, or of a degree deemed equivalent by the Head of study course, may be admitted to the Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence programme offered by DistanceUniversity.

<sup>2</sup> Admission to the MSc in Artificial Intelligence programme of holders of a foreign Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science (IT) or a Bachelor's with Computer Science (IT) as a minor subject may be subject to additional conditions. For the rest, the provisions of the DistanceUniversity admission regulations apply by analogy.

<sup>3</sup> Admission to the Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence is subject to the condition of employment in a partner company.

<sup>4</sup> The fees payable by students are laid down in the rules on tuition fees.

<sup>5</sup> Supervision fees payable by partner companies are set out in Appendix 6.

## III. Studies

### A Structure of studies

#### Art. 5 Commencement and duration

<sup>1</sup> The courses of study commence each spring semester in February.

<sup>2</sup> The regulation duration of study is three semesters, or six trimesters respectively.

<sup>3</sup> The duration of studies cannot be shortened, even in the case of equivalences granted to certain previous courses (see Article 21).

<sup>4</sup> The modules start in the autumn trimesters or in the spring trimesters only (see Appendix 2).

<sup>5</sup> The minimum duration of study is 3 semesters and the maximum duration is 4 semesters. Any student failing to gain his/her Master's within this period will be deregistered, unless an exemption is granted by the Head of study course.

#### Art. 6 ECTS credits

<sup>1</sup> The study credits (learning achievements) are calculated according to the European Credit Transfer System (hereinafter ECTS). One ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of work by the student.

<sup>2</sup> The number of ECTS credits awarded for a given module is defined in Appendix 1 to these Regulations.

<sup>3</sup> The ECTS credits acquired remain, in principle, valid for five years after the end of the course. On an exceptional basis, the Head of study course may, in specific and motivated cases, extend the period of their validity.

#### Art. 7 Progress and organisation of studies

<sup>1</sup> The Master's Degree counts as 90 ECTS credits.

<sup>2</sup> The allocation of ECTS credits within the Master's Degree is made up of:

- a. Compulsory modules of basic courses
- b. Elective modules of advanced courses

As well as the work-based learning:

- c. The professional activities in the company
- d. The Master's dissertation in the form of the development of one or more project(s) in the company.

<sup>3</sup> The list of modules for the Master's programme is given in Appendix 1 of these regulations.

<sup>4</sup> Students follow the basic course modules in a predetermined chronological order. Students are free to choose when to participate in advanced course modules. The students' free choice is limited, however, in that some modules take place in the autumn or spring semesters only.

<sup>5</sup> The students must follow the basic course modules. For elective advanced course modules, students choose a certain number of them from the options available.

## **Art. 8 Teaching modules**

<sup>1</sup> The basic course modules and the advanced course modules take place at least every two semesters.

## **Art. 9 Participation in modules**

<sup>1</sup> In principle, a student cannot participate in more than six new modules per semester. S/he can, in addition to six new modules, continue to participate in unsuccessful modules.

<sup>2</sup> The Head of study course can, however, agree to a student following supplementary modules. The Head of study course will, however, have to check, depending on the marks obtained, that this is compatible with the student's performance to date.

<sup>3</sup> A student may participate in a module only once. It is not possible to redo the module the following year. The module must be validated during the assessment or on the second or third attempt and, therefore, at the latest by the end of the following semester (see Art. 18).

## **B Form of studies**

### **Art. 10 Individual learning**

<sup>1</sup> Individual learning combines self-directed and directed learning.

<sup>2</sup> Within the framework of directed learning, different tasks must be carried out for the various chosen modules during the semester.

<sup>3</sup> The participation in directed learning activities is, theoretically, compulsory. The Academic Supervisor defines the details of these activities and informs the students of them at the beginning of the semester. Candidates who participate in these activities or who can prove equivalent abilities as defined by the Academic Supervisor are admitted to the examinations.

### **Art. 11 Online Learning**

<sup>1</sup> Within the framework of online learning, different tasks must be carried out for the various chosen modules during the semester.

<sup>2</sup> In principal, the taskwork takes place via the communication systems made available by DistanceUniversity.

<sup>3</sup> The participation in online activities is, theoretically, compulsory. The Academic Supervisor defines the details of these activities and informs the students of them at the beginning of the semester. Candidates who participate in these activities or who can prove equivalent abilities as defined by the Academic Supervisor are admitted to the examinations.

## **Art. 12 Group sessions**

<sup>1</sup> Each module taught during a semester (see Art. 8) includes a group session.

<sup>2</sup> The frequency and the duration of the group session are laid down in Appendix 4 of these regulations.

<sup>3</sup> Only students enrolled in a module may take part in the corresponding group session.

<sup>4</sup> The group session takes place in the form of a theoretical lecture and directed tasks. Participation in the group session is compulsory. In order to be authorised for the exam, each student must have participated in the group session. The Academic Supervisor, or the learning manager respectively, decides on the procedures for checking attendance. The obligation to participate in the group session may be suspended temporarily in specific, justified cases. The exemption is granted by the Head of study course.

## **Art. 13 Work-based learning**

<sup>1</sup> The work-based learning corresponds to a minimal duration of 1200 hours. It corresponds to an occupation (FTE) rate of 40% within the partner company.

<sup>2</sup> The work-based learning must be carried out under the supervision of a Company Supervisor and a Project Coordinator.

<sup>3</sup> The work-based learning assignments include, but are not limited to:

- a. Research into the contribution of artificial intelligence in the strategy of the company
- b. A project(s) proposal for the development of artificial intelligence in the company
- c. A demonstration of the concept for one or more projects
- d. A Master's dissertation in the form of the development of one (or more) projects in the company

<sup>4</sup> The student has to write a dissertation as part of the work-based learning. The Master's dissertation corresponds to the development of one (or more) projects in artificial intelligence within the partner company.

<sup>5</sup> The work-based learning assignments (including the Master's dissertation) are marked or graded and ECTS credits are awarded for them (see Art.17 and Appendix 6).

<sup>6</sup> The work-based learning assignments/achievements are the subject of an agreement between DistanceUniversity, the Idiap and the partner company about the student.

<sup>7</sup> The terms of the work-based learning are described in Appendix 6 to these Regulations.

## **Art. 14 Studies in English**

<sup>1</sup> The language of instruction and assessments of the modules is English.

<sup>2</sup> The language used in the work-based learning environment is chosen by the company.

<sup>3</sup> The language used for assessments of the work-based learning achievements is English. Another language can be specified in discussion with the Project Supervisor, the Project Coordinator and the Company Supervisor.

## **C Assessment of understanding**

### **Art. 15 Dates**

By the end of each trimester at the latest, the modules taught are subject to a test of knowledge. The test of knowledge is marked or graded (see Art. 17).

### **Art. 16 Methods of knowledge assessment**

<sup>1</sup> The method of assessing knowledge is determined according to the specificities and requirements of each module. The various forms of knowledge assessment are listed in Appendix 3 of these Regulations.

<sup>2</sup> During the semester, partial tests of knowledge may also be required and will contribute to the assessment.

<sup>3</sup> The Academic Supervisors specify the content of the knowledge assessment and the authorised resources, after consulting the Head of study course.

<sup>4</sup> The Academic Supervisors advise the students at the beginning of the semester about the practical details of the tests of knowledge.

### **Art. 17 Awarding of marks**

<sup>1</sup> The tests of knowledge and the specific assignments are evaluated with marks from 1 to 6, 6 being the highest and 1 the lowest mark. Any mark greater than or equal to 4 indicates a pass.

<sup>2</sup> The tests of knowledge and special assignments passed are recognised by the following scale of marks:

6.0; 5.75	Excellent,
5.5; 5.25	Very good,
5.0; 4.75	Good,
4.5; 4.25	Satisfactory,
4.0	Pass.

<sup>3</sup> The tests of knowledge and special assignments failed are recognised by the following scale of marks: 3.75; 3.5; 3.25; 3.0; 2.75; 2.5; 2.25; 2.0; 1.75; 1.5; 1.25; 1.0.

<sup>4</sup> The awarding of marks also implies the awarding of ECTS credits.

<sup>5</sup> For modules comprising partial tests of knowledge, the module mark is the weighted average of all partial tests of knowledge. The marks for a module are calculated out of 100.

<sup>6</sup> A student who has not obtained a pass mark in a module cannot offset that mark with other marks obtained in another module.

### **Art. 18 Repeat assessments**

<sup>1</sup> When a module is marked as a fail, the corresponding assessments must be re-sat. In modules with several partial assessments, the academic supervisor must decide which ones should be re-sat.

<sup>2</sup> Only two further attempts are permitted. If the candidate fails the second re-sit, the failed module mark is considered final. The most recent re-sit result is always the result included in the evaluation.

<sup>3</sup> Unsuccessful assessments must be re-sat on the next possible date and no later than the end of the next trimester. In specific and duly justified cases, the Head of study course may allow another date for the re-sit.

<sup>4</sup> A student who receives a final mark of less than 3.0 will be deregistered (Art. 25).

<sup>5</sup> If the student receives a fail evaluation in the work-based learning assignments, he/she must re-register for the following semester and re-sit the evaluation test on the earliest available date and, at the latest, by the end of the following semester. The student cannot start a new project (or projects) in the company. The second, and third, evaluation always concerns the project (or projects) initially specified.

<sup>6</sup> The assessment of a written piece of work marked as a fail can be returned to the student concerned only once for the purposes of revision/rewriting. Except for the assessment of the work-based learning assignments, which can be returned twice to the student concerned for the purposes of revision/rewriting.

<sup>7</sup> The revision/rewriting period is thirty days and starts the day after receipt of the decision to reject the written work, stating the reasons for the rejection, subject to appeal. Except for the assessment of the work-based learning achievements, for which an appropriate period is set by the Work-based Learning Committee.



## **Art. 19 Absence during tests/assessments**

<sup>1</sup> A student who, without reasonable excuse, does not attend an assessment or who interrupts or fails to provide evaluable results at the end of the test, receives a mark of 1.0.

<sup>2</sup> A student who cannot attend the assessment for valid reason must, before the date of the exam, inform the Student Services and provide the necessary evidence. The Head of study course decides whether or not to grant a justified absence for that exam. If this is the case, the assessment will not be considered a failure and the student must attend by the next scheduled date, no later than the end of the following quarter.

<sup>3</sup> If a case of force majeure prevents the student from explaining his/her absence before the examination date, the same process will be applied as outlined in paragraph 2. He/she then has five days to inform and provide justification for the absence to the Student Services.

## **Art. 20 Cheating**

<sup>1</sup> Any assessment realised in a fraudulent manner will be marked as 1.0.

<sup>2</sup> During an assessment, plagiarism will be considered to be cheating.

<sup>3</sup> It is also considered cheating to bring or use unauthorised resources during an assessment or, in the case of suspicion of cheating, to refuse to provide an explanation to the examiner.

<sup>4</sup> If the cheating is not discovered until after the publication of assessment results, the Head of study course will cancel the mark obtained. If cheating is not discovered until after graduation, the decision to cancel is at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

<sup>5</sup> The right is reserved to pursue any other disciplinary measure or follow-up action.

## **D Granting of equivalences**

### **Art. 21**

<sup>1</sup> Anyone who has already followed a course that would allow him/her to be exempt from following a module must make the request, duly documented, during registration.

<sup>2</sup> Any equivalent course completed at a university or any other higher education institution may be taken into account provided that its content and scope are deemed equivalent and in conformity with the requirements, that it has been completed in the last five years, that it has not already been used for the purpose of obtaining a Master's degree (prohibition of dual use) and that it has been sanctioned by a pass mark. The corresponding mark is included in the evaluation.

<sup>3</sup> At least 70 to 90 credits required for obtaining the Master's degree must be obtained in courses in which the student is enrolled, in the DistanceUniversity study plan.

<sup>4</sup> The credits obtained as part of the work-based learning cannot be obtained by equivalence. The work-based study credits are compulsory in order to obtain the Master's Degree.

## **E Success in attaining the Master's**

### **Art. 22**

<sup>1</sup> The Master's degree course is considered to have been successfully completed when the following conditions are met:

1. The student has passed all the compulsory modules in the basic courses.
2. He/she has completed enough elective modules in advanced courses to achieve at least 14 ECTS.
3. The weighted average mark of all modules should be no less than 4.0.
4. He/she does not have more than one final module marked as a fail.
5. No mark for a definitive module in a basic course or an advanced course can be below 3.0.



6. The student has completed his/her work-based learning assignments and the weighted average of the marks for the work-based learning achievements, awarded by the Work-based Learning Committee, is no lower than 4.0.
7. He/she has obtained 90 ECTS.

<sup>2</sup> Any student who has completed their Master's degree course successfully will be awarded the corresponding diploma. The student will, in addition, be awarded the title of Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence.

## **F Registration, leave of absence, deregistration**

### **Art. 23 Registration**

- <sup>1</sup> Any person who fulfils the conditions of Art. 7 of the Rules of Admission (RgA) is considered registered.
- <sup>2</sup> Any person wishing to commence or continue studies must be registered.
- <sup>3</sup> Anyone who wishes to benefit from courses offered and other services of the institution or to study must be registered.

### **Art. 24 Leave of absence**

- <sup>1</sup> Any registered person whose leave of absence request, submitted in the context of the half-yearly re-registrations, has been granted, is considered to be on leave.
- <sup>2</sup> The person on leave may not benefit from any study offer and may not carry out any assignment related to studies.
- <sup>3</sup> Anyone on leave must pay a leave of absence fee in accordance with the regulations on fees (RgF).

### **Art. 25 Deregistration**

- <sup>1</sup> Any person who ceases studies will be deregistered. The deregistration takes place at the end of the semester.
- <sup>2</sup> Any person who has requested deregistration will be deregistered.
- <sup>3</sup> Any person having completed their studies successfully will be deregistered.
- <sup>4</sup> The Executive Board will deregister any student who:
  1. has obtained more than one fail mark for a module, which, by definition, rules out the successful completion of the Master's (Art. 22).
  2. has exceeded the maximum duration of studies (Art. 5, Para. 4).
  3. did not re-register within the deadlines set for the following semester or who did not pay the fees specified in the Fee Regulations, or
  4. loses his/her job within the partner company or the partner company does not pay the support costs within the stipulated deadlines (see Appendix 6).
- <sup>5</sup> A student may also be deregistered by the Executive Board in the following cases:
  1. he/she is proven to be guilty of cheating (Art. 20), or
  2. he/she disrupts the programme of study by acting improperly towards the institution's teaching or administrative staff or other students.

## **G Special hardship**

### **Art. 26**

- <sup>1</sup> In exceptional cases, the Executive Board may waive these regulations.

## IV. Legal Remedies

### Art. 27 Bodies

<sup>1</sup> The Student Services, the Dean, the Head of study course, the Executive Board and the Appeals Committee are competent bodies for decisions relating to these Regulations.

<sup>2</sup> The Appeals Committee consists of a Dean, an Academic Supervisor and a member of the Board of Trustees. It is presided over by the Dean. The Dean and the Academic Supervisor belong to different study courses. If the appeal concerns the course of one or more of the members of the Committee, they must disclaim competence.

<sup>3</sup> The members for the Appeal Committee are appointed for three years by the Board of Trustees at the proposal of the Executive Board. The appointment is renewable.

### Art. 28 Objections and appeals

<sup>1</sup> Decisions made, in application of these regulations, relating to the admission to and registration for the examinations, and all of the decisions made by the Student Services, the Head of study course, the Academic Supervisor, the Project Coordinator or the Project Supervisor can be objected to in writing, stating the reasons, to the Dean within ten days of the interview with the Academic Supervisor or the Project Supervisor (see Appendix 5).

<sup>2</sup> Decisions regarding an objection which are made by the Dean in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article may be appealed against, stating the reasons, by submitting a written request to the Executive Board within 30 days following receipt of said decision.

<sup>3</sup> Decisions regarding an appeal which are made by the Executive Board in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article may be appealed against, stating the reasons, by a written application to the Appeals Committee within 30 days of receipt of the decision.

<sup>4</sup> Decisions reached by the Appeals Committee may be appealed against to the Canton of Valais State Council by submitting an appeal within thirty days in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Administrative Procedure and Jurisdiction of 6 October 1976.

## V. Final Provisions

### Art. 29 Entry into force

<sup>1</sup> These regulations have been adopted by the Board of Trustees of DistanceUniversity.

<sup>2</sup> They come into force upon approval by the Department of Economy and Education of the Canton of Valais.

### Art. 30 Transitional Provisions

The Executive Board will take all necessary transitional measures.

Adopted by the DistanceUniversity Board of Trustees, January16, 2019



Wilhelm Schnyder, President



Marc Bors, Rector

Approved by the Department of the Economy and Education of the Canton of Valais on ...



Christophe Darbellay, Head of the Department of the Economy and Education