General Study Regulations

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

dated 16th 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:

«Art. 23: 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. »

adopts the following:

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

1 The form of education offered by DistanceUniversity is distance learning.

2 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 a professional activity (see Art. 13).

Art. 3 Definitions

The following definitions apply:

a. The Executive Board: The body in charge of the operational management of DistanceUniversity. The Executive Board is presided over by the Rector.

b. Rector: The person who presides over the Executive Board. This person is appointed by the Board of Trustees at the proposal of the Selection Committee and with the assistance of the Academic Council. The term of office is four years and is renewable.

c. Vice-rector education: The person in charge of all matters related to teaching. With the Academic Director, he/she is responsible for the quality of teaching and studies. This person is appointed by the Board of Trustees at the proposal of the Selection Committee and with the assistance of the Academic Council. The term of office is four years and is renewable.

d. Dean: The person who runs the faculty. He/she represents DistanceUniversity both within the institution and externally. He/she is appointed for two years within and by the faculty college. The appointment is renewable.

e. Head of the study course: The person responsible for the scientific and pedagogical management of a course of study. He/she is appointed by Executive Board, at the proposal of the Dean. He/she represents the course to the faculty college, the Executive Board, as well as externally.

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. He/she 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 professional activity.

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 professional activity. The company supervisor can supervise several projects within the partner company.

l. Project Supervisor: The person, within the teaching team, in charge of scientific supervision, monitoring, organization and smooth-running of the professional activity. 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 professional activities.
n. **Professional Activity Committee**: This consists of the Project Coordinator, the Project Supervisor and the Company Supervisor. It is responsible for ensuring the validation of the professional activities.

o. **Professional activity**: all the professional activities carried out within the partner company for which ECTS credits are obtained. The terms of the professional activity are defined in Appendix 8.

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.

## II. Admission and Fees

Art. 4

1 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. 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 permitted under certain conditions. For the rest, the provisions of the DistanceUniversity admission regulations apply by analogy.

2 Admission to the Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence is subject to the condition of employment in a partner company.

3 The fees payable by students are laid down in the rules on tuition fees.

4 Supervision fees payable by partner companies are set out in Appendix 8.

## III. Studies

### A. Structure of studies

Art. 5 **Commencement and duration**

1 The courses of study commence each spring semester in February. The modules start in the autumn semester or spring semester only (see Appendix 2).

2 The regulation duration of study is three semesters.

3 The duration of studies cannot be shortened. Even in the case of equivalences granted to certain previous courses (see Article 21), the duration of studies is not shortened. This is to enable the professional activity to run smoothly.

4 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**

1 The study credits obtained through DistanceUniversity courses are calculated according to the European Credit Transfer System (hereinafter ECTS). One ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of work by the student.

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

3 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

1 The Master’s Degree counts as 90 ECTS credits.
2 The allocation of ECTS credits within the Master’s Degree is made up of:
   a. A professional activity
   
As well as two types of modules:
   b. Compulsory modules of basic courses
   c. Elective modules of advanced courses

3 The list of modules for the Master’s programme is given in Appendix 1 of these regulations.
4 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 all modules take place in the autumn or spring semesters only.
5 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

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

Art. 9 Participation in modules

1 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 until validation on the second or third attempt or until the final failure.
2 The Head of study course can, however, agree to a student following supplementary modules. The Head of study course will, however, have to check that this is compatible with the student’s performance to date.
3 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 and Appendix 6).

B Form of studies

Art. 10 Individual learning

1 Individual learning combines self-directed and directed learning.
2 Within the framework of directed learning, different tasks must be carried out for the various chosen modules during the semester.
3 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

1 Within the framework of online learning, different tasks must be carried out for the various chosen modules during the semester.
2 In principal, the taskwork takes place via the communication systems made available by DistanceUniversity.
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**

1. Each module taught during a semester (see Art. 8) includes a group session.
2. The frequency and the duration of the group session are laid down in Appendix 4 of these regulations.
3. Only students enrolled in a module may take part in the corresponding group session.
4. 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 in specific, justified cases. The exemption is granted by the Head of study course.

**Art. 13 Professional activity**

1. The professional activity corresponds to a minimal duration of 1200 hours. It corresponds to an occupancy rate of 40% within the partner company.
2. The professional activity must be carried out under the supervision of a Company Supervisor and a Project Coordinator.
3. The professional activity includes, but is 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. The development of one (or more) projects in the company
4. The professional activity is marked or graded and is subject to credits ECTS allocation (see Art.17 and Appendix 8).
5. It is the subject of an agreement between DistanceUniversity, the Idiap and the partner company about the student.
6. The terms of the professional activity are described in Appendices 6 and 8 to these Regulations.

**Art. 14 Studies in English**

1. The language of instruction and assessments of the modules is English.
2. The language used in the professional activity environment is chosen by the company.
3. The language used for professional activity assessments 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**

1. 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.
During the semester, partial tests of knowledge may also be required and will contribute to the assessment.

The Academic Supervisors specify the content of the knowledge assessment and the authorised resources, after consulting the Head of study course.

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**

1. 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.

2. 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

3. 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

4. The awarding of marks also implies the awarding of ECTS credits.

5. 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.

6. 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**

1. 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.

2. Only two further attempts are permitted. If the candidate fails the second re-sit, the failed module mark is considered final. The most recent resit result is always the result included in the evaluation. The third failure is considered a definitive failure.

3. 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.

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

5. If the student receives a fail evaluation in the professional activity, he/she must re-register for the following semester and re-site 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.

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

1. 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.

2. 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.
3 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.

4 A student who is present at an assessment cannot later invoke the fact that he/she was not able to take part for justified reasons.

5 A student who is unable to complete their assessment for health reasons must inform the examiner and see a doctor immediately to obtain proof to be submitted to Student Services in the following five days. Upon presentation of a medical certificate, the assessment will not be considered a failure.

6 For all other types of tests or assessments, paragraphs 1 to 5 apply by analogy.

Art. 20 Cheating

1 Any assessment realised in a fraudulent manner will be marked as 1.0.

2 During an assessment, plagiarism will be considered to be cheating.

3 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.

4 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.

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

D Granting of equivalences

Art. 21

1 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.

2 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.

3 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.

4 The credits obtained as part of the professional activity cannot be obtained by equivalence. The professional activity is compulsory in order to obtain the Master's Degree.

E Success in attaining the Master's

Art. 22

1 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.
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 the professional activity and the weighted average of the marks of the professional activity, attributed by the professional activity committee, is no lower than 4.0.
7. He/she has obtained 90 ECTS.
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

1 Any person who fulfils the conditions of Art. 7 of the Rules of Admission (RgA) is considered registered.
2 Any person wishing to commence or continue studies must be registered.
3 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

1 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.
2 The person on leave may not benefit from any study offer and may not carry out any assignment related to studies.
3 Anyone on leave must pay a leave of absence fee in accordance with the regulations on fees (RgF).

Art. 25 Deregistration

1 Any person who ceases studies will be deregistered. The deregistration takes place at the end of the semester.
2 Any person who has requested deregistration will be deregistered.
3 Any person having completed their studies successfully will be deregistered.
4 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.
   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 8).
5 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).
   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

1 In exceptional cases, the Dean may waive these regulations.
2 At the end of the semester, the Dean gives the Vice-Rector Academic a written report in which he/she indicates the cases where he/she has made use of this clause, and a written report indicating the cases where he/she has made use of this clause.
IV.   Legal Remedies

Art. 27  Bodies

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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  Complaints

1. Decisions made by the Student Services, the Head of study course and the Dean can be appealed against in writing to the Executive Board within ten days.

2. Decisions made by the Executive Board may be appealed against by a written application to the Appeals Committee within 30 days of receipt of the decision.

3. Decisions reached by the Appeals Committee may be appealed against to the Canton of Valais State Council by submitting a complaint 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

1. These regulations have been adopted by the Board of Trustees of DistanceUniversity.

2. 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, January 16, 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