Published Policy on recruitment, support, and development of MSc staff in distance learning

The MSc offers an environment of academic cooperation and respects the academic freedom of its members and their autonomous position in their departments. It encourages and supports research activity, teaching innovation, and the renewal of courses and teaching methods (including through the provision of support for the development of educational material), while demanding mutual respect among teachers and respect for all students.

The MSc is constantly interested in attracting faculty members of high academic standing. It follows procedures of transparency and meritocracy in the selection of its staff, in accordance with the provisions of current legislation. The selection procedures for teaching staff are carried out in accordance with the applicable legislation, and the relevant announcements are posted on the websites of the collaborating Departments and the MSc. The procedures for selecting human resources are carried out in accordance with the procedures and standardised documents of the Central Administration of the University of the Aegean (PA). The EPS, with the assistance of the Department Secretariat, ensures that the provisions of the Law on the formation of the selection committee are strictly applied and that the transparency and validity of the selection process are guaranteed.

The measures/actions for the development of the staff of the MSc Open Data and Collaborative Governance are as follows:

- Provision of the necessary IT tools for teaching,
- Access to research bibliography libraries,
- Encouraging joint research projects with students and their participation in scientific conferences
- In their region and in educational seminars,
- Participation in departmental research projects,
- Provision of support and resources for the development of educational material,
- Access to student evaluations and advice from the EPS and the External Evaluation Committee,

‒ Coverage of expenses for publishing articles in open access scientific journals that are affiliated with the University of the Aegean and UNICAM. The MScU encourages the participation of academic staff in scientific projects and networks, scientific meetings, and conferences.

The MSc encourages the participation of academic staff in scientific projects and networks, scientific meetings, summer schools, and all kinds of academic mobility, within the framework of the Erasmus+ program or other programs, both for teaching and research. Participation in the Erasmus+ program is coordinated by the Departmental Coordinator and enables teaching staff to teach in a different academic environment or even to receive training from members of the host institution's community. Priority is given to persons with disabilities, for whom additional funding is provided. Next, priority is given to lower-ranking teaching staff (e.g., new assistant professors) in order to strengthen their international research profile. Finally, priority is given to mobility that activates new bilateral agreements at the institutional level in order to develop cooperation with new universities or research institutions abroad.

At the same time, teachers are supported by the Teaching and Learning Center of the University of the Aegean:

- [CENTER FOR SUPPORT FOR TEACHING & LEARNING - UNIVERSITY OF THE AEGEAN](#)
- [Centre of Support for Teaching & Learning](#)

D6.5.1 Actions taken by the Department to ensure the quality of its teaching staff

Ensuring the high quality of teaching and research staff and attracting new members with prospects or international recognition are key objectives of the Postgraduate Program. For this reason, significant material and technical support is provided to all faculty members through transparent procedures for the continuous training and upgrading of their teaching and research work.

In this context, the Postgraduate Program follows specific procedures and implements specific practices such as: The announcement of new positions should cover as wide a range of subjects as possible in order to attract a large number of qualified candidates, while the description of the fields of knowledge is done in such a way as to match the research profile of the MSc program and cover areas required by international developments. With regard to the announcement of new positions, in most cases the aim is to attract younger candidates who are motivated to contribute to research and teaching, while in some cases the aim is to attract established academics with internationally recognized research work. The election procedures for all levels are determined by the applicable legislation, ensuring transparency and meritocracy in the final selection. Members of the Postgraduate Studies Program are offered funding to participate in international conferences and publish in highly recognized scientific journals, while faculty members of the department are offered access to databases to carry out their research. At the same time, they are encouraged to participate in Erasmus+ mobility programs for training and teaching.

In this context, educational leave is also granted for visits to institutions abroad, with the aim of facilitating their teaching and research work. With regard to the quality of teaching, at the end of each semester, students are encouraged to evaluate their teachers and the material taught by completing questionnaires. In fact, teachers have access to their evaluations so that they can improve their teaching where weaknesses are observed, while the information from the student evaluations is also used by the Department's Internal Evaluation Team and the University's Quality Assurance Unit. It should be noted that student evaluations are a criterion that must be taken into account in the selection and promotion of faculty members. At the same time, the department evaluates the teaching workload of staff, which is set at a minimum of 6 hours per week, not including teaching in postgraduate programs. To improve the quality of teaching, all faculty members are provided with equipment such as computers, scanners, and printers, and all classrooms are equipped with modern technological equipment. Finally, every year, the institution makes use of teaching fellowships, scientific collaborators, and Presidential Decree 407/80 to attract new researchers.

Support and development of staff skills in distance learning by the University of the Aegean Teaching and Learning Support Center (KEDIMA)

The University of the Aegean operates a Teaching and Learning Support Center, Government Gazette 3933/B/15-09-2020, as amended by Government Gazette 1001/B/23-02-2023 and Government Gazette 6126/B/23-10-2023, and as applicable at any given time. The main role of the Teaching and Learning Support Center is to provide support, reinforcement, and continuous improvement of the teaching and learning experience, in line with current trends in pedagogy, as well as the use of new technologies in teaching for the development of distance learning with the aim of ensuring the continuous provision of high-quality teaching, with the student population as the ultimate recipient and beneficiary.

Through innovative actions organized by the Teaching and Learning Support Center, teaching staff are encouraged to exchange and create good learning and teaching practices, attend relevant seminars organized by KEDIMA, record their needs, and reflect on their practice. The aim is to develop modern and effective teaching methods, by utilizing ICT in the teaching of university courses in order to create learning environments that facilitate and support the educational process in the best possible way.

Within the framework of the above policy, the Guide to Good Practices in Distance Education was compiled and posted on the Center's digital repository. Hybrid seminars and training workshops for teaching staff were organized on the topic of "Distance learning: Basic principles, design methodology, and practical advice" by Professor Alivizos Sofos of the University of the Aegean. In addition, educational material on the following topics was compiled and is available on the Center's repository, which is constantly updated.

Innovation in teaching methods – new technologies

All necessary infrastructure and equipment are provided to facilitate the teaching work of the postgraduate program staff. All classrooms are equipped with computers and video projectors, while teleconferencing is also available, with the participation of guest speakers. In fact, the teaching work of the staff can also be offered electronically, supported by the e-class electronic platform and the Moodle platform. The aim of the MSc program is to use the existing infrastructure and technological equipment to enable innovative teaching methods, such as

interactive teaching, educational visits, laboratory exercises, the screening of videos and other audiovisual media, and the presentation of student projects.

Legislation on the selection and development of teaching staff

The selection and promotion of teaching staff members is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the applicable legislation, currently described in 5094/2024, Chapter IB, and in particular Articles 75 to 80. A prerequisite for election to any rank is the possession of a doctoral degree relevant to the subject of the position and relevant teaching and research work, a significant part of which must have been carried out during the last five years. For the promotion of teaching staff members to the next rank, their overall contribution to the research, teaching, and administrative work of the Department is also taken into account.

D6.5.2 Department actions to ensure the quality of administrative staff

Administrative staff who work in the services of the Institution, both in the Secretariats of the Postgraduate Programs and in other services, are given the opportunity to develop their skills, as described below:

Administrative staff of the Secretariats of the Departments and other services:

The administrative staff of the University of the Aegean who work in the Secretariats of the Postgraduate Programs and other services have the opportunity to:

1. Participate in mobility through the Erasmus+ program and transfer to partner institutions in Program countries and Partner countries. This provides an opportunity to exchange know-how and administrative culture with other institutions operating in a different institutional environment, within the framework of training programs, job shadowing, or staff weeks.

2. Participate in a training program (of their choice) offered by the Training Institute, which designs and implements training programs for public administration and local government executives. Training programs contribute to the development of effective administration, the improvement of the organization and efficiency of public services, and the effective implementation of public policies that ultimately ensure the high quality of services provided to citizens.

3. Participate in internal training seminars of the Foundation regarding the use and operation of information systems, such as the student registry, the MODIP information system, the electronic document management and distribution platform (DocuTracks), etc. It is also worth noting the seminars held by the Quality Assurance Unit of the University of the Aegean from November 2022 to February 2023. In these seminars, the administrative staff of the Institution had the opportunity to participate in different modules depending on the subject of their work.

4. The University of the Aegean, in accordance with Article 8 of the Regulations for Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies (Government Gazette 4551/B/17.07.2023), allows a number of administrative staff to attend a Postgraduate Program of their choice without paying the corresponding tuition fees.

5. From 2020, employees and all members of the university community of the University have the opportunity to attend free Chinese language courses as part of the collaboration between the University of the Aegean, Henan University, and the Chinese Embassy. The courses are conducted in English on a specially designed platform, and all the necessary educational and other multimedia tools are provided.

6. The University of the Aegean offers free English language courses entitled "Topic: General English for All" on a voluntary basis by a member of the Academic Teaching Staff of the School of Social Sciences to members of the University community. The courses are held on Saturdays, outside working hours, both in person at the University premises in Mytilene and online.

Erasmus Office and International Student Support Unit:

The administrative staff of the University of the Aegean who staff the Erasmus Office have all the capabilities of the Department Secretariats staff, plus the following:

1)   The University of the Aegean enables the staff of the Erasmus Office to participate in workshops organized by the EMS/IKY for the Erasmus program. These workshops contribute to strengthening the staff's knowledge of Erasmus mobility issues.

2)   The staff of the Erasmus Office participates in online seminars organized by EU bodies, which ensure their training on topics related to the Erasmus program.

KEDIMA (Teaching and Learning Support Center):

Staff supporting KEDIMA, through the KEDIMA Network of Universities, participate in meetings of executives from all universities participating in the Network, as well as in conferences on the development and operation of the Centers. E.g.: https://ctlconference.org/.

In addition, there is an exchange of good practices through the KEDIMA repositories. E.g.: https://www.ltcnetwork.net/index.php/el/good-practices-menu-gr and https://ctl-repo.aegean.gr/?lang=el

Library Services

The administrative staff of the University of the Aegean who staff the University Library have all the capabilities of the Department Secretariats staff and, in addition:

Through the Library's participation in Library Networks, such as the Network of Geographical Libraries or Maritime Libraries, staff acquire expertise in handling issues relating to special collections of documents.

Information and Communication Services

The administrative staff of the University of the Aegean who work in the Information and Communication Services have all the capabilities of the staff of the Department Secretariats and, in addition, have the ability to:

Participate in conferences, workshops, and training seminars organized by public and/or private entities. In particular, seminars organized by software suppliers such as Cisco and GUNET, or other Greek or international seminars on Information and Communication Technologies.

Technical Services

The administrative staff of the University of the Aegean who work in Technical Services have all the same capabilities as the staff of the Department Secretariats, plus the following:

1)   Participation in workshops and seminars organized by the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE) and/or the Panhellenic Federation of Associations of Engineers, Civil Servants, and Graduates of Higher Education Institutions (POEMDYDAS) for engineers.

2)   Participation in workshops organized by other public bodies concerning, for example, the seismic safety of building infrastructure, the energy efficiency of building infrastructure, etc.

Staff Support Programs on Distance Learning

All teaching staff participating in distance learning are evaluated for their work and the quality of their teaching through the course evaluation process carried out by the University of the Aegean's MO.DI.P.

In order to upgrade the digital skills of teaching staff, they are encouraged to attend a special training program that

has been developed in relation to the design and organization of distance learning, the use of the Moodle platform, and the design and development of educational material and learning activities: https://aegeanmoodle.aegean.gr/course/view.php?id=2759

In addition, the Digital Governance Unit of the University of the Aegean provides guides for the use of other information systems and tools in a special section of the Digital Governance Unit website. https://ype.aegean.gr/eservices/eypiresies-teacher