



Digital4Business Joint Post-Graduate Certificate in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business

Student Handbook 2025

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
About the Digital4Business Project	4
The Digital4Business Consortium	5
Welcome to your programme	6
The Digital4Business Consortium	6
D4B Consortium - Higher Education Institute Members	7
The Digital4Business Joint PGC in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business and inherent Micro-Credentials	7
Objectives	7
PGC Structure and Delivery Modes	9
Full Time Delivery	10
Part Time Delivery	10
Choice of Elective Modules.....	11
Language of Instruction.....	11
Summary Description of PGC Modules.....	12
Digital4Business PGC and Micro-Credential Governance and Management Structure ...	17
i) Master’s Board of Directors	17
ii) The Programme Secretariat (including Programme Coordinators).....	17
iii) The Joint Admissions Board	17
iv) The Examinations Board	18
v) The Joint Programme Committee	18
vi) The Quality Enhancement and Curriculum Development (QECD) Committee	18
vii) The Project Coordinator.....	18
viii) Faculty Members	19
Teaching, Learning and Assessment on the Joint Post-Graduate Certificate and Micro-Credentials	19
Teaching and Learning	20
Assessment	21
Resits and Repeat Assessments	23
Late Submission of Coursework	23

Avoiding Problems with Plagiarism, Poor Scholarship, Collaboration/Collusion, Outsourcing Assessments, knowingly aiding and abetting Academic Misconduct	23
Plagiarism	23
Collaboration/Collusion	23
Poor Scholarship	23
Cheating in assessments or examinations	24
Outsourcing assessment	24
Knowingly aiding and abetting academic misconduct	24
Plagiarism of software code	24
Disciplinary Committee.....	24
Student Mobility	25
Student Support Services	25
Careers and Opportunities Support Service.....	25
Assistive Technology Support Service	26
Student Counselling & Wellness Service.....	26
Library Service	27
Student Complaints Procedures	27
Making a Complaint.....	27
Appeals.....	28
Communication.....	28
Online Communication	28
Appendix: Guide to Academic Writing.....	29
Guidelines on Essay Writing.....	29
Essay Structure	29
Style	30
Disclaimer	31

About the Digital4Business Project

The DIGITAL4Business European Masters Programme aims to design and implement a highly innovative, effective, and sustainable European Professional Master's Programme in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business. This contributes to the overall objectives of the DIGITAL Europe Programme by fast-tracking a high number of graduates through a dynamic pan-European stakeholder ecosystem. In the latter, HEIs, Research Centres, Employment Services, and Industry work together to design, promote, deliver, and improve an innovative Master's Programme. It will focus on the practical application of Advanced Digital Technologies within European Business, an entirely market-led academic programme driven and designed to meet the current and future (up)-skill needs of SMEs and Companies.

The Master's Course(s) will focus on the practical application of Advanced Digital Technologies within Business, including topics such as AI, cybersecurity, and the cloud. The latter skills are pivotal to European businesses' ongoing competitiveness and growth. Courses will blend academic and industry content to ensure that graduates are equipped with theoretical and employment-ready digital skills that will undoubtedly ensure career success for the candidates. Their degrees will be academically accredited by the hosting institutions and comprise industry certification through the key IT leading sector partners. DIGITAL4Business fosters the industry-recognized certifications as a critical element of the learning pathway.

As a special constituent of subject-specific learning in the context of the Master's Programme, students have the opportunity to complete individual modules as **micro-credentials** as well combinations of these micro-credentials in the form of a **post-graduate certificate (PGC)** to provide the opportunity of a more competency-oriented learning approach, providing exactly the skills required by the industry. This Handbook, being a complementary to the Master's Student Handbook, provides the relevant information regarding these sub-categories.

Online teaching and learning environments will be used, combining in-house tools of the participating universities and a new 'Master's as a Service' central online platform to enhance learning opportunities for part time students and professionals already in employment. In addition, mentoring programmes with industry partners, hackathons, industry-focused project-based learning, and coaching on soft skills and job profiles will be offered during the programme. All these offers and services will be equally accessible for participants in the micro-credentials or post-graduate certificate.

Parallel to the Master's programme, micro-credentials and PGC can be studied both in full-time as well as part-time format.

The Digital4Business Consortium

The DIGITAL4Business consortium is a partnership of 15 stakeholders led by National College of Ireland, bringing together key industry, technology, and education stakeholders in Europe. Its composition is presented in the following table.

Partners	Acronym
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND	NCI
ALMA MATER STUDIORUM – UNIVERSITE DI BOLOGNA	UNIBO
GERMAN UNIVERSITY OF DIGITAL SCIENCE GGMBH	UDS
AKKA ITALIA (former MODIS CONSULTING SRL)	Akkodis
ADECCO FORMATIONE SRL	ADECCO
LEE HECHT HARRISON DEUTSCHLAND GMBH	LHH
SKILLNET IRELAND COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE	Skillnet Irl
LINKÖPINGS UNIVERSITET	LIU
TERAWE TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED	Terawe
MATRIX INTERNET APPLICATIONS LIMITED	Matrix
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SKILLS LIMITED	DTSL
UNIVERSIDADE NOVA LISBOA	UNL
SCHUMAN ASSOCIATES SCRL	Schuman

Associated Partners	Acronym
Certiport, A business of NCS Pearson Inc	Certiport
DIGITALEUROPE AISBL*	DIGITALEUROPE
UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 8 VINCENNES SAINT-DENIS	UP8

Digital4Business (D4B) Joint Micro-Credentials and PGC in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business

Welcome to your programme

Welcome to the Digital4Business (D4B) Joint Micro-Credentials and Post-Graduate Certificate in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business programme. These innovative postgraduate learning formats are developed through an industry-led approach by a consortium of leading European institutions. The learning units cover essential areas such as AI, data science, cybersecurity, and cloud technologies, offering learners the opportunity to focus on their individual competency needs. In particular, the learning units focus on meeting the needs for advanced digital technologies within European SMEs and companies across a range of industry sectors, helping businesses achieve long-term competitiveness and growth through digital transformation and innovation. These skills are pivotal to European businesses' ongoing competitiveness and growth.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with key information as to how the micro-credentials and the PGC are delivered, structured, how you will be assessed, which student services you can avail of, and to inform you about relevant policies and procedures. The information in this handbook outlines what you can expect at each stage of your studies.

We hope you find learning units interesting, enjoyable, and rewarding.

The Digital4Business Consortium

The DIGITAL4Business Consortium is a collaboration of 15 partners and associated partners representing 7 EU countries. This diverse group includes Higher Education Institutes, Research Centres, Training Providers, and industry partners. The consortium has developed the micro-credentials as well as the PGC as elements of an overarching Master's programme for business leaders, professionals and graduates from all across Europe to fill high-demand occupational profiles critical to the success of European companies. The consortium's goal is for the programmes' graduates to position themselves as the next generation of digital decision-makers and business professionals with knowledge in advanced digital technologies who can work effectively with ICT teams, help companies overcome digital uncertainty, and fast-track digital transformation within organisations. While graduates of the overarching Master's programme will benefit of the full range of competencies, subjects, and learning outcomes, the micro-credentials and PGC will offer participants the opportunity to expand their knowledge in selected areas of the Master's programme and acquire skills and competencies with a specialized focus for their particular career-objectives.

D4B Consortium - Higher Education Institute Members

The following Higher Education Institutes participate in the delivery and design of the Joint Professional Master's in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business as well as the adhering micro-credentials and PGC:

- National College of Ireland [NCI], Dublin, Ireland
- Universidade Nova De Lisboa [UNL], Lisboa, Portugal
- Alma Mater Studiorum – Università Di Bologna [UNIBO], Bologna, Italy
- Linköpings Universitet [LIU], Linköping, Sweden

The Digital4Business Joint PGC in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business and inherent Micro-Credentials

Objectives

The PGC aims to provide learners with essential knowledge, skills, and competence to understand the impacts of digital transformation, advanced digital technologies, and emerging technologies for business and enterprise with a particular focus on business-application of tools and technology. Students of micro-credentials may acquire specialized competencies in particularly selected business-applications. The curriculum of the PGC focuses on the associated core subject matter area of Digital Transformation in combination with two selected business-applications at both a theoretical and practical level including:

- Digital Transformation
- Artificial Intelligence
- Data Science
- Cloud Computing
- Cybersecurity

A mandatory module on Digital Transformation serves as the cornerstone of the PGC, establishing essential knowledge and skills that underpin various specialized fields. This core mandatory module is designed to ensure that learners develop a comprehensive understanding of the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Its learning outcomes directly link with other modules across the curriculum, creating a holistic learning experience.

The other modules in the programme are offered as a suite of two elective modules. This provides learners with a high degree of flexibility to choose areas of focus within the Advanced Digital Technologies landscape.

Modules on AI and Data Science benefit from their linkage with Digital Transformation, providing real-world context for the applications in organizations. Likewise, Cloud Computing gains significance as learners consider the effective implementation of cloud solutions within the context of digital transformation.

Cybersecurity knowledge becomes more practical and strategic when seen through the lens of Digital Transformation, as it helps learners navigate the complex digital security landscape.

The minimum intended certificate learning outcomes (MICLOs) in terms of knowledge, skill, and competence for the PGC are presented in Table 1.

MICLO1	Critically appraise, select, and employ existing and emerging technologies to address complex business problems and support innovation and digital transformation in business
MICLO2	Synthesise and communicate the opportunities, risks and critical challenges of digital transformation practices to underpin strategic decisions to key stakeholders.
MICLO3	Demonstrate an in depth understanding of the fundamental concepts and techniques of advanced digital technologies from a business perspective.
MICLO4	Cultivate, select, and employ transversal advanced digital technologies and practices, evaluating their application in various contexts.

Table 1. Minimum Intended Certificate Learning Outcomes (MICLOs)

These certificate learning outcomes have been developed to align with industry feedback and the analysis of related programmes internationally. While the MICLOs are to be achieved by any certificate graduate, individual learning outcomes will be reached depending on the choice of combinations among available elective modules. For these combinations, an additional, subject-specific learning objective (SSLO) has been defined:

SSLO1: Digital Transformation + AI for Business + Data Science for Business	Strategically design and implement digitally transformative solutions by leveraging advanced AI and data science techniques, critically evaluating business performance through predictive analytics, optimization, and automated decision-making models to support innovation and competitive advantage.
SSLO2: Digital Transformation + AI for Business + Cybersecurity for Business	Lead digital transformation initiatives that incorporate intelligent systems and robust cybersecurity frameworks, balancing innovation in AI with proactive threat mitigation strategies to ensure secure, ethical, and sustainable business advancement.
SSLO3: Digital Transformation + AI for Business + Cloud Computing for Business	Develop and deploy intelligent, cloud-enabled digital business solutions by integrating AI capabilities with scalable cloud infrastructures, driving transformation through automation, flexibility, and strategic use of emerging digital technologies.
SSLO4: Digital Transformation + Data Science for Business + Cybersecurity for Business	Engineer data-driven digital transformation strategies that ensure business resilience, applying analytical modeling and visualization tools in conjunction with advanced cybersecurity practices to secure and optimize digital ecosystems.
SSLO5: Digital Transformation + Data Science for Business + Cloud Computing for Business	Design and execute transformative digital business initiatives by using scalable cloud technologies and data-driven intelligence, enabling efficient decision-making, service innovation, and responsive enterprise architectures.
SSLO6: Digital Transformation + Cybersecurity for Business + Cloud Computing for Business	Lead secure and sustainable digital transformations by integrating robust cybersecurity principles with dynamic cloud-based infrastructures, ensuring compliance, trust, and agility in digitally enabled organizations.

Participants completing only individual micro-credentials will acquire learning objectives as defined in the corresponding module descriptions compiled in the PGC Module Handbook.

PGC Structure and Delivery Modes

The Joint Post-Graduate Certificate in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business will be delivered fully online using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous delivery techniques. As delivery of the programme is fully online, there will be no requirement for learners to physically attend classes at any partner institution's geographical location. The fully online delivery of the programme is facilitated via a centralised Learning Management System (LMS) and virtual classroom technologies.

The programme is offered in two modes of study:

- i) Full Time,
- ii) Part Time.

For all study modes, learners must complete 30 ECTS to earn the Joint Post-Graduate Certificate in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business. The program duration varies by mode: 1 semester for Full Time, 2 semesters for Part Time. (see Table 2).

Note: A semester is an academic session that typically encompasses 12 weeks of teaching and a further period of time to allow for module terminal examinations after the 12th week of teaching.

Mode of Study	Duration	Average time required to complete studies	Credit points/unit
Full time	1 semesters	0.5 years	30 ECTS
Part time	2 semesters	1 year	30 ECTS

Table 2. Duration of Programme for each Mode of Study

For a learner registered on the Full-Time programme, the standard period of study is a half year. The programme schedule and the curriculum are designed in a way that allows students to earn 30 ECTS in one semester. The workload per semester consists of an average of 750 hours.

For a learner registered on the Part Time programme, the standard period of study is one year. For such learners, the programme schedule and the curriculum are designed in a way that allows students to earn 10 ECTS in one semester and 20 ECTS in the second semester. As the PGC consists of 10 ECTS modules alone, a completely equal distribution of workload between semesters is not possible. The workload per semester consists therefore of an average 250 and 500 hours respectively.

Learners wishing to complete only individual micro-credentials may complete those at a workload of 10 ECTS (250 hours) each.

To the greatest extent possible, the programme schedule is designed to distribute the workload evenly across the semester by offering a variety of teaching and assessment formats.

Full Time Delivery

The curriculum and programme structure for the Joint Post-Graduate Certificate in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business (Full Time) is shown in Figure 1.

Semester 1			
Mandatory: Digital Transformation (10 ECTS)			
Elective Module Choices (20 ECTS)			
AI for Business (10 ECTS)	Data Science for Business (10 ECTS)	Cybersecurity for Business (10 ECTS)	Cloud Computing for Business (10 ECTS)

Figure 1: Joint Post-Graduate Certificate in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business (Full Time)

Part Time Delivery

The curriculum and structure for the Joint Post-Graduate Certificate in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business (Part time) semester 1 and semester 2 is shown in Figure 2a and 2b respectively:

Semester 1		Semester 2	
Mandatory: Digital Transformation (10 ECTS)		Elective Module Choice (10 ECTS)	
Elective Module Choice (10 ECTS)			
AI for Business (10 ECTS)	Data Science for Business (10 ECTS)	Cybersecurity for Business (10 ECTS)	Cloud Computing for Business (10 ECTS)

Figure 2a: Joint Post-Graduate Certificate in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business (Part Time) Option 1

Semester 1		Semester 2	
Elective Module Choice (10 ECTS)		Mandatory: Digital Transformation (10 ECTS)	
		Elective Module Choice (10 ECTS)	
AI for Business (10 ECTS)	Data Science for Business (10 ECTS)	Cybersecurity for Business (10 ECTS)	Cloud Computing for Business (10 ECTS)

Figure 2b: Joint Post-Graduate Certificate in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business (Part Time) Option 2

Choice of Elective Modules

There is a high degree of flexibility for learners when choosing elective modules. The programme team's analysis of role profiles offer guidance to learners with regards to which elective modules are a more suitable choice to make when pursuing such roles.

Note: the elective modules that are offered for learners to choose from in any given semester may be restricted due to operational scheduling constraints and/or the overall learner demand for choosing particular elective modules. Notwithstanding this, the programme team will endeavour to accommodate the broadest offering of elective modules each semester under these constraints.

Language of Instruction

The program is delivered entirely in English. Applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate proficiency through recognized tests or an interview.

Summary Description of PGC Modules

Table 3 provides a summary description and a set of learning objectives for each of the programme's modules.

Note: Further detailed information for each module is available in the Module Descriptor Handbook document available for download on the <https://www.digital4business.eu> website.

Module Title	Mandatory / Elective	ECTS	Module Overview	Module Learning Objectives
Digital Transformation	Mandatory	10	<p><i>The module aims to enable students to understand, discuss and synthesise the fundamentals of Digital Transformation and the main Digital Implementation strategies.</i></p> <p><i>The Digital Transformation Module is a deep dive into the essentials of digital transformation concepts and enablers. Students will critically assess digital transformation paradigms to understand their influence on innovative business models, while defining the deployment of strategic resources for effective digital change. The course emphasises the design and implementation of cutting-edge digital transformation strategies, using practical exercises to simulate real-world applications. This module aims to equip students with the necessary skills to navigate and lead digital transformation efforts, preparing them to effectively manage and capitalise on the opportunities of the digital business landscape.</i></p> <p><i>This curricular unit intends to develop methodological and research skills on business and digital transformation.</i></p>	<p><i>Upon successful completion of this module, learners will be able to:</i></p> <p>LO1: <i>Analyse and Synthesise the Key Concepts and Enablers of Digital Transformation.</i></p> <p>LO2: <i>Critically Evaluate Digital Transformation Paradigms and their Impact on Innovative Business Models.</i></p> <p>LO3: <i>Assess and Strategize the Deployment of Strategic Resources for Digital Transformation.</i></p> <p>LO4: <i>Design and Implement Advanced Strategies for Digital Business Transformation.</i></p>
AI for Business	Elective	10	<p><i>The primary objective of this module is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental theories, methods, and models</i></p>	<p><i>Upon successful completion of this module, learners will be able to:</i></p>

Module Title	Mandatory / Elective	ECTS	Module Overview	Module Learning Objectives
			<p>that underlie machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI). The module delves into AI and ML, focusing on their analysis, synthesis, and innovation within business contexts. Students will learn to design, train, and evaluate advanced ML models using innovative data and optimisation strategies to address real-world business challenges. Key components include rigorous performance assessment techniques, result interpretation, and effective communication of implications.</p> <p>This module will equip students with the skills to innovate and improve business processes through advanced machine learning models, leading to enhanced decision-making, increased efficiency, and competitive advantage in the market. Students will also develop transferable and soft skills such as problem-solving, communication, collaboration, teamwork, and service orientation. They will apply strategic thinking to complex AI applications, critically assessing and enhancing their effectiveness in business settings.</p> <p>The module addresses AI's ethical, societal, and environmental impacts, guiding students to propose responsible development and implementation practices. It prepares students to navigate the complexities of technology responsibly, ensuring that AI implementations are socially acceptable and environmentally sustainable, thus safeguarding organisational reputation and contributing to long-term success.</p>	<p>LO1: Analyse, synthesise, and innovate within artificial intelligence and machine learning, emphasising critical understanding and the capability to advance the field.</p> <p>LO2: Design, train, and critically evaluate advanced machine learning models, focusing on innovative data and optimisation strategies to boost performance in business applications.</p> <p>LO3: Employ innovative techniques for rigorous machine learning model performance assessment, interpret results, and effectively communicate implications across various business contexts and to diverse stakeholders.</p> <p>LO4: Apply strategic thinking in AI and ML for complex applications, assess effectiveness critically, propose innovative solutions or improvements, and improve problem-solving and decision-making skills.</p> <p>LO5: Teamwork to develop AI solutions, enhancing collaboration skills, team competences, and service orientation towards addressing business needs.</p> <p>LO6: Critically explore AI and machine learning's ethical, societal, and environmental impacts, and propose ethical, sustainable development and implementation practices within business environments.</p>
Data Science for Business	Elective	10	<i>This module equips students with the ability to use data science methodologies to address</i>	<i>Upon successful completion of this module, learners will be able to:</i>

Module Title	Mandatory / Elective	ECTS	Module Overview	Module Learning Objectives
			<i>complex business challenges while fostering essential transferable skills such as communication, collaboration, and problem-solving.</i>	<p>L01: Evaluate and integrate data science principles to solve real-world business challenges, demonstrating creativity in data interpretation and insight extraction. (Transferable Skill: Critical Thinking)</p> <p>L02: Apply advanced data science methods and algorithms to develop and optimize models that address complex business problems. (Transferable Skill: Problem Solving)</p> <p>L03: Synthesize insights using statistical and machine learning techniques to make informed decisions, effectively communicating results to diverse audiences. (Transferable Skill: Communication)</p> <p>L04: Design and assess advanced visualizations, dashboards, and BI tools to deliver actionable insights and enhance business decision-making. (Transferable Skill: Service Orientation)</p> <p>L05: Collaborate within teams to design and implement data-driven solutions, fostering teamwork and adaptability. (Transferable Skill: Team Competence)</p>
Cybersecurity for Business	Elective	10	<i>The module aims to enable learners to explore the field of cybersecurity. It focuses on identifying and mitigating security breaches in personal and organisational data systems. Students will learn to identify and assess vulnerabilities in data systems, understanding how these can lead to security breaches in business environments. The course will equip students with the skills to create strong protection strategies, ensuring that data remains safe from potential threats. In addition, the module will delve into the legal and ethical dimensions of cybersecurity.</i>	<p><i>Upon successful completion of this module, learners will be able to:</i></p> <p>L01: Analyse and critically evaluate vulnerabilities in personal and organisational data systems to identify potential security breaches and suggest mitigative strategies, fostering analytical thinking and attention to detail.</p> <p>L02: Synthesise and apply advanced concepts and techniques of cyber-attacks to simulate potential security breaches, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of cyber</p>

Module Title	Mandatory / Elective	ECTS	Module Overview	Module Learning Objectives
			<p>Students will also develop transferable and soft skills such as problem-solving, communication, collaboration, teamwork, and service orientation. They will apply strategic thinking to complex cybersecurity applications, critically assessing and enhancing their effectiveness in business settings.</p>	<p>threat landscapes and training problem-solving abilities and decision-making skills.</p> <p>L03: Design and implement robust strategies for the protection of personal and organisational data, utilising encryption techniques and security protocols to mitigate potential threats.</p> <p>L04: Evaluate and integrate tools and methodologies for the prevention and detection of cyber-attack incidents, developing critical thinking skills and demonstrating an ability to anticipate and counteract emerging cyber threats.</p> <p>L05: Critically assess and debate cybersecurity legal and ethical issues, formulating well-justified recommendations for policy and practice that reflect an advanced understanding of the complexities and responsibilities in the field of cybersecurity, developing adaptability and continuous learning habits in a rapidly evolving field.</p>
Cloud Computing for Business	Elective	10	<p>The Cloud Computing for Business module aims to provide a comprehensive coverage of Cloud Computing technologies and addresses the potential impact, challenges, and benefits of these technologies in the context of digital business transformation. Students will explore the essentials of Cloud Computing and its role in digital business transformation, assessing core principles, frameworks, and methodologies, along with the tools necessary for implementing Cloud Computing solutions effectively.</p> <p>The module will touch upon governance and security challenges of cloud-based systems, guiding students to identify and evaluate various cloud security architectures and deployment strategies. The module also covers</p>	<p>Upon successful completion of this module, learners will be able to:</p> <p>L01: Assess core principles, frameworks, development methodologies and tools for the adoption of Cloud Computing solutions to support and enable digital business transformation.</p> <p>L02: Critically analyse the governance and security challenges associated with cloud-based systems to identify and evaluate candidate cloud security architectures and deployment strategies.</p> <p>L03: Evaluate and assess the intersection and impact of Fog and Edge Computing in relation to Cloud Computing.</p>

Module Title	Mandatory / Elective	ECTS	Module Overview	Module Learning Objectives
			<i>a broad spectrum of existing and emerging cloud services, including storage, machine learning, compute, analytics, and quantum computing. Students will learn to critically appraise these services and develop strategies to harness their potential for driving digital business transformation, equipping them with the knowledge to make informed decisions in a cloud-enabled business landscape.</i>	LO4: <i>Critically appraise the wide range of existing and emerging cloud services (e.g., storage, machine learning, compute, analytics, quantum computing, etc.) and develop strategies to leverage such services for digital business transformation.</i>

Table 3. Module Summary Overview and Learning Objectives

Digital4Business PGC and Micro-Credential Governance and Management Structure

The PGC and micro-credentials are embedded in the Master's Program in Advanced Digital Technologies for Business and thus adhere to the same management structures defined with responsibilities of decision, of evaluation and execution. Whenever in this Handbook reference is made to organizational bodies such as the Master's Board of Directors and others, these bodies also cover the administration and coordination of the PGC and adhering micro-credentials.

i) Master's Board of Directors

The Master's Board of Directors is comprised of Programme Directors that have been selected by each of the Partner Institutions to represent them on all matters concerning the degree programme. The Master's Board is responsible for general management, academic supervision, quality assurance, degree awarding and recognition issues, agreement changes, dispute resolution and student complaints. Additionally, the Master's Board is responsible for the system review, advice on policy developments for the joint degree programme, and to ensure the coherence and consistency of the concept of the programme. The Master's Board meets at least twice each year. Initial minutes of the Master's Board meeting are compiled by the Secretariat and distributed to all members of the Master's Board within fifteen days after the meeting. Any changes to the draft minutes must reach the Programme Secretariat within one week after the distribution of the minutes. After this deadline, the Programme Secretariat shall produce and file a final version, a copy of which shall also be sent to all Programme Directors.

ii) The Programme Secretariat (including Programme Coordinators)

The Secretariat is responsible for the daily operation and administrative management of the programme guided and governed by the Master's Board. The Secretariat is partly based at the Project Coordinator Institution, also designated as the Master's Secretariat. The secretariat supports the coordination and day-to-day management of the programme, its support mechanisms, specifically tasks regarding quality assurance, application, selection and student admission and administration, and mobility coordination. The Secretariat also includes a wider group of Programme Coordinators from each of the partner institutions. Partner Programme Coordinator representatives will liaise with Programme Coordinators from other partner institutions and provide administrative support to the Secretariat for issues arising that are associated with the partner institution they are representing. The Secretariat also provides direct support for the Master's Board Meetings (the minutes), the public website, and other tasks assigned by the Master's Board.

iii) The Joint Admissions Board

Assisted by the Secretariat and under the supervision of the Master's Board, the Joint Admissions Board is responsible for the selection and admission of all students to the degree programme as well as PGC and micro-credentials. The Joint Admissions Board shall consist of one representative from each Partner Institution. The Partner Institution is responsible for appointing its representative in accordance with its own procedures and national regulations. The Joint Admissions Board convenes at least once after each application deadline and can hold additional meetings until a selection and admission procedure is completed.

iv) The Examinations Board

The Examinations Board is headed by the Master's Board of Directors. The Master's Board is responsible for the overall quality and standards of the degree programme as well as PGC and micro-credentials and for agreeing the academic standards. It monitors the partner institutions' compliance and is responsible for the degree programme being delivered to the highest academic standards. The Examinations Board may be supplemented with additional nominees from Partner Institutions that have expertise in quality assurance and those who are responsible for programme examination administration. Meetings of the Examinations Board convene after each programme examination session and on completion of grading and the assessment of learners' exam scripts, project submissions, or other relevant coursework by programme faculty. The Examinations Board deliberates cases, brought to its attention in at least one week's notice. If the nature of the case brought to its attention demands a swift ruling, a special meeting may be arranged or by written consultation of its members via electronically mediated systems. All assessments are conducted in accordance with the jointly agreed policies and procedures for the degree programme as adopted by the Master's Board (specifically in accordance with the Study and Examination Regulations).

v) The Joint Programme Committee

The Joint Programme Committee acts as advisor to the Master's Board of Directors. It is responsible for the system review and advice on policy developments for the joint degree programme as well as PGC and micro-credentials. The Joint Programme Committee meets physically at least once a year to ensure the coherence and consistency of the concept of the joint degree programme. Additional meetings can be held as required. The Joint Programme Committee is composed of representatives from the Secretariat, Programme Coordinators, the Master's Board of Directors, Faculty representatives, and representatives from the Quality Enhancement and Curriculum Development Committee.

vi) The Quality Enhancement and Curriculum Development (QECD) Committee

The Quality Enhancement and Curriculum Development Committee is composed of at least one academic faculty member from each Partner Institution. The QECD Committee prepares and implements on behalf of the Master's Board of Directors, quality enhancement and curriculum development. It strengthens the collaborative nature of the degree program by following the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The Quality Enhancement and Curriculum Development (QECD) Committee reports to the Master's Board. The QECD Committee meets whenever called upon or whenever the annual internal quality procedures as detailed in the Internal Quality Handbook of the Programme require, either in person or via electronically mediated systems.

The Quality Enhancement and Curriculum Development (QECD) Committee supports the Joint Programme Committee in assessing how well the program as well as PGC and micro-credentials meet their learning objectives and maintain coherence. It also ensures effective processes are in place for data collection, analysis, making recommendations, and channelling suggestions to improve the program

vii) The Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator is responsible for:

- Student Recruitment, Onboarding, and Support: Managing recruitment, onboarding, and support processes, including the use of digital platforms and supplementary events.
- Industry Certifications & micro-credentials: Implementing industry certifications and micro-credentials.
- Employability Programme: Establishing an employability programme for students.
- European Mobility Programme: Facilitating student and lecturer mobility between institutions and companies.
- Faculty Training Resources: Providing resources for faculty training and support.

Moreover, the Project Coordinator has overall coordination responsibility for the degree programme. He/she represents the Digital4Business consortium partnership before the Commission and reports to the Master's Board and other stakeholders on the operation and programme coordination issues and quality enhancement outcomes.

viii) Faculty Members

The programme's teaching staff includes academics from each of the partner institutions directly involved in the design, development, and delivery of the programme as well as PGC and micro-credentials. It comprises highly qualified lecturers and researchers with a broad range of expertise across the spectrum of subjects associated with advanced digital skills. The primary responsibility of the program faculty is to develop curriculum ideas, create innovative teaching materials and methods, engage in professional discussions with fellow academics, and promote interdisciplinary thinking across different subjects. They may participate in teacher exchange and joint teaching programme design. The programme faculty members focus on approaches to teaching and learning, assessment and performance, and comparative analysis of student workload. The faculty is committed to providing the best possible service to students of the Master's programme as well as PGC and micro-credentials.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment on the Joint Post-Graduate Certificate and Micro-Credentials

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) strategy for the PGC and micro-credentials provides learners with an innovative mix of approaches to engage with the content of their modules and to demonstrate their learning. The TLA strategy seeks to combine lectures, tutorials, problem-based learning (PBL), enquiry-based learning, practical work, the flipped classroom, seminars, case-based learning, project-based work, and group work which are all recognised as effective teaching and learning methods.

Central to the strategy is the belief that the learner is an active participant in the learning process and not simply a passive recipient of information. Teaching on the PGC and micro-credentials therefore aims to make content relevant to the worlds of work and community and aims to create opportunities for learners to interact with each other as well as with faculty from partner HEIs in a mutually supportive learning environment.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning is a collaborative process involving learners, lecturers and academic support staff. All students enrolled on the PGC and micro-credentials are at the centre of this process, and their success depends on their active engagement with it. Below are some of the items students can expect from lecturers and academic support staff, and some of the items we expect from students:

Students can expect the teaching and support staff to:

- Treat all learners with dignity and respect
- Provide academic support and guidance
- Provide appropriate teaching and learning materials
- Provide a Module Descriptor for each Module studied
- Assess your learning in ways that are fair, consistent and valid
- Assure fair and consistent enforcement of all College rules and procedures

In turn, Students are expected to:

- Treat all teaching and support staff and students with dignity and respect
- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Attend all classes tutorials and other learning sessions
- Make proper use of all learning resources provided
- Attempt honestly all assessments set on your programme
- Abide by all the programme's rules, regulations, and procedures

Teaching attempts to create a relevant and meaningful context for learners to make practical connections to the knowledge and skills being acquired. This is primarily achieved through the broadly practical nature of tutorials across most modules which expose students to industry-based technologies and techniques through practical laboratory exercises.

Teaching styles and contexts are flexible and aim to motivate and engage learners. Assessments are recognised as learning opportunities, and are designed to match the level of study, and to prepare learners for progression.

The part-time program is delivered entirely online through Directed E-Learning (DEL), which combines on-demand activities and live online classes using virtual classroom technology. Students will complete specific tasks independently at scheduled times on the courses Learning Management System (LMS). This approach helps avoid overcrowded schedules, especially for students with limited time, and allows the program team to keep track of student progress and engagement in the online courses.

Asynchronous activities may consist of reading or audio/video-based content, as well as practical lab exercises which must be uploaded to the LMS on a weekly basis. The synchronous class contact elements build upon and supplement the asynchronous and self-paced learning materials and activities on Moodle to create an environment whereby learners engage practically with materials outside of class time, leaving time for practical facilitation based directly on those materials in class-contact time.

For the Full Time PGC, both lecture and practical labs/tutorials will be delivered fully online. Full Time learners will also be able to avail of DEL assets and resources.

Learners are also given the tools and guidance to create and manage their own digital spaces where they can organise group work/study groups/support chats etc.

In general, asynchronous activities consist of:

- Audio/Video presentations
- Podcasts
- Practical Lab/Project work
- Asynchronous discussion activities

Synchronous activities consist of:

- Live lectures
- Live labs
- Group work/Breakout rooms

Due to the fully online delivery mode, the programme team will ensure that:

- Learners are advised in advance of commencement of the programme of the technical requirements and pre-requisite skills for effective participation on the learning unit.
- Learners are provided with support during learning unit inductions on how to use the learning technologies.
- Support and on-going professional development are provided to College staff in the design, production and use of new technologies in teaching and learning.
- Technical support is provided for the systems utilised by the learning units (e.g., LMS, Learner Portal, etc.).
- PGC and module learning outcomes and associated assessments are the same for all modes of delivery except where specifically specified and approved.
- Lecturers are encouraged to apply good pedagogic design to their production and planning of learner learning activities – this is achieved by mapping such activities against specific learning outcomes.
- Learners should be provided with opportunities to review archived instructional sequences for revision purposes.
- Learner assignments are to be submitted electronically through the LMS unless otherwise specified.

Students should be aware that there is a clear link between attendance at, and engagement in learning sessions, and their performance in each of the modules.

Assessment

Teaching follows the principle of constructive alignment and hence establishes a close relationship between the intended learning outcome of a module, the teaching formats applied and the assessment methods. Exams are designed to assess the extent to which the defined learning objectives have been achieved. Module Descriptor documentation provides information on the types of exams and assessments (with possible alternatives) that are specified for each module.

Learners are informed about the conditions for completing the module (coursework, exams etc.) at the beginning of each module. Examinations are marked according to transparent criteria. Grading rubrics for assignments are provided to learners. Lecturers will provide general assessment feedback regarding assignments in a timely manner (typically within two weeks of the assessment submission date). Learners may also apply for additional feedback meetings with their lecturers.

The rationale for the choice of assessment instrument follows five principles:

1. *Students are responsible for demonstrating their learning achievement:* A student who is enrolled on a PGC or micro-credential should submit his or her assessment to demonstrate their attainment of the learning unit's intended learning outcomes.
 2. *Assessment is designed to meet specific standards related to learning outcomes:* Grades and awards are given solely based on assessments that evaluate specific criteria, which include knowledge, skills, and *competencies*. *Assessment promotes and supports effective learning and teaching:* Effective assessment is intrinsic to effective teaching and learning, and is (i) consistent with, (ii) supportive of, and (iii) derived from the intended programme and module learning outcomes.
 3. *Assessment methods are regularly reviewed:* The Joint Programme Committee, in conjunction with the Quality Enhancement and Curriculum Development Committee, regularly review the assessment methods to adapt to evolving requirements. evaluates
 4. Each module's assessment strategy is designed to effectively evaluate the learning outcomes for that module. *Students are well informed about how and why they are assessed:* Students need to be (i) familiar with and understand the intended module and programme learning outcomes, relevant programme and module assessment strategies and (ii) regularly reminded of the assessments and their regulations.
- All modules use formative assessments as in-class individual or group activities to assess the learning progress of the students. These assessments, designed as practical lab work, are completed weekly during mentoring and tutoring hours to enhance hands-on learning. In addition, each individual module assessment strategy is composed of one or at most two additional assessments. The types of assessment may vary, but can include: Open book examinations/Terminal examinations where learners can demonstrate their understanding of the topic and their capacity to conduct research about the topic
 - Peer reviews where learners demonstrate their critical analysis skills
 - Individual as well as team projects where learners can hone and demonstrate their practical and leadership skills

All examinations and assessments are conducted in accordance with the jointly agreed policies and procedures for the PGC and micro-credentials as adopted by the Master Programme's Board of Directors. Each of the partner institutions has agreed on joint examination regulations for the PGC and adhering modules in the form of micro-credentials. An agreed set of rules for conducting and organising examinations and assessments will be implemented for the PGC and micro-credentials. The Examinations Board is responsible for ensuring compliance with these regulations.

Documentation detailing the assessments and examinations rules and regulations are made available to students. Additionally, the Modules Handbook specifies the type of assessments associated with each of the PGC's modules and individual micro-credentials, including a

breakdown of the contribution of each assessment to a module's overall marks and an indication of when the assessment will take place.

Further information on examination and assessment of learners can be found in the PGC Study and Examination Regulations document available for download from the <https://www.digital4business.eu> website.

Resits and Repeat Assessments

Learners who fail, miss, or withdraw from a module assessment must retake it. If they fail the repeat assessment, they must re-enroll and attend the module again. Repeat assessments cover all learning outcomes of the failed module.

Late Submission of Coursework

Late submission of assignments is only accepted under special circumstances, e.g. illness. The student must inform the lecturer before the deadline of the assignment and should present medical proof on request to the PGC Coordinators team. If not, the lecturer can decide to sanction the student in terms of grading or refuse to accept late work. Assignments submitted late are typically graded as a failure.

Avoiding Problems with Plagiarism, Poor Scholarship, Collaboration/Collusion, Outsourcing Assessments, knowingly aiding and abetting Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when someone uses another's work including, e.g., text, visuals, or code without proper acknowledgment. This includes failing to use quotation marks for direct quotes, not citing sources for paraphrased work, and not referencing any borrowed material. Additionally, submitting the same work for multiple assignments is also considered plagiarism, which is a serious violation. To avoid plagiarism, it's crucial to properly cite and reference all sources

Collaboration/Collusion

Where two or more students work together, without the prior authorisation of the course lecturer or supervisor, to produce the same piece of work, and then attempt to present this work as entirely their own work, is also a disciplinary offence.

Poor Scholarship

Poor scholarship may consist of poor referencing, but where there is clearly no intention to deceive. This may be penalised in the mark you receive. Poor scholarship may also consist of very close paraphrasing of published work, or the over-use of long quotations (such that your own contribution is unclear) and will also receive a low mark.

Cheating in assessments or examinations

Using, having, sharing, or relying on any unauthorised materials or help during any assessment or academic activity is considered a violation and may lead to disciplinary action

Outsourcing assessment

Having others complete assessments for oneself whether personally or via any free or commercial service is a disciplinary offence.

Knowingly aiding and abetting academic misconduct

Cases in which students knowingly permit others to copy all or part of their work shall also be subject to the procedures outlined here and considered an offence.

Plagiarism of software code

This policy relates to plagiarism of programming assignments that take place as continuous assessments in modules. All continuous assessments and projects are part of the examination process and any attempt to plagiarise is a major offence, punishable accordingly.

Plagiarism includes the following:

- Re-use of code that is based on the learning outcome of the module.
- Submitting another student's work as your own (with or without that person's consent).
- Any act designed to give a student an unfair advantage over another student or the attempt to commit such acts.
- Allowing another student to use your entire program code.
- The reuse of code from previous years' laboratory assessments.
- Not being able to demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the code.
- Taking code with no understanding and not tailoring it to the requirements of the assessment.
- Re-use of code from other locations and not substantially modifying it.

This policy advocates the use of software reuse under strict guidelines namely:

- Each source code program shall contain a standard header which states that this is entirely the authors own work or references the re-used code.

It is at the lecturer's discretion to determine whether a student has breached the above conditions and committed plagiarism.

Disciplinary Committee

Students found guilty of these offences will be penalised and may be reported to the Master Programme's Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may subsequently convene a Disciplinary Committee. Disciplinary measures include written warnings, suspension from the PGC or micro-credential, or expulsion and exclusion of the student respectively.

Student Mobility

As delivery of the PGC and micro-credentials is fully online, there will be no requirement for learners to physically attend classes at any partner institution's geographical location. Learner mobility will predominantly be virtual – with learners enrolling on modules that will be delivered by faculty from the different institutional partners. In addition to this, learners may also have opportunities to attend various networking events, hackathons, etc. that are associated with the overarching Master's programme. For such events, learners will have an option of either attending physically or online. The programme team believe that this will facilitate some aspect of physical mobility for learners within the different programme formats. These events will be hosted by partner institutions in different countries as part of the programme's schedule.

Student Support Services

Participants in the PGC and micro-credentials may rely on the same support services offered to students of the overarching Master's programme described in the following paragraph. Due the specific nature of short-term programmes such as micro-credentials, it may be that not all services are available to any participant at any time: A student's principal supports on the programme are the academic and academic support staff (the Programme Coordinators). Programme Coordinators are the first point of contact for processing support requests, addressing academic, personal, or professional challenges. But since teaching and learning is a collaborative process, and since students may face a number of challenges during their time on the programme, a full range of further services are offered to students.

Information on the range of student support services can be found online through the student support services portal on the programme website at <https://www.digital4business.eu/support>. A number of student support services can be requested online through the student support services portal. Learning Development and Disability Support Service

The Learning Development and Disability Support Service aims to empower all students to become active and confident learners. This is accomplished through initial contact with students during the orientation process and the regular provision of effective academic skills throughout the programme's semesters.

To enhance this direct interaction, the service actively promotes the use of learning technologies and accommodates diverse learning preferences, creating an innovative and inclusive environment for all students. The aim of the Disability Support Service is to facilitate students in reaching their full potential by providing appropriate and specific support which meets individual needs. The programme is committed to provide equal access to education and equal opportunities for students with disabilities.

Careers and Opportunities Support Service

As referenced in Criterion 1.3, the programme incorporates an Employability Strategy. As part of this strategy, an extensive series of events will be scheduled to enhance the employability of students. These events will include online, hybrid, and on-site activities involving the

Digital4Business consortium's industry partners and the wider business community. Moreover, the programme will provide a general Careers and Opportunities Service to facilitate and empower students in developing Career Management and Employability skills. The service also aims to assist students in exploring employment opportunities and/or graduate study options. This service provides a comprehensive and accessible Career Information Service for students and recent graduates.

Assistive Technology Support Service

The aim of the Assistive Technology (AT) Support Service is to dismantle the barriers to education for students with disabilities by harnessing the potential of technology. The AT Service promotes independent learning by providing technology and tailored training to meet the needs of individual students.

Student Counselling & Wellness Service

The Student Counselling and Wellness Service's aim is to support students and offer a supportive encouraging environment where students can talk about any struggles or difficulties they may be facing while they are completing their studies.

Deciding to undertake a Master's degree is a big step and this may feel daunting and students face many new challenges. These challenges may be academic, career, or even personal problems that can interfere with student's ability to take full advantage of their experience on the programme. Counselling can be a helpful and supportive place to start.

Counselling can offer students some time and space to explore any issues that may be of concern such as:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Academic difficulties
- Relationship difficulties
- Depression
- Family issues
- Grief or bereavement
- Homesickness/loneliness
- Sexual/personal identity issues
- Physical assault/abuse
- Self-harm
- Eating disorders
- Addiction or substance use
- Confidence or self-esteem
- LGBTQ+ Support
- Autism/ADHD Support

Students can book an appointment with the Student Counselling and Wellness Service via sending an email message to counselling@digital4business.eu. Once a message is received, a counsellor will contact the student with an available appointment. Counselling sessions last for 40- 50

minutes. A counsellor will discuss the frequency and number of sessions with the student depending on their needs (usually weekly/bi-weekly and anywhere from 1 to 6 sessions).

Library Service

Library services are a key learning resource for students. Library services provide access to a wide range of scholarly publications. Much information (useful and otherwise) is now available on the web, and you will need to be familiar how to use it effectively and correctly. Library services for the programme provide an extensive source of on-line resources, all of which are of the quality that students need for successful study. The library catalogue may be accessed online and is searchable in a number of ways: author, title, author and title (the most useful for a specific reference), keywords (very good for a search). Copies of principal books and articles specified in the reading list are available through the programme 's library services and each module's description document.

Student Complaints Procedures

Making a Complaint

The following process is designed to resolve concerns as speedily and effectively as possible. Most concerns can be addressed successfully through informal means (before writing a formal complaint); however, if informal resolution is unsuccessful, a formal process is available. This procedure is not to be used in cases where the learner is not satisfied with an assessment result or outcome of disciplinary actions. In these cases, relevant appeals processes should be used.

Students are expected to raise concerns directly rather than through a third party. If another person is named in the concern, they have the right to be informed promptly about what was said and who raised it. Any fear of retaliation as a result of raising a concern will not be tolerated. Confidentiality will be maintained when appropriate. All concerns are taken seriously. It is assumed they are legitimate. If an expressed concern is found to be malicious the Master's Board of Directors may have to consider initiating disciplinary proceedings.

We will respectfully deal with each concern and deal with it in the context of our policies and resources.

There are five steps in expressing a concern:

- Step 1: Approach the person responsible for the student's concern.

The student should first address concerns directly to the person responsible and attempt to resolve the matter informally

- Step 2: Approach the person responsible for the area about which the learner has the concern.

This may be the Master's Board of Directors or the Programme Coordinators. Many concerns can be dealt with informally by explanation and discussion. If the student needs help in expressing their concern or is reluctant to approach the person(s) responsible, the student can seek advice from the Programme Coordinators.

- Step 3: Make a formal complaint in writing.

If it is not possible to resolve the student's concern informally by discussion and explanation the student can lodge a formal complaint with the Master's Board of Directors. A formal complaint must be made in writing.

Please supply the following details in a letter:

- The student's name and where the student can be contacted
- The nature of the complaint
- What action, if any, has already been taken by the student to attempt to resolve the concern
- Any prior action taken by the programme's management in regard to this matter
- Say what the student would expect to be done to resolve their complaint

Please send the written formal complaint to the Programme Coordinators marking the complaint for the attention of the Master's Board of Directors.

- Step 4: Acknowledgement of the complaint.

The student can expect to receive a written acknowledgement of the learner's complaint within 20 (twenty) working days of its receipt. The student can expect to be kept informed if there is undue delay in coming to a conclusion on the student's complaint. If the person dealing with the student's complaint thinks it would be better dealt with by someone else, or that it should be dealt with under some other procedure, the student will be informed.

- Step 5: Investigation of the complaint and response

The student's complaint will be investigated as quickly as possible and the student will receive a written response upon completion of the investigation detailing what action, if any, is to be taken.

Appeals

If the student is still unsatisfied after the initial investigation, they can request that the Project Coordinator, or another appropriate person or group who has not previously handled the student's complaint, conduct a further investigation

Communication

Online Communication

Official notices will be sent to student email accounts only. Furthermore, the programme's information page on the LMS provides students with information about their programme and programme resources such as the library services, career development information, and programme related events, Further supports can be accessed through the support pages on the student support section of the <https://www.digital4business.eu> website.

Appendix: Guide to Academic Writing

Assessments, whether essays or examinations, are designed to help students develop their knowledge, skills, and critical thinking while identifying areas for improvement. This guide outlines expectations for submitted work and provides tips for academic essay writing.

Guidelines on Essay Writing

The following guidelines complement module-specific instructions and aim to support students in preparing and writing essays. Essays are intended to develop analytical thinking, the ability to construct coherent arguments, and an understanding of relevant literature. Feedback on essays will help students refine their critical thinking throughout the programme.

Essays involve two key aspects: structure and style.

Essay Structure

All students are advised to follow these guidelines on essay structure, before starting to write an essay. The structure should have three main components: an Introduction, a main part, and a conclusion. Note that it is not a requirement to use subheadings, although you may find these helpful in structuring your essay. The question should be “addressed” rather than ‘answered’, in an organised analytical argument. Observe the word limit (plus or minus 10%).

1. Introduction

This should cover the following:

- Discussion of title - your understanding of what the question is asking, and the definition of any relevant terms.
- Summary of your argument.
- Indication of your conclusion.

Be careful not to allow the introduction to become over-long. This wastes space in a relatively short essay.

2. Main part

The main part of the essay should focus on a few major themes, ideally three or four. Adding more can overwhelm the reader and make the essay seem like a list.

Instead of merely summarizing readings or lecture notes, students should use them to support and strengthen their arguments. Analysis should not be substituted with summaries. They should evaluate various theories and evidence if required by the essay topic. When personal experiences are included, they should serve to illustrate points within the argument, not replace analytical thinking

3. Conclusion

The conclusion consolidates and summarizes the major findings from the main part of the essay. It may also suggest potential implications of the argument. New material should not be introduced

at this stage. Once the conclusion is clear, it can be integrated into the introduction, outlining the central argument at the start. This approach clarifies the subsequent discussion.

Constructing an essay plan before beginning the writing process is beneficial. The plan should outline the main points of the introduction, key themes from the main body, and the conclusions, including any resulting implications. This provides a clear roadmap for the essay. Students are advised to discuss their essay plans with the module lecturer for further refinement

Style

The following guidelines are not exhaustive but should help students with general and stylistic points. All essays must be referenced, with a bibliography at the end.

All concepts, figures and other evidence, use a designated referencing system (e.g., Harvard, IEEE).

Bibliography - at the end of the essay, a Bibliography should be included where all references are listed in full according to the referencing system you are using.

Statistics - when referring to data and statistics, use rounded numbers in the text. For example, if the cited figure is 13,201, either put 13,000 or "just over 13,000". Unless there is a good reason, you should avoid decimal places - so put 49% rather than 48.8%.

Do not copy other student's essays! This is a disciplinary offence: see the section on 'Collaboration/Collusion' in this Handbook.

Quotes - do not over-quote.

Compiling a series of quotations, no matter how relevant, does not replace the need to develop arguments in the essay writer's own words and with their own emphasis. A careful use of quotes that enhances the argument is sufficient. When quoting, writers should avoid long paragraphs and consider that often a single sentence or phrase captures the essential point. Inserting passages from literature without proper citation and acknowledgment can be viewed as plagiarism by the evaluator (refer to the 'Plagiarism' section in the HRM Handbook). When referencing an author's work, the full citation—author, date, and page—must be provided. Essays should not be comprised solely of paragraphs that start with phrases like 'Jones/Smith argues....' Instead, they should focus on concepts, issues, and cases, with references to the authors. Avoid assertions, vagueness, and value-judgements. For example:

- 'It is well known that' (assertion - statement without evidence)
- 'Some business leaders have said' (vague - imprecise statement)
- "Unfortunately, labour is still in government" (value-judgement)

Historical material - too much of this is often reproduced in essays. As with other evidence, it should be used selectively to illustrate arguments, not to avoid making them. In social science essays, historical exposition does not usually constitute an argument in its own right, so it should not be used as one of the major themes, but in support of each of the themes. Finally, historical material can easily impose its own structure on the writer - i.e. chronological - and, when reproduced, makes the essay far too descriptive, rather than analytical.

Check grammar and spelling. Do not use paragraphs either too short or too long; each should be a coherent unit.

Typing and Word-processing - Quite apart from the fact that a typed essay looks better and is easier to read, using word-processing facilities enables work to be corrected and altered without having to rewrite the entire essay. Any skills gained in typing and/or word-processing are almost certain to be useful in the workplace and a useful addition to student's CVs.

Disclaimer

The Digital4Business Consortium has made all reasonable efforts to ensure that the information contained within this publication is accurate and up-to-date when published but cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions.

The Digital4Business Consortium reserves the right to revise, alter or discontinue modules and to amend regulations and procedures at any time, but every effort will be made to notify interested parties.

Legal Disclaimer

The European Commission's support to produce this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.