

Memorandum of Understanding

Founding and Operation of International AI Doctoral Academy (AIDA)

1. MoU Preamble

European Commission funded 5 Horizon2020 ICT48 projects on Artificial Intelligence (AI):

1. **AI4Media** (AI for the Society and the Media Industry <https://ai4media.eu/>),
2. **ELISE** (Fundamental research in AI, driven by machine learning <https://www.elise-ai.eu/>)
3. **HumanE-AI-Net** (Scientific foundations and technological breakthroughs needed to build AI systems that enhance human intelligence rather than replacing it, <https://www.humane-ai.eu/>)
4. **TAILOR** (Trustworthy AI, <https://liu.se/en/research/tailor>)
5. **VISION CSA** (Coordination between the new networks of centers of excellence in AI as well as with the European Commission, <https://www.vision4ai.eu/>)

to ensure European strategic autonomy in such critical technology as AI, underpinning most of our future professional and private activities, with huge potential socio-economic impact and to reinforce and build on Europe's assets in AI, including its world-class researcher community, in order to stay at the forefront of AI developments.

The set of networks will form a common resource and will become a shared facility, as a virtual laboratory offering access to knowledge and expertise and attracting the talents. It should become a reference, creating an easy entry point to AI excellence in Europe and should also be instrumental for its visibility.

2. MoU Scope

Founding and Operation of International AI Doctoral Academy (AIDA) for offering access to knowledge and expertise and attracting PhD talents, operating like an umbrella organization for AI PhD and Postdoc studies and having significant industrial involvement.

3. AIDA Objectives

1. Coordination of the PhD/postdoc educational and training activities on AI of AIDA Members.
2. Aiming high to become a world-level reference for anything related to AI education (and research).
3. Defining mechanisms to create inter-university sharing of educational assets in the area of PhD-level AI.
4. Envisage future efforts towards a charter for European universities to share, accredit and recognize PhD education credits in the area of AI.

4. AIDA Definitions and Governance

Founding Members: Universities in any of the ICT48 projects that initially sign this MoU.

Full Members (acronym AIDA Members): Universities from European Union (EU) or Associated Countries having PhD studies on AI that will be invited to and will sign this MoU. Founding AIDA Members are AIDA Full Members.

Associate Members: International Universities from other countries than EU or Associated ones, having PhD studies on AI, that will be invited to and will sign this MoU.

Research & Industry Members: Research Institutions or Companies with AI activities that will be invited to and will sign this MoU.

Representatives. Representatives of any Member type must have a track record on AI research/education. Representatives of Full Members or Associate Members must be University Full/Associate/Assistant/Emeritus/Retired Professors that have a track record on AI research/education. A Representative may assign a Deputy Representative.

5. AIDA Governance

General Assembly (GA): It is the highest AIDA governing body consisting of one Representative of each Full Member.

Management Board: It consists of 5 Full Member Representatives and manages AIDA operations. It is elected by the GA for a 4-year term. The number of Management Board members may be changed by GA decision, but cannot be less than 3.

Coordinator: It is a Full Member hosting AIDA Management operations. It is elected by the General Assembly for a 4-year term.

Chair: She/he is the Management Board member, which is the Representative of the Coordinator and chairs AIDA General Assembly, Management Board and Research and Innovation Board.

Research and Innovation Board: It consists of international AI research and industry experts and advises AIDA on research and industrial innovation. It is elected by all AIDA Member Representatives of any type for a 4-year term, or less.

All 4-year terms synchronize with the one of the Management Board.

Sender: AIDA member of any type sending Students or staff to attend AIDA Education and Training Activities.

Host: AIDA member of any type organizing an AIDA Education and Training Activity. A Host should be a Full Member or Associate Member, when it comes to courses to be credited.

Student: PhD students/candidates or postdoc researchers belonging to any AIDA Sender. AIDA Management Board may decide to expand this definition to other student categories (e.g., MSc students of AIDA members of any type) and may define Student selection criteria.

Lecturer: Academic/teaching personnel of any AIDA Member or Associate Member that: a) offers a course open to AIDA Students and/or b) is supervisor/mentor of an AIDA Student.

AIDA General Assembly or Management Board can decide to create (or dissolve) special committees to work on any AIDA Operation.

6. AIDA Operations

6.1 AIDA Management Operations

It concerns management, dissemination, book-keeping and reporting of AIDA activities and resources. Management rules and procedures will be decided by AIDA GA or AIDA Management Board and should be compatible with Coordinator's own and/or national legislation, rules and internal procedures. Management will primarily be performed as a funded project by the Coordinator, following Coordinator's own rules and procedures.

6.2 AIDA Education and Training (ET) Activities

- Creation of a joint AI education curriculum, possibly initially consisting of 4 education strands (one per ICT48 project).
- Offer of semester courses on AI by various AIDA Hosts to AIDA Students, according to the rules and regulations of each AIDA Host.
- Offer of short courses, lecture series, web lectures etc. on AI by various AIDA Hosts to AIDA Students, according to the rules and regulations of each AIDA Host.
- Industry, research or academic secondments.
- Offering AI vision: AI Mellontology workshop and AI grand challenges.
- “AI excellence” lecture series (by world known senior AI researchers).
- “AI sprint” lecture series (by qualified postdocs and young researchers).
- Provisions for students of other backgrounds (e.g., Cognitive Science or Philosophy), also towards European AI branding.
- “AI seniors”: qualified AI researchers that can act as an AI topic reference.
- State-of-the-Art (SoA) overviews on AI topics (maintained by AI seniors).
- AIDA itinerant lecture series over the world (“AI trobadours”)
- AI workshops.
- AI event calendar.

The above is a non-exhaustive list to be updated during AIDA operations. AI curriculum, graduate and short courses will always be on AIDA focus.

All AIDA members of any type are encouraged to participate in AI Education and Training activities on a win-win basis.

7. AIDA Dissemination/communication

They will be done primarily through AIDA www portal www.i-aida.org, various email lists and channels to be managed by the Coordinator and through various AI events.

8. AIDA Resources

AIDA resources come from its members of any type, its activities, funded R&D or educational projects, but also from any other source, e.g., donations or sponsorships.

The activities mentioned in this Memorandum of Understanding shall not, in principle, impose any financial obligations on AIDA members of any type. Each members of any type shall bear its costs and expenses to participate in AIDA, unless otherwise specified and agreed/accepted by the member concerned.

As a general rule, Senders (or their Students themselves) cover the costs for their participation in AIDA ET Activities, using own rules and procedures. Hosts organize AIDA ET Activities and other AIDA operations and cover the related expenses using own rules and procedures. Exceptions to this general rule are allowed. AIDA Management Board is responsible for approving the yearly budget of AIDA.

9. AIDA Academic Rules

A Student can register to become an AIDA Student through AIDA Coordinator. AIDA Lecturers may need to confirm the status of their own Students. All AIDA Full or Associate Members (Hosts) are encouraged to offer short/web/full graduate courses on fair own terms, open to AIDA Students. Their relevant AIDA Lecturers notify the Coordinator upon: a) Student registration to a course and b) course completion by a Student (successful or otherwise) and provide any relevant information of any type that will be decided by AIDA Management board concerning the above said courses. Course credits will be recognized to a Student, according to Sender own rules. Students registered to AIDA will receive an AIDA Certificate of Course Attendance (CCA), possibly also containing other attended AIDA ET Activities, from the Coordinator, acting on behalf of the present AIDA cooperation. CCA only certifies the attended courses, it is NOT a degree, and it is issued after the Students get a minimal number of total credits. CCA format and details will be defined by AIDA GA or Management Board. For the avoidance of doubt, Student degree will always be delivered at the discretion of the corresponding University/Institution of original Student registration only, AIDA not being involved in this procedure in any way.

10. AIDA International Cooperation

AIDA will seek active cooperation with any European, national and international entity engaged in AI activities of any type, notably with any national AI network within EU and with:

- AI4EU <https://www.ai4eu.eu/>
- European AI Alliance <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/european-ai-alliance>
- ELLIS Society <https://ellis.eu/units>
- CLAIRE <https://claire-ai.org/>
- European Association for Artificial Intelligence (EurAI) <https://www.eurai.org/>
- AI Campus <https://ki-campus.org/?locale=en>
- EURASIP <https://www.eurasip.org/>
- euRobotics <https://www.eu-robotics.net/>
- UNITE! (European University network) <https://www.unite-university.eu/about-us>
- Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE)
- Association for Computing Machinery (ACM).

AIDA can act as an umbrella organization for promoting the educational activities of such entities and networks.

11. AIDA Duration and Other Provisions

AIDA will start operations once this MoU: a) is signed by at least 5 Founding Members and b) it is endorsed by at least 1 Horizon2020 ICT48 project. Prospective Members/Associate Members/Research & Industry Members can adhere to this MoU by signing its copy, together with the Coordinator. This MoU is valid for 5 years (2021-2026), that can be extended based on a decision of the AIDA GA and shall be subject to the drafting of an amendment to be signed by the members.

AIDA General Assembly will have a quorum, if at least 50% of the AIDA Full Member Representatives participate in person or electronically. Decisions of AIDA General Assembly must be taken by a majority vote of all present Full Members. Decisions of Management Board or any other AIDA Board or Committee must be taken unanimously, whenever possible, or by majority vote.

Any AIDA member of any type may refuse to implement a decision if it is contrary to the law of its country or to the internal rules governing its operation. Every decision on academic activities must comply with the national legislation and academic rules of the members of any type concerned.

AIDA may be terminated by a decision of the AIDA GA to take effect after a 6-month period, so that any outstanding course/activity evaluation has been duly completed, in order to avoid any disadvantage to AIDA Students.

AIDA members of any type are free to leave AIDA, after a 6-month prior notice and, subject, to any outstanding course/activity evaluation has been duly completed, in order to avoid any disadvantage to AIDA Students.

In very exceptional cases of breach of AIDA MoU provisions, AIDA GA may decide to discontinue the membership of an AIDA member of any type, which will take effect after a prior 6 month notice to the affected member.

12. PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

Personal data, as defined in the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, shall always be treated as Confidential Information, and shall be protected with an adequate level of safety and confidentiality, subject to any applicable legal, regulatory or contractual requirements.

All AIDA members of any type commit themselves to respect the European Regulation EU 2016/679 (GDPR), as well as the national applicable laws.

Since the processing of Students and other persons personal data is necessary for the performance of this Agreement, all AIDA members commit themselves to agree and enter into data processing agreements, which shall be attached to this MOU to constitute the entire Agreement and reflect each Party's rights and obligations in this respect.

13. Special provisions during ICT48 project duration

During the period from AIDA start to 31/12/2024:

- a) **AIDA organization, governance and activities must facilitate ICT48 projects fulfil their contractual AI education obligations.**
- b) The Representative of a Full Member or Research & Industry Member, who also is ICT48 project partner, should be a member of the respective ICT48 project team of this partner. Representative of an ICT48 project to AIDA is a Full Member Representative elected by the respective ICT48 project.
- c) Eligible AIDA Management Board members to be voted by GA are Representatives of ICT48 projects. Members of AIDA Management Board are responsible for reporting AIDA activities and decisions to the ICT48 project they represent.
- d) Given that AIDA activities shall not, in principle, impose any financial obligations on its members of any type, AIDA resources will come primarily from the participating ICT48 projects, but also from any other source, e.g., donations or sponsorships.
- e) Coordinator for the first 4-year term will be the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.
- f) All AIDA Education and Training activities by Hosts that are ICT48 project partners may be organized primarily at each ICT48 project level. Their promotion will be also implemented through AIDA www portal fed by ICT48 project www pages. AIDA will pay particular attention to graduate course/short course offers, promotion and execution.

- g) AIDA Full or Associate Members will offer short/full graduate courses on fair own terms to other AIDA Full or Associate Members Students.

For AIDA Coordinator:

Name, Capacity, date

For AIDA Founding Member:

Name, Capacity, date

For AIDA Full Member:

Name, Capacity, date

For AIDA Associate Member:

Name, Capacity, date

For AIDA Research & Industry Member:

Name, Capacity, date