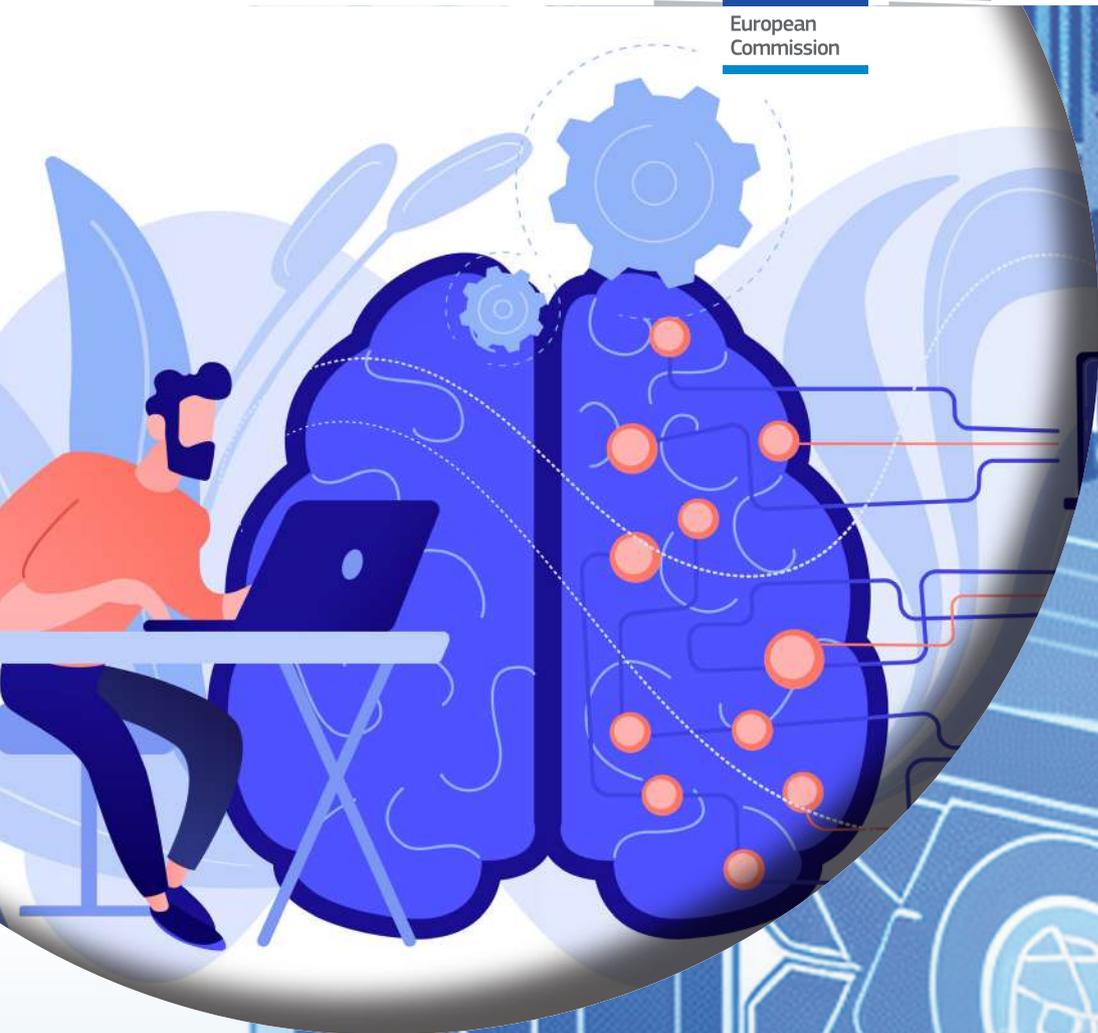# SPHERE Study Vist
AI and Digital Transformation for Inclusive Universities: Policy, Practice, and Impact

9-10 March 2026
Online

Abstract

This study visit examines how artificial intelligence (AI) and digital transformation are reshaping universities' approaches to inclusion, internationalisation, teaching and learning, and institutional wellbeing. Anchored in the themes of policy, practice, and impact, the programme brings together senior leadership perspectives, academic expertise, and applied university experience to explore how AI-enabled digital transformation can promote equity, inclusive pedagogy, intercultural dialogue, and academic integrity.

Through keynote presentations, institutional case studies, and interactive workshops, participants will critically engage with the opportunities and challenges posed by AI in higher education. Particular attention is given to governance frameworks, ethical considerations, quality assurance, and the alignment between institutional strategies and European and national policy agendas. The study visit aims to support higher education leaders and practitioners in designing responsible, human-centred, and sustainable digital transformation strategies that enhance inclusion and meaningful educational impact.

Participants

The study visit is designed for higher education professionals involved in institutional leadership, policy development, teaching and learning, and digital transformation. Intended participants include university leaders, academic and administrative staff working in digital learning, quality assurance, internationalisation, student support, and educational development, as well as policy officers, researchers, and educational technologists.

The programme is particularly relevant for participants engaged in strategic decision-making, policy implementation, or innovation initiatives that seek to strengthen inclusion, intercultural dialogue, academic integrity, and wellbeing within increasingly digital and international university environments.

Why the topic?

Artificial intelligence and digital technologies are rapidly transforming higher education systems, redefining how universities teach, learn, govern, and engage internationally. While digital transformation offers significant opportunities to expand access, personalise learning, and enhance institutional effectiveness, it also presents risks related to inequality, ethics, academic integrity, and staff and student wellbeing if not addressed deliberately.

In diverse and international academic communities, universities must ensure that AI-driven innovation is aligned with inclusive values and human-centred principles. This study visit responds to the growing need for shared understanding and evidence-informed approaches that connect institutional practice with policy development, placing inclusion, intercultural dialogue, and responsible governance at the core of digital transformation.

Key objectives

The study visit aims to:

- o Examine the role of AI and digital transformation in fostering inclusive and equitable teaching and learning
- o Explore implications of AI for internationalisation, intercultural dialogue, and institutional wellbeing
- o Showcase university practices that inform institutional, national, and European policy agendas
- o Analyse governance, ethical, quality assurance, and academic integrity considerations related to AI adoption
- o Promote peer learning and collaboration among higher education leaders and practitioners
- o Support strategic decision-making for responsible and sustainable digital transformation

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the study visit, participants will be able to:

- o Critically assess the impact of AI and digital transformation on inclusion, equity, and access in higher education
- o Identify effective institutional practices for AI-enabled inclusive teaching and learning
- o Understand policy implications related to AI, digital learning, data ethics, and academic integrity
- o Integrate internationalisation and intercultural perspectives into digital learning strategies
- o Reflect on the relationship between digital innovation, governance, and institutional wellbeing
- o Apply insights from peer institutions to inform strategy, policy, or practice in their own universities

Agenda

Day 1 – Monday, March 9th

ONLINE | Registration link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/0KIhrX4YTl-DEabBedLowA

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions on how to join the webinar. The same link will be used for the second day.

(Cyprus time)

14:00 – 14:15	**Welcome address**
	Panayiotis Angelides, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, University of Nicosia
	Elizabeth Colucci, SPHERE Team

Moderation:

Panayiotis Angelides, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, University of Nicosia

14:15 – 14:45	**Internationalization of Higher Education and AI – The Case of the University of Nicosia**
	Philippos Pouyioutas, Rector, University of Nicosia
14:45 – 15:15	**AI, digital learning, and wellbeing: Implications for Universities**
	Charalambos Vrasidas, Professor for Learning Innovations & Policy, Department of Education, University of Nicosia
	Executive Director CARDET
15:15 – 15:45	**Universities as Capacity Builders: AI, Security, and Strategic Dialogue with European and National Institutions**

Constantinos Adamides, Associate Professor of International Relations, Department of Politics and Governance, University of Nicosia

15:45 – 16:15   **Round Table Discussion**

Philippos Pouyioutas, Charalambos Vrasidas, Constantinos Adamides

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16:15 – 16:45   **Break**

Moderation:

Melpo Iacovidou, Assistant Professor, Department of Accounting, Economics and Finance, Director - NEOLAIA European University Alliance Unit, University of Nicosia

16:45 – 17:15   **Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity in the AI Era**

Constantinos Phellas, Senior Vice Rector, University of Nicosia

17:15 – 17:45   **Re-Designing AI-Transformative Academic Environments to Be Supportive to ALL Students**

Lefki Kourea, Associate Professor of Special and Inclusive Education, Department of Education, University of Nicosia

17:45 – 18:15   **AI as a Catalyst for Inclusive Universities: Policy, Regulation, and Governance**

Dimitrios Koukiadis, Assistant Professor of Law, Department of Law, University of Nicosia

18:15 – 18:45   **Round table discussion**

Constantinos Phellas, Lefki Kourea, Dimitrios Koukiadis

Day 2 – Tuesday, March 10th

ONLINE | Registration link (same as Day 1):
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/0KIhrX4YTl-DEabBedLowA

Please use the same link you used on Day 1 to join the webinar. If you have not registered yet, please register using the link above to receive the connection details.

(Cyprus time)

Moderation:

Agni Stylianou, Associate Professor in Educational Psychology, Department of Education, University of Nicosia

09:00 – 09:30 **AI-Enabled Digital Transformation for Inclusive Teaching and Learning: University Practice Informing Policy**

Efi Nisiforou, Assistant Professor of Education Technology, Department of Education, University of Nicosia

09:30 – 10:00 **From Digital Transformation to Intelligent Universities: The Role of AI, Blockchain, and Emerging Technologies in Higher Education**

Marinos Themistocleous, Professor of Blockchain and Digital Innovation, Department of Digital Innovation, University of Nicosia

10:00 – 10:30 **UNIC and NEOLAIA European University Alliance: Building a Digital, Inclusive Campus for a European Future**

Melpo Iacovidou, Assistant Professor, Department of Accounting, Economics and Finance, Director - NEOLAIA European University Alliance Unit, University of Nicosia

10:30 – 11:00   **Round table discussion**

Efi Nisiforou, Marinos Themistocleous, Melpo Iacovidou

11:00 – 11:30   **Break**

11:30 – 13:00   **Interactive Workshop**

Who's is thinking when using AI? Acknowledging data power and finding balance between human and artificial intelligence

Agni Stylianou, Associate Professor in Educational Psychology, Department of Education, University of Nicosia

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13:00 – 13:15   **Closing Session and take-aways**

Elizabeth Colucci, SPHERE Team

Panayiotis Angelides, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, University of Nicosia

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