

PATHFINDER

MDIA DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

PATHFINDER MDIA DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP 2026

Guidelines

G-TEC-001-05

30th June 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship** is intended to support postgraduate education in the fields of **Artificial Intelligence** and/or **Digital Trust** and/or **Knowledge and Data Representation and Analysis** and/or **Technology for Peace Sustainability and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** and/or **Quantum Computing** and/or **High Performance Computing (HPC)** and/or **Other Emerging Technologies** and/or **Regulatory Compliance and Governance** and/or **Cultural and Linguistic Technologies** to ensure that the Maltese labour market is supplied with individuals having the necessary skills and to guarantee that it is in a better position to compete at an international level. The scheme is aimed to support those pursuing this path to succeed both at the level of education attainment as well as contributing effectively towards the economy.
- 1.2 Postgraduate education forms an increasingly important part of our country's economic and social agenda. It supplies a key element of many people's continuing professional development, and the Scheme is intended to contribute to this agenda through its support of this important sector of education.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The key objectives of the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship** are to:
- i. assist people to pursue further levels of academic research in the fields outlined in clause 1.1 and Annex A.
 - ii. particularly within the technological economic sectors covered in Annex A.
 - iii. support further research in Science and Innovative Technologies; and
 - iv. increase the capacity and level of research, innovation, and development activity in Malta.

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3. Explanatory Notes

Academic Record shall mean an official document issued by a Recognised Educational Institution. The document shall show the marks/grades obtained by the Applicant and where it is the norm, the final grade/classification. A **detailed** Academic Record is expected.

Administration fees shall mean compulsory fees charged by a Recognised Educational Institution for the processing, registration, and general administration of a programme of studies, excluding tuition fees and bench fees.

Agreement shall mean a legally binding document to be signed by the Scholarship Awardee as beneficiary of the Scholarship and a recognised representative of MDIA for the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship**. These Guidelines shall be construed as forming part of the Agreement.

Applicant shall mean a natural person who submits a scholarship application.

Artificial Intelligence shall mean an “AI system is a machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments. Different AI systems vary in their levels of autonomy and adaptiveness after deployment.”

Web source (2nd June 2025):

https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2024/03/explanatory-memorandum-on-the-updated-oecd-definition-of-an-ai-system_3c815e51/623da898-en.pdf

Awardee shall mean a natural person who is awarded a scholarship under this scheme.

Awarding Body refers to an organisation recognised by the National Regulatory Authorities whose purpose is awarding accredited qualifications.

Bench fees shall mean compulsory fees charged by a Recognised Educational Institution (or its laboratory, department, or supervisor) to cover the costs of research facilities, laboratory access, equipment, materials, and/or specialist support required for a programme of studies.

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Commencement Date of scholarship shall mean the date as specified on the Unconditional Letter of Acceptance (ULA) being the start date of the programme/course from when the payment to Awardee will be calculated.

Completion Date shall mean the date when the programme/course is completed, and the final result is published.

Course Duration is to be established by the Recognised Educational Institution. For courses of more or less than 12 months, the allowances shall be calculated pro rata over the number of months.

ECTS shall mean European Credit Transfer System.

Guidelines shall be this document having the name '*Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship 2026 Guidelines*'.

Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship, hereinafter also referred to as 'Scholarship', shall mean and these Guidelines and the Agreement as well as any documents attached thereto, as administered by the Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA).

Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board shall mean a Board appointed by the Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA). This Board shall be entrusted with the evaluation and ranking of Applicants for the awarding of scholarships and overseeing of the scheme.

Full-time studies shall mean studying full-time at a Recognised Educational Institution.

Part-time studies shall mean studying part-time at a Recognised Educational Institution.

ISCED shall mean International Standard Classification of Education.

HEI shall mean Higher Education Institutions.

Innovative Technology includes any form of digital technology, including but not limited to Cloud Computing, Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Distributed Ledger Technology" and "Decentralised Ledger Technology (DLT)", related products, solutions or services, as well as processes and practices aimed or designed at protecting digital technology and its users.

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Master's Programme shall mean a higher educational programme that:

- a) Leads to a Master's degree level qualification offered by a HEI or Further and Higher Education Institution (including a university) with a minimum of 60 ECTS credits (based on the Bologna Process), and
- b) Leads to a full MQF Level 7 qualification on an academic level

PhD Programme shall mean a higher educational programme that:

- a) Leads to a PhD level qualification offered by a HEI or Further and Higher Education Institution (including a university) and
- b) Leads to a full MQF Level 8 qualification on an academic level

MQF - Malta Qualifications Framework is a referencing tool that helps to describe and compare both national and foreign qualifications to promote quality, transparency, and mobility of qualifications in all types of education.

MQF Level 7 Qualification shall mean any qualification referenced at Level 7 of the Malta Qualifications Framework.

MQF Level 8 Qualification shall mean any qualification referenced at Level 8 of the Malta Qualifications Framework.

MQRIC shall mean Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre within the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority.

MFHEA shall mean Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Per Annum shall mean a period of twelve (12) calendar months from the commencement of programme of studies.

Quantum Computing shall mean any kind of computational model or device that employs quantum mechanical phenomena (such as superposition and entanglement) to perform operations on data

Recognised Educational Institution shall mean a Higher Educational Institution, or an Awarding Body recognised by the competent authorities in the country where the institution is registered and mutually recognised by MFHEA (in the case of foreign institutions), or locally registered Educational Institution accredited by MFHEA.

Study Allowance shall mean an additional allowance to cover additional expenses incurred during the duration of the programme of studies in the MDIA Digital Pathfinder Scholarship, if applicable.

Tuition fees shall mean the compulsory fees charged by a Recognised Educational Institution for enrolment and instruction in a programme of studies, excluding bench fees and any administration fees.

Transcript shall mean the same as Academic Record. A **detailed** Transcript is expected.

Unconditional Letter of Acceptance (ULA) shall mean a letter issued to the Applicant by the Registrar (or a delegated high authority) of the Recognised Educational Institution which shall have the following details:

A clear statement by the Recognised Educational Institution that it is **unconditionally accepting** the Applicant to follow a programme of studies.

- The Commencement Date of studies (Indicating the exact day, month, and year).
- The End Date of studies (Indicating the exact day, month and year).
- The Modality of study (that is whether it is part-time or full-time studies).
- The Number of ECTS credits pertaining to the programme of studies (if applicable).
- Any other information required by Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA).

Applicant shall note that the Agreement is to be signed at a later stage (should the applicant be awarded a Scholarship).

ALL APPLICANTS shall be obliged to submit the **Unconditional Letter of Acceptance** by, **Friday 16th October 2026**.

It is the **duty of the Applicants to ensure** that when they choose a Recognised Educational Institution, this institution is in a position to issue such a ULA with all the above details. This has to be in the form of an original letter, signed by the Registrar of the University (or delegated high authority). Scanned, PDF copies shall be accepted in terms of [Clause 6.2](#).

Applicants are responsible for ensuring their proposed research areas align with the criteria outlined in these Guidelines, with particular attention paid to [Section 16](#). Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disqualification from the Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship.

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4. Eligibility

4.1 In order to apply for a **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship** must satisfy both the following conditions:

4.1.1 An Applicant shall by the closing date of the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship** application:

- a) Be a Maltese citizen who has been residing in Malta for the past five (5) years. Provided that a Maltese citizen who has been residing outside Malta for study, health or work purposes or any other purpose which the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** may consider, will still be eligible to apply and this period of time during which the citizen was abroad will not be taken into consideration for the purpose of calculating the five (5) year requirement; or
- b) Be a national of an EU/EEA state or a family member of such EU/EEA national (as defined in [SL460.17](#) and in [SL217.04](#) (Subsidiary Legislation) respectively for EU and EEA nationals), provided that such person has obtained permanent residence in Malta in accordance with [SL460.17](#) and in [SL217.04](#) respectively for EU and EEA nationals; or
- c) Be a national of an EU/EEA state who is in Malta exercising his/her Treaty rights as a worker, self-employed person or person retaining such status in accordance with [SL460.17](#); or
- d) Be a third country national that has been granted long-term residence status under [SL217.05](#)

4.1.2 Must be applying to follow a programme of studies:

- a) at MQF level 7 that has a minimum of 30 ECTS related to the fields in Annex A in which the research project must be related to innovative technologies that may or may not include the mentioned above fields; or
- b) at MQF level 8 focusing on a research area related to the fields in Annex A.

4.2 Applicants already holding a Level 7 Master's degree or Level 8 Doctorate degree in a field that is unrelated to those in Annex A , are still eligible to apply for a scholarship in terms of the Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship for any subsequent studies they may undertake which studies are in line and according to the terms of these guidelines.

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- 4.3 Applicants **shall start** their course leading to a Qualification at MQF Level 7 or 8 between the 31st of December 2025 and the 31st of December 2026.
- 4.4 Applicants who by closing date of application are still undergoing another programme of studies may still apply, provided that such programme is to be concluded and results published by **Friday 2nd October 2026**, that is, before entering into the **Scholarship agreement**, if awarded the **Scholarship**.
- 4.5a) **Part 1 documents** of the Application Form shall be submitted by **Friday 14th August 2026** together with, if available, the Part 2 documents.
- 4.5b) **Part 2 documents** of the Application Form include but not limited to the
- Detailed and official Transcript,
 - Unconditional Letter of Acceptance as detailed in the [Clause 3 – Explanatory Notes](#) and
 - MQRIC report
 - Proof of employment status (through Jobs Plus or equivalent) showing no current full-time employment, for those entering full-time studies.

The above Part 2 shall be submitted by latest **Friday 16th October 2026**

- 4.6 An Applicant who is starting a programme of studies leading to MQF Level 7, but part of the programme/course is referenced to MQF Level 6 shall NOT be eligible to apply under this scheme but shall be eligible to apply under the Malta Government Undergraduate Scheme (MGUS) / Students' Maintenance Grants'.
- 4.7 Applicants shall become ineligible for a Scholarship if they are in breach of any part of these Guidelines.

5. Tenure and Placement

- 5.1 Awards are tenable at any local or international Recognised Educational Institution for a specific programme of studies or research. Only MFHEA Recognised Educational Institutions shall be taken into consideration by the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board**.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the Applicants, applying for qualifications awarded by foreign or local Recognised Educational Institutions not featuring in the "List of Accredited Courses offered by Licensed Institutions" (excluding University of

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Malta (UM), Malta College of Arts Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS)) to produce an evaluation report on comparability of qualifications issued by the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) within the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). Applicants not in possession of this report / receipt of an MQRIC application may still apply, provided that they submit a copy of the report or receipt to the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship** office by not later than **Friday 16th October 2026**.

5.3 The MQRIC may be contacted as follows;

Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) / Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA)
J.Abelo Scolaro Street,
Hamrun HMRI304

Tel. no. 153

E-mail: mqric@mfhea.mt

Website: www.mfhea.mt

6. Choice of Institution

6.1 Applicants are expected to identify only one (1) Recognised Educational Institutions and programmes/courses that they consider most appropriate on the Application Form. No change to the Recognised Educational Institution is accepted after the closing date of application **Friday 14th August 2026**.

6.2 Applicants shall submit the Unconditional Letter of Acceptance (ULA) from a Recognised Educational Institution listed on their Application Form. The last day of submission of ULA shall be **Friday 16th October 2026**.

6.3 Many courses have strict admission deadline, and Applicants must take the necessary steps to secure admission to their preferred institution in advance of any Scholarship's application to the Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board. Applicants should note that a number of recognised educational institutions / university departments require an Applicant to demonstrate a valid Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) or Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score before an offer of admission can be made. The fees for these tests shall not be covered by the funds provided by Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship. Applicants should check admission requirements carefully at the time of application.

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7. Administration of Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board

7.1 The **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** is administered by the Malta Digital Innovation Authority. The **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** is responsible for the selection and ranking process and for overseeing the scheme.

7.2 All correspondence is to be addressed to:

MDIA
Twenty20 Business Centre
Triq l-Intornjatur, Zone 3
Central Business District, Birkirkara
CBD 3050, Malta

Tel. No.: +356 21828800
E-mail: pathfinder.mdia@mdia.gov.mt
Website: www.mdia.gov.mt

8. Application Form

8.1 Applicants are invited to apply by sending the application form and accompanying documents to pathfinder.mdia@mdia.gov.mt. It is the responsibility of the Applicants to ensure that their application is:

- successfully submitted on time,
- to keep a printed copy of the Application Form and
- to have a copy of the acknowledgement email.

The acknowledgement email shall be the Applicants' proof that an Application is submitted on time, however, it is not a confirmation that the application was complete. It is the duty of the applicant to ensure the correctness and completion of the application at the time of submission.

8.2 **The below supporting documents must be submitted with the application form and labelled as per hereunder identification along with other requested information:**

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Part 1 Documents:

- DOC 1** - Identification Card or Passport
- DOC 2** - Curriculum Vitae
- DOC 3** - Appendix I (As per [Clause 8.4](#))
- DOC 4** - Appendix II **or** (III **and** IV) (As applicable as per [Clause 8.4](#))

Part 2 Documents:

- DOC 5** - Applicant's HEI or Further and Higher Education Institution (Including University) detailed transcripts (*if already available*)
- DOC 6** - Unconditional Letter of Acceptance from the Recognised Educational Institution applied for (*if already available*).
- DOC 7** - MQRIC evaluation report as per [Clauses 5.2](#) (*if required*).
- DOC 8** - Permanent Residence permit (*where applicable*).
- DOC 9** - Visa approval (*if applicable*)
- DOC 10** - Evidence of commencement of programme of studies (*if applicable*)
- a) Detailed Transcripts or
 - b) Letter from University
- DOC 11** - Proof of employment status (through Jobs Plus or equivalent) showing no current full-time employment, for those entering full-time studies.

8.3 The **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** shall give considerable weight to the contents of these Sections in the application form:

- **Appendix I:** The relevance of the course / research to the research fields outlined in Annex A for the development of Malta.
- **Appendix II:** Details about the course or research
- **Appendix III:** Course co-ordinator confirmation letter on research project
- **Appendix IV:** PhD proposal details on research project

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- 8.4 **Thus, the Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board reserves the right to penalise Applicants who fail to submit the required Appendices with the respective Application Form.**

Appendix I: Applicants applying to read for an **MQF Level 7 or 8 qualification** shall submit a clear overview of the relevance of how the programme of studies/course/research is related to the research fields outlined in Annex A and how this study/research can impact the development of Malta, in not more than three hundred (300) words. The word count does not include references, bibliographies, or footnotes

Appendix II: Applicants applying to read for an **MQF Level 7** shall submit the list of units in their course or research, clearly identifying the unit/s in their course or research that are related to the fields in Annex A. The latter should amount to a minimum of 30 ECTS.

Appendix III: Applicants applying to read for an **MQF Level 8 qualification** shall submit a letter from the course coordinator/ studies' supervisor providing identification and confirmation of the topic of the research.

Appendix IV: Applicants applying to read for an **MQF Level 8 qualification** shall submit a PhD proposal detailing their research project in relation to the research fields outlined in Annex A.

- 8.5 The Application deadline is **Friday 14th August 2026**. Only in the case of the Part 2 documents the date of submission is extended to **Friday 16th October 2026**.

8.6 Late and incomplete applications shall not be considered by the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board**. Applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit their application. MDIA cannot be held responsible for any delay due to technical difficulties, or otherwise, that may hinder applicants' submission.

8.7 No written (hard copy) applications will be accepted. The **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** shall not consider any petitions stating that the Application Form was submitted, without tangible and valid proof as evidence.

8.8 Application must be filled in, in its entirety. Incomplete / Incorrect applications shall be considered disqualified. No changes to the application are permitted after the deadline of the **14th August 2026**.

- 8.9 **Every applicant shall submit one (1) application form for either MQF level 7 or MQF level 8.**

9. Eligibility, Selection Process and Procedure

9.1 The Malta Digital Innovation Authority has set up the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** to operate the process of selection. This Board shall be responsible for all matters concerning selection according to pre-established criteria identified in [Clause 10.1](#) and determination of appropriate awards according to the terms of these guidelines.

9.2 Eligible Applicants shall be called for an interview. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to make sure to be available on the date and time communicated to him/her for the interview. No alternative arrangements shall be made to change the date and time of the interview unless there are exceptional circumstances (supported by written proof) that warrant the change of such date and time. The aforementioned exceptional circumstances shall be examined, and such alternative date and time may be chosen by the Board, at the Board's discretion.

9.2.1 Interviews are expected to be scheduled **in September during weekdays from Monday to Friday (subject to change at the sole discretion of MDIA)**. Applicants who do not turn up for their interview or are late of more than 5 - 10 minutes to the interview will be considered as no longer having an interest in the scholarship and thus they will be considered ineligible by the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board**.

9.2.2 In the case of applicants who are unable to attend on the given date and time for the interview due to being abroad, such interviews shall take place via video call at the given date and time. In exceptional cases, an alternative date for interview may be given by the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** depending on the circumstances which led to the failure of such an interview.

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10. Selection Criteria

10.1 Applications are considered on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- a) Academic merit of the Applicant (40%) – Only qualifications at MQF Level 5 or higher will be taken into consideration.
- b) How study / research is related to the research fields outlined in Annex A and development of Malta and details about the courses/programme applied for – Appendix I, II, IV (30%).
- c) The outcome of the interview (30%)

10.2 Applicants and applications shall be deemed to be ineligible for a scholarship by the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** if they do not achieve at least a pass mark of fifty percent (50%) in each of the selection criteria listed in [Clause 10.1](#).

10.3 The applicants will be ranked according to the marks obtained from the criteria found in [Clause 10.1](#). Funding will be made available to the applicants according to the relative rank they have achieved. Therefore, the fund will first be made available to the highest ranked applicant, and funds will subsequently continue to be made available to the other applicants according to their rank until the fund is exhausted.

11. Types of Scholarships

11.1 Applicants must be applying to read for a programme of studies leading to a qualification at MQF Level 7 or 8.

11.2 Applicants awarded a scholarship shall be available to commence / or have commenced their programme/course leading to a qualification at MQF Level 7 or 8 between the **31st of December 2025 and the 31st of December 2026**.

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11.3 Programmes / courses eligible under this scheme and value of awards are included in the table below for ease of reference:

| Level of Programme | Max Duration of Programme | Value of Scholarship Grant |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| MQF Level 7 | Up to and not more than three (3) years (thirty-six (36) months) | <p>Full-time Basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of the tuition fees • 100% of bench fees and/or administration fees • Study allowance amounting to €3,600 per annum • Notwithstanding the above, the total of grant must not exceed €10,000 over the duration of the course. <p>Part-time basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of the tuition fees • 100% bench fees and/or administration fees • Notwithstanding the above, the total of grant must not exceed €10,000 over the duration of the course. |
| MQF Level 8 | Up to and not more than six (6) years (seventy-two (72) months) | <p>Full-time Basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of the tuition fees • 100% of bench fees and/or administration fees • Study allowance amounting to €3,600 per annum • Notwithstanding the above, the total of grant must not |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <p>exceed €20,000 over the duration of the course.</p> <p>Part-time basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of the tuition fees • 100% bench fees and/or administration fees • Notwithstanding the above, the total of grant must not exceed €20,000 over the duration of the course. |
|--|--|---|

Table 1: Scholarship Grants

12. Value of Awards and Payments

12.1 Programmes / Courses at MQF Level 7:

For programmes/courses provided by a Recognised Educational Institution through full-time/part-time, the value of the scholarship grant is **up to €10,000 over the duration of the course**. This amount shall cover 80% of the tuition fees and 100% bench fees and a study allowance for students reading for a programme/course on a full-time basis is to be provided amounting to €3,600 per annum. To be eligible for the study allowance, full-time students must not enter into full-time employment concurrently with their studies.

12.2 Programmes / Courses at MQF Level 8:

For programmes/courses provided by a Recognised Educational Institution through full-time/part-time, the value of the scholarship grant is **up to €20,000 over the duration of the course**. This amount shall cover 80% of the tuition fees and 100% bench fees and a study allowance for students reading for a programme/course on a full-time basis is to be provided amounting to €3,600 per annum. To be eligible for the study allowance, full-time students must not enter into full-time employment concurrently with their studies.

12.3 The **MDIA** may consider extension for completion of studies. **ONLY** one Extension beyond the completion date indicated on the Scholarship Grant Agreement may be considered by **MDIA**. Any request for extensions is to be

addressed to the **MDIA** supported by the approval of the Recognised Educational Institution and submitted at least 1 (one) month prior to the completion of studies. Any request for extension is at the discretion of the **MDIA** to approve or otherwise. No further funds will be allocated or paid for this extension if approved by the Board.

12.4 Payments of Scholarships grant are affected as follows:

Programmes / Courses at MQF Level 7 and 8:

Tuition fees and/or bench fees are to be paid by the Scholarships' Awardees directly to the Recognised Educational Institution. The fees paid by the student shall then be reimbursed to the awardee on **presentation of invoice/s and the original official receipt/s of payment/s or equivalent** (i.e., receipted invoice where applicable) issued by the receiving Recognised Educational Institution.

- 12.4.1 For full-time and part-time programmes, the payment for tuition fees and/or bench fees shall be split into payments in the form of 'once Per Annum' to the Awardee's Bank Account, provided that the Awardee presents all the necessary invoice/s and official fiscal receipts. Notwithstanding the above, payment processing may take up to 30 (thirty) working days.
- 12.4.2 For full-time programmes, the payment of the study allowance shall be split into payments in the form of 'once Per Annum' to the Awardee's Bank Account. Notwithstanding the above, payment processing may take up to 30 (thirty) working days.
- 12.4.3 The first annual disbursement of the awarded scholarship, amounting to 25% of the total eligible costs, shall be effected in the last quarter of the calendar year 2026. The remaining 75% of the eligible amount shall be split and disbursed on an annual basis, with each instalment payable during the last quarter of the respective calendar year until successful completion of their studies, provided that Articles 13.13 and 13.14 are duly observed. The MDIA reserves the right to vary the rates of disbursement at its discretion.
- 12.4.4 In cases of an extension of studies as per Article 12.3, 50% of the final payment entitlement will only be disbursed upon successful completion

and submission of the documents as outlined in Article 13.14 found here under.

Should an Awardee's programme of studies entail part of "Per Annum", the study allowance for that particular partial year shall be given on a pro rata basis.

13. General Conditions of Award

13.1 The general conditions in this section apply to all Applicants under the scheme and to all Scholarship Awardees.

APPLICATION STAGE

13.2 Applicants shall be expected to seek prior visa approval (where applicable) for any proposed studies abroad. It is the applicant's responsibility to seek visa approval where applicable for any proposed studies abroad.

13.3 **No supplementary scholarship awards/grants for the same course/ programme of studies are allowed in addition to the Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship.** Should the candidate seek to obtain supplementary Scholarship awards or supplementary grants from any other source additional to **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship** for the same course or programme it shall be deemed to be in breach of the agreement. As a result, cancellation of award and refund of all funds granted to Awardee by then shall be required by the **MDIA**. The MDIA considers this as fraud and may proceed with a criminal liability suit against such Awardees. Please refer also to [Clause 14](#).

PROVISIONAL AWARD STAGE

13.4 Applicants will be notified of their acceptance by the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board**.

13.5 The Awardee shall be given a draft Agreement that stipulates the terms and conditions of such Award. The **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** reserves the right to review and cancel the provisional award if new information reveals any change in information or conditions which renders the provisional Awardee ineligible for the Scholarship Award.

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- 13.6 The Awardee shall conclude and sign the Agreement by not later than one (1) week from receipt of awardee notice, unless otherwise agreed with the MDIA in writing upon the provision of a justification which the MDIA, at its sole and absolute discretion, deems to be sufficient. Failure to present the signed Agreement by the prescribed date, unless otherwise agreed in the manner prescribed in this clause, shall result in the cancellation of such award and its allocation to the next eligible candidate according to the established ranking. As part of the signing of Agreement, the Awardee shall be required to fill any required forms that may be communicated by the MDIA.
- 13.7 Should any conflict arise between the interpretation of clauses in these guidelines and the Agreement, the terms of these guidelines shall prevail.
- 13.8 Should the programme of studies have not already commenced at the time of the application; the Awardee shall be expected to take up the Scholarship award from the date stated by the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** on the Grant Agreement. If for any reason, Applicants cannot commence their studies on the date inserted in the Scholarship Grant Agreement or requires a different start date they are duty bound to inform the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board prior to signing the Scholarship agreement**. The **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** reserves the right, on notification of such intention, to review the start date or else to cancel the Scholarship should the changes imply postponing the start date in breach of [Clause 11.2](#).

13.8.1 Should the programme of studies have commenced at the time of the application, the Awardee shall provide unto the Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board, the commencement date as well as evidence showing that he/she has commenced the said programme of studies.

CONTRACTED AWARD STAGE

- 13.9 Scholarships cannot be extended to enable the Awardee to complete an additional or higher qualification other than that for which the selection was made.
- 13.10 On award of a Scholarship, MDIA may make the information obtained from the applicants, available to public authorities for the purpose of quality assurance, transparency, and double funding checks.
- 13.11 In line with financial management and transparency principles, and in

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accordance with the **Public Finance Management Act (Cap. 601)** and the **Public Administration Act (Cap. 595)**, the MDIA and the applicant agree and acknowledge that grant-related financial and administrative data may be shared with public entities to prevent duplicate funding. All data processing by the MDIA pursuant to this Agreement, including but not limited to this provision and the last preceding provision (13.10) will comply with **Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act (Cap. 586)**, ensuring only necessary information is shared. If double funding is detected, the MDIA reserves the right to proceed according to law to recover the funds.

- 13.12 Awardees who are found to have given false information or who have in any manner withheld information that would have influenced the awarding of the Scholarship and/or any grants in accordance with these guidelines, shall be immediately disqualified and shall be asked to reimburse any expenses and money granted to them or on their behalf. **MDIA** may proceed with a criminal liability suit, without prejudice to any civil action for damages, against such Awardees.

PROGRESS AND COMPLETION

- 13.13 For **Masters (MQF Level 7)** applicants, with the completion of a study unit the Awardee must submit the official result achieved by that study unit, in a format which clearly shows official results together with the student id and name, within one (1) month of receipt of result.

For **PhD (MQF Level 8)** applicants, the Awardee must submit a progress report signed by the awardee's supervisor every academic year from the start of the course till the end.

- 13.14 Applicants pursuing full-time studies, and receiving the study allowance are required to show proof of no other full-time employment, through Jobs Plus record, or the equivalent, every year before the annual disbursement of funds. Applicants who are employed on a full-time basis at the time of the respective submission shall not be eligible for the study allowance. Applicants employed on a part-time basis and who do not exceed 30 hours per week shall be deemed eligible for the study allowance. Applicants employed on a part time basis shall, in addition to the Jobs Plus record, or the equivalent, provide a declaration from their employer confirming that they do not work more than 30 hours per week, every year before the annual disbursement of funds.

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13.15 Upon completion of the studies, and prior issuing the final payment, the below documentation shall be submitted to the MDIA within **three (3) months** from the award of the qualification:

13.14.1 Final confirmation (directly from the institution via email) where the University confirms that the student has obtained the award.

13.14.2 Soft copy of title and contents pages of thesis/dissertation/research work/project.

13.14.3 Transcript and/or the Official Certificate awarding the Degree.

Soft Copy documentation shall be forwarded to the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship** office in **PDF format** by email to pathfinder.mdia@mdia.gov.mt

13.16 MDIA reserves the right to organise Public Relations events in relation to this **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship**. MDIA also reserves the right to invite any awardee to attend and/or to speak at such event. If such an invitation is received by an awardee, said awardee is hereby accepting such invitation **a priori**. Said acceptance shall be valid for the duration of their course and **for two (2) years** following the completion of their course.

13.17 Awardees may be contacted for PR collaboration from the PR office at MDIA.

13.18 All publications, including journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, theses or dissertations, technical reports, proceedings, books, monographs, and working papers arising from the applicant's studies, shall include an acknowledgment of the MDIA Pathfinder Scholarship Fund.

14. Termination prior to completion of programme

14.1 Scholarship Awardees who for any reason discontinue their studies shall inform the MDIA in writing immediately.

14.2 The **MDIA** shall on thirty (30) days written notice terminate the award if:

- a) the Applicant's progress is deemed unsatisfactory by the Recognised Institution; and/or
- b) the Applicant discontinues the studies; and/or

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- c) the Applicant is in breach of any provision of these Guidelines and does not remedy the breach within thirty (30) days of receipt of written notice requiring him/her to do so; and/or
- d) fails to submit the documentation stipulated in article 13.14 demonstrating completion of studies.

14.3 When an Awardee has the scholarship award terminated under conditions stipulated in [Clause 14.2](#), or in the event that the Awardee voluntarily withdraws from the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship**, the **MDIA** shall determine the amount to be reimbursed. The refund must be made within **three (3) months** from the awardee's declaration in terms of Clause 14.1 or from the date of the decision to withdraw from the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship**.

14.4 Awardees shall not be deemed to be in breach of these guidelines **ONLY** in case of serious illness and demise of the awardee. In case of serious illness, the awardee needs to provide medical certificates and testimonials to **MDIA**. Thus, awardees who cannot pursue further studies due to serious illness might be required to refund grants on a pro-rata basis as approved by and at the discretion **of the MDIA**.

14.5 In such situations, the Scholarship Awardee shall provide justifiable explanation as to why the course was not completed or why the Scholarship Awardee failed to obtain the qualification. Documented evidence, medical certificates and testimonials must accompany each claim. The **MDIA** shall in no way be bound to waiver all claims put forward. The **MDIA** reserves the right to appoint its own expert, be it medical or otherwise, to advise and assess the case of the claimant.

14.6 The Awardee/Candidate/Applicant hereby binds himself to fully indemnify MDIA and to hold MDIA, the MDIA Digital Pathfinder Scholarship Board and its members free from any responsibility should the Awardee/Candidate/Applicant, MDIA, the MDIA Digital Pathfinder Scholarship Board or any third party suffer any form of damages as a result of this Scholarship. The Awardee/Candidate/Applicant shall reimburse MDIA for any expenses MDIA may incur due to the fact that it may have to defend itself, legally or otherwise, from any claim made against it as a result of this Scholarship. Said expenses include but are not limited to, court expenses, legal fees, consultant expenses and ancillary expenses. Indemnity in terms of this Scholarship shall be immediately due upon any request to this effect made by MDIA to the Awardee/Candidate/Applicant. Such indemnity shall

be deemed to be certain, liquidated and due in terms of Maltese Law, and shall not be subject to any abatement or reduction by any adjudicating body be it the Maltese Courts or otherwise. Furthermore, the Awardee/Candidate/Applicant agrees that the MDIA and the MDIA Digital Pathfinder Scholarship Board, nor its members, shall not be held liable nor responsible for any act or omission by the Awardee/Candidate/Applicant in furtherance of this Scholarship.

15. Information

15.1 For further queries and information please contact: **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship** office:

MDIA
Twenty20 Business Centre
Triq l-Intornjatur, Zone 3
Central Business District, Birkirkara
CBD 3050
Malta

Telephone :(+356) 21828800
Email: pathfinder.mdia@mdia.gov.mt
Website: www.mdia.gov.mt

15.2 Please note that the official website of **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship** is found on <https://www.mdia.gov.mt/schemes/pathfinder-digital-scholarship/>. The **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Board** shall not assume any responsibility for any incorrect information found on other websites as regards to the **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship**.

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Annex A - Research Areas

The **Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship** is intended to support postgraduate education in the fields of **Artificial Intelligence** and/or **Digital Trust** and/or **Knowledge and Data Representation and Analysis** and/or **Technology for Peace Sustainability and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** and/or **Quantum Computing** and/or **High Performance Computing (HPC)** and/or **Other Emerging Technologies** and/or **Regulatory Compliance and Governance** and/or **Cultural and Linguistic Technologies** to ensure that the Maltese labour market is supplied with individuals having the necessary skills and to guarantee that it is in a better position to compete at an international level. The scheme is aimed to support those pursuing this path to succeed both at the level of education attainment as well as contributing effectively towards the economy.

The research areas can be further subdivided into the following sub-areas:

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Generative AI constitutes the most promising research area in the domain of AI as it can directly augment humans in knowledge creation by producing original content, such as text, images, and sound. Most executives still consider Generative AI the most disruptive emerging technology over the next 3 - 5 years, with 46% of global CEOs planning to enhance profitability through its integration, according to PwC's 2025 Global CEO Survey.¹ Meanwhile, Gartner forecasts that total AI-related IT spending including infrastructure, software, and services will reach approximately \$1.5 trillion in 2025.²

Agentic AI, in which AI solutions autonomously make plans and workflows and execute them using minimal human intervention, is being seen as one of the shifts in the use of the technology. This shift from AI to produce answers to AI which executes actions, decomposing a problem, using tools, evaluates effectiveness and adapts accordingly can bring new opportunities in integrating with other systems

¹ PwC (2025). PwC's 2025 Global CEO Survey reveals that, while most executives anticipate growth in the global economy and stronger results from generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), they remain cautious about macroeconomic volatility. Available at: <https://www.pwc.ro/en/press-room/press-releases-2025/pwc-s-2025-global-ceo-survey-reveals-that--while-most-executives.html>

² Gartner (2025). Press Release: Gartner Says Worldwide AI Spending Will Total \$1.5 Trillion in 2025. Available on: <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2025-09-17-gartner-says-worldwide-ai-spending-will-total-1-point-5-trillion-in-2025>

act acting as an active problem solver. This technology is expected to reach early majority adoption within 3 - 6 years, with significant transformative potential identified for functional areas such as customer service, sales, and software engineering. By 2028, it is predicted that one-third of enterprise applications will incorporate agentic AI, resulting in a landscape where 15% of day-to-day work decisions are made autonomously.³

Multimodal AI is also gaining traction, as its development is fuelled by large tech companies. By accepting input and producing content across multiple modalities, such as text, images and sound, Multimodal AI unlocks new possibilities in content creation and data analysis and surpasses traditional AI, which is often focused on a single data type in both input and output.

Explainable AI represents another promising trend in this research area. It refers to the collection of methods and frameworks that allow humans to understand the rationale of AI-generated outputs, making the interaction with AI less ambiguous along with improving transparency and traceability of AI outcomes. Most business leaders now see the importance of ethical AI practices and are prepared to implement them. It is expected that Explainable AI will accelerate the adoption of ethical AI frameworks and practices in the near future.

Intelligent and Safe Human Environments have also been a primary area of study within the field of AI. It focusses on the beneficial impact, as well as risks, brought about to environments such as intelligent homes and cities, from the implementation of various AI systems.

Autonomous Vehicles including land, sea and air-based, offer great potential for economic impact. In the past few years, there was an increase to address the needs and concerns introduced by this field.

Responsible and Ethical AI focusing on the OECD AI principles, Malta's AI Strategy and Vision and UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence .

Domain-specific language models, specialised for particular sectors/areas such as medicine or law can provide more accurate and reliable output than general purpose models, yet being more efficient and cheaper to run. The development of such techniques to enable the use of such models, for instance to enhance privacy and governance through training on internal, sensitive data is predicted to leave an impact on the industry.

³ Gartner (2025). Executive Briefing on Emerging Technology: Agentic AI.

Digital Trust

Due to escalating threats of cybercrime, accompanied by the growing instances of data breaches and fraud, global organisations face the need to resort to additional measures for safeguarding sensitive data and securing business integrity.

Digital Identity constitutes the first important research area in the realm of digital trust. One of the evolving trends in this research area is a **Digital Identity Wallet**, which refers to a software where individuals and organisations can centrally store and manage their certificates and identification-related evidence. Digital Identity Wallets are expected to produce a high impact on society by providing an additional layer of security in digital interactions. Substantial economic benefits can also be unlocked due to the reduction in the number of fraudulent activities and occurrences of identity breach.

Cybersecurity is expected to become one of the integral components of digital trust by implementing measures that safeguard data and systems. Today, cybersecurity witnesses a shift in perception on the part of modern organisations. Rather than being just a resilience necessity, it is now being recognised as a key commercial opportunity, which lays the foundation for further research and development.

Cyber Resilience is also anticipated to emerge as a cornerstone of digital trust, ensuring the protection and continuity of data and systems against evolving threats. As organisations embrace cyber resilience in preparation of the EU Cyber Resilience Act, they not only enhance their ability to withstand cyberattacks but also seize competitive advantages in an increasingly digital landscape.

Quantum Communication constitutes another crucial research area. Given the potential advent of quantum computers, the protection of sensitive data of individuals and organisations becomes vital. It is projected that in coming decades, quantum communication protocols, such as QKD and PQC, will be utilised to deploy quantum-secure networks both across the EU and on the international level.

Dependable Computing focuses on ensuring the reliability and security of computing systems in an era which is increasingly reliant on digital infrastructure. Research in dependable computing is centred on developing robust systems capable of withstanding failures and cyber threats, enhancing overall digital trust. This area encompasses advancements in techniques to improve robustness, including conformity assessment, technical auditing, fault tolerance, error detection and recovery, and secure software design, essential for safeguarding critical data and systems integrity.

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Regulatory Science, as a separate research area in digital trust, focuses on the need for foresight in the development of frameworks, regulations, and standards to govern that balance innovation with consumer protection and societal well-being. This research area also addresses the effectiveness of the current frameworks to foster an environment of trust and accountability in the digital domain.

Knowledge and Data Representation and Analysis

As the data becomes more intricate and complex, there is a growing necessity to integrate information from multiple sources and organise knowledge in a structured way. In this context, the significance of knowledge and data representation and analysis becomes ever more pivotal. This area is also of great focus at a European Union level, with dynamic data being one of the key drivers for the digital transformation of Europe. The EU supports the need to invest in next generation data standards, tools, and technologies that are flexible to adapt to dynamic data that changes its nature over time and therefore might require different data representation, processing, and analysis.

Data Analytics involves the application of statistical, mathematical, and computational methods to uncover patterns, trends, and valuable insights from data. This field is instrumental in making informed decisions, predicting future trends, and optimising processes across various domains. The synergy between knowledge representation and data analysis is pivotal for leveraging the full potential of data in our increasingly data-driven world.

Domain-Specific Data Analysis has the potential of leading to better results when compared to general purpose approaches. It is of high importance to develop specialised techniques for specific domains, as well as to perform research into the combination of domain-specific analysis techniques across different application domains interacting together.

Knowledge Graphs which represent a separate research area in this domain, aim to accumulate and convey knowledge of the real world. Knowledge graphs constitute a promising area of research due to the extent of their use cases, encompassing semantic search, context-aware chatbots, recommendation systems, and targeted advertising. Another reason behind the growing prominence of knowledge graphs is their potential to address the uncertainty in AI by forcing latent variables to represent content interpretable by humans.

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Technology for Peace, Sustainability and ESG

Technology for Peace, Sustainability and ESG represents another field of innovative technology research that warrants immediate consideration on the part of MDIA. It refers to the development and application of innovative technologies with the objective to minimise environmental impact, as well as to address social and governance considerations set out in the global ESG agenda. This area also focuses on the opportunities related to Peace Technology.

Sustainable Cloud, which refers to the cloud computing services that prioritise compliance with sustainability objectives, represents the first evolving trend in this research area. In contrast to traditional cloud, sustainable cloud puts emphasis on the adoption of green practices, which can include the integration of renewable energy sources to power data centers, the optimisation of data centre locations, and the implementation of effective load-balancing algorithms, among many others.

AI for Sustainability represents another promising field of research, which can find its use cases across multiple economic sectors, such as agriculture, energy management, and transport. Today, most business leaders either have plans to implement or already have implemented Generative AI to achieve ESG objective⁴, and some of the major technology companies have already started to apply AI to accelerate change.

Social-Technical Ecosystems obtain a wider context and view of the social impact of technology, recognising that technical systems work in a societal context and that society is increasingly dependent on such technical systems. It is necessary for new approaches to be developed to ensure that social roles and structures shape technology, during their design and development phases, ensuring organic integration into society, and highlighting their impact on social rights and power structures. **Edge Computing** is an additional research area, which can serve as an indirect enabler of sustainability. Conceptually, edge computing refers to the practice of processing data locally, closer to the source of data generation, rather than in centralised data centres, which are often geographically distant from the **data source**.

Peace Tech represents a strategic research area focused on leveraging advanced technologies to enhance societal well-being, resilience, and harmony to create technologies that serve as catalysts for peace and sustainable progress. This domain emphasizes the development of solutions that prevent, mitigate and

⁴ Deloitte (2025). 2025 C-suite Sustainability Report: The next wave of business value. Available on: <https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-shared/docs/about/2025/2025-deloitte-global-c-suite-sustainability-report.pdf>

resolve conflict; dual-use innovations supporting peace, resilience and EU security. Emerging trends in this area include AI systems that apply machine learning to predict and prevent disputes through data-driven insights.

GPU Powered Infrastructure (NeoClouds) technology is a cloud platform designed specifically for AI and high-performance computing workloads. It provides on-demand GPU-powered infrastructure, enabling organizations to run intensive tasks such as machine learning model training, real-time inference, and large-scale data analytics without investing in costly hardware. The platform emphasizes flexibility and cost-efficiency, offering transparent, pay-as-you-go pricing. Beyond compute resources, Neocloud delivers optimized services for AI workflows, including fast storage, data pipelines, and monitoring tools, making it ideal for modern, performance-driven applications. Backed by major tech companies, enterprise adoption of this technology is expected to surge in 2026, with growth forecasted to triple in Neocloud deployments, regional expansion across Europe and Asia, and deeper integration into enterprise AI strategies.⁵

Other Emerging Technologies

Quantum Computers, which leverage the principles of quantum mechanics, can achieve an exponential increase in computational power and processing speed.

Notably, this research area is expected to deliver substantial benefits in healthcare by enhancing computer-assisted drug discovery and accelerating the adoption of personalised medicine. Moreover, quantum computers are projected to become one of the drivers behind sustainability objectives by solving complex problems faster and making computation less energy intensive. Specifically, they can optimise the use of available resources while minimising projected adverse environmental impact, contribute to the optimisation of electrical grids and routing, and enable innovations in carbon capture, batteries, and fertilisers.

Despite their potential positive impact, quantum computing might also lead to serious repercussions if some important pre-emptive measures are overlooked. As quantum computers have the potential to break current encryption methods and undermine the security of modern networks, it is critical to commence a thorough research into quantum communication to determine an optimal strategy of risk mitigation.

High Performance Computing (HPC) refers to the use of supercomputers or large clusters of interconnected machines, combined with parallel processing

⁵ Forrester (2025). 2026 Predictions: Technology & Security. Available on: <https://www.forrester.com/predictions/technology-2026/>

techniques, to solve complex computational problems at extremely high speeds. HPC enables the processing of massive datasets, sophisticated simulations, and calculations that are too large or time-consuming for standard computers.

Neuromorphic Computing is inspired by the human brain's architecture and represents a paradigm shift in computing design, offering unprecedented efficiency and versatility. Research in this field focuses on developing hardware and algorithms that mimic neural networks, enabling tasks like pattern recognition, adaptive learning, and sensor processing with remarkable speed and energy efficiency. Neuromorphic computing is expected to have a pronounced impact on multiple sectors, finding its applications in healthcare, financial sector, and manufacturing, among many others.

Applications related to Personalised Medicine leverage advancements in genomics, data analytics, and AI to tailor medical treatment to individual characteristics, offering more precise diagnostics and therapy. Research in this area explores the integration of diverse data sources, including genomic data, medical records, and lifestyle factors, to develop predictive models and therapeutic interventions customised to each patient's unique profile. This approach holds potential for improving patient outcomes, reducing healthcare costs, and advancing medical research.

Augmented-Connected Workforce focuses on leveraging technology to enhance human productivity, collaboration, and well-being in the workplace. This includes developments in augmented reality (AR), virtual collaboration platforms, and human-computer interfaces, enabling seamless integration of digital tools into everyday work processes. By empowering workers with enhanced capabilities and access to real-time information, this research area aims to drive innovation and efficiency across industries.

Digital Twins which consists of virtual models of real-world objects or processes, are becoming crucial in several applications. Moreover, they are increasingly being recognised as effective means of process and design optimisation, safety assurances, planning and predictive analysis.

Innovative Computing for the Humanities aids in supporting fundamental questions in relation to human society and culture. However, there are still gaps in our understanding of how digital and computational tools can serve better the understanding of the human and social condition.

Regulatory Compliance and Governance

EU digital regulations covering areas such as AI, cybersecurity, data governance, data access, and digital identity provide an opportunity to develop compliance and governance tools that help organisations compliance efforts. Such tools support transparency, accountability, and secure data handling, which are fundamental expectations embedded across EU digital legislation.

Research that supports the development of tools that enables compliance with one or more of the following:

EU AI Act - [Regulation - EU - 2024/1689 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

EU Cyber Security Act - [Regulation - 2019/881 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

EU Cyber Resilience Act - [Regulation - 2024/2847 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

EU Data Governance Act - [Regulation - 2022/868 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

EU Data Act - [Regulation - EU - 2023/2854 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

The European Digital Identity Regulation (eIDAS 2) - [Regulation - EU - 2024/1183 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

Cultural and Linguistic Technologies

This research priority aims to support the implementation of Measure 9, 10 and 11 of the proposed AI Strategy and Vision “Malta AI: Where Innovation Meets Trust for Well-Being”

Measure 9: AI and long-term archival of cultural heritage data. Capitalising on ongoing efforts for the digitalisation and archival of cultural heritage, set up schemes to support the use of AI on such data.

Measure 10: Tool support for the Maltese language. Support the creation of toolsets to enable digital processing and analysis of Maltese artefacts, in both its written and spoken form, including spellchecking and transcription support.

Measure 11: Language models for the Maltese language. Support research and development in the creation and use of language models with a focus on the Maltese language.

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17. REVISION HISTORY

| Revision No. | Issue Date | Description |
|--------------|------------|---|
| 1 | 24/06/2021 | First issue. |
| 2 | 28/06/2023 | Second issue. |
| 3 | 24/06/2024 | Third issue. |
| 4 | 28/04/2025 | Fourth issue – The value of grant for PhD applicants was updated and a requirement was also added for applicants to include an acknowledgment of the Pathfinder MDIA Digital Scholarship Fund in all of their publications. The terms related to the extension request and final payment have been updated accordingly. |
| 5 | 30/06/2026 | Fifth Issue - Updated the priority areas in line with the MDIA`s research priorities. Amended the eligibility criteria for study allowance. |

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| Priorities | Artificial Intelligence | Digital Trust | Knowledge and Data Representation and Analysis | Technology for Peace, Sustainability and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) | Other Emerging Technologies | Regulatory Compliance and Governance | Cultural and Linguistic Technologies |
|----------------|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| Sub-Priorities | Generative AI Agentic AI Multimodal AI Explainable AI Intelligent and Safe Human Environments Autonomous Vehicles Responsible and Ethical AI Domain-specific language models | Digital Identity Cybersecurity Cyber Resilience Quantum Communication Dependable Computing Regulatory Science | Data Analytics Domain-Specific Data Analysis Knowledge Graphs | Sustainable Cloud AI for Sustainability Social-Technical Ecosystems Edge Computing Peace Tech GPU Powered Infrastructure (NeoClouds) | Quantum Computers High Performance Computing (HPC) Neuromorphic Computing Applications related to Personalised Medicine Augmented-Connected Workforce Digital Twins | EU AI Act EU Cyber Security Act EU Cyber Resilience Act EU Data Governance Act EU Data Act European Digital Identity Regulation (eIDAS 2) | AI and long-term archival of cultural heritage data Tools to support for the Maltese language Creation and use of language models with a focus on the Maltese language. |

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