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NEOLAIa

Transforming Regions for an Inclusive Europe

WORK PACKAGE 2

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING

Deliverable 2.2

Intermediate Report on setting up teaching and learning activities

December 2025

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	5
1. Used terms	6
2. List of figures	6
3. List of tables	7
4. Introduction.....	7
5. Executive summary	8
6. Description	9
6.1. General information	9
6.2. Task 2.1 - Launching the NEOLAIa Pedagogical Hub	12
6.3. Task 2.2 - Piloting and sustaining the NEOLAIa Focus Academy	15
6.4. Task 2.3 - Designing and piloting NEOLAIa multiple and joint degrees.....	20
6.5. Task 2.4 - Designing and piloting the NEOLAIa Summer School in Humanities and Social Sciences	23
6.6. Task 2.5 - Piloting and upscaling science knowledge dissemination with the NEOTeAch.....	26
6.7. Task 2.6 - Designing and piloting NEOLAIa Micro-credentials and Digital Badges for Lifelong Learning.....	28
7. Discussion	31
8. Conclusion	34
9. References.....	35
10. Annexes	35

1. Used terms

AC - Academic Committee

BIP - Blended Intensive Programme

Col - Community of Interest

DMJ - Double, Multiple, Joint (Degrees)

EC - Executive Committee

FA - Focus Academy

GA - Grant Agreement

HEI - Higher Education Institution

KPIs - Key Performance Indicators

LMS - Learning Management System

QA - Quality Assurance

SC - Steering Committee

SDG - Sustainable Development Goal

UN - United Nations

WP - Work Package

WP2 - Work Package 2 “Improving Teaching and Learning”

WPD - Work Package Delegate

WPL - Work Package Leader

WPTF - Work Package Task Force

WPTL - Work Package Task Leader

2. List of figures

Figure 1: WP2 members per university	10
Figure 2: WP2 Milestones status.....	12
Figure 3: Process decisions-making task T2.3	22
Figure 4: Participants per WP2 activities.....	31
Figure 5: Participation in courses developed within WP2 from January 2024 to December 2025	32

3. List of tables

Table 2: Task-specific committees	10
Table 3: Number of meetings.....	11
Table 4: Online activities for NEOLAiA community	14
Table 5: FA Courses developed from January to December 2025	17

4. Introduction

NEOLAiA, with its motto “Transforming Regions for an Inclusive Europe” is an Alliance of nine European Universities co-funded by the European Commission in its 2023 call for the period 2024-2027. The aim of NEOLAiA is to transform regional connectivity by embracing (i) digital transformation, through (ii) inclusion and diversity in a context of (iii) enhanced mobility, which are the three pillars of the project.

To achieve this end, “NEOLAiA, Transforming Regions for an Inclusive Europe” is based on ten lines of action:

WP1 Project Management

WP2 Improving Teaching and Learning

WP3 Diversity and inclusion - overcoming barriers to participation

WP4 Enhanced Mobility

WP5 Increasing the impact of regional research

WP6 Entrepreneurship - Capacities for the society of tomorrow

WP7 Towards a multilingual and intercultural European university

WP8 Adoption and maintenance of Open Science

WP9 Digital Transformation

WP10 Sustainability and dissemination

The NEOLAiA Alliance consists of nine partners: University of Jaén, Örebro University, Bielefeld University, University of Ostrava, University of Nicosia, Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava, University of Tours, University of Salerno, and Šiauliai State University of Applied Sciences.

The aim of WP2 "Improving Teaching and Learning" is to fulfil one of the NEOLAiA's three Higher Education Institution (HEI) core missions: Teaching, Research and Societal Engagement and contribute to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) "Quality Education" to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (GA p.13). Moreover, WP2 will contribute to two of the European Council's recommendations for a "European space of learning which benefits all learners, academics and other education staff who can move freely to study and work across the EU" and "contribute to the vitality of [our] regions and communities, helping to overcome disadvantage and geographic disparities" (Proposal for a

Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation COM/2022/17 final, pp. 1 and 8).

The specific objectives of this WP are:

- Promoting a shared European identity and cooperation among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to foster common economic and societal development rooted in regional contexts, through the establishment of joint courses and programmes, and collaborative structures that enhance institutional cooperation in teaching and learning,
- Facilitating international mobility and learner-centred education by developing short courses and implementing international multiple or joint degree programmes,
- Strengthening the European dimension in higher education and research in line with the European Strategy for Higher Education, by engaging with society and promoting inclusive, accessible, and barrier-free digital learning resources,
- Fostering a culture of lifelong learning within regional communities to support future-oriented and market-relevant employability through the implementation of Micro-credentials and Digital Badges.

Thus, the achievement of these objectives enables the NEOLAIa European Universities Alliance to actively contribute to the consolidation of the European Higher Education Area fostering internationalisation, inclusiveness, and innovation in teaching and learning. It supports the development of a shared European academic and cultural identity while enhancing societal engagement, employability, and regional development through collaborative, learner-centred, and digitally supported education.

5. Executive summary

The present Deliverable 2.2, titled *“Intermediate Report on Setting Up Teaching and Learning Activities,”* provides an overview of the progress achieved in implementing NEOLAIa’s pedagogical and educational initiatives across its nine partner universities. It summarises advancements under the six WP2 tasks, including the **Pedagogical Hub** (Task 2.1 Launching the NEOLAIa Pedagogical Hub), **Focus Academy** (Task 2.2 Piloting and sustaining the NEOLAIa Focus Academy), **Joint and Multiple degrees** (Task 2.3 Designing and piloting NEOLAIa multiple and joint degrees), **Summer Schools** (Task 2.4 Designing and piloting the NEOLAIa Summer School in Humanities and Social Sciences), **the NEOTeAch programme** (Task 2.5 Piloting and upscaling science knowledge dissemination with the NEOTeAch) and the framework for **Micro-credentials and Digital Badges** (Task 2.6 Designing and piloting NEOLAIa Micro-credentials and Digital Badges for Lifelong Learning).

The report highlights the main achievements in developing joint programmes, blended short courses, and digital collaboration platforms supporting inclusive, learner-centred, and innovative teaching practices. It also documents ongoing efforts to enhance inter-university cooperation, promote international mobility, and strengthen the European dimension in higher education within the Alliance.

In order to complete this deliverable, all WP2 team members contributed by providing structured data on the organisation of their activities related to WP2 within their respective institutions. These inputs included

comprehensive details on the outcomes and impacts of each activity, as well as the specific challenges encountered and lessons learned during their implementation, ensuring a transparent and collective assessment of progress.

Overall, the analysis of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) confirms a steady advancement towards the objectives of WP2, with significant progress in the design and delivery of short courses, the design of multiple and joint degree programmes, the launch of summer schools, the implementation of digital education projects, and the establishment of a framework for Micro-credentials and Digital Badges to support lifelong learning.

6. Description

To ensure this deliverable accurately reflects the scope and impact of activities carried out under WP2, we adopted a structured and collaborative writing process. The report is based on the work conducted between January 2024 and December 2025, with a particular focus on the milestones scheduled for 2025. These milestone reports, prepared by the task leaders, served as the primary foundation for drafting each section of the deliverable.

Our approach was designed to ensure inclusiveness and accuracy across all partner institutions. Each university was invited to contribute relevant data to the WPL, who coordinated the compilation of content. The writing process followed three key steps:

- WPLs drafted each task-specific section using the milestone reports as source material.
- WPTLs reviewed and validated the content to ensure the accuracy of the data presented.
- a questionnaire was distributed to all partner institutions to collect additional information, including:
 - the internal structuring and implementation of WP2 within each university;
 - quantitative and qualitative data on participation in teaching and learning activities (results and impact);
 - each institution's vision and recommendations for supporting WP2 activities in the medium term.

This deliverable consolidates all contributions to provide a comprehensive and transparent overview of the activities, outcomes, and future perspectives of WP2.

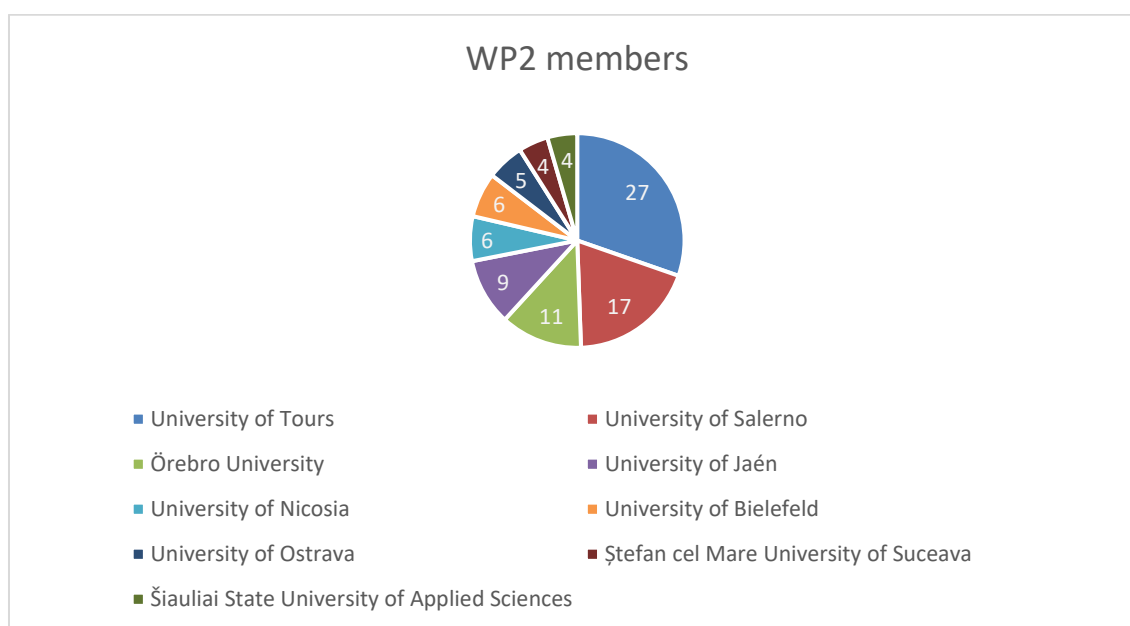
6.1. General information

Organisation Chart

The overall coordination of WP2 is led by the University of Tours, while task-level coordination is ensured by several partner institutions: University of Tours (Task 2.1, Task 2.4, Task 2.5), University of Jaén (Task 2.2), University of Salerno (Task 2.3), University of Ostrava (Task 2.4) and Örebro University (Task 2.6). WP2 is composed of several members with distinct roles and responsibilities (refer to Deliverable D2.1 *Report on planning teaching and learning activities* pages 7-9).

The **WP2 group comprises 89 members** across the nine partner universities reflecting a broad and interdisciplinary commitment to the implementation of NEOLAIA's teaching and learning activities.

Figure 1: WP2 members per university



To reinforce quality assurance and guide strategic decision-making within WP2, dedicated committees have been established across individual tasks. These committees are embedded in the implementation process to monitor progress and ensure alignment with NEOLAIa standards.

Table 1: Task-specific committees

Tasks	Committees	Mission
Task 2.3 Designing and piloting NEOLAIa multiple and joint degrees	- Multiple Master degree programme in AI and Social Robotics applied to Global Health Academic Committee - Multiple Master degree programme in Inclusion Studies Academic Committee - Joint Bachelor degree programme in Science, Management and Politics in Global Health Academic Committee	Three committees support the development and accreditation of NEOLAIa degrees.
Task 2.5 Piloting and upscaling science knowledge dissemination with the NEOTeAch	NEOTeAch Selection Committee	Selects and validates digital educational projects for dissemination.
Task 2.6 Designing and piloting NEOLAIa Micro-credentials and Digital Badges for Lifelong Learning	Digital Badges Selection Committee	Reviews proposal and determines which NEOLAIa activities can be awarded by a Digital Badges

Coordination and Task-Specific Meetings

Between January 2024 and December 2025, **a total of 109 meetings** were organised to coordinate, monitor, and steer the progress of WP2 activities. These included both online and on-site¹ sessions, ensuring inclusive participation and efficient communication across all partner institutions.

Table 2: Number of meetings

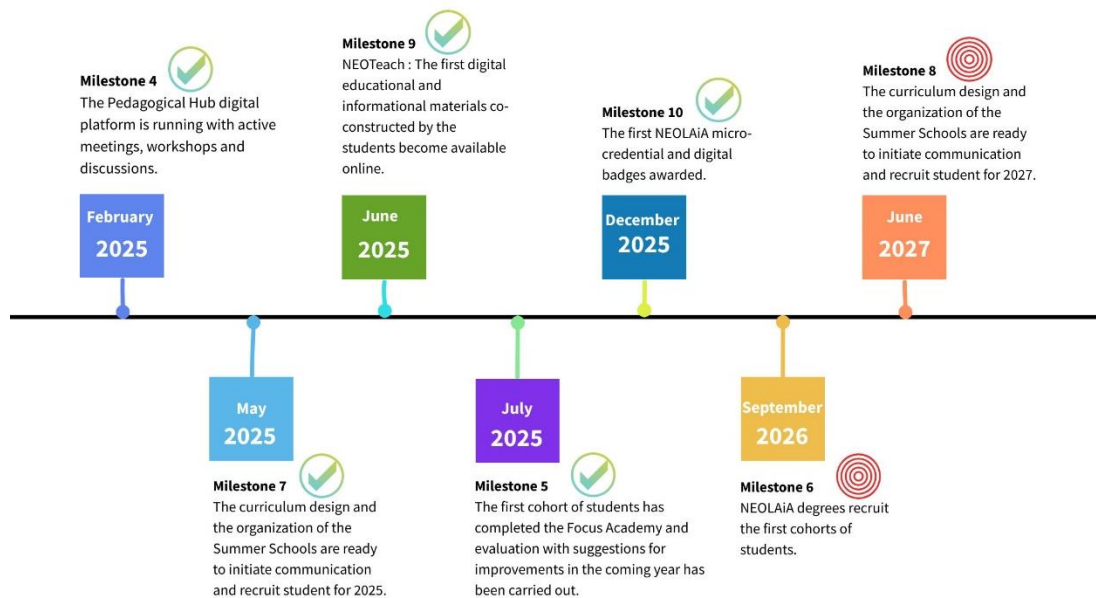
Meeting Type / Task	Number of Meetings	Format
WP2 General Coordination	14	Hybrid: 11 online, 3 on-site
Task 2.1 - Pedagogical Hub	15	Hybrid: 13 online, 2 on-site
Task 2.2 - Focus Academy	2	Online
Task 2.3 - Multiple and Joint Degrees	5	Hybrid: 3 online, 2 on-site
Task 2.3 - Academic Committee – Master in AI and Social Robotics applied to Global Health	20	Hybrid: 18 online, 2 on-site
Task 2.3 - Academic Committee – Master in Inclusion Studies	13	Hybrid: 10 online, 3 on-site
Task 2.3 - Academic Committee – Joint Bachelor Sciences, Management and Politics in Global Health	29	Online
Task 2.4 - Summer School	1	Online
Task 2.5 - NEOTeAch	4	Online
Task 2.5 - NEOTeAch Selection Committee	5	Online
Task 2.6 - Micro-credentials and Digital Badges	6	Online
Task 2.6 - Digital Badges Selection Committee	4	Online
Total	110	—

Milestones achievement

Five out of seven milestones have already been achieved. This figure provides an overview of the key steps completed so far within WP2, which remains in continuous implementation until the end of the project (Annex 1, Annex 2, Annex 3, Annex 4 and Annex 5).

¹ Each on-site meeting shall be deemed equivalent to one full on-site workday.

Figure 2: WP2 Milestones status



Six collaborative tasks

The six WP2 tasks operate within a coherent and complementary framework, collectively advancing NEOLAIa's Teaching and Learning objectives. Task 2.1 (Pedagogical Hub) establishes the collaborative and pedagogical infrastructure, which supports the student-centred mobility and learning initiatives of Tasks 2.2 (Focus Academy), 2.3 (Joint and Multiple Degrees), and 2.4 (Summer Schools). Task 2.5 (the NEOTeAch programme) extends these initiatives through the creation and dissemination of inclusive digital resources, while Task 2.6 (Micro-credentials and Digital Badges) formalises recognition of skills and competencies, promoting lifelong learning and employability. Together, the tasks form a logically integrated continuum from collaborative design to international learning, digital innovation, and accredited skill development, ensuring a strategic contribution to NEOLAIa's educational and societal goals.

6.2. Task 2.1 - Launching the NEOLAIa Pedagogical Hub

Objectives

The objective of the Task is to establish an inter-institutional Pedagogical Hub to facilitate cooperation, innovation, and exchange of good practices in teaching and learning across NEOLAIa partner universities. Specifically:

- create three functional digital forums (*Teaching & Learning Forum, Administration & Organisational Forum and PhD Students Collaboration Forum*) to enable structured dialogue and exchange among NEOLAIa stakeholders,
- facilitate hybrid collaboration by providing synchronous and asynchronous spaces for pedagogical innovation, administrative coordination, and PhD students engagement,

- promote resource sharing and best practice dissemination through a digital platform accessible to academics (teachers and researchers), administrative staff, and students,
- facilitate mobility, networking, and professional development for PhD students,
- harmonize administrative and organisational processes across partner universities.

The **Teaching and Learning Forum** has been established to foster pedagogical innovation and enhance teaching practices across the NEOLAiA alliance. It undertakes the organisation of activities such as Workshops, Webinars, Teaching Cafés, and targeted training sessions.

The **Administrative and Organisational Forum** supports the alignment of academic procedures across NEOLAiA institutions. It promotes the exchange of best practices in joint programme delivery and ECTS recognition, develops shared operational tools such as guides and calendars, and ensures logistical coordination for mobility and educational activities.

The **PhD Students Collaboration Forum** enhances doctoral mobility and engagement within the alliance. It facilitates research residencies, internships, and training opportunities, organises interactive events to foster collaboration, and monitors funding and mobility schemes accessible to PhD candidates.

Activities implemented

Activities carried out within the Pedagogical Hub from January 2024 to December 2025:

- **Creation of the Moodle - Learning Management System** hosted by the University of Tours, with Edugain authentication setup coordinated by the University of Tours in collaboration with WP9.
- **Creation of two dedicated web pages** in the NEOLAiA website: [Pedagogical Hub](#) and [PhD Hub page](#)
- **Development of a Community of Interest** ([EUSurvey - Survey](#))
- Creation of a Sphinx form by the University of Tours to provide targeted support for pedagogical project: [PedHub- Hub support - NEOLAiA - European University Alliance](#).
- **Organisation of coordination meetings** among Pedagogical Hub members to define our mission and digital tools, and to organise a programme of activities for the academic year.
- **Creation of three groups** to coordinate the activities within each forum: *Teaching and learning, Administrative and organisational, PhD Students Collaboration*.

Outputs and results

- **3 digital forums launched** through the Virtual Café
- **47 active members** for the Pedagogical Hub:
 - 15 members for the Teaching and Learning Forum
 - 15 members for the Administrative and Organisational Forum
 - 17 members for the PhD Students Collaboration Forum
- **21 members** for the Community of interest
- **3 activities were launched** during the reporting period: one webinar on NEOTeAch, one workshop focused on the BIP timeline, and one Teaching Café session, as detailed in Table 3 below.

- The **2025–2026 academic year activity calendar** developed through a collaborative effort of the Pedagogical Hub task forces, with representatives from each NEOLAIa university contributing to the content in pairs or small groups (Annex 6).
- **4 self-paced modules topics** validated and assigned content creation responsibilities in pairs (*self-paced modules titles: 1. NEOTeAch guide; 2. International Collaboration; 3. Diversity & Inclusion teaching and learning; 4. English & Interculturality*) (Annex 6).
- **2 PhD Students podcasts** launched and broadcast online: [NEOLAIa PhD Hub website](#).

Table 3: Online activities for NEOLAIa community

Date	Activity	Title	Numbers	Organisers	Target audience	Total of participants
13/11/2024	Webinar	NEOTeAch: How to develop a NEOTeAch project	1	University of Tours	Teachers Academics Lecturers Pedagogical advisors – Educational Developers – Multimedia engineers	32: 20 teachers + 12 administrative staff
25/05/2025	Workshops	Workshop BIP Timeline n°1	1	University of Tours University of Salerno Örebro University University of Bielefeld University of Sialui	Teachers, Academics, Administrative staff, International relation officers	53: 19 teachers + 34 administrative staff
18/11/2025	Teaching Café	Experiences from organizing BIP/Focus Academy in NEOLAIa – a teacher's perspective	1	Örebro University University of Tours	Teachers, Academics, Administrative staff, PhD students, Community of Interest members	50: 30 teachers + 17 administrative staff + 3 PhD students
28/11/2025	Podcast	Experiencing NEOLAIa opportunities of mobility	1	University of Jaén University of Tours	NEOLAIa community, worldwide reach	2 PhD students creating the content – 1 Multimedia Engineer editing

10/12/2025	Podcast	Experiencing a NEOLAIa joint supervision	2	University of Bielefeld University of Tours	NEOLAIa community, worldwide reach	2 PhD students creating the content – 1 Multimedia Engineer editing
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Indicators (KPIs)

- **Pedagogical Hub** set up with digital forums: 3 digital forums active.

Challenges and actions taken

During the previous academic year, the Pedagogical Hub encountered coordination challenges due to the simultaneous scheduling of meetings across its three task groups. Initially, each group held separate one-hour sessions, followed by a 30-minute joint meeting. While this format was intended to foster cross-group exchange, it proved inefficient for institutions represented by a single participant and generated scheduling tensions among partners.

To address these issues, the meeting structure has been revised: sessions are held jointly around clearly defined thematic priorities, enabling broader participation and better alignment across institutions. In parallel, smaller working groups have been established to advance specific content, including Self-paced modules and activity planning.

Another significant challenge concerns the diversity of learning management systems (LMS) used across partner universities. To overcome this, a digital gateway is being developed in collaboration with WP10, aiming to streamline access and enhance the learning experience for all users.

Next steps

- **Develop an Operating Manual** to the structure and functionalities of the Pedagogical Hub.
- **Launch training activities:** four self-paced modules, workshops, and webinars.
- **Develop Digital Badges** for the training programmes created within the Pedagogical Hub to recognise and validate participants' learning achievements.
- **Finalize the BIP Timeline and Glossary of terms** for NEOLAIa stakeholders and disseminating among the community.
- **Launch a survey targeting teachers** within the alliance to identify and document their specific training needs for 2026-2027 academic year.
- **Strengthen communication and visibility** for NEOLAIa stakeholders and **associate partners:** invite them to join our Community of Interest, the Teaching Café discussion, Webinars and Workshops

6.3. Task 2.2 - Piloting and sustaining the NEOLAIa Focus Academy

Objectives

The **NEOLAIa Focus Academy (FA)** is a transnational educational initiative designed to provide students across the European University alliance with interdisciplinary, challenge-driven learning experiences. The programme

revolves around the creation of a cross-sectional curriculum that highlights the impact of the three key NEOLAIa Pillars on European regions and explores how European values can be pursued through these pillars.

FA courses are co-created and delivered by faculty members from multiple NEOLAIa partner institutions (at least three), ensuring alignment with the alliance's strategic pillars. A total of **nine English-taught short courses** are planned, each applying a blended teaching methodology and corresponding to 3 ECTS (approximately 75 hours of student work). Experts from each participating university contribute to course design, develop materials with specialized teachers, and select tutors to supervise both online and on-site activities.

The course structure combines virtual and physical components. The **virtual component** includes:

- Large-cohort synchronous events (1-hour TED Talk-style online lectures);
- Small-cohort groups (1–3 students per university) engaging in 25 hours of asynchronous activities and 5 hours of discussion seminars/workshops;
- 44 hours of individual self-paced work, including recommended reading, essays, and assessments.

The **physical mobility** component involves on-site sessions, lasting 5–10 days and funded through Erasmus Key Action 1 Blended Intensive Programmes.

The NEOLAIa FA targets multiple levels of impact: strengthening the identity of the alliance through the NEOLAIa Pillars; equipping students with tools to address global challenges from a regional perspective; and fostering interaction across diverse EU regions by engaging international students and researchers in collaborative problem-solving.

Activities implemented

- **Development of a common framework** for NEOLAIa Focus Academy courses, including a Task Card defining objectives, methodology, course requirements, recommended structure, scheduling, resources and tools.
- **Organisation of coordination meetings** among WP2 leaders, task leader and task force to plan course design, identify collaborators, and align schedules.
- **Set up a Tool** (Excel) to support topic identification and collaboration, enabling the selection of course subjects and potential partners ensuring at least three NEOLAIa universities for each course.
- **Creation and dissemination of 2 guidelines** for organising and promoting open activities within the NEOLAIa FA and for Communication process for FA course coordination **and several templates** for course design, syllabus preparation, communication (flyer), certificate of attendance and student evaluation.
- Creation and maintenance of a **dedicated webpage** in the NEOLAIa website for promotional purposes: <https://neolaiacampus.eu/for-students/focus-academy-2/>
- **Implementation of five Focus Academy courses** during the reporting period, from January to December 2025, combining virtual components and physical mobility.

Table 4: FA Courses developed from January to December 2025

Course Title	Host Institution	Collaborators	NEOLAIa Pillar	Dates	Attendance
<i>Introduction to Information Security Requirements</i>	Örebro University (ORU) ORU Course website	University of Nicosia (UNIC), University of Salerno (UNISA), University of Suceava (USV) University of Tours (UT)	Digital Transformation	Online: 20 th Jan-2 nd Feb 2025 On-site: 3 rd Feb-9 th Feb 2025	45 students completed the FA course; 9 teachers participated in the FA course; Approximately 159 participants attended the live-streamed event held on 4 th of February 2025 at 10:00 CET.
<i>Data Analytics for Inclusion & Diversity</i>	University of Jaén (UJA) UJA Course website	Bielefeld University (UNIBI), Örebro University (ORU), University of Suceava (USV)	Diversity & Inclusion	Online: 19th May-23rd May 2025 On-site: 16th June - 20th June 2025	19 students completed the FA course; 9 teachers participated in the FA course; Approximately 45 participants attended the live-streamed event held 20 th of May 2025 on MS Teams at 16:00 (CET on Youtube channel.
<i>Personal Health Data Management</i>	University of Salerno (UNISA) UNISA Course website	Šiauliai State University of Applied Sciences (SVK), University of Nicosia (UNIC), Örebro University (ORU)	Digital Transformation	Online: 9th June- 20nd June 2025 On-site: 30th June - 4th Jul 2025	35 students completed the FA course; 10 teachers participated in the FA course; Approximately 40 participants attended the live-streamed event held on 4 th of July 2025 on MS Teams at 11:00 (CET)
<i>Global competencies and multicultural identity</i>	Šiauliai State University of Applied Sciences (SVK)	University of Suceava (USV), University of Salerno (UNISA)	Enhanced mobility Diversity & Inclusion	Online: 14 th Oct. - 7 th Nov. 2025	27 students completed the FA course; 5 teachers participated in the FA course;

				On-site: 3 rd Nov. - 7 th Nov. 2025	Approximately 100 participants attended the live- streamed event held on 14 th of October 2025 on MS Teams at 14:00 (EET)
Digital transformation and entrepreneurship	University of Bielefeld (UNIBI) UNIBI Course website	University of Jaén (UJA), Örebro University (ORU)	Digital Transformation	Online: 3 rd Nov.-15 th Dec. 2025 On-site: 24 th Nov. - 28 th Nov. 2025	32 students completed the FA course; 5 teachers participated in the FA course; Approximately 35 participants attended the live- streamed event held on 15 th of December 2025 on Zoom at 14:15(CET)

- **Monitoring and evaluation of course delivery**, including student participation, completion, and feedback surveys, as well as teacher assessments. The student survey focused on course design, learning activities, assessment and workload, and intercultural experience, combining quantitative ratings with open feedback. The teacher survey addressed pedagogical design, course content, collaboration, and organisational aspects, also using mixed response formats. Together, both instruments provided a comprehensive evaluation of the academic, practical, and social dimensions of the course.
- **Ongoing support and quality assurance** to ensure alignment with NEOLAIa Pillars, Erasmus+ requirements, and interdisciplinary, transnational learning objectives.

Outputs and results

- **Task Card, templates, and guidelines** finalized and shared across NEOLAIa partners.
- Already **five English-taught FA courses** implemented
- **FA syllabus and evaluation tools** standardized for alignment with NEOLAIa Pillars and Erasmus+ requirements.
- **Student certification procedures** defined, including ECTS recognition and optional Micro-credentials.
- **Two complementary surveys**—one for students and one for teachers—collected quantitative and qualitative feedback.

Indicators (KPIs)

- Number of Focus Academy courses online: Min. **9 courses to be implemented**. This KPI is on track, with 5 courses already delivered and 4 more courses planned for the 2025-2026 academic year.
- Qualitative survey to improve teaching from students and staff: survey satisfaction rate above 70%. According to the three surveys conducted by 66 students following the first three FA courses, 90% expressed overall satisfaction with the experience. Additionally, a dedicated survey was conducted with the 9 teachers participating in the *Introduction to Information Security Requirements* course at the time this report was finalized, and 100% of respondents reported being satisfied with the teaching experience (Annex 2).

Challenges and actions taken

The implementation of Focus Academy has not been without challenges directly affecting the course design and delivery of the courses. Difficulties emerged from clarifying assessment expectations, integrating transversal skills in a coherent manner, and targeting students with heterogeneous backgrounds. Additional challenges at the implementation level include calibrating workload, improving student–teacher interaction, and allowing more time for final assignments.

Cross-institutional coordination has also proven demanding. Aligning course structures across universities with varying ECTS distributions, academic calendars, internal procedures, and regulatory frameworks necessitated extensive planning and ongoing communication. These discrepancies complicated the harmonisation process and highlighted the need for clearer common frameworks.

In response, the Focus Academy introduced shared templates, unified recommendations for scheduling and timelines, and comprehensive guidelines for both virtual and physical components. Collaboration with WP4 was intensified to streamline Erasmus+ BIP. Hence a multilateral Erasmus+ framework agreement for BIPs was established, covering all courses and project years, to facilitate administrative procedures to ensure seamless student and staff mobility across the alliance.

Next steps

For the 2025/2026 academic year, the NEOLAIa Focus Academy will launch a new cycle of courses, building on lessons learned from the first courses (derived from the T2.1 Teaching and Learning forum) to enhance interdisciplinary and transnational collaboration. Four new courses are planned:

1. *“Eyes Wide Open: Learning to See and Wonder about Possible Inclusive Worlds”*, coordinated by the University of Nicosia in collaboration with the University of Salerno and the University of Tours, with online sessions from March to April 2026 and a face-to-face session from 18 to 22 May 2026;
2. *“Visual Competence and Gender in the Digital World”*, coordinated by the University of Ostrava with Bielefeld University and Šiauliai University, running online on 23 February, 16 March, and 27 April 2026, with on-site teaching from 8 to 12 June 2026;
3. *“European Citizenship”*, coordinated by the University of Tours in collaboration with Bielefeld University, Universidad de Jaén, Örebro University, University of Salerno, and University of Suceava, with online sessions in January–February 2026 and a face-to-face session from 23 to 27 March 2026;

4. “*Data Analytics for Inclusion and Diversity*”, coordinated by the University of Jaén in collaboration with Bielefeld University, Örebro University, and Ștefan Cel Mare University of Suceava, with face-to-face teaching from 8 to 12 June 2026 and online sessions from 15 to 19 June 2026.

The next steps also include expanding interdisciplinary and transnational collaboration by involving additional NEOLAIa universities and experts, while continuing to monitor course quality, student participation, and engagement to further refine blended course delivery. Mechanisms will be strengthened to ensure the dissemination and recognition of certificates and Micro-credentials.

Finally, the sustainability of the nine Focus Academy courses is currently under consideration, with reflections ongoing on the development of a course catalogue accessible to all students within the NEOLAIa alliance, which would enable broader participation and support long-term continuity.

6.4. Task 2.3 - Designing and piloting NEOLAIa multiple and joint degrees

Objectives

Task 2.3 – *Designing and Piloting NEOLAIa Multiple and Joint Degrees*, led by the University of Salerno, aims to develop and pilot **three international study programmes**: one Joint Bachelor and two Multiple Masters. These programmes are guided by NEOLAIa’s three pillars—Digital Transformation, Diversity and Inclusion, and Enhanced Mobility—and are based on research-driven, flexible learning, student-centred teaching, innovative assessment methods, and strong integration of international mobility and intercultural learning.

During the reporting period, the ***Joint Bachelor in Science, Management and Politics in Global Health*** aimed to finalise its academic, administrative, and accreditation foundations. Objectives included completing the programme structure, course content, and mobility scheme; establishing governance and financial frameworks; and preparing the Cooperation Agreement in line with European quality standards.

For the ***Multiple Master in Artificial Intelligence and Social Robotics Applied to Global Health***, the main objectives were to harmonise programme structure, ECTS distribution, and assessment methods across institutions; define governance, admission, and examination procedures; and align the programme with national and European accreditation requirements.

The ***Multiple Master in Inclusion Studies*** focused on finalising its academic design ahead of the planned 2027 launch. Objectives included defining modules, learning outcomes, and ECTS allocation; setting admission criteria and career pathways; and preparing documentation to support national accreditation in participating countries.

Activities implemented

- **Mapping and benchmarking existing models:** Mapping existing European University Alliances and collecting data on multiple and joint degree programmes to identify relevant models, governance structures, diploma issuance, and best practices.

Analysing the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes and the EQAR system to ensure compliance with European standards and inform degree design.

- **Coordination and Academic Committee (AC) work:** Regular updates and coordination during T2.3 and WP2 meetings-maintained alignment and transparent progress across all partners.
Independent AC were created and meetings held to facilitate continuous engagement and timely decision-making. Each AC received relevant documentation to support informed discussions.
Creation of the **Degree Story document**, a structured guide for ACs, detailing enrolment, tuition, mobility, internships, thesis, and post-graduation pathways, directly supporting the drafting of the Cooperation Agreement.
- **Marketing and dissemination:** Development of Marketing and Orientation Campaign Guidelines to raise awareness, build visibility, and promote enrolment, tailored to target audiences while allowing contextual adaptation across institutions.
Oversight and operational support for face-to-face meetings ensured productive sessions with clear objectives and outputs.
Support for pre-, during-, and post-meeting activities promoted workflow efficiency and proper documentation.

Degree-specific activities

- **Joint Bachelor in Science, Management, and Politics in Global Health:** Consolidated academic structure, mobility scheme, course syllabi, and learning outcomes across partner universities.
Defined governance, admission procedures, tuition, and accreditation strategy, ensuring compliance with European quality standards and labour market relevance.
- **Multiple Master in Artificial Intelligence and Social Robotics Applied to Global Health:** Finalized programme structure, course content, mobility scheme, and supervision procedures across partners.
Aligned academic, administrative, and accreditation frameworks to ensure coherent delivery, mutual recognition, and compliance with national and European standards.
- **Multiple Master in Inclusion Studies:** Advanced programme design, module content, and learning outcomes.
Supported internal data collection for national accreditation and defined objectives for upcoming Bootcamp to align curriculum and academic coordination.

Outputs and results

- **Identification of Partners:**
Each partner university selected participation in one or more degree programs based on thematic alignment and strategic priorities. All nine partner universities participate in at least one degree:
 - *Bachelor in Science, Management and Politics in Global Health:* University of Salerno, University of Jaén, University of Nicosia, and Šiauliai State University of Applied Sciences as Mobility Partner.
 - *Master in Artificial Intelligence and Social Robotics Applied to Global Health:* University of Tours, Örebro University, Ștefan Cel Mare University of Suceava, University of Jaén.
 - *Master in Inclusion Studies:* University of Bielefeld, University of Ostrava, Ștefan Cel Mare University of Suceava.
- **Degree Type Decisions:** Agreement reached on implementation: 2 Master's programmes as Multiple Degrees (potential future transition to Joint Degrees), 1 Bachelor's programme as a Joint Degree.

- **Academic Committee (AC) Establishment and Coordination:** Each degree has an AC with academic and administrative representatives from all partner universities. ACs operate autonomously with regular meetings, following structured deadlines. Each AC has a Chair and Vice-Chair responsible for agendas, minutes, and moderation.
- **Bootcamp-style Meetings:** Three bootcamp-style events organized to support degree design and coordination: 11–12 December 2024 Bootcamp (University of Salerno): Finalization of academic content for all degrees. Two additional 2025 bootcamps, one in 7–9 October 2025 for the Master AI & Social Robotics applied to Global Health in Tours and another one in 4–6 November 2025 for the Master Inclusion Studies in Suceava. Those bootcamps focused on accreditation procedures and supporting the drafting of Cooperation Agreements.

Indicators (KPIs)

- Number of Multiple or Joint degrees set up and ready to be launched: **Min. 3 multiple or joint degrees running.** This task is linked to Milestone 6, due on month 35 of the project:
“The 3 NEOLAIa dual/multiple degrees have recruited their first cohort of students for a first start in September 2026”.
- **Number of expected students** - *Bachelor in Science, Management and Politics in Global Health*: 75
- **Number of expected students** - *Master in Artificial Intelligence and Social Robotics Applied to Global Health*: 50
- **Number of expected students** - *Master in Inclusion Studies*: 50

Challenges and actions taken

The development of NEOLAIa’s joint and multiple degree programmes faced challenges mainly linked to differing institutional and national regulations, the coordination of nine partner universities, and the transition from initial Communities of Interest (CoI) to fully operational Academic Committees (ACs).

To address these issues, one **Academic Committee** per degree was established, including academic and administrative representatives from all partner universities. The T2.3 Leader and Task Force coordinated the process, setting mid-deadlines, attending AC meetings, and ensuring consistency across all programmes.

Given the diversity of internal rules on enrolment, accreditation, and programme management, decisions were carefully harmonised. ACs prepared academic and administrative proposals, while final approvals were validated by the T2.3 and WP2 Leaders, with unresolved matters escalated to the Steering Committee.

Figure 3: Process decisions-making task T2.3



The *Joint Bachelor in Science, Management and Politics in Global Health* advanced according to schedule, with effective coordination and timely completion of planned activities. For the *Multiple Master in Artificial Intelligence and Social Robotics Applied to Global Health*, a minor deviation occurred due to accreditation constraints at the University of Jaén, which will join in 2027/2028 after the initial launch in September 2026 by the three other partners. The *Multiple Master in Inclusion Studies* underwent two approved modifications: a postponed start to September 2027 following the withdrawal of the University of Nicosia, and a reduction in the first student cohort size to 20–25 students.

Continuous monitoring and internal quality assurance were ensured through regular reporting, shared documentation, and systematic follow-up. A proactive, problem-solving approach and constant communication between AC Chairs and the Task Force helped maintain alignment, mitigate risks, and ensure smooth progress toward the design and accreditation of the degrees.

Next steps

In the next reporting period, activities will focus on completing the preparatory and implementation phases of the three NEOLAIa degree programmes. The **Joint Bachelor in Science, Management and Politics in Global Health** and the **Multiple Master in Artificial Intelligence and Social Robotics Applied to Global Health** are scheduled to launch in **September 2026**, with finalisation of Cooperation Agreements, completion of national accreditation procedures. Such as UNISA will act as Accreditation Manager and has begun coordinating the submission process with the Italian Accreditation Agency (ANVUR) for the Joint Bachelor in Science, Management and Politics in Global Health. In parallel, partners are preparing a coordinated **student recruitment and communication campaign** across partner universities.

The **Multiple Master in Inclusion Studies**, set to launch in **September 2027**, will continue the refinement of its programme content, mobility scheme, and quality assurance framework in line with the revised timeline. In parallel, all Academic Committees will work on consolidating the **Cooperation Agreements**, ensuring alignment with national regulations and NEOLAIa's strategic objectives for sustainable and high-quality joint and multiple degree delivery.

6.5. Task 2.4 - Designing and piloting the NEOLAIa Summer School in Humanities and Social Sciences

Objectives

NEOLAIa Summer Schools are designed to provide students with new and highly specialized content, combining both learning and networking in a multicultural environment that stimulates cultural awareness and fulfilling NEOLAIa's vision to transform regional connectivity through education. These are essential elements to build a cohesive NEOLAIa community for both students and teachers.

The NEOLAIa Summer School in Humanities and Social Sciences is implemented as a **joint venture of the 9 NEOLAIa partner universities**. It will be held **twice** during the project period, at the University of Ostrava (Czech Republic) and at the University of Tours (France). During 2 weeks, the NEOLAIa Summer School introduces the participants to the latest trends and findings in Humanities and Social Sciences. The NEOLAIa Summer Schools

is organised in synergy with the NEOLAIA “Open Science” Festival that must be open to the community beyond the host university, communicating the latest research results to the public, and testing potential ground and interest in citizen science (WP8).

During the reporting period, the **first NEOLAIA Summer School in Digital Humanities and Social Science**, entitled *Vanishing and Silent Communities, Places and People*, was actively implemented in Ostrava.

The main and umbrella activity of the entire course was the creation of an **interactive Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map** with several information layers aiming for comparative monitoring of social, cultural and visual phenomena across Europe, for example gender and social inequalities, socially excluded localities, cultural exclusion, demolished monuments and visual objects, vanished/vanishing places and communities etc. The main task is to let digital technologies assist the protection of the memory of places, mapping of vanished monuments, communities and visual objects, in reconstructing the multi-structured history (digital history) and reconnecting it with the presence.

Preparatory work was carried out during the summer and autumn of 2024, with student registration launched in October–November 2024. The online part (16 hours) took place from 26 February to 28 April 2025, providing students with foundational training in research methodologies and digital tools required for the on-site programme. The two-week on-site component ran from 2 to 13 June 2025, with Open science festival on June 12th, combining field research, hands-on activities, and collaborative projects designed to develop students’ competencies in Humanities and Social Sciences, while fostering cross-cultural exchange and interdisciplinary learning.

Activities implemented

- **Summer School design and organization (summer–autumn 2024):** Curriculum and programme structure were jointly developed by three NEOLAIA universities: the University of Jaén (UJA) provided GIS instruction and online support, the University of Tours (UT) contributed expertise in cultural heritage and social change and participated in the NEOLAIA Open Science Festival, and the University of Ostrava (UO) offered GIS teaching, on-site support, and leadership in field research, ensuring interdisciplinary guidance throughout the course.

The Summer School was open to PhD, Master, and Bachelor students in the humanities and social sciences who demonstrated independent English proficiency; prior experience in GIS mapping was desirable but not required. To be awarded 4 ECTS credits, students were expected to: attend both the online and on-site components, actively participate in discussions and workshops, and collect and process data for the QGIS map in accordance with the webinar and on-site training sessions.

- **Student recruitment (October–November 2024):** Open to NEOLAIA partner universities and associate partners; selection on a first-come, first-served basis, ensuring multicultural teams involving 3-8 students from each university. 40 students were accepted (with a total number of 50 applications) – 30 incoming students from all eight partner universities and 10 students from the hosting University of Ostrava. Ostrava University students played a double role: in addition to their full participation in the course they also guided their NEOLAIA fellow students around the University and the City and provided a back-up as experienced GIS students and users.

- **Preparatory online webinars (February–April 2025, 16 hours):**
 - Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and QGIS software
 - Data collection, editing, and synchronization in Merging Maps and QGIS CLOUD
 - Basic cartographic representation, mapping techniques, and synthesis of spatial data.
- **On-site session (2–13 June 2025, University of Ostrava):**
 - Field research in Ostrava's Vítkovice industrial district
 - Team-based projects producing interactive GIS maps of social, cultural, and visual phenomena
 - Hands-on application of methodologies introduced in webinars.
- **Integration with NEOLAIa Open Science Festival (12 June 2025, University of Ostrava):** Students showcased their research outcomes and digitalised maps during the Festival, engaging with participants of the Summer School and the "International Perspectives in Higher Education" Blended Intensive Programme (BIP), as well as members of the University of Ostrava community and the wider public (approximately 60 attendees).
- **Academic mentoring:** Teaching activities led by multiple staff from three universities covering GIS, cultural heritage, industrial history, and social change.
- **International and collaborative learning:** Students formed multicultural teams (3–8 students per university) to foster intercultural exchange and collaborative research.

Outputs and results

- Design and delivery of a **comprehensive online and on-site programme** combining digital tools, research methodology, and interdisciplinary content.
- **Participation of 40 students** from all nine NEOLAIa partner universities, organized into multicultural teams of 3–8 students per university, bringing together participants from different academic levels—from Bachelor's to PhD—and from diverse disciplinary backgrounds.
- Active involvement of **7 academic staff from three partner universities** in curriculum design, instruction, and supervision.
- Creation of **interactive GIS maps** documenting social, cultural, and visual phenomena in Ostrava, producing open-access research outputs.
- **Interdisciplinary content delivery:** The Summer School provided an interdisciplinary learning experience combining digital humanities, social sciences, and cultural studies. Participants acquired competencies in GIS mapping and data visualization, industrial and cultural heritage preservation, and the application of digital technologies to address social exclusion and promote sustainable development. The programme also enhanced students' visual literacy, enabling them to critically interpret and represent visual and cultural phenomena in both physical and digital environments.
- Implementation of the **NEOLAIa Open Science Festival**, enabling public outreach and dissemination of research findings.

Indicators (KPIs)

- **Min. 2 summer schools implemented:** 1 implemented (February–June 2025, University of Ostrava), second one in 2027 in Tours.

- **Number of students** successfully completing the Summer School: 40 enrolled, full attendance. For this first edition, students came from all nine NEOLAIa partner universities. The challenge for the next edition in 2027 will be to open participation to students from other universities, particularly NEOLAIa associate partner universities.

Out of 40 participants in the Summer School, 13 respondents completed the post-mobility survey, showing 100% satisfaction with the overall mobility experience and 77% satisfaction with the quality of the virtual component of the programme.

- **Number of partner universities** actively contributing to teaching: 3 directly involved in course delivery, all 9 represented in student participation.

Challenges and actions taken

The main challenges encountered during the preparation and implementation of the first NEOLAIa Summer School concerned the coordination of an interdisciplinary and international teaching team, the harmonisation of academic calendars across nine universities, and the logistical complexity of organising a blended intensive programme (BIP) combining online and on-site components.

Ensuring that students acquired sufficient technical skills prior to the on-site session represented an additional challenge, which was effectively addressed through 16 hours of preparatory online webinars designed to familiarise participants with research methodologies and digital tools. Coordinating staff and curricula across multiple universities required early and continuous collaboration, achieved through joint planning meetings and shared syllabus documentation.

Next steps

The next edition of the NEOLAIa Summer School is scheduled to take place in June 2027 at the University of Tours, focusing on food studies. Building on the experience and outcomes of the first session in Ostrava, this second edition will expand the interdisciplinary and digital dimensions of the programme, integrating feedback from participants, teachers, and partner universities. An organising committee is currently being established to oversee the design of the Summer School. Discussions are underway to explore the integration of other NEOLAIa initiatives, such as the NEOTeAch programme, into the Summer School framework.

Particular attention will be paid to strengthening the link between humanities, social sciences, and environmental studies through the lens of food culture, sustainability, and social inclusion. The Summer School will continue to operate in synergy with the NEOLAIa Open Science Festival, enhancing public engagement and ensuring broad dissemination of student outputs to academic and non-academic audiences alike.

6.6. Task 2.5 - Piloting and upscaling science knowledge dissemination with the NEOTeAch

Objectives

The **NEOTeAch programme** consists of bottom-up initiatives co-led and co-constructed by students and their teachers. Its main objective is to **build and disseminate digital educational and informational materials**—including podcasts, videos, websites, infographics and social media content—that communicate the latest

academic findings to both students and the general public. The implementation draws on the experience of the University of Tours Faclabs, which serve as multimedia creation spaces enabling students to acquire practical digital production skills while engaging in pedagogical projects (<https://newteach.univ-tours.fr/les-faclabs/>).

NEOTeAch also aims to **develop a critical database aligned with the NEOLAIa Pillars**, where each partner university can contribute research or academic content for inclusive dissemination. This approach facilitates the creation of a **common digital heritage** accessible to students, teachers, and the wider public.

Activities implemented

- **Development of a common framework:** A shared methodological and pedagogical framework was co-designed among NEOLAIa partners, with an operating charter defining roles for teachers, multimedia engineers, and students.
- **Organization of information and training sessions:** A webinar “How to Develop a NEOTeAch Project” (November 13, 2024) gathered 32 participants from 7 partner universities, including 6 speakers from Tours, covering project planning, media selection, student organisation, and promotion. Dissemination materials include a Genially presentation and an English video overview of the Faclab approach, shared across the consortium.
- **Launch of project calls across partner universities to identify NEOTeAch pilot projects:** Between September 2024 and May 2025, five universities launched calls for pilot projects (Tours, Ostrava, Jaén, Örebro, and pre-identified partners in Suceava). A common application form centralised submissions.
- **Selection committee to evaluate projects according to defined pedagogical and technical criteria:** Three selection committee meetings evaluated 17 projects from five universities, ultimately selecting, for online dissemination, five projects involving 8 teachers, 1 multimedia engineer, and 59 students. Additional projects for 2025–2026 were presented by Tours, Suceava, and Jaén.
- **Development of a dissemination strategy, including multilingual material production and integration into NEOLAIa digital platform:** NEOTeAch outputs were designed to reach the widest possible audience, produced in English and local languages. Published resources are accessible on a dedicated webpage (<https://neolaiacampus.eu/neoteach>), contributing to the creation of a shared digital pedagogical heritage across the Alliance.

Outputs and results

- Creation of a **common pedagogical framework** and operating charter.
- Delivery of **training** through a webinar reaching 32 participants from 7 universities.
- **17 pilot projects** submitted across partner universities, showing a significant interest in the NEOTeAch initiative.
- **5 projects** published online, involving 8 teachers, 1 multimedia engineer, and 59 students.
- Creation of **digital educational resources** in multiple formats (video, audio, web, infographic) co-produced by students and teachers, covering various disciplines.
- Establishment of a **shared repository** of materials contributing to a common digital heritage (<https://neolaiacampus.eu/neoteach>).

- **Dissemination materials** (video, Genially presentation) accessible across the NEOLAiA network.
- Increased **student engagement** in project management, multimedia production, and pedagogical co-conception.

Indicators (KPIs)

- Number of NEOTeAch projects launched: **target 20 over four years, 5 completed in first cycle**. This KPI is on track, with two further calls planned for 2025–2027.

Challenges and actions taken

Some initial projects demonstrated **limited innovation**, as they consisted of translations of existing initiatives, emphasized promotional aspects over pedagogical value, or were produced in a single language.

Collaboration across partner universities was limited in the first phase, with only one fully joint project completed.

Actions taken regarding **capacity building** include developing technical toolkits, step-by-step guides for producing podcasts and videos, training modules, detailed guidance on project design, and promoting best practices to enhance collaboration between NEOLAiA partners. Further reflection is planned on facilitating connections between teachers, potentially through a matchmaking platform, to foster and strengthen collaborative teaching projects.

Next steps

- The **upcoming calls** for the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 academic years will be launched, with inter-university collaboration established as a mandatory requirement by 2026.
- A **90-minute self-paced training module** will be delivered as part of the Teaching and Learning Forum of the Pedagogical Hub (Task 2.1) on University of Tours' Learning Management System Moodle, in December 2025, covering project application procedures, integration into course syllabi, student evaluation, and multimedia content production.
- **User feedback** will be monitored through questionnaires to evaluate the pedagogical impact and overall quality of the resources.
- **Continuous support** will be provided to enhance pedagogical quality, foster student engagement, develop technical competencies, and ensure multilingual dissemination, thereby strengthening NEOLAiA's role in creating a shared digital pedagogical heritage.
- **Communication** will be strengthened to raise awareness of the initiative both within the academic community and among stakeholders in the regional ecosystems.

6.7. Task 2.6 - Designing and piloting NEOLAIA Micro-credentials and Digital Badges for Lifelong Learning

Objectives

Task 2.6, *Designing and Piloting NEOLAiA Micro-credentials and Digital Badges for Lifelong Learning* focuses on developing a shared understanding and agreed definitions of Micro-credentials (MC) and Digital Badges

(DB) across partner universities, enabling the recognition of both formal and informal learning while respecting national educational frameworks. Micro-credentials will allow learners to accumulate ECTS credits and integrate them into larger qualifications, while Digital Badges will recognise transversal and soft skills such as intercultural communication, teamwork, and participation in NEOLAIa activities. Common guidelines and a flexible quality assurance framework will support implementation, paving the way for future interoperability with the European Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI) and the creation of an Alliance-wide credential issuance system.

Activities implemented

- **Mapping and Definition Development**

A consortium-wide mapping of existing systems for Micro-credentials and Digital Badges was conducted and discussed during the **Micro-credentials Workshop** (Tours, June 2024). The exercise revealed significant national differences in regulatory and institutional readiness. Partners therefore decided to focus initially on the design and issuance of Digital Badges as a preparatory step toward future credit-bearing Micro-credentials.

- **Definition and Guidelines**

Partners co-developed and approved the document *“Definition and Guidelines for Micro-credentials and Digital Badges”* (December 2024), endorsed by the NEOLAIa Executive Committee. It provides shared terminology, use-cases and quality principles, aligning with the **European Commission’s 2022 Recommendation on Micro-credentials** and with NEOLAIa’s pillars of Digital Transformation, Diversity & Inclusion, and Enhanced Mobility linked to Global Health.

- **NEOLAIa Digital Badge Committee**

Established in early 2025, the committee includes 18 representatives from all partner universities (one voting member from each university and one substitute) and ensures coherence and mutual recognition across the Alliance. Approved badges become Alliance-wide Digital Badges, valid for issue by any partner.

- **Implementation and Technical Coordination**

The first pilot Digital Badge, *“Engagement in the Student Advisory Group”* (proposal from University of Ostrava), recognises student intercultural and collaborative engagement within NEOLAIa (Annex 5). Technical testing of the **European Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI)** began in cooperation with WP9 (Digital Transformation). Because the current EDCI system entails complex administrative procedures, partners adopted a **transitional multi-platform model** allowing each university to issue GDPR-compliant badges through its own system under a shared NEOLAIa visual and procedural framework.

- **First Micro-credential via Focus Academy**

Örebro University implemented the first NEOLAIa Micro-credential, *“Introduction to Information Security Requirements”* (3 ECTS), delivered as an Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (January–February 2025). The course combined online and on-site learning with participation from all partner universities,

demonstrating the feasibility of stackable, credit-bearing modules aligned with NEOLAIa's Digital Transformation pillar (Annex 5).

- **Dissemination and Future Outlook**

Outcomes and methodological guidelines have been shared across WPs 2 and 9, supporting cross-learning and coherence.

Outputs and results

- Mapping of existing national and institutional systems for Micro-credentials and Digital Badges across all NEOLAIa universities (June – September 2024).
- Development and approval of a shared **“Definition and Guidelines for Micro-credentials and Digital Badges”** (December 2024).
- Establishment of the **NEOLAIa Digital Badge Committee** with representatives from all partner universities (February - March 2025).
- Creation of a **“Digital Badge Issuance Process Map”** defining validation and approval procedures.
- Launch of the first **pilot Digital Badge** – *“Engagement in the Student Advisory Group”* (Annex 5).
- Initial **testing of the European Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI)** for future interoperability.
- Temporary adoption of **multiple GDPR-compliant issuing platforms** under a shared NEOLAIa framework.
- Delivery of the first **NEOLAIa Micro-credential** – *“Introduction to Information Security Requirements”* (3 ECTS, Örebro University) (Annex 5).

Indicators (KPIs)

- Number of Micro-credentials launched: **target min 20 over four years, 1 completed in first cycle.**

Challenges and actions taken

Task 2.6 has faced challenges related to the heterogeneity of national regulations and institutional readiness for Micro-credential and Digital Badge issuance across NEOLAIa partner universities. In response, the Alliance has developed shared definitions, operational guidelines, and a common framework for recognition, supported by the NEOLAIa Digital Badge Committee. Coordination with WP9 has enabled the evaluation of technical solutions for a secure and interoperable digital credential infrastructure, while capacity-building measures and dissemination of best practices have reinforced partner engagement and alignment with NEOLAIa standards.

Next steps

In the next phase, Task 2.6 will expand the scope of Digital Badges to include staff development and strengthen communication and outreach activities across the Alliance, in close collaboration with WP10. The task will also coordinate the collection and documentation of all NEOLAIa Micro-credentials to provide a comprehensive overview for internal and external stakeholders, enhancing visibility and transparency. Additional support will be provided to partners in countries with legal or institutional constraints for implementing Micro-credentials, ensuring compliance with national regulations and alignment with European recommendations. Continued collaboration with WP9 will focus on establishing a long-term, interoperable infrastructure for digital recognition, thereby maximising the usability and impact of Task 2.6 outputs across the Alliance.

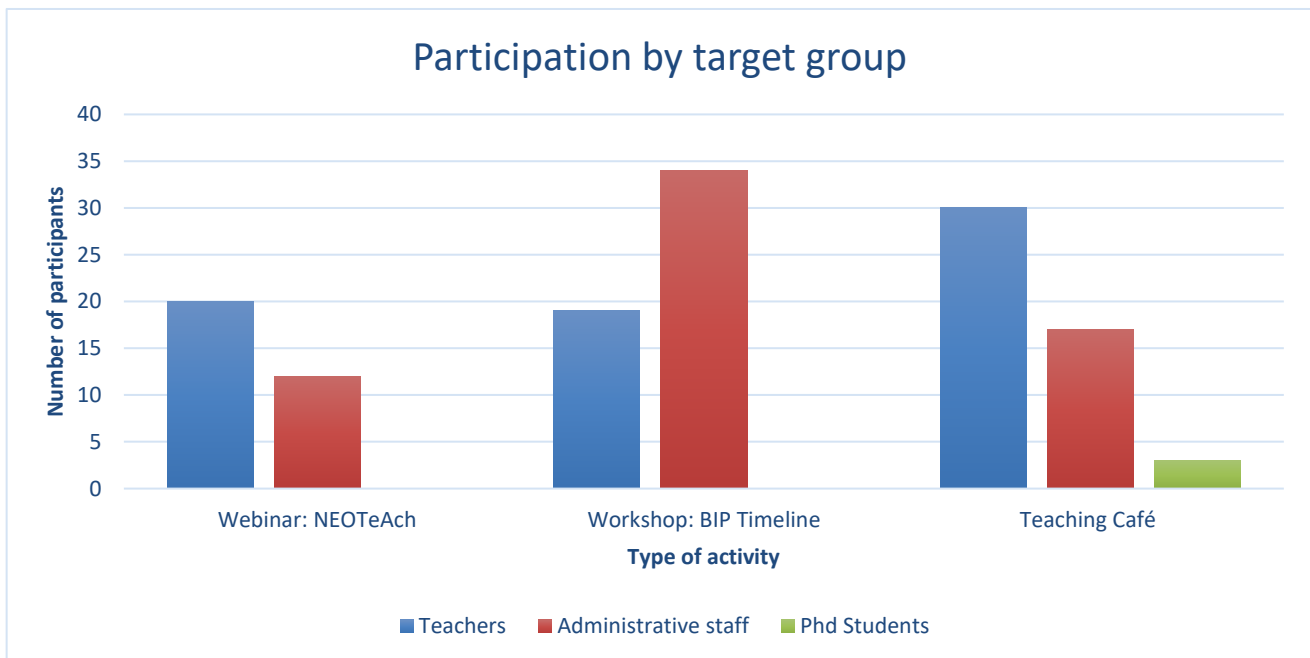
This task will proactively align with existing and upcoming European initiatives and policy frameworks on Digital Credentials and Micro-credentials, ensuring that NEOLAIa remains agile and responsive to evolving standards. Rather than developing independent software applications for issuing badges, the focus will be on seamless integration with established and future EU-wide Digital Credential infrastructures. Piloting and testing of Digital Badges within the Alliance will provide a flexible, real-world proof-of-concept, generating valuable insights to guide broader implementation. This approach will enhance interoperability, sustainability, and compliance with European standards while showcasing the practical benefits and added value of Micro-credentials within NEOLAIa.

7. Discussion

Quantitative overview for teaching and learning activities

This section below presents an overview of participation in teaching and learning activities carried out under WP2. In this context, “participation” refers to attending an activity, such as a webinar, workshop, or discussion session. The figure below illustrates the number of participants engaged across the different WP2 activities.

Figure 4: Participants per WP2 activities

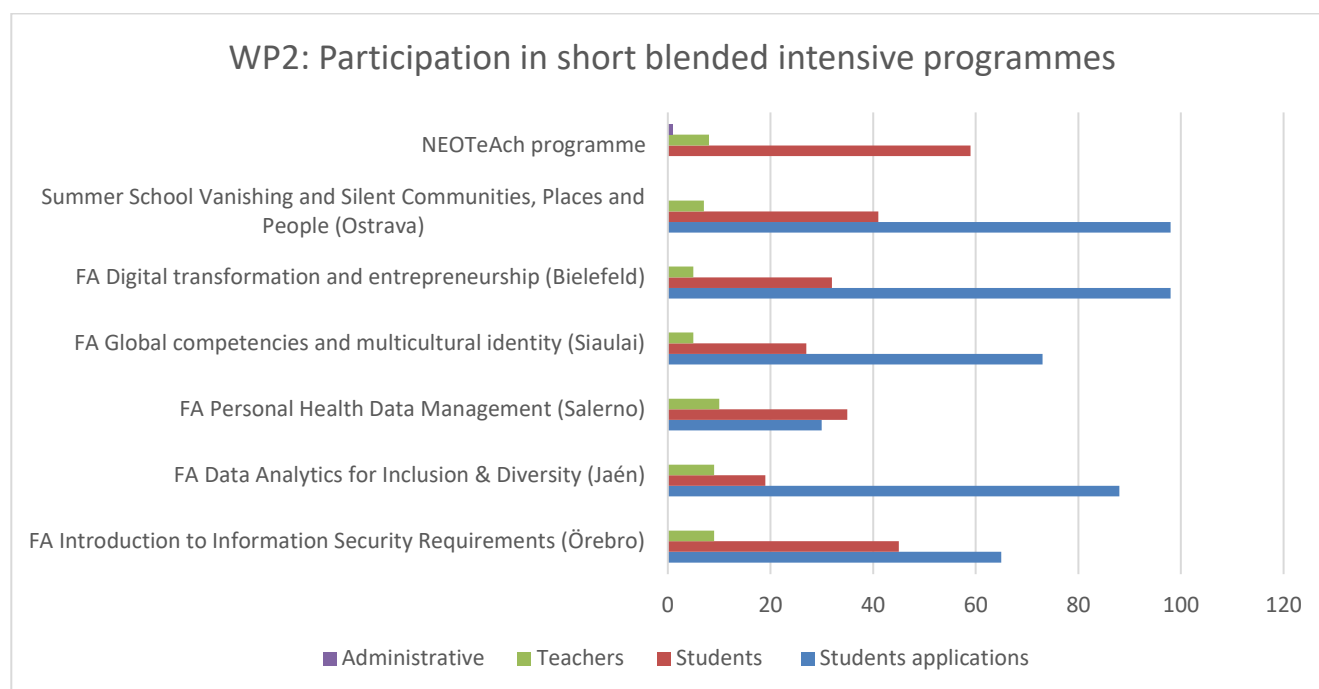


(source: the data was extracted from official attendance lists of three activities: the Webinar NEOTeAch held on 13 November 2025), the Worskhop BIP Timeline held on 23 May 2025) and the Teaching Café No. 1 - Experiences from organizing BIP/Focus Academy held on 18 November 2025.)

The figure below provides a quantitative overview of participation and engagement in the NEOLAIa innovative educational project, such as, short blended intensive programmes, implemented by WP2 delivered through five Focus Academy courses and one Summer School, encompassing both online and on-site. The data reflects the impact of the initiative across partner institutions, highlighting the number of student applications received, the actual number of student participants, and the involvement of teaching staff (Annex 7):

- A total of **452 student applications** were submitted for six blended intensive programmes across the Alliance.
- A total of **189 students** participated in six short, blended intensive programmes.
- A total of **53 teachers** contributed to the design, delivery, and facilitation of these international and interdisciplinary teaching and learning activities. Their contributions included curriculum development, preparation of learning materials, delivery of lectures and workshops, mentoring students, and coordinating collaborative projects.

Figure 5: Participation in courses developed within WP2 from January 2024 to December 2025



(source: the data was extracted from official attendance lists of the courses.)

Among the six NEOLAIa short blended intensive programmes implemented, two successfully achieved participation from all nine partner universities, reflecting a high level of cross-consortium engagement. Participation in the remaining study programmes was more uneven, largely due to academic calendar misalignments, limited time to open internal applications and overlapping with summer closure periods in some institutions.

Integration of NEOLAIa courses into academic curricula

Across the NEOLAIa alliance, partner universities have adopted diverse yet converging approaches to integrate NEOLAIa learning opportunities, such as Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs), Focus Academy courses, and Summer Schools, into their academic frameworks. While the degree of formalization and implementation varies, all institutions share a strong commitment to fostering international mobility and pedagogical innovation.

The mechanisms range from course substitution and the creation of elective modules to catalogue integration and credit recognition. Overall, universities demonstrate increasing adaptability and institutional support to

accommodate NEOLAIa's international and interdisciplinary offerings. This process has become a catalyst for pedagogical transformation and cross-institutional collaboration, reaffirming NEOLAIa's mission as a driver of modern, inclusive, and globally connected higher education.

Challenges and lessons learned

This section consolidates the main challenges and lessons learned reported by partner institutions in the implementation of WP2 activities. The insights gathered through the questionnaire reflect shared experiences across the alliance and highlight the key structural, operational, and organisational factors that have shaped the progress of WP2 during the reporting period.

Human resources and time constraints

Partner universities highlighted challenges related to staff availability and language differences, which impacted participation in WP2 activities and the mobilisation of teachers and students, including PhD candidates. To address this, the Alliance is exploring ways to provide clearer incentives and formal recognition for participants, while streamlining engagement processes to make collaboration across institutions more accessible and effective.

Coordination and communication

The coordination of activities across multiple departments, faculties, and partner universities proved challenging. Differences in academic calendars, administrative procedures, and internal approval pathways created delays and required extensive alignment efforts. Reaching students and staff effectively also remained a difficulty, contributing to uneven levels of participation in activities such as the Focus Academy.

Activity organisation and implementation

Several operational issues were identified, including frequent modifications to activity requirements, which complicated planning and execution. Technical challenges—particularly regarding platform interoperability and resource management—further hindered progress. Partners also highlighted the complexity of developing and implementing joint degree programmes, Micro-credentials, and NEOTeAch activities.

Lessons learned

Across the alliance, several key lessons emerged:

- The importance of planning activities well in advance and limiting changes once implementation has begun while ensuring sufficient flexibility to accommodate the diverse institutional calendars and operational rhythms of the nine partner universities.
- The added value of small, dedicated WP2 teams (2–3 members) within each institution to ensure continuity and shared expertise.
- The need to reinforce collaboration both within and between universities to streamline processes and improve coherence.
- The necessity of integrating WP2 activities into regular curricula and institutional procedures to ensure long-term sustainability.
- The benefit of a more balanced distribution of activities and improved logistical organisation, enabling fairer and more effective participation from all partners.

8. Conclusion

The conclusions and these recommendations originate from the WP2 questionnaire and represent the collective contributions of all partner institutions involved in WP2.

Institutionalisation and integration

Partners emphasised the importance of embedding WP2 activities into existing institutional processes to ensure durability beyond the project timeframe. This includes:

- gradually integrating WP2 actions into official university procedures and internal regulatory documents,
- ensuring that participation in WP2 becomes part of the regular duties of academic and administrative staff, rather than an additional workload.

Digital platforms and resources

Digital infrastructure was identified as a critical component for sustainability. Recommended actions include:

- maintaining and further developing the LMS platform and the NEOLAiA website to host FA courses, NEOTeAch modules and other shared resources,
- promoting asynchronous learning and incorporating WP2 content into existing modules to facilitate scalability and long-term use.

Training and engagement

Building staff capacity remains essential for continuity. Partners suggested:

- continuing professional development initiatives through structures such as the Pedagogical Hub and online trainings, while also ensuring access to language training, which is essential for all stakeholders to participate effectively in international collaborative activities,
- recognising staff engagement in WP2 activities within annual performance evaluations,
- establishing shared documentation, monitoring tools, and institutional memory mechanisms to improve coordination and preserve experience.

Funding and international cooperation

To secure long-term stability, partners highlighted the need to:

- pursue additional funding opportunities (e.g., Erasmus+, national fundings) to sustain our study programmes and activities,
- reinforce collaboration between NEOLAiA universities to share resources, develop common tools, and mutually support activity implementation.

Common educational strategy

A shared strategic framework was identified as essential to ensure coherence and joint progress across the alliance. Recommended actions include:

- Developing a unified educational strategy that aligns WP2 activities with the needs and priorities of students and institutions.
- Standardising processes and governance mechanisms to facilitate implementation and secure continuity after the end of the project.

Sustainability will depend on the structural integration of NEOLAIa WP2 activities within institutions, reinforced digital infrastructure, continuous staff development, stable funding sources, and a shared educational strategic vision that unites all universities in a coherent and forward-looking direction.

9. References

Grant Agreement. Project 101124794 — NEOLAIa. (2023).

10. Annexes

- Annex 1: Milestone report M4_NEOLAIa Pedagogical Hub implemented
- Annex 2: Milestone report M5_NEOLAIa Focus Academy first cohort Graduated
- Annex 3: Milestone report M7_NEOLAIa Summer Schools design finished/1
- Annex 4: Milestone report M9_NEOTeAch materials available online
- Annex 5: Milestone report M10_First NEOLAIa Micro-credentials and Digital Badges awarded
- Annex 6: Calendar 2025-2026 - Pedagogical Hub activities
- Annex 7: Participation data short blended intensive programmes