

## HR Excellence in Research

# Action Plan

### Action Plan

**Case number**

2025RO297888

**Name Organisation under review**

Universitatea "Valahia" din Târgoviște

**Organisation's contact details**

Aleea Sinaia no.13, Targoviste, Dambovita, 130004, Romania

**Submission date to the European Commission**

29/01/2026

### 1. Organisational Information

Please provide a limited number of key figures for your organisation. Fields marked with \* are compulsory.

<b>STAFF &amp; STUDENTS</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	451
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	5
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	3
Of whom are women *	226
Of whom are R3 or R4 = established or leading researchers with a large degree of autonomy (e.g. holding the status of principal investigator or professor) *	147
Of whom are R2 = recognised researcher (e.g. postdoctoral researcher, junior researcher) *	99
Of whom are R1 = first stage researcher (e.g. doctoral candidate, research apprentice) *	197
Total number of students (if relevant) *	5985
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching, and research staff) *	398
<b>RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for the most recent fiscal year)</b>	<b>€</b>
Total annual organisational budget	37914495
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	288420
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	240779
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	24683

**ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)**

VUT is a state HEI established in 1992, located in the city of Targoviste, Romania. It has 10 faculties, 35 B.Sc., M.Sc. programs and doctoral studies, a teacher training entity, and a distance-learning department. It has two modern campuses, one in the city of Alexandria in Teleorman County. VUT follows its mission of high-quality scientific training and research, excellent study conditions for its students, professional integration at the national level, and international

academic relations having its own Institute of Multidisciplinary Research. VUT is ranked in THE Impact ranking and in QS Europe Rankings 2026. Since 2025, VUT has been a full member of the KreativEU European University Alliance.

## 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please provide an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current practice under the four thematic headings of the European Charter for Researchers at your organisation.

**Note:** Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the European Charter for Researchers to open the editor and provide your answer.

## Ethics, integrity, gender, and open science\*

**Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)****STRENGTHS**

- All study programs have courses in ethics and research integrity, ensuring adherence to the highest standards of academic conduct being available for all students enrolled in undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs.
- VUT maintains an Ethics Committee responsible for overseeing compliance with institutional ethical principles, national regulations, and GDPR requirements. The Committee ensures the consistent application of the University's Code of Ethics and Deontology (<https://www.valahia.ro/comisia-de-etica/>).
- All bachelor's theses, master's dissertations, and doctoral theses undergo mandatory plagiarism screening using software tools recognized by the Ministry of Education and Research. VUT enforces strict internal procedures to uphold academic integrity and prevent fraudulent practices.
- In accordance with the University Charter and the Code of Ethics and Deontology, VUT firmly prohibits any form of discrimination and actively promotes an inclusive academic environment based on equality and respect.
- Robust accountability mechanisms are in place for all research and institutional funding. Every project-related expenditure is verified by the Finance–Accounting Department for compliance with national legislation and funding rules. All technical and financial reports, alongside internal or external audits, are submitted to the respective funding bodies in strict conformity with contractual obligations.
- VUT management is committed to strengthening ethical and professional standards, guided by a reform-oriented approach and an international strategic perspective aimed at enhancing integrity, transparency, and excellence in education and research.

**WEAKNESSES**

- Potential limitations of the institutional capacity for systematic ethics training - although VUT offers ethics and research integrity courses, the university may lack sufficient continuous training programs for academic and administrative staff, especially workshops tailored to new legislation, GDPR updates, AI ethics, or research misconduct case studies. This can lead to uneven levels of awareness and inconsistent application of ethical standards across faculties and departments.
- Potential insufficient access to SOA digital tools for monitoring ethical compliance - plagiarism detection is well organized, but other areas—such as research data management, conflict-of-interest reporting, or anonymization of personal data—often rely on manual processes. The absence of integrated digital systems or dashboards makes systematic monitoring difficult and can slow down ethical decision-making and reporting procedures.
- Potential overload of the Ethics Committee's activities - while VUT has an active Ethics Committee, its decisions, reports, and guidelines may be delayed in the case of many actions that it may receive in the case of the increasing of the number of consents for research. This reduced capacity due to the low number of members can increase of the time for decisions and limit the committee's preventive role.
- Inconsistent monitoring of discrimination-related issues - despite a clear institutional stance against discrimination, implementation mechanisms - such as anonymous reporting tools, systematic surveys, or diversity audits - are not sufficiently developed. Cases of subtle discrimination, unequal treatment, or harassment may be difficult to be reported or resolved preventively.

**Researchers assessment, recruitment, and progression\*****Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)****Strengths**

- Strong alignment with European OTM-R & HRS4R standards - VUT has clear, published procedures for open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment; uses CNATDCU standards; follows national laws; and has an ISO-certified quality system (ISO 9001, SMIn).
- Transparent recruitment and evaluation mechanisms - Vacancies are publicly advertised via multiple channels (VUT website, EURAXESS, Official Gazette); evaluation criteria are explicit; committees are appointed with attention to expertise, ethics, and gender balance.
- Institutionalized researcher assessment tools and digital reporting - VUT uses standardized tools such as the FINER platform, yearly research plans, self-evaluation forms, and peer-review systems to structure researcher assessment.
- Broad access to research infrastructure and scientific databases - Researchers and doctoral candidates have access to laboratories, research centers, and major scientific databases (Scopus, WoS, Springer, etc.) through ANELIS+.
- Expanding internationalization & mobility ecosystem - VUT participates in Erasmus+, KreativEU Alliance, international cooperation agreements, and supports mobility for all research stages (R1–R4).

**Weaknesses**

- Lack of a unified institutional evaluation framework for researchers - Although many tools exist, VUT acknowledges the absence of a fully standardized, cross-disciplinary evaluation system leading to inconsistencies.
- Limited attractiveness for international researchers - Barriers include Romanian-language documentation, low competitiveness of national salaries, and limited tailored measures for underrepresented or foreign applicants.
- Hiring unpredictability due to national budget constraints - recruitment can be disrupted by hiring freezes, low national research funding, and annual variability in the number of vacancies, impacting long-term planning.
- Fragmented mentoring and career-development support - the GAP Analysis notes uneven supervision quality, lack of a unified mentoring system, and limited capacity for personalized career development across departments.
- Underdeveloped integration of international research mobility into selection criteria - Experience from high-profile research programs (Marie Curie, Fulbright) is not yet systematically considered in recruitment or promotion criteria.

Working conditions and practices\* ▼**Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)****Strengths**

- Supportive working environment ensuring academic and research autonomy - VUT guarantees academic freedom, aligned with national legislation (Law 199/2023 & VUT Charter 2025), allowing researchers to select topics, design methodologies, and freely participate in competitions.
- Strong access to research infrastructure, laboratories, and digital scientific resources - researchers at all stages (R1–R4) have equitable access to research equipment, accredited centers, IT services, ANELIS+ databases, Springer/Elsevier content, and institutional support systems.
- Comprehensive set of internal support structures and quality-assurance mechanisms - VUT maintains ISO-certified Quality Management (SMQ), Innovation Management (SMIn), Quality Assurance Committees (CEAC, CEAC-F), and structured operational regulations that support safe and stable working conditions.
- Availability of financial and logistical support for researchers - VUT provides internal funding schemes, support for participation in conferences, publication fees (including open access), and project-based salary incomes and merit-based supplements.
- Commitment to equality, nondiscrimination, and gender-balanced practices - recruitment and working-conditions policies explicitly require gender balance, nondiscrimination, and equal access to opportunities, supported by the institutional Gender Equality Guide.

**Weaknesses**

- Chronic underfunding of national research ecosystem affects institutional stability - systemic underfunding is a threat, reducing long-term sustainability and creating structural limitations in working conditions.
- Predominant impact of national budget constraints on employment stability - while VUT provides internal stability, external factors—budgetary freezes, blocked positions—limit contract predictability and weaken long-term workforce planning.
- Uneven availability of resources and development opportunities across research units - career development support, supervision quality, and access to mentoring vary between departments and research units, leading to inconsistent working conditions.
- limited competitiveness in attracting international researchers - low salary competitiveness, Romanian-language constraints, and incomplete bilingual documentation reduce VUT's ability to attract foreign talented researchers and improve international working conditions.
- Insufficient internal capacity for large-scale project development and administrative support - a need for improved grant-writing support, more project-management resources, and institutional mechanisms to ensure sustained, well-supported research careers was identified.

## Research careers and talent development\*



### Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

#### Strengths

- Coherent career-stage structure (R1–R4) with equitable access to institutional resources - researchers across all stages (doctoral, postdoctoral, established, and senior) receive equal access to research infrastructure, scientific databases, training programmes, and internal reward schemes, ensuring an inclusive environment for career growth.
- Stable regulatory framework for career progression aligned with national and European standards - career advancement follows CNATDCU minimum standards, the VUT Charter (2025), and the European Charter for Researchers, ensuring transparent, merit-based progression for academic and research staff.
- Diverse career-development opportunities, training, and soft-skills programmes- VUT provides training in ethics, academic writing, research methodologies, project management, open science, intellectual property, innovation, leadership, communication, and entrepreneurship—supporting long-term talent development.
- Active participation in international mobility and collaboration networks - the university promotes researcher mobility through Erasmus+, KreativEU Alliance, bilateral partnerships, and international research centers, enabling global exposure and strengthening research careers at all levels.
- Institutional support mechanisms (Career Counseling Centre, Doctoral Schools, International Relations Department) - VUT maintains structured support units offering career counselling, proposal development assistance, research-networking support, and guidance for doctoral and postdoctoral advancement.

#### Weaknesses

- Lack of a unified, institution-wide support and evaluation system for research careers - criteria and performance expectations differ significantly across domains, resulting in inconsistent support for research careers and difficulty ensuring comparability across faculties.
- Limited institutional capacity for systematic and individualized career-development support - insufficient human and structural resources to provide continuous, personalized career mentoring for researchers across all subject specific to VUT.
- Uneven supervision and mentoring practices across research units - there is no clearly coordinated university-wide framework for supervision, leading to variations in meeting frequency, feedback quality, progress monitoring, and mentor assignment for R1–R2 researchers.
- Insufficient preparation for participation in major international research competitions (e.g., Horizon Europe, Marie Curie) - VUT notes the need for improved proposal-writing support, research-support structures, and interdisciplinary teams to enhance competitiveness in European funding programmes.
- Structural weaknesses caused by national underfunding and limited mobility integration in evaluation - chronic national underfunding reduces stability and limits opportunities for early-career researchers, while international mobility experience is not consistently integrated into recruitment/progression criteria.

## 3. Actions

The Action Plan and HR Excellence in Research strategy must be published in an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

**Please provide the web link(s) to the organisation's action plan / strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Multiple links must be comma-separated.**

<https://www.valahia.ro/cercetare-new/hrs4r/> (<https://www.valahia.ro/cercetare-new/hrs4r/>)

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HR Excellence in Research strategy to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the gap analysis. It is recommended that the listed actions are concise but detailed enough for the assessors to determine the level of ambition, engagement, and planning for the implementation process. Please ensure that you provide a detailed plan, with precise and quantifiable KPIs, not just an enumeration of the institution's action.

**Note:** Choose one or more of the principles automatically retrieved from the gap analysis with their ratings.

**Proposed actions**

**Action 1**

Maintain and keep updated a single public HRS4R hub (webpage) and publish Action Plan, templates, and updates

**GAP Principle(s)**

(++) 2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q1 2026 → continuous

**Responsible**

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice-Rector  
RAC; IT  
support;  
Communication

Updated HRS4R webpage; quarterly updates; repository of key documents

**Proposed actions****Action 2**

Adopt and implement an official OTM-R policy; update recruitment methodologies (incl. candidate feedback)

**GAP Principle(s)**

(++) 2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

(+/-) 9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

(++) 11. SELECTION

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q4 2027 (staged deliverables from 2026)

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice-Rector

EQA; Vice-

Rector RAC;

Vice-Rector

IDIR; HR;

Doctoral

Council

OTM-R policy (RO/EN); updated recruitment methodology; templates; feedback mechanism; Targets: Policy adopted; methodology updated; templates published; feedback delivered to candidates

**Proposed actions****Action 3**

Expand recruitment of international and diaspora researchers

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

(++) 11. SELECTION

(+/-) 17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q2 2027 → continuous

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**Vice-Rector  
RAC; HR;  
Research  
institute/centresTargeted promotion of vacancies; support package according to the national legislation for incoming candidates: Target  $\geq 1$  international/diaspora researchers recruited per year (from 2027–2028)

**Proposed actions****Action 4**

Publish all teaching & research vacancies in English; centralize methodologies; improve accessibility

**GAP Principle(s)**

(++) 6. THE RESEARCHER

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q1 2027 and Q4 2028

→ continuous

**Responsible****Unit                      Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice-Rector

RAC; Vice-Rector EQA; HR; IT support

Dedicated EN vacancy page; centralized page for methodologies with EN versions EN vacancy page live; target: translated methodologies published; candidate clarity feedback

**Proposed actions**

**Action 5**

Modernize researcher assessment by valuing diverse outputs (research, teaching, transfer, service)

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

(++) 11. SELECTION

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q1 2027 → continuous

**Responsible**

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice-Rector  
EQA; Vice-Rector RAC;  
Vice-Rector IDIR; QA structures

Updated assessment framework; guidance for units; annual evaluation cycle; Target: Annual evaluations completed for all staff; expanded output categories used

**Proposed actions**

**Action 6**

Train evaluators and incorporate mobility/leadership/mentoring experience in merit assessment

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE

(+/-) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(+/-) 20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q4 2027 → annual

**Responsible**

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

HR; Quality

Assurance;

Scientific

Council;

Administration

Council

Evaluator training modules; updated guidance for internal committees; Target ≥1 training/year; ≥70% satisfaction regarding fairness

**Proposed actions**

**Action 7**

Improve supervision rules and mentoring structures (meeting frequency, mentor selection, best practices)

**GAP Principle(s)**

(++) 6. THE RESEARCHER

(+/-) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(+/-) 20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q1 2027 → continuous

**Responsible**

**Unit                      Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice-Rector  
EQA;  
Doctoral  
Council;  
Vice-Rector  
RAC

Updated assessment framework; guidance for units; annual evaluation cycle; Target: Annual evaluations completed for internal staff; expanded output categories used

**Proposed actions****Action 8**

Structured mentorship and career development programmes for early-career researchers (R1–R2)

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS

(+/-) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE

(+/-) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(+/-) 20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q4 2026 → Q4 2027  
(scale-up)

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice-Rector

EQA;

Doctoral

structures;

Career

counselling;

QA;

Faculties;

Research

Institute

Mentorship scheme; career workshops; monitoring surveys  
Target: Mentorship operational; ≥80% positive feedback from participants

**Proposed actions****Action 9**

Grant/proposal and project management training (calls, budgeting, partners, dissemination)

**GAP Principle(s)**

(++) 6. THE RESEARCHER

(+/-) 7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q1 2027 → continuous

**Responsible Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice-Rector RAC; Vice-Rector EQA; Research Institute/centres/support units

Training programme with repeated sessions; materials repository ; Target: ≥ 2 sessions/year; ≥50 participants/year

**Proposed actions**

**Action 10**

Improve research environment and working spaces (coworking, research rooms); wellbeing supports

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

Q3 2027 → continuous

(++) 14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT

**Responsible**

**Unit                      Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

General

Director;

Director of

ICSTM; Vice-

Rector RAC;

Vice-Rector

IDIR; HR;

QA

≥1 co-working space; upgraded workspaces; wellbeing activities;  
Target: ≥2 co-working spaces established; annual satisfaction surveys

**Proposed actions**

**Action 11**

Create a unified researcher expertise catalog (web) to support collaboration and visibility

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(++) 6. THE RESEARCHER	
(+/-) 7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS	Q4 2026
(+/-) 9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT	

**Responsible**

Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Director of ICSTM; Vice-Rector RAC; Research support units; IT support	Public catalog page of expertise and researchers; Target: Catalog live; updated at least annually; connection with FINER Platform and other digital products of VUT

**Proposed actions**

**Action 12**

Update research ethics regulations and publish ethics templates; disseminate procedures

**GAP Principle(s)**

- (++) 1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY
- (++) 2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q2 2027

**Responsible**

**Unit                      Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Ethics Committee; Vice-Rector EQA; Q/A; Director of ICSTM; Vice-Rector RAC	Updated ethics regulations in EN; 1 procedure; 2 support documents; dissemination emails Regulations updated; Target: ≥3 dissemination emails; templates downloadable from VUT cloud
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**Proposed actions**

**Action 13**

Align OHS and GDPR in research onboarding

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

(++) 14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT

(++) 15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q4 2026

**Responsible**

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Administration

Council;

General

Director;

relevant

services

Safety & data protection guide; certification pre-assessment report; Target: Guide published for public debate; certification requirements identified;

**Proposed actions**

**Action 14**

Create a dedicated complaints/suggestions section on VUT and HRS4R webpages

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT

(++) 11. SELECTION

(+/-) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q2 2027

**Responsible**

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice-Rector  
IDIT; IT  
support

Webpage section + procedure for handling inputs Target: Page live; response workflow defined

**Proposed actions****Action 15**

Research events calendar + public engagement plan (open days, school outreach, dissemination)

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 3. OPEN SCIENCE

(+/-) 16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q2 2027 → continuous

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

ICSTM; Vice-Rector RAC; Vice-Rector IDIR; Communication

Real-time events calendar; minimum outreach programme; ≥2 outreach events/semester; ≥5 dissemination articles/year

**Proposed actions****Action 16**

Strengthen knowledge transfer and academic entrepreneurship in agreement with the VUT innovation policy (IP specialist, patenting, partnerships)

**GAP Principle(s)**

(+/-) 8. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH

(+/-) 16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q3 2027

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

ICSTM; Vice-

Rector RAC;

Vice-Rector

IDIR; Financial

Director;

Communication;

Corpartment of

Technological

transfer

Spin-off/start-up regulation; increased socio-economic partnerships; Target:1 regulation adopted; ≥5 new CDI partnerships; +10% industry collaboration

**Proposed actions**

**Action 17**

Enhance ethical awareness and balanced practices in co-authorship

**GAP Principle(s)**

- (++) 1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY
- (++) 6. THE RESEARCHER

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q2 2027 - continuous

**Responsible**

**Unit                      Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Doctoral Council; Vice-Rector RCA; Ethics Committee  
 Ethics of authorship workshop (recommended for PhD students and supervisors); Target: 1/year; >75% satisfaction in annual survey regarding fairness

**Action 18**

Establish a formal mechanism to monitor gender balance in academic recruitment and decision-making bodies. Use annual data to identify imbalances and recommend merit-based corrective actions.

**GAP Principle(s)**

- (+/-) 4. GENDER EQUALITY

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q3 2027- continuous

**Responsible**

**Unit                      Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Administration Council; Quality Assurance Committee; Ethics Committee.  
 Annual public report on gender balance in committees and leadership structures; Target: ≥40% representation of each gender in recruitment and evaluation committees, where possible; Corrective recommendations issued where imbalances persist

**Proposed actions****Action 19**

Implement targeted career continuity measures for researchers with interruptions, featuring flexible workloads, reintegration mentoring, and adjusted evaluation timelines that maintain merit-based standards according to the national regulations

**GAP Principle(s)**

- (+/-) 4. GENDER EQUALITY
- (+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION
- (++) 15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q4 2027  
(implementation and review)

**Responsible****Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Administration Council; HR;; Director of ICSTM	Formal procedure approved and published; Target: ≥70% satisfaction rate among beneficiaries in annual survey; Increased retention and progression of early-career researchers after career breaks
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**Proposed actions**

**Action 20**

Establish a university-wide Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Programme for researchers and administrative staff, focusing on inclusive communication, cultural awareness, accessibility, and prevention of implicit bias in academic environments, supervision, and evaluation processes according to KreativEU Universities Alliance policy

**GAP Principle(s)**

- (+/-) 5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY
- (++) 6. THE RESEARCHER

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q2 2027

**Responsible**

**Unit**

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

International Relations; Administration Council; HR;; Director of ICSTM;	At least 1 diversity and inclusion workshop per year; Target: ≥75% participation rate among targeted staff groups ≥80% positive feedback on relevance and usefulness Improved perception of inclusiveness in annual HRS4R survey results
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**Unselected principles:**

The establishment of an open recruitment policy is a key element in the strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the OTM-R toolkit and how you intend to implement / are implementing the principles of OTM-R. It is helpful to include a brief commentary demonstrating this implementation even if there is some overlap with the actions listed above. If this is the case, please link the OTM-R checklist with the overall action plan (max. 1000 words).\*

VUT is firmly committed to implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, strengthening a culture of academic freedom, integrity, and fairness across all research activities. This commitment is anchored in the 2025 University Charter, national legislation—including the Higher Education Law 199/2023 and the Law on RDI Personnel 183/2024—and an extensive body of internal regulations that guide recruitment, evaluation, and career development. VUT applies Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) principles through structured procedures for academic and research positions. Competitions are published on the university website and, when required by law, in the Official Gazette, ensuring openness and equal access. Calls are increasingly available in both Romanian and English, accompanied by clear descriptions of criteria, required documents, and evaluation stages. Recruitment processes rely on standardized methodologies such as M15 and M16 and on the CNATDCU minimum standards, ensuring that merit remains central to selection. Committees are appointed based on expertise, ethical compliance, and attention to gender balance. Candidates receive official results, and appeal mechanisms are in place. The university recognizes the need to further strengthen

transparency and accessibility, particularly through more detailed job descriptions, consistent qualitative feedback for all applicants, and wider international promotion of vacancies via EURAXESS. VUT aims to expand the use of English-language documentation for job calls and to diversify selection committees by integrating international experts, including through the KreativEU Alliance. Certain OTM-R measures, such as targeted recruitment of underrepresented groups, remain constrained by national non-discrimination legislation; nonetheless, the university continues to reinforce equal opportunity principles across all recruitment stages.

Working conditions at VUT support high-quality research careers. Researchers at all stages (R1–R4) enjoy equitable access to laboratories, accredited research centres, IT facilities, and major scientific databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Springer collections, largely through ANELIS+. Professional development is strengthened through workshops on ethics, research methodology, open science, intellectual property, and project management. VUT also encourages dissemination activities, conference participation, and open-access publishing, providing financial support where available. Institutional quality assurance is ensured through certified systems, including ISO 9001 and the Innovation Management System SMIn, complemented by CEAC structures and the Quality Management Compartment. Despite these strengths, several challenges remain. National underfunding of the research system and periodic hiring freezes impact long-term career stability. Support for grant writing, international project development, and administrative management must grow to meet European competition standards. Mentoring and supervision practices, though present, vary across faculties and require a unified institutional framework to ensure consistent guidance, structured feedback, and clear expectations, especially for doctoral and early-career researchers. Through its HRS4R Action Plan, VUT commits to enhancing international visibility, strengthening OTM-R implementation, expanding career-development support, and reinforcing a sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality research environment aligned with European standards.

The OTM-R toolkit structure to draft a public OTM-R Policy and an Internal OTM-R Guide (with templates for job adverts, evaluation criteria, timelines, and result communication). These will be published in Romanian and English to ensure accessibility for both domestic and international applicants.

Standardized recruitment templates will be produced and used - toolkit components will be converted into bilingual templates (advert text, eligibility checklist, candidate forms, committee briefings) so that every unit follows the same open, transparent, merit-based steps—beyond legal minimums.

Process checklists and e-recruitment. The toolkit checklists will be integrated in our competition lifecycle (advertising, eligibility, committee evaluation, ranking, feedback, appeals), and will use EURAXESS and other platforms systematically for all research posts, not only for grant-mandated vacancies.

Evaluator briefings. Short bias-awareness and fair-assessment briefings (drawn from toolkit good practices) will be provided to selection committees to standardize judging and reduce variability across departments.

#### Implementation Roadmap (Phases)

##### Phase 1 (2026): Visibility & Foundations

- Launch/maintain central HRS4R hub; publish EN vacancy information and centralize recruitment methodologies.
- Update research ethics regulations and publish ethics templates; create complaints/suggestions webpage.
- Create researcher catalog; establish supervision meeting-frequency rules; launch research events calendar.

##### Phase 2 (2027): OTM-R Deployment & Capacity Building

- Adopt OTM-R policy (RO/EN) and updated recruitment methodology; implement candidate feedback mechanism.
- Scale mentoring structures; deliver proposal-writing/project-management trainings; establish coworking spaces.
- Integrate safety/GDPR in onboarding; initiate lab certification planning; adopt spin-off/IP related measures.

##### Phase 3 (2028–2029): Maturity & Continuous Improvement

- Institution-wide evaluator training cycles; refine merit criteria and responsible metrics; broaden international recruitment.
- Strengthen long-term career services, advanced training, data management maturity and continuous policy alignment.

**Minimal KPI (Quarterly Monitoring)**

- OTM-R: policy adopted; recruitment methodology updated; % posts published on EURAXESS; candidate feedback delivered.
- Internationalization: number of international/diaspora recruits per year; % calls and key documents available in English.
- Mentoring & supervision: mentor methodology adopted; number of sessions delivered; satisfaction rates.
- Training capacity: number of grant/proposal/project-management sessions; participation levels.
- Ethics & compliance: updated ethics procedures published; safety/GDPR onboarding delivered; certification steps executed.
- Knowledge transfer: spin-off regulation adopted; number of socio-economic CDI partnerships; IP support capacity.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of OTM-R, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website. Multiple links must be comma-separated.

**URL:**

<https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/M-15-Metodologie-de-concurs-pentru-ocuparea-posturilor-didactice-si-de-cerceare-2025.pdf> (<https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/M-15-Metodologie-de-concurs-pentru-ocuparea-posturilor-didactice-si-de-cerceare-2025.pdf>)

**4. Implementation****General overview of the expected overall implementation process of the action plan (max. 1000 words).**

VUT embeds the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers into its institutional strategies, operational plans, and regulatory framework. These documents—approved by the Senate and communicated across the academic community—are already being implemented and aligned with national legislation and the 2025 VUT Charter. VUT's quality-assurance systems, including ISO 9001 and the Innovation Management System (SMIn), further reinforce the integration of HRS4R principles into institutional practice. The HRS4R Action Plan developed by VUT builds directly on the comprehensive Gap Analysis conducted during the internal review process. Contributions were collected from researchers across faculties, research centres, and career stages, ensuring that the Action Plan reflects real institutional needs and priorities. The plan, therefore, serves both as a response to the identified gaps and as a component of VUT's long-term research and institutional development strategy. A major element of future implementation is the development of a formal OTM-R Policy, which will be fully integrated into VUT's recruitment and selection procedures. This includes the use of bilingual documentation, wider use of EURAXESS for all research posts, standardized recruitment templates, and clearer information for candidates regarding responsibilities, evaluation criteria, and career-development prospects. These enhancements build on existing procedures, such as the M15 recruitment methodology and CNATDCU minimum standards, ensuring continuity with national requirements while advancing openness and transparency. The Action Plan was prepared through a collaborative and validated process:

- (a) it was shaped by concrete proposals from researchers and guided by the Gap Analysis;
- (b) its feasibility was examined with administrative units involved in implementation, including Human Resources, Quality Assurance, Doctoral Schools, and International Relations; and
- (c) it was formally endorsed by the Vice-Rector for Scientific Research and Academic Creativity. Implementation will be overseen by the HRS4R Steering Committee, with the support of the Vice-Rector for Research and Academic Creativity and including representatives from all relevant administrative units. Each action will have a designated responsible structure, while academic participation will be ensured through deans, department heads, and research centre coordinators, guaranteeing that the Action Plan remains fully rooted in the needs and contributions of the VUT research community.

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist below, which you will need to describe in detail.

**Note:** Click on each question of the checklist to open the editor.

How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?\*



**Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)**

The HRS4R Steering and Implementation Committee at VUT will hold regular meetings—at least once per quarter—to monitor the progress of the Action Plan and ensure coherent coordination across all responsible structures. Each action included in the Plan will be linked to predefined milestones, established jointly by the Steering Committee and the operational team responsible for its implementation.

The Action Plan will be a standing item on the agenda of the Administrative Council of VUT, and each meeting will include a dedicated section on the status of HRS4R implementation. This section will comprise progress reports, identified challenges, and corrective measures, where needed, ensuring that institutional leadership follows the evolution of each measure in a structured and timely manner. Important decisions will be submitted to the Senate for final approval.

Each action will have a designated responsible unit (e.g., Human Resources, CEAC, Doctoral Schools, International Relations, faculties, or ICSTM Research Institute). These units will prepare quarterly progress reports on the actions assigned to them. The reports will be submitted to the Steering Committee, which will analyse them together with the annual progress reports to track the level of implementation, the achievement of milestones, and any adjustments required for the next phase.

Through this structured cycle of monitoring, reporting, and review, VUT ensures that the HRS4R Action Plan is implemented efficiently, with active involvement from both administrative departments and academic leadership (faculty deans, department heads including ICSTM, and research centre coordinators).

How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?\*



**Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)**

The academic community of VUT will be informed about the HRS4R process through institutional email and directed to the dedicated HRS4R webpage, where detailed information and updates about the progress are available. All actions in the HRS4R plan will be developed and implemented in collaboration with VUT researchers and relevant internal and external stakeholders, including administrative departments, faculties, research centres, and partner institutions. Progress updates will be communicated regularly through currently official university channels such as email, the institutional website, social media, and newsletters. The Working Group will actively encourage researchers to provide feedback, submit suggestions, and propose improvements, ensuring that the process remains sustainable and aligned with institutional needs while promoting a participatory culture consistent with the principles of the European Charter and Code.

How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HR Excellence in Research award process? Make sure it is recognised in the organisation's research strategy as the overarching HR policy. \*

**Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)**

All future institutional regulations and methodologies at VUT will be aligned with the principles of the HRS4R framework. Given that many internal documents are revised on an annual basis, the university expects a high degree of natural convergence between ongoing updates and HRS4R requirements. In situations where certain documents follow a longer revision cycle—such as the University Strategic Plan or multi-year policy frameworks—the necessary adjustments will be introduced during their next scheduled update, acknowledging that some revisions may require a shorter implementation period while others may extend over several years. In the rare cases where annual updates are not foreseen or where substantial inconsistencies with HRS4R principles are identified, the Steering Committee will determine the corrective measures to be applied. The Committee will communicate the required modifications to all relevant stakeholders, including the university's leadership and administrative departments. These units will be responsible for integrating the approved changes into their procedures and documentation to ensure full institutional compliance with HRS4R.

To maintain continuity of the process, the governance of HRS4R implementation will not be affected by potential changes in the composition of the Steering Committee. Institutional responsibilities and reporting mechanisms are embedded in VUT's operational structure—ensuring that implementation progresses smoothly regardless of administrative or personnel transitions.

How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?\*

**Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)**

Implementation will be coordinated by the designated Vice-Rector, who will oversee the working groups and the departments responsible for each specific action. Every department will appoint a person in charge of its assigned implementation tasks.

The Steering Committee will monitor the entire process and, when necessary, decide on mitigation or corrective measures on a case-by-case basis. Its members will assume responsibility for coordinating specific actions and will establish the appropriate working groups to carry them out. The Steering Committee will be notified whenever an indicator is achieved, and the corresponding action has been fully implemented.

The possibility to digitalize the process of monitoring the implementation of proposed actions will be a priority.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?\*



**Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)**

Progress will be assessed periodically by the designated coordinators, based on reports submitted by each responsible department according to the agreed timeline. The Working Group will address delays or challenges collaboratively, and any issues that cannot be resolved at this level will be escalated to the Steering Committee for further action. Monitoring will also include regular institutional surveys to evaluate the usefulness and accessibility of HRS4R activities, as well as perceptions of fairness and transparency in recruitment and career development. The Administrative Council will dedicate a fixed agenda section to reviewing Action Plan progress and identifying potential obstacles, ensuring rapid decision-making and timely corrective measures.

How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?\*



**Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)**

The process will follow a structured lifecycle, closely monitored from its formal endorsement by the VUT governing bodies through to its full operational status. Key milestones include conceptual design, implementation, and the production of tangible deliverables (web content, project timelines, and specialized toolkits), followed by rigorous testing. Performance will be evaluated against KPIs focusing on efficiency, stakeholder synergy, and visibility. Priority will be given to metrics such as new partnerships, secured funding, scholarly output, and media reach. Furthermore, the process will measure stakeholder engagement through satisfaction surveys and the practical integration of research findings, directly supporting VUT's ascent in national and relevant international rankings.

**Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process (max. 1000 words)**

VUT demonstrates a solid and evolving commitment to high-quality working conditions, grounded in national legislation, European standards, and institutional policies. Through the recognized infrastructure (<https://eertis.eu/erio-2300-000m-4240>), certified management systems, nondiscrimination principles, and access to diverse research resources, VUT provides an environment conducive to professional development and research excellence.

At the same time, VUT acknowledges systemic and internal challenges—particularly the need for enhanced mentoring, internationalization, stable funding, and expanded project-support capacity. Addressing these gaps through targeted actions will reinforce VUT's alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, strengthening its position in the HRS4R process.

VUT owns a local point of the EURAXESS Romania Network (one of the 17 entities - <https://www.euraxess.gov.ro/romania/romania-network#romania-network-tab-2-name>) and the Networking and Career Development Center for Research in the South-Muntenia Region (CNDCSM) - one of the 8 regional centres existing in Romania, and their roles will be crucial for researchers' support in the Muntenia Region.

Approved for external dissemination  
Vice-Rector in charge of Research and Academic Creativity  
Valahia University of Targoviste