

HR Excellence in Research

GAP Analysis (Charter and Code Checklist)

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Case number

2025RO297888

Name Organisation under review

Universitatea "Valahia" din Târgoviște

Organisation's contact details

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Date endorsement charter and code

30/01/2025

Submission date to the European Commission

29/01/2026

GAP Analysis overview

The Charter and Code provides the basis for the Gap analysis. In order to aid cohesion, the GAP Analysis principles have been renumbered under the following headings. Please provide the outcome of your organisation's GAP analysis below. If your organisation currently does not fully meet the criteria, please list whether national or organisational legislation may be limiting the Charter's implementation, initiatives that have already been taken to improve the situation or new proposals that could remedy the current situation. In order to help the organisation's recruitment strategy, a specific self-assessment checklist is provided for Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment.

European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers : GAP analysis overview

- **Status** : to what extent does this organisation meet the following principles?
- **Implementation (++, +/-, -/+, --)** :
 - ++ fully implemented
 - +/- almost but not fully implemented
 - -/+ partially implemented
 - -- insufficiently implemented
- **GAP** : In case of --, -/+, or +/-, please **indicate the actual "gap"** between the principle and the current practice in your organisation.
- **Implementation impediments** : If relevant, please list any national/regional legislation or organisational regulation currently impeding implementation.
- **Initiatives undertaken/new proposals** : If relevant, please list any initiatives that have already been taken to improve the situation and/or new proposals that could remedy the current situation.

Status

PILLAR 1 – ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER AND OPEN SCIENCE

Status

1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	In the initial phase of the gap analysis, no national, regional, or institutional regulations were identified that would hinder the implementation of ethical principles.	<p>Initiatives undertaken: All researchers at VUT adhere to established ethical standards and discipline-specific ethical principles, as defined in the VUT Code of Ethics and Deontology (https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/Codul-de-Etica-si-deontologie-universitara.pdf). In accordance with Ministerial Order No. 5255/10.09.2021, the University has implemented a comprehensive strategy aimed at preventing plagiarism and strengthening institutional research integrity mechanisms. Furthermore, national legislation (Ministerial Order No. 3131/2018) requires that all study programmes (Bachelor and Master) incorporate mandatory courses in Ethics and Academic Integrity. These provisions are reflected in the VUT Regulation governing the design and approval of study programmes. Despite the availability of institutional regulations, guidelines, and methodologies on the university's online platforms, enhancing awareness and understanding of ethical principles remains a critical priority, especially for early-stage researchers. This institutional emphasis is aligned with Law 199/2023, Article 3(c), which underscores integrity as a core value and promotes the advancement of ethical conduct in education and research. Doctoral candidates at VUT are required to complete mandatory courses on ethics and academic integrity. Guidance on research ethics, plagiarism avoidance, and academic integrity is embedded within the institutional regulations and procedures governing the development, evaluation, and defense of doctoral theses. Additionally, doctoral candidates receive training in academic writing as part of their structured doctoral programme. Plagiarism-detection software (sistemantiplagiat.ro) is available to all students as well as to academic and research staff, ensuring consistent application of integrity standards across the university. Furthermore, VUT researchers have participated in advanced research training sessions (Masterclass format) covering topics such as research metrics, open-access publishing, intellectual property rights, national and international patenting, and ethically grounded academic writing. On the VUT website, the Ethical Commission has a dedicated page that provides relevant information on regulations and activities (https://www.valahia.ro/comisia-de-etica/)</p> <p>Proposed potential improvements: - regulation of the AI utilization in line with the ethical norms and intellectual rights in the scientific works; - domain-specific courses that incorporate legal, social, ethical, and professional issues, complementing the mandatory ethics course and enhancing awareness and responsibility among students and academic staff; - organization of round-tables and workshops with internationally renowned scholars for sharing experience on ethical principles; - ensuring a progressive integration of ethical principles throughout the educational pathway—from foundational concepts at bachelor level, to advanced frameworks at master level, and in-depth exploration during doctoral studies as part of the strategy for research conduit within VUT.</p>

Status

2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	In the initial phase of the gap analysis, no national, regional, or institutional regulations were identified that impede the implementation of academic and research freedom of scientific research.	<p>Initiatives undertaken: Academic freedom constitutes a fundamental institutional value explicitly affirmed in the VUT Charter. This principle is fully aligned with the guarantees provided by the Constitution of Romania—Article 32 on the freedom of scientific research—as well as with the National Strategy for Research, Innovation and Smart Specialization 2022–2027 and the relevant national legislation, including Law 183/2024 on the status of research, development and innovation personnel and Law 199/2023 on Higher Education. Academic and research staff at VUT enjoy full autonomy in conducting research, selecting research topics, developing and submitting research projects, and deciding on the research programmes and competitions in which they participate. Research freedom is upheld and promoted by the university’s administrative and academic structures responsible for research management—namely, the Scientific Research Council, the Institute for Technological and Multidisciplinary Research, the Faculty Departments, and the 18 institutionally accredited research centres. This framework is further reinforced through dedicated operational procedures that support and safeguard researchers’ autonomy and freedom of scientific research. Chart of VUT updated in 2025 (Art. 128) - https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/CARTA-UNIVERSITARA_2025_adoptata_30.06.2025__.pdf Regulation of the Scientific Council, other regulations and methodologies related to research and assurance of freedom of scientific research - https://www.valahia.ro/cercetare-new/regulamente-metodologii-formulare/ Proposed potential improvements: - increase institutional support for Independent and Innovative Research by developing competitive internal funding schemes, seed-grants, or innovation vouchers that support early-stage ideas, exploratory research, and investigator-initiated projects without restrictive thematic constraints. - establish a reliable University-wide Framework for Safeguarding Research Autonomy that clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of researchers, outlines acceptable limitations (e.g., ethical, legal, safety-related), and formalizes mechanisms for reporting any interference or undue pressure on research activities.</p>

Status

3. OPEN SCIENCE

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	More funding is required to access various services that provides successful dedicated repositories such as Digital Commons, to publish more articles in Open Access journals in Q1 and Q2, development of dedicated platforms for technological transfers	<p>Initiatives undertaken: The dissemination of research outputs constitutes a core responsibility of the academic and research staff at VUT and is an integral component of the annual individual performance evaluation process. Data on research dissemination—including publications, conference contributions, scientific events, patents, and other outputs—are systematically collected at institutional level and reported within national evaluation exercises. VUT actively encourages open-science publishing, recognizing its role in enhancing visibility and accessibility of research results. The VUT Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation 2025–2029 sets out the objectives and actions required to advance the institutional adoption of Open Science principles and to expand the dissemination of research achievements, scientific results, and innovation activities across the university (https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/Strategia-cercetarii-stiintifice-si-creatiei-universitare-2025-2029.pdf). To support these goals, VUT implements internal funding schemes that facilitate and promote dissemination activities, primarily by covering publication fees for high-quality journals indexed in Web of Science and Scopus—many of which operate under open-access models. The university also subsidizes, in part, open-access publication charges, conference registration fees, and travel expenses for participation in prestigious international scientific events. Research projects coordinated or co-implemented by VUT maintain dedicated websites, enabling open access to project results and outputs (https://www.valahia.ro/proiecte/). VUT has also endorsed the principles of CoARA (Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment), reinforcing its institutional commitment to responsible research evaluation and transparency. Additionally, the university has initiated the development of an upgraded internal digital platform—FINER (Feasible, Interesting, Novel, Ethical, and Relevant)—designed to automatically collect and centralize research results indexed in Web of Science and Scopus. A remaining challenge is the absence of a fully developed framework to support systematic dissemination and institutional communication regarding the tools and mechanisms used for collecting research outputs (https://www.valahia.ro/cercetare-new/platforma-de-raportare-a-rezultatelor-cercetarii-finer/). VUT maintains an Open Science section on its institutional website, and all university-owned journals operate under an open-access publishing model. Most are hosted on the De Gruyter platform, while two additional journals have been selected to benefit from Elsevier's Digital Commons solution (https://www.valahia.ro/cercetare-new/open-science/). Proposed potential improvements: - development of an institutional repository for open-access science (e.g., using the Elsevier Digital Commons solution) for publications, datasets, and research outputs; - an Open Science Helpdesk offering support on data management, FAIR principles, copyright, and open-access publishing. - Providing regular training programs for researchers (including doctoral candidates) on topics such as data stewardship, open data standards, FAIR data, and responsible publishing. - Implementing clear institutional policies for data management plans (DMPs) for all funded research projects. - Aligning assessment principles with CoARA commitments and responsible metrics.</p>

Status**4. GENDER EQUALITY**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	<p>GEP and other subsequent documentation and successful practices are in the phase of development because of the necessity to be aligned with the practices and regulations of the partners in the European Alliance of Universities KreativEU. It is expected that in 2026 to be fully deployed.</p>	<p>Initiatives undertaken: VUT has fully implemented a guide for gender equality https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/Ghid_egalitate_gen_UVT_Ed.1.pdf It is committed to promoting gender equality and ensuring balanced representation across all academic, research, and administrative structures. This commitment is grounded in national legislation (Law 199/2023 of Higher Education; Law 153/2017 regarding the remuneration of staff paid from public funds; Directive 99/70/EC on fixed-term work; Romanian Labor Code) and aligned with the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for Recruitment, and Horizon Europe requirements. VUT ensures equitable access to positions, opportunities, and institutional benefits for all staff. Gender balance is maintained both in VUT's leadership structure and across the broader academic community. Recruitment and evaluation committees operate on a gender-balanced basis, and the researcher recruitment process is strictly nondiscriminatory. Access to managerial roles follows the same principles of fairness and equal opportunity. Moreover, gender balance represents a formal requirement in the submission of EU-funded project proposals. Proposed potential improvements: - enhanced Gender-Balanced Recruitment and Promotion by implementing gender-neutral evaluation criteria, ensuring balanced selection committees whenever possible, and providing brief bias-awareness training for evaluators. - strengthen Work–Life Balance Support by expanding flexible working arrangements and reintegration measures for staff returning from parental leave to reduce career interruptions. - promote Gender Awareness in Research and Teaching by integrating gender perspectives into research and curricula where relevant, and conduct regular awareness activities for staff and students. - development of GEP for Horizon projects and other requirements.</p>

Status**5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	In the initial phase of the gap analysis, no national, regional, or institutional regulations were identified that impede the implementation of embracing diversity	<p>Initiatives undertaken: The KreativEU Diversity and Inclusion Plan unites 11 universities including VUT in fostering equality, respect, and belonging. Rooted in EU values, it sets common principles — dignity, cultural and gender equality, inclusive language, equal opportunities, and well-being — into governance, education, research, mobility, and community life. The plan provides a common framework while respecting each university's autonomy. It aims to align activities with EU strategies, promote shared principles across all alliance activities, and position KreativEU as a model of openness and inclusivity in Europe. Core Values: The plan emphasizes respect and dignity – treating all with fairness and integrity, cultural equality – valuing diverse perspectives and traditions, gender equality – ensuring equal treatment and opportunities, equal opportunities – removing barriers for those with special needs or disabilities, inclusive language – communicating without exclusion or bias, and well-being – supporting health, balance, and belonging. Diversity and inclusion principles will guide: - governance – transparent leadership and equitable representation, - education – inclusive curricula and accessible resources, - research – ethical, diverse, and representative practices, - community life – safe, respectful, and inclusive engagement, - communication – multilingual, accessible, and inclusive messaging, - mobility – equitable access and strong support measures. The DIP is both a declaration of shared values and a roadmap for embedding inclusivity into all aspects of KreativEU. By committing to these principles, the alliance strengthens its role as a truly European university, setting an example for academia and society in building a fair, supportive, and inspiring environment for future generations. Furthermore, VUT has implemented or is implementing projects that support the academic and social inclusion of learners from secondary schools, students, and staff from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, linguistic, or disability backgrounds (see https://www.valahia.ro/proiecte/proiecte-structurale/). Proposed potential improvements: - Implement Structured Training and Awareness Programs on Diversity and Inclusion by introducing regular, mandatory workshops for staff and students focused on cultural awareness, inclusive communication, bias prevention, and respectful campus engagement. These sessions should be integrated into onboarding and annual professional development to build a sustained culture of openness and understanding. - Strengthen Institutional Support Mechanisms for Underrepresented Groups by establishing dedicated support services—such as mentoring programs, peer networks, and confidential advisory points—to enhance the academic and social inclusion of students and staff from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, linguistic, or disability backgrounds. Ensure clear pathways for reporting discrimination or exclusion, with transparent follow-up procedures.</p>

Status

6. THE RESEARCHER

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	In the initial phase of the gap analysis, no national, regional, or institutional regulations were identified that impede the researchers' status.	<p>Initiatives undertaken: Researchers are recognized as a distinct professional category in accordance with national legislation. Within the academic profession, teaching and research constitute core functions, each enjoying equal professional status and institutional recognition. Valahia University ensures that early-career researchers and doctoral candidates have equitable access to all institutional services, facilities, and resources, comparable to those provided to academic staff, thereby supporting their full integration into the university's research environment. At VUT, researchers across all career stages (R1–R4) are regarded as fully fledged professionals and active contributors to the academic community, in line with the institutional commitment to strengthening research excellence. Most internal regulations apply equally to academic and research staff, reflecting the university's integrated approach to research and teaching; the only distinction relates to job-specific responsibilities, with research positions not requiring mandatory teaching duties (researchers that are working in the VUT Institute of Multidisciplinary Research - ICSTM. In accordance with the VUT Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation 2025-2029, the university ensures that early-career researchers and doctoral candidates benefit from equitable access to institutional infrastructure and services, including IT resources, scientific databases, journal subscriptions, and internal research-performance reward schemes and also support of fees in open access journals for articles. These provisions support the development of a competitive, inclusive, and sustainable research environment and foster the progression of researchers throughout their careers. Moreover, VUT ensures access for all researchers and students to key scientific databases (Scopus, WoS, Springer, Sciencedirect, etc. - https://www.valahia.ro/cercetare-new/acces-baze-de-date-stiintifice/) through ANELIS+ project (https://anelis-plus.ro/) and its own contributions (eBook collections from Springer or other key resources for specific domains) within the inner network or as mobile through the Enformation service (https://www.e-nformation.ro/). https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/M-07-Metodologie-infiintare-evaluare-recunoastere-centre-cercetare-v2025-Ed-3.pdf https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/REG-03-Regulament-de-organizare-si-desfasurare-a-activitatii-de-cercetare-Ed4-R1.pdf https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/REG-43-Regulament-de-promovare-si-sustinere-a-rezultatlor-cercetarii-stiintifice-din-UVT.pdf https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/REG-01-Regulament-de-organizare-si-functionare-ICSTM.pdf Proposed potential improvements: - a better preparation of the teams that are developing research proposals for European Competitions (Horizon, Widera, Marie Curie Actions, etc.) by involving a research support structure; - encouraging networking and/or brokerage events, more partnerships, exchange programs, and formation of interdisciplinary research groups. - development of a specific platform that provides matchmaking and searching for competencies of researchers (some initiatives exist in KreativEU for potential scientific coordinators identification, leading to a better inter-institutional collaboration).</p>

Status**7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	<p>Despite VUT efforts, existing appointment and recruitment procedures do not yet systematically integrate explicit criteria related to research or professional experience acquired within leading international institutions and reputed mobility programs for researchers (Marie Curie, Fulbright, etc.). Although Erasmus+ mobilities are widely encouraged and provide substantial benefits for pedagogical development and academic collaboration, there remains an underexploited potential for expanding research-focused mobility, such as visits to high-profile research centres or participation in competitive international fellowship programmes. Moreover, the university has not yet established dedicated selection criteria for sector-specific or disciplinary research mobility.</p>	<p>Initiatives undertaken: Internationalization represents a central strategic pillar of Valahia University of Târgoviște (VUT), which actively seeks to expand the global engagement of its academic and research community. The institution promotes participation in international mobility schemes—including research stays, teaching exchanges, training periods, and involvement in scientific and educational events—as these experiences contribute significantly to strengthening international cooperation, enhancing institutional visibility, and improving the overall quality of research and teaching activities. VUT collaborates with more than 125 universities, institutes, and businesses from 38 European Union, European Economic Area, and other European countries, as well as the Asian, American, and African continents, and this number is expanding. This demonstrates the university's commitment to European principles, as well as its openness and global outlook. Inter-university or partner collaboration agreements encompass a wide range of forms of collaboration, including bilateral and multilateral agreements, Erasmus Plus contracts, research contracts and partnerships, and multilevel arrangements (https://international.valahia.ro/cooperation/). Advancing the integration of international research experience into recruitment and evaluation processes, together with strengthening targeted support for research-oriented mobility opportunities, would further reinforce VUT's strategic commitment to internationalization and enhance the institution's capacity for research excellence (https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/Strategia_de_internationalizare_2021-2025.pdf). Current practices for promoting researcher mobility within the KreativEU European University Alliance, launched in 2025 (https://www.kreativeu.org/), include organizing matchmaking events to support collaborative partnerships, providing access to shared research infrastructure and thematic research and innovation hubs, and offering additional support programmes for incoming mobile researchers. These initiatives aim to strengthen cross-border collaboration, facilitate knowledge exchange, and foster the development of innovative research projects across the member institutions of the KreativEU alliance (https://www.kreativeu.org/en/research/). Proposed potential improvements: - identify and allocate targeted funding for mobility of researchers, especially in underfinanced projects, preponderantly for those led by early-career or interdisciplinary teams. - develop a centralized platform to connect researchers across disciplines and share expertise and opportunities. - organize regular interdisciplinary workshops and networking events, including those fostering international partnerships.</p>

Status

8. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	<p>A critical gap regarding the sustainability of research in Romania is the chronic underfunding and its subsequent impact on the national research ecosystem's survival. Research efforts are largely concentrated in the public and academic sectors, with minimal contribution or integration from the private sector to stimulate applied innovation that is connected to sustainability goals.</p>	<p>Initiatives undertaken: VUT integrates sustainability as a defining dimension of its educational mission, research activity, and institutional development. Sustainability principles are embedded both in academic offerings and in the university's commitment to building a greener, smarter campus environment, while also being reflected in international partnerships that expand VUT's impact beyond the local community. From an academic perspective, VUT advances sustainability through specialized programs and research structures dedicated to the study and protection of the environment. The Faculty of Environmental Engineering and Food Science plays a central role in this effort, focusing on environmental protection, the sustainable use of natural resources, and rural development. Courses and curricular pathways in Environmental Engineering, Agriculture, and Geography place sustainable development at their core, equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to address current ecological challenges. These academic elements are complemented by the work of accredited research centers that study subjects in the context of sustainable development, which support interdisciplinary research and contribute to evidence-based solutions for environmental protection. Sustainability is also reflected in VUT's campus infrastructure and operational practices. The university has begun implementing green energy solutions, marking a shift toward cleaner and more efficient resource use. Sustainable mobility is encouraged through hybrid modern buses that connect the campus with the city of Târgoviște, reducing the environmental footprint of daily commuting. Furthermore, VUT contributes to the development of smart, sustainable urban environments through programs that address themes such as Smart Cities and modern approaches to sustainable development. International initiatives strengthen and amplify VUT's sustainability agenda. The university serves as the headquarters of the KreativEU UNESCO UNITWIN Network, which focuses on heritage preservation and its role in building sustainable communities. Through this European University Alliance, VUT promotes intercultural dialogue, collaborative research, and the exchange of best practices in sustainability. The university also hosts international events, such as the International Summer School on Sustainability, where students are invited to work on real-life challenges related to ecosystems, renewable energy, and sustainable business solutions. Together, these academic programs, research initiatives, green campus measures, and international collaborations demonstrate VUT's comprehensive and evolving commitment to sustainability—a commitment that positions the university as an active contributor to regional development and global sustainability efforts. VUT was present at various international events regarding sustainability, including the Global Sustainable Development Congress 2025, and in 2025, it was ranked in the THE Impact Rankings (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/valahia-university-targoviste). Recently, VUT has been ranked in the prestigious QS World University Rankings: Europe 2026 (https://www.topuniversities.com/europe-university-rankings?search=Valahia&sort_by=rank&order_by=desc). VUT focuses on the South Muntenia region, using EU</p>

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
		<p>funds to solve local environmental challenges like global warming and regional development imbalances. Proposed potential improvements: - diversify and stabilize long-term research funding - to enhance research sustainability, VUT should try to expand its portfolio of stable funding sources by strengthening participation in competitive European programmes, and building strategic partnerships with industry and local authorities. A more diversified funding structure would reduce dependence on external fluctuations and support continuous research activity, particularly for early-career teams and emerging interdisciplinary fields. - Improve research Infrastructure and data stewardship - improving sustainability also requires long-term investment in shared research infrastructure and robust data-management practices. Enhancing access to modern equipment, ensuring routine maintenance, and expanding digital platforms for open data, repositories, and research monitoring would create a resilient ecosystem. These measures would support reproducibility, promote collaboration, and ensure that research outputs remain accessible and useful over time.</p>

PILLAR 2 – RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION

Status

9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	The primary gap identified was the absence of a structured and standardized evaluation framework capable of ensuring consistency, transparency, and clarity across assessment processes for various domains in a comprehensive university.	<p>Initiatives undertaken: At Valahia University of Târgoviște (VUT), the evaluation of researchers is carried out in accordance with national regulatory frameworks, including the CNATDCU minimum standards and complementary internal criteria. To support a comprehensive annual assessment of individual performance, the university employs the FINER online platform, which enables researchers to report their academic outputs—such as publications, conference presentations, scientific events, patents, awards, and research projects—through a unified digital system. The evaluation process is supported by a series of institutional documents that researchers and academic staff complete on a regular basis. These include the Individual Research Plan, the Annual Research Results Report, the Annual Self-Evaluation Form, the Merit-Based Self-Evaluation Form, and peer-evaluation instruments for both teaching staff and researchers. Student evaluations of teaching activity, management evaluations of academic staff, and adherence to the Minimum Standards for Academic Title Awards (as established by Order No. 6.129/20.12.2016) form additional components of the quality assurance cycle. Evaluation practices and procedures are further framed by the university’s Operating Regulations, the updated 2025 edition of the VUT Charter, and the standards defined by SR EN ISO 9000:2015 (Quality Management Systems) and SMIn SR 13572 (Innovation Management Systems). The broader institutional approach aligns with national legislation, including Law 199/2023 on quality assurance in higher education, Law 87/2006, and the ARACIS external evaluation methodology adopted through Decision No. 1418/11.10.2006 and subsequently revised. Complementary documents such as the Merit Grading Regulations and the Methodology for Recruiting and Promoting Teaching and Research Staff ensure a coherent and regulated framework for academic evaluation (https://www.valahia.ro/documente/regulamente/). Together, these instruments and procedures form a structured system that supports transparent, standardized, and comprehensive evaluation of research activity across the university. Proposed potential improvements: - to ensure better consistency, transparency, and comparability across departments, VUT should design and implement a comprehensive institutional evaluation framework that consolidates existing tools and procedures; - to strengthen the quality and uniformity of evaluations by offering regular training sessions for academic staff, including evaluators and evaluated researchers, addressing topics such as performance criteria, responsible research assessment, and fair, bias-aware evaluation practices, including CoARA principles.</p>

Status

10. RECRUITMENT

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	One relevant gap is related to the reduced predictability of open jobs for researchers from one year to another due to the blockage of vacancies in the budgetary sector that may occur, combined with the low funding of research and a reduced number of competition.	<p>Initiatives undertaken: VUT conducts the recruitment of researchers through public competitive procedures that comply with European standards of transparency, merit-based selection, and ethical conduct. Recruitment processes are structured to ensure equal opportunity, openness, and alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Vacant research and academic positions are formally announced through multiple official channels. All competitions are published in the dedicated "Employment Competitions" section of the university's official website (https://www.valahia.ro/posturi-in-concurs/personal-didactic/), ensuring institutional transparency. In accordance with national legislation, research posts corresponding to grades CS, CS III, CS II, and CS I are additionally advertised in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part III. To attract international candidates and strengthen VUT's global visibility, research opportunities are also disseminated through other relevant channels. Selection procedures are grounded in clearly defined criteria that reflect academic excellence and professional achievements. Candidate evaluation typically considers scholarly output and its visibility in major international databases such as Web of Science and Scopus, as well as prior involvement in research grants and competitive projects. A relevant proportion of recruitments are carried out within the Multidisciplinary Scientific and Technological Research Institute (ICSTM), where staff are employed to support specialized research activities financed through national strategic programmes (e.g., UEFISCDI, PNRR, CNFIS) and European initiatives such as Horizon Europe. Opportunities are also available for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers through the university's Doctoral Schools, covering research areas such as Economic Disciplines, Electrical Engineering, Materials Engineering, and History. Applicants are required to submit a standardized application file that typically includes an application form, a curriculum vitae in Europass format, a list of publications and relevant works, a research career development plan, and documentation proving academic qualifications, including the doctoral diploma where applicable. These requirements ensure a uniform and rigorous assessment of candidates' qualifications and research potential. Through these measures, VUT maintains a recruitment system that is transparent, merit-based, and consistent with European best practices, thereby supporting the continuous development of a competitive and internationally oriented research environment. Proposed potential improvements: - increasing the role of the Euraxess Romania platform in advertising open vacancies for researchers; - increasing the role of the Networking and Career Development Center for Research in the South-Muntenia Region (CNDCSM) in promoting recruitment at regional level (https://cndsm.eu/index.php/en/project-presentation/general-information).</p>

Status

11. SELECTION

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	In the initial phase of the gap analysis, no national, regional, or institutional regulations were identified that impede the researchers' selection process.	<p>Initiatives undertaken: The recruitment and selection of researchers at VUT is conducted through public competitive procedures that are designed to ensure transparency, fairness, and alignment with European principles for merit-based recruitment (OTM-R). The following selection process occurs following the national legislation (Law 199/2023, chapter II, quality assurance methodology, Law 87/2006 regarding education quality assurance, etc.) and internal procedures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publication of Vacancies All research positions are publicly advertised through multiple institutional and national channels: VUT Official Website – announcements appear in the “Employment Competitions” section, ensuring open access for all potential applicants. Official Gazette of Romania, Part III – required for research grades CS, CS III, CS II, and CS I. (R1-R4) Euraxess Romania – used especially for positions intended to attract international candidates and to align with European recruitment standards for research project positions available within the project’s structure. This multi-channel approach ensures openness, visibility, and equal access for national and international applicants. 2. Application File Submission Candidates must prepare a standardized application file that typically includes: Application form and Europass CV List of scientific publications and relevant academic works A research career development plan Copies of academic credentials (e.g., PhD diploma) Other documents required by the specific position (certifications, project experience, etc.) For R4 positions, habilitation is a compulsory item. This documentation allows a comprehensive assessment of academic merit and research potential. 3. Eligibility Verification Administrative staff verify the completeness of the application file and ensure compliance with: Internal regulations of VUT National standards, including CNATDCU minimum criteria Requirements specific to the advertised research project or research center Only eligible candidates proceed to the evaluation stage. 4. Evaluation by the Selection Committee The evaluation is carried out by a gender-balanced and competence-based selection committee, appointed according to institutional and national rules. The committee assesses candidates using criteria such as: Scientific output and visibility (indexed publications in Web of Science / Scopus) Involvement in research grants, national or European projects Research relevance and alignment with institutional or project needs Potential contribution to ongoing activities within units such as the ICSTM Multidisciplinary Scientific and Technological Research Institute If required, candidates may also be invited for interviews, presentations, or technical discussions related to their research expertise. 5. Ranking and Selection Based on the evaluation results, the committee ranks all candidates and recommends the most qualified individual for appointment. The ranking is documented in an official report, signed by all committee members. 6. Publication of Results The final results are published on the official university website, in accordance with transparency requirements. The publication includes: Names of candidates Scores or evaluation outcomes The selected candidate Candidates may request clarifications regarding their evaluation, following internal procedures. 7. Appointment The selected candidate is formally appointed following the completion of administrative procedures, contract preparation, and verification of legal compliance.

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
		<p>Appointment decisions adhere strictly to nondiscriminatory principles and the European Charter for Researchers. Proposed potential improvements: - Revising internal regulations and methodologies to incorporate gender and diversity requirements in selection committees; - developing a database of international experts by leveraging collaborations within the KreativEU University Alliance for potential selection based on the requirements.</p>

12. CAREER PROGRESSION

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	<p>The changing of CNATDCU standards to the new ones requires higher criteria that, for some domains, are hard to achieve without a better funding and international cooperation in research projects</p>	<p>Initiatives undertaken: Career progression at VUT follows national legislation and institutional regulations that ensure transparent, merit-based advancement for both academic and research staff. Researchers progress through clearly defined career stages (R1–R4), supported by structured evaluation, access to institutional resources, and continuous professional development opportunities. Early-career researchers, including doctoral and postdoctoral candidates, benefit from equitable access to research infrastructure, databases, training programmes, and mobility schemes, enabling them to build a strong academic profile. Advancement to higher academic or research grades is based on performance criteria aligned with CNATDCU's minimum standards and internal regulations, assessing scientific output, project participation, teaching quality (where applicable), and contributions to institutional development. Annual evaluations, self-assessment forms, peer review, and student feedback provide a consistent basis for monitoring progress and identifying development needs. VUT also supports career growth through participation in international mobility, interdisciplinary collaboration within research centres, and involvement in national and European research projects. Overall, VUT maintains a career-progression system that promotes excellence, transparency, and equal opportunities in agreement with the national regulations, ensuring that researchers at all stages can advance within a supportive and competitive academic environment. Proposed potential improvements: - inclusion of early career researchers in teams with R4 reputed researchers to increase their research metrics; - sustaining the VUT journals to be indexed in Scopus and WoS, and encouraging the academic community to publish in these journals. - invitation as visiting professors of diaspora scholars and reputed scientists to research stages at VUT.</p>

PILLAR 3 - WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES

Status

13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	The main gap is the underfunding and its subsequent impact on the national research ecosystem's including universities.	<p>Initiatives undertaken: 1. Working Conditions Valahia University of Târgoviște (VUT) provides a working environment that supports academic autonomy, research freedom, and equal access to institutional resources. Researchers and academic staff benefit from: - Academic and Research Autonomy (freedom to select research topics, design methodologies, and participate in national or international competitions based on the full alignment with the Romanian Higher Education Law and the VUT Charter (2025 edition), which guarantees academic freedom and institutional support for scientific inquiry). - Access to Infrastructure and Digital Resources (all researchers, including early-career staff and doctoral candidates, have access to research facilities, laboratories, databases, IT services, and digital platforms. Research activities are supported by the Institute for Technological and Multidisciplinary Research and 18 accredited research centres). - Supportive Academic Environment (opportunities for professional development through training in ethics, academic writing, open science, research metrics, intellectual property, and project management. Availability of support services through the specialized University Departments, Doctoral Schools, International Relations Department, and KreativEU Alliance partnerships). - Work-Life Balance and Equal Opportunities (equal access to all positions and resources, irrespective of gender, age, or background. Transparent recruitment processes and gender-balanced committees. Institutional commitment to non-discrimination and inclusion). 2. Research Funding Opportunities VUT ensures a diversified ecosystem of funding sources to support sustainable research development. - Internal Funding Competitive internal schemes supporting early-stage research projects. Institutional support for open-access publishing in Web of Science and Scopus journals. Financial assistance for participation in national and international scientific events. - National Funding Researchers may obtain funding through: Competitive grants from national agencies and ministries. Programmes such as PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan) for strategic research. Sectoral projects and collaborative research initiatives led by national institutions. - European and International Funding VUT actively participates in: Horizon Europe research consortia. KreativEU European University Alliance, including thematic R&I hubs and mobility funding. Erasmus+ projects supporting teaching, research mobilities, and capacity building. UNESCO UNITWIN activities coordinated by VUT. - Project Support and Management Dedicated administrative staff assist with project administration, reporting, and compliance. Digital systems are increasingly used to streamline project management. 3. Salaries and Employment Conditions Salaries at VUT follow the national salary grid established by Romanian legislation for public universities. Key characteristics include: - Standardized Salary Structure Academic positions (Assistant, Lecturer, Associate Professor, Professor) follow nationally regulated pay scales. Research positions (CS, CS III, CS II, CS I) follow separate national research salary categories. Salaries increase with academic rank, seniority, and merit-based bonuses. - Additional Income Opportunities Participation in research grants (national or EU-funded) may provide salary top-ups, project-based remuneration, or performance bonuses granted based on research performance that contributes to the rankings of VUT. Funding for conference participation, publications,</p>

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
		<p>and professional development. - Merit-Based Evaluation Annual performance evaluations determine eligibility for merit stimulants and internal recognition. Evaluation criteria include publications, project involvement, scientific visibility, and contributions to the university's strategic objectives. In the last two years, the best researchers have received prizes in the Research GALA of VUT. Through access to infrastructure, diverse funding schemes, international collaborations, and performance-based recognition, the university supports the professional development and adequate working conditions of researchers across all stages. Proposed potential improvements: - increasing the number of project proposal submissions in international consortia, especially to EU competitions; - increasing the technological transfer and involvement of SMEs and industrial partners; - increasing the number of patents (VUT ranked first among Romanian Universities in Scimago Ranking on the Innovation rank Criteria in 2025 - https://www.scimagoir.com/rankings.php?sector=Higher+educ.&ranking=Innovation&country=ROU)</p>

14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	<p>There is no inner impediment related to the stability of employment, excluding, however, the exogenous factors that govern the budgetary system in Romania</p>	<p>Initiatives undertaken: Overall, the fluctuation of the academic personnel at VUT is low. Recruitment for academic and research positions is conducted through transparent public competitions, aligned with OTM-R principles and national standards. Employment conditions are governed by the VUT Charter (2025 edition), Operating Regulations, ethics policies, and quality-assurance standards. These documents ensure clarity regarding rights, responsibilities, workload, and professional conduct. VUT adheres to all applicable national legal frameworks governing employment in higher education, including: Law 199/2023 on Higher Education Labor Code (2024 edition) Directive 199/70/EC concerning fixed-term employment Quality assurance legislation, including provisions on working conditions and academic staffing Together, these measures support a stable and well-regulated working environment, while highlighting areas where further improvement is possible, especially in strengthening long-term career perspectives for researchers. Proposed potential improvements: - strengthen internal support services for grant writing and project development to increase participation in competitive national and European programmes, thereby securing more stable funding streams. - introduce an institutional mechanism that regularly reviews project-based and fixed-term research contracts, identifying cases where long-term or permanent employment could be offered, in line with national legislation and available budget.</p>

Status

15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
++ fully implemented	In the initial phase of the gap analysis, no national, regional, or institutional regulations were identified that impede the contractual and legal obligations..	<p>Initiatives undertaken: At VUT, the legal and contractual responsibilities of researchers are defined through individual employment contracts, project-based contracts, and the corresponding job descriptions approved at the institutional level. These responsibilities are framed by national legislation as well as internal regulations that govern the employment, rights, and obligations of academic and research staff. - The Labor Code (last update) - Law 199/2023 on Higher Education - Law 183/2024 on the status of research, development, and innovation personnel - Government Ordinance No. 57/2002 on scientific research and technological development - Government Ordinance No. 43/2023 Guidelines and information packages for national and European project competitions Together, these frameworks ensure that researchers at VUT operate within a well-regulated, transparent, and ethically grounded environment that supports high-quality scientific activity. The university's organizational structure supports research governance through the Vice-Rectorate for Scientific Research and Academic Creativity and the Vice-Rectorate for Education and Quality Assurance, which provide oversight for research coordination, project development, and innovation activities with the help of the dedicated councils. The Charter of Valahia University (2025 edition) and the Operating Regulations detail the general rights and duties of all employees, including those involved in research. Researchers at VUT may be employed as: tenured academic staff who combine teaching and research responsibilities, full-time researchers, project-based researchers hired through national or European research grants, or doctoral and postdoctoral researchers affiliated with the university's Doctoral Schools. Each category follows a specific contractual framework, with clearly defined responsibilities aligned with the nature and funding of the position. The administrative team responsible for project implementation ensures consistent and compliant management of externally funded projects. They provide standardized contract templates and internal guidelines that define researchers' roles, reporting obligations, intellectual property responsibilities, and accountability in relation to project objectives. Newly hired researchers, grantees, and fellows receive orientation and support to clarify their roles and obligations within the institutional research framework. Internal regulations relevant to employment and research management at VUT include: The VUT Charter (2025) The Operating Regulations of the University Internal procedures for the management and monitoring of nationally and internationally funded research projects Regulations governing workload, responsibilities, ethics (VUT Code of Ethics), and quality-assurance standards (SR EN ISO 9000:2015; SMIn SR 13572 – Innovation Management System) Individual employment contracts and project-specific research contracts These documents ensure coherence, transparency, and alignment with national and European standards in research management. Proposed potential improvements: - maintaining a permanent dialogue with the employees' union to support and improve the social well-being of researchers, ensuring that their rights and welfare are actively protected and promoted.</p>

Status**16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	VUT has undergone various initiatives to increase the dissemination and exploitation of scientific results, but these actions depend on constant funding to ensure the continuity of digitalization through dedicated e-platforms and repositories	<p>Initiatives undertaken: The D-EDUC project (Sustainable Development through Digitalization in Education) is a strategic initiative at Valahia University of Târgoviște (VUT) aimed at modernizing university governance and creating a high-performance digital education ecosystem (https://www.valahia.ro/proiecte/d-educ-dezvoltarea-durabila-prin-digitalizare-in-educatie/). The key benefits of the project include: - Digital Infrastructure Modernization, having as a targeted Investment: The project funds the equipment and digital platforms for 121 departments, centers, laboratories, and digital libraries across the university. Advanced Tools: It provides students and staff with modern e-learning and research platforms, enhancing the overall quality of the academic environment. - Curricular Innovation for Emerging Careers - a total of 14 study programs in fields of "smart specialization" are being updated to align with modern market demands. Entrepreneurial Focus: There is a specific emphasis on preparing students for emerging professions and strengthening entrepreneurial skills within the digital sector. Other initiatives are related to the Open Science promotion, both on sustaining the journals of VUT on the DeGruyter platform (5 journals), our own repository for a WoS journal, and a new project on Elsevier Digital Commons for two journals (https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/UVT_Raport_privind_starea_universitatii_2024.pdf - page 33). The FINER Platform is in development for a proper report and publishing of results on an open-access regime. Another initiative is the application in the QS Stars evaluation program, which is currently underway. VUT is the first Romanian partner among the universities in the Times Higher Education Campus+ (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/institutions/valahia-university-targoviste). Proposed potential improvements: - initiation of a University general repository to showcase all the scientific outputs and bibliographic resources existing in the university; - improvement of existing platforms and adaptation to the new context.</p>

PILLAR 4 -RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Status**17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation Impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	One relevant gap is the creation of a proper unitary support mechanism for all the domains existing in VUT due to diverse criteria of performance evaluation	<p>Initiatives undertaken: VUT supports the professional development of its researchers by offering a variety of career-development opportunities, specialized mentoring initiatives, and training programmes coordinated by the university's research and academic units. Workshops and training sessions dedicated to transferable skills—such as communication, project management, innovation, entrepreneurship, and policy-relevant competencies—are organized regularly to complement disciplinary research training and to facilitate career diversification within academia, industry, or public institutions. Career development practices at VUT are guided by internal documents such as the VUT Charter (2025 edition), the Operating Regulations, the VUT Code of Ethics, the Methodology for Recruiting Teaching and Research Staff, and institutional procedures related to staff evaluation, peer review, and student feedback. These instruments ensure that professional growth, performance assessment, and career advancement are aligned with institutional objectives and national standards. VUT also complies fully with national legislation governing employment and career development in higher education and research, including Law 183/2024 on the status of RDI personnel, Law 199/2023 on Higher Education, Law 153/2017 on public-sector remuneration, the updated Labor Code (2024), Government Ordinance 57/2002 on scientific research and technological development, and Directive 99/70/EC on fixed-term employment. Together, these frameworks ensure transparent, fair, and supportive conditions for researchers at all career stages. Proposed potential improvements: - increased support for the domains with lower performance in research; - stimulation of the researchers based on merit and contribution to the University rankings and position in the national metaranking.</p>

Status

18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	An impediment to career development at VUT is the limited institutional capacity to provide systematic and individualized career-development support for researchers across all involved entities due to the diversity of subjects	<p>Initiatives undertaken: VUT is committed to supporting the career development of researchers across all stages, i.e., R1 (doctoral candidates), R2 (postdoctoral researchers), R3 (established researchers), and R4 (senior experts). The university provides structured guidance, specialized training, and equitable access to institutional resources to ensure that researchers can advance professionally in line with European standards and national legislation. Institutional Support Structures Career development is supported through several dedicated units and services: - Center for Career Counseling and Guidance providing tailored career advice for students, doctoral candidates, and early-career researchers; mentoring and individual counseling sessions; workshops on employability, communication, and soft skills; guidance for transitions into academia, industry, administration, or entrepreneurship. - Doctoral Schools and Academic Departments providing discipline-specific mentoring from supervisors and senior researchers; training in research methodologies, academic writing, ethics, and scientific dissemination; opportunities to participate in research groups, conferences, and international collaborations. ICSTM and the International Relations Department assist researchers in identifying national and European funding opportunities; preparing competitive research proposals; accessing mobility schemes (Erasmus+, KreativEU Alliance, bilateral partnerships); developing research networks and international career pathways. Valahia University promotes a wide range of training and development activities designed to enhance both research-specific and transferable skills: Training in research ethics and integrity Workshops on project management and grant writing Sessions on open science, intellectual property, and innovation Professional development in academic writing, publication strategies, and research metrics Soft-skills training (leadership, teamwork, communication, negotiation) These activities support researchers in expanding their expertise and preparing for leadership and advanced research roles. Career advancement at VUT is based on transparent procedures aligned with national legislation and institutional regulations. Researchers benefit from: To ensure a supportive environment for career development, VUT provides: access to laboratories, equipment, and accredited research centers; digital resources, scientific databases, and IT infrastructure; institutional support for conference participation, open-access publishing, and research dissemination. These provisions allow researchers at all levels to strengthen their scientific impact and visibility. All the actions are in alignment with National and European Standards Career development and advice at VUT operate within the framework of national legislation (Law 199/2023 on Higher Education, Law 183/2024 on RDI personnel, the Labor Code) and are fully aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and the HRS4R process. Proposed potential improvements: - develop a coordinated mentoring system pairing early-career researchers (R1–R2) with experienced academic staff (R3–R4), providing guidance on research planning, publication strategies, grant applications, and career progression pathways. - introduce a continuous training programme focusing on transferable skills</p>

Status

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
		such as leadership, communication, data management, entrepreneurship, and industry-oriented research competencies, delivered in collaboration with relevant external partners.

19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	On impediment could be the fragmented or uneven support across research units according also with external influence and modifications in the Romanian HEI sector that can hinder researchers' ability to have a continuous professional development in an ethically and professionally manner (e.g., unclear expectations, inconsistent access to resources and mentoring, uneven awareness of integrity and financial difficulty to consider open-science practices).	Initiatives undertaken: VUT offers a range of internal training opportunities for researchers, including workshops, seminars, conferences, and online events, many of which address specialized or interdisciplinary topics and are frequently supported through FDI-funded initiatives (https://www.valahia.ro/proiecte/implementare-fdi/) as well as other funding sources. These activities are provided free of charge, with participation costs covered by institutional resources, ensuring equal access for all staff. Through this approach, VUT promotes continuous professional development and supports a culture of lifelong learning across the academic community. Proposed potential improvements: - enhance the range and depth of training programmes by collaborating with external institutions - such as members of the KreativEU Alliance, reputed research institutes, governmental organizations and industry partners - to deliver workshops on emerging topics (AI in research, data stewardship, technology transfer, entrepreneurship). - develop a coordinated training framework that differentiates learning pathways for doctoral candidates, postdoctoral researchers, established researchers, and senior staff by including core modules (ethics, open science, research methodology) and advanced modules (leadership, project coordination, innovation management).

Status**20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING**

Implementation	GAP / Implementation impediments	Initiatives undertaken/new proposals
+/- almost but not fully i...	<p>Requirement of a unified, institution-wide framework that standardizes supervision and mentoring practices across all faculties and research units. Although supervision is carried out according to doctoral school regulations and individual academic practices, there is no fully deployed coordinated system that ensures consistent expectations for meeting frequency, progress monitoring, feedback mechanisms, mentor assignment, or supervisor training. As a result, the quality and availability of supervision and mentoring may vary, leading to uneven support for doctoral candidates and early-career researchers (R1–R2).</p>	<p>Initiatives undertaken: VUT promotes a supportive, ethical, and performance-oriented environment for supervision and mentoring across all researcher stages (R1–R4). Supervision is anchored in academic freedom, institutional quality-assurance standards, the VUT Charter (2025 edition), and doctoral school regulations, while mentoring complements formal supervision with career guidance and skills development. In the Doctoral Schools, there are supervision agreements: at the start of the programme, the supervisor and candidate agree on a research plan, milestones, meeting frequency, authorship expectations, and data-management responsibilities. Progress monitoring: annual (or semester) reviews combine self-assessment, supervisor report, and (where applicable) committee feedback; outputs are tracked through institutional tools. Workload and capacity: Supervisor loads are monitored to maintain quality and availability; co-supervision is encouraged for interdisciplinary or complex projects. Training for supervisees: Mandatory modules in ethics and academic integrity, academic writing, research methods, open science, and IP/patenting are provided via doctoral schools and institutional programmes (https://www.valahia.ro/en/doctorate/general-information-on-doctoral-studies/). Proposed potential improvements: - Adopt minimum standards for supervision loads, meeting frequency, milestone tracking, and authorship/data practices; formalize mentoring for R1–R2; provide adapted training for supervisors. - Establish annual supervision quality reviews using standardized feedback, outcomes (completion/throughput), and professional-development uptake; link excellence in supervision to recognition/merit.</p>

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