



ROMÂNIA
MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI ȘI CERCETĂRII
UNIVERSITATEA DE ȘTIINȚELE VIEȚII „REGELE MIHAI I” DIN TIMIȘOARA



ORGANIZATION DATA:

Name of the analyzed organization: University of Life Sciences “King Mihai I” of Timișoara (Acronym: USVT)

Contact details of the organization: Calea Aradului no. 119, 300645 Timișoara, Timiș County, Romania

Phone: +40256/277009; +40256/277122; **Fax:** +40256/200296

Website: <https://www.usab-tm.ro/>



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

GAP-Analysis

The European Charter for Researchers is a set of principles on which to base the development of attractive careers in research to support excellence in research and innovation activities across Europe. The Charter for Researchers focuses on the rights and responsibilities of researchers, employers, funders and policy-makers and comprises 20 key principles. These are grouped into the following four pillars: Pillar I: Ethics, integrity, gender and open science; Pillar II: Assessment, recruitment and career development of researchers; Pillar III: Working conditions and practices; and Pillar IV: Research careers and talent development.

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- **Status:** to what extent does the organization 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 current practice in your organization.
- **Barriers to implementation:** If relevant, please list any national/regional legislation or organizational regulations that currently hinder implementation
- **Initiatives taken/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.

Pillar I: Ethics, integrity, gender and open science		
1.1. Ethics and research integrity (Principle 1):		
Researchers should adhere to strict ethical standards and conduct their work in conditions of honesty, reliability, objectivity, impartiality and independence, open communication, with the application of the duty of diligence, with fairness and responsibility for future generations of science.		
+/-	<p>Relevant national legislative framework: In Romania, the ethics of scientific research is regulated by a legislative framework that includes ethical norms, general laws on research, but also specific regulations for certain fields (medicine, genetics, animal protection, etc.). Below is a summary of the main ethical principles in research, as reflected in national legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher Education Law No. 199/2023; - Order No. 4067/2024 regarding the Code - framework of university ethics and deontology/04.04.2024 - Law on the status of research, development and innovation personnel No. 183/2024; - Law No. 206/2004, regarding good conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/52457; - Guide to integrity in scientific research: https://www.old.research.gov.ro/uploads/sistemul-de-cercetare/organismе-consultative/cnecsdti/2020/ghid-integritate-in-cercetarea-stiintifica-cne-2020.pdf; - CEMU Guide (University Ethics and Management Council): https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/OMENCs%206085.pdf; - National Code of Ethics for Scientific Research (HG 451/2023): - UEFISCDI Integrity Code: http://old.uefiscdi.ro/Upload/27963931-6eb6-4a07-9e75-078a20de12b9.pdf; 	<p>Current situation at USVT:</p> <p>USVT has a Code of University Ethics and Deontology, approved by the University Senate, as well as an Ethics Commission with extended powers, regulated by internal regulations. The Commission operates autonomously, in accordance with national legislation, the University Charter and institutional norms.</p> <p>USVT has also adopted a Code of conduct on the prevention and sanctioning of antisemitic incidents, reaffirming its commitment to an inclusive academic environment based on mutual respect. Ethical principles are implemented at all levels of research and academic activities of USVT, both by staff and students, administrative and research staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code of ethics and university deontology: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/Carta%20Universitara%20USV%20Timisoara.pdf; - University Charter : https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/Carta%20Universitara%20USV%20Timisoara.pdf; - Regulations on the organization and functioning of the university ethics committee (USVT– R021): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R021.pdf; - Code of Conduct - prevention and sanctioning of antisemitic incidents: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/Cod%20de%20conduita%20-%20preventia%20si%20sanctionarea%20incidentelor%20antisemite.pdf;

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrity standards in higher education: http://old.uefiscdi.ro/Upload/27963931-6eb6-4a07-9e75-078a20de12b9.pdf; - Law No. 95/2006 on healthcare reform – regulates clinical trials, informed consent, respect for human dignity: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/186641; - Law 43/2014 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/157944. <p>Ethical principles are integrated and respected at all levels of academic and research activities carried out within USVT, being assumed by teaching staff, researchers, students, as well as administrative staff.</p> <p>These mechanisms directly contribute to ensuring an institutional climate of ethics and integrity, in full accordance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, in particular those relating to professional responsibility, ethical conduct and compliance with legal norms.</p> <p>Obstacles identified: The analysis of the questionnaire highlights significant challenges regarding research ethics, such as uneven training, lack of clear procedures, limited access to tools, confusion between error and misconduct, low visibility of the ethics committee, performance pressure and the absence of recognition of ethical behavior, all affecting the coherent and responsible application of integrity principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code of Ethics in Scientific Research (USAMVBT – PG 001-R083): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R083.pdf; - Strategy for preventing and combating the phenomenon of plagiarism within USVT: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/proceduri/Strategia%20de%20prevenire%20si%20combatere%20a%20fenomenului%20de%20plagiat.pdf; - Bioethics committee regulations (COD: USVT – R084): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/r084/USVT_R084%20ed%202%20rev%201%202028_01_25.pdf; - Regulation on the periodic evaluation of the quality of teaching staff (USAMVBT – PG 001- R022): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R022.pdf; - Regulation on the organization and conduct of doctoral studies in USVT (USVT - R075): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R_075.pdf; - Regulations on the organization and functioning of the scientific research committee of the USVT Senate (USVT – R004): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R004.pdf; - Rector's annual report: https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/rapoarte-senat-1187; - Internal regulations (USAMVBT - PG 001 R045): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R046.pdf; - Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Quality of the Technology Transfer Center (COD:USVT- R107): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R107.pdf; - Regulation for awarding the results of scientific research, innovation and technology transfer activities (COD:USAMVBT – PG 001- R088): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R088.pdf; - Access for teachers, researchers and students within the USVT research infrastructure (COD Edition 2 /Revision 0 USAMVBT-PCIT-PO001): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/proceduri/USAMVBT%20PCIT%20PO001.pdf. <p>Also, the USVT Technology Transfer Center (COD: USVT–R107) is responsible for managing intellectual property resulting from research and education activities, ensuring its protection and valorization for the benefit of the institution and society.</p> <p>The Rector's annual report will include a section dedicated to academic ethics and research aspects, in which the activities and conclusions of the University Ethics Committee are summarized.</p> <p><i>All these measures reflect USVT's commitment to the principles of ethics, transparency and responsibility assumed by the European Charter for Researchers and contribute to the consolidation of an institutional culture based on trust and academic excellence.</i></p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development and dissemination of a Practical Guide to Research Ethics: Includes examples of good practices, cases of ambiguity, typologies of deviations and recommendations; Can be integrated as an annex to the Code of Ethics and distributed digitally to all researchers. - Implementation of periodic courses on ethics and scientific integrity: Mandatory training for new researchers, doctoral students and staff involved in projects; Interactive workshops on topics such as: plagiarism, co-authorship, conflicts of interest, good practices in data processing.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Promoting a proactive institutional culture regarding research ethics: Creating a Research Integrity Day at USVT (annual event); Public recognition of outstanding contributions in promoting ethics (e.g. award for academic integrity).- Clear separation between honest error and misconduct: Revise the Code of Ethics to include this explicit distinction; Organize training sessions with real case studies on negligence vs. deliberate intent. <p><i>Proposals:</i> Action Plan measure 1; Action Plan measure 2; Action Plan measure 3.</p>
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1.2. Freedom of scientific research (Principle 2):

Freedom of scientific research is a core value and a common principle of research cooperation within the European Research Area and with international partners. Researchers should direct their research activities towards the good of humanity and towards expanding the frontiers of human knowledge, while enjoying freedom of thought, opinion and expression, freedom to define research questions, freedom to identify methods by which problems are solved, freedom to choose and develop theories, freedom to question accepted knowledge and to present new ideas, and freedom to associate with professional or representative academic bodies.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitution of Romania (Art. 6 regarding university autonomy): https://www.ccr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Constitutie-2003.pdf; - Higher Education Law No. 199/2023, as amended and supplemented, art. 12, letter (f): https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/geztqmjwgg4ts/legea-invatamantului-superior-nr-199-2023; - Order No. 4067/2024 regarding the Code - Framework of University Ethics and Deontology/04.04.2024: Methodology regarding the financing of university scientific research within state higher education institutions: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/281570; - National strategic framework for Romania's participation in European open science and high-performance computing networks and initiatives: https://www.adr.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Cadru-strategic-national-Open-Science.pdf; - Law on the status of research, development and innovation personnel no. 183/2024: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/283972; - Order of the Ministry of Education No. 4262/15.04.2024 for the approval of the Methodology regarding the academic mobility of students. <p>Teaching and research staff benefit from the freedom to choose their research topics, including by attracting public or private grants. Individual research plans and projects are collected annually at the level of the vice-rector responsible for scientific activity, without any constraints regarding research directions. At the same time, annual evaluations of academic staff are based on objective criteria, without favoring certain thematic areas.</p> <p>This approach reflects USVT's strong commitment to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, particularly with regard to respect for research freedom, academic integrity and professional autonomy of research staff.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>Limitations in access to research infrastructure (equipment, consumables, dedicated spaces), lack of reagents, insufficient endowments or specialized equipment and unwieldy procurement procedures for materials and services.</p> <p>Also, clear support mechanisms for innovative, transdisciplinary research are not developed and there are tendencies to favor traditional or conservative directions.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT:</p> <p><i>Internal regulations:</i> Academic freedom includes the right of members of the university community to express themselves freely, to research, teach and learn, in accordance with scientific and ethical standards, both in the university environment and outside it.</p> <p>Internal regulations with reference to academic freedom are found in the University Charter of USVT, in Art. 18. paragraph (1) and (2), Art. 19 letter f, Art. 104 paragraph (2), letter b, Art. 128 paragraph (3) and in the Code of University Ethics and Deontology Art.9, paragraph (1), letter a, and CHAPTER III.1. called “Academic Freedom”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University Charter: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/Carta%20Universitara%20USV%20Timisoara.pdf; - Code of ethics and university deontology: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/Carta%20Universitara%20USV%20Timisoara.pdf; - Internal regulations (USAMVBT - PG 001 R045): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R046.pdf; - Regulation on the organization and conduct of doctoral studies in USVT (USVT - R075): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R_075.pdf; - Regulations on the organization and functioning of the scientific research committee of the USVT Senate (USVT – R004): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R004.pdf. <p>Also, the USVT academic community has free access to Web of Science, Scopus, Science Direct and other international databases and they are accessible to both staff and students.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <p>Courses on academic freedom and researcher rights: Interactive workshops for young researchers, with case studies on thematic freedom, divergent opinions and external pressures (political, economic, etc.);</p> <p>Creation of a digital platform on available research infrastructure: Inventory and promotion of existing facilities in the university (equipment, laboratories, digital platforms), to reduce the perception of logistical limitations.</p> <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 4; Action Plan measure 5.</p>
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1.3. Open science (Principle 3):

Researchers should aim to engage in all aspects of open science, and their employers and funders should support them in this. Researchers should share their results openly, for example, in the form of open access and FAIR data, in the form of open access publications, and through open access software, models and algorithms. They should take steps to ensure the reproducibility of research results.

+/-	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law no. 183/2024 on the status of research, development and innovation personnel; Includes obligations regarding the dissemination of research results and opening access to knowledge. - National Strategy for Research, Innovation and Smart Specialization 2022–2027 (SNCSII) - Integrates <i>Open Science</i> principles: Support for open access to publications and data; Creation of dissemination infrastructures and platforms; Correlation of research evaluation with scientific results. - MCI Order no. 4691/2020 on open access to research results - Mandatory for projects financed from public funds: Publication in Open Access regime; Deposit of data and publications in open repositories (e.g. National Repository). - PNRR – Component C9 – Support for research and innovation - Funds Open Science infrastructures and programs, including for the development of digital skills and access to open platforms. <p>Relevant European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan S – cOAlition S - Initiative launched in 2018 by cOAlition S, a consortium of European funding agencies (including the European Commission); Provides that all publications resulting from public funding be available in Open Access mode immediately after publication; Publication must be in Open Access journals or platforms, or in compliant open repositories. - Horizon Europe (2021–2027) - <i>The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation requires:</i> Open access to scientific publications and FAIR research data; <i>Development of a Data Management Plan (DMP); Support for open science practices, citizen science, open peer review.</i> - EU Council Recommendation on Open Science (2022) - <i>Encourages Member States to: Integrate open science into the evaluation of research and academic careers; Invest in digital infrastructures and open European networks; Ensure coherence between Open Science policies and research ethics.</i> - EOSC – European Open Science Cloud: EU initiative to create a unified European platform that provides researchers with open access to data, services and research tools. <p>Obstacles identified:</p> <p>However, the analysis also revealed a series of gaps that limit the full application of <i>Open Science</i> principles:</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT has registered an encouraging level of awareness and application of the principles of open science among researchers. According to the applied questionnaire, a significant percentage of respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 72% declare that they publish results in Open Access; - 75% benefit from institutional and funder support for free access to publications and research data; - 69% have access to the development of the necessary digital skills and infrastructure. <p>These data indicate an institutional culture favorable to open science and a progressive integration of this principle in research activity.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education and continuing training: <i>Periodic organization of workshops and courses</i> on Open Access publishing, the use of FAIR data and the responsible management of research data; <i>Creation of an online platform with open educational resources (tutorials, guides, examples of good practices)</i> for researchers from all disciplines; <i>Partnerships with other institutions</i> for participation in international conferences dedicated to open science and continuing training. - Institutional policies and norms: <i>Developing and adopting an institutional policy on open science</i>, including guidelines for publishing and sharing data; <i>Correlating professional evaluation and academic promotion</i> with open dissemination of research results; <i>Introducing Open Science criteria</i> in internal funding contracts (e.g.: obligation to publish in Open Access or to share FAIR data). - Institutional support and infrastructure: <i>Creating a fund dedicated to Open Access publishing</i>, supported by the university or in partnership with the Ministry of Research; <i>Ensuring access to scientific software and databases through institutional licenses</i> (e.g. SPSS, MS Office, NVivo, etc.); <i>Developing digital infrastructure</i> for sharing and archiving research data (e.g. an institutional repository or connection to Zenodo, OpenAIRE). - Transparency and recognition: <i>Official recognition</i> of contributions in the field of open science within the framework of academic performance evaluation; <i>Promoting open peer review models</i>, by encouraging participation in open peer-reviewed journals or platforms; <i>Annual monitoring</i> of the adoption of open science practices in USVT, through concrete indicators and public reports. <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 6; Action Plan measure 7; Action Plan measure 8.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sharing results in the form of open software, algorithms, models – only 53% of researchers indicate this practice, indicating the need for training and recognition of these forms of dissemination.- Involvement in open access peer reviews – 58%, showing that transparency in the peer-review process is still developing.- Rewarding the culture of open science – 61% believe that they receive institutional recognition, which indicates a moderate degree of official valorization of these practices.- Lack of infrastructure and equitable access to tools – in the free responses, difficulties related to financing Open Access publishing, lack of essential software or limited access to databases were reported.	
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1.3.1. Citizen science initiatives

Researchers should integrate citizen science initiatives into their projects whenever possible and relevant. This means involving citizens in the conceptualization, design and implementation of research projects in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), social sciences and humanities (SSH). This type of engagement is an ideal means of democratizing science, strengthening trust in science and harnessing the broad societal knowledge and capacities to conduct excellent research and innovation.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The National Strategy for Research and Innovation 2022–2027 mentions public participation in research as a strategic direction; - PNRR – C9 Research, Innovation supports projects that include science communication and citizen involvement; - Lack of a specific legal framework on citizen science in Romania – an aspect that requires regulation and systemic support. <p>Relevant European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU Council Recommendation on Open Science (2022) explicitly includes encouraging citizen involvement in research; - Horizon Europe supports the integration of citizen science in all fields, as part of the objective of responsible research and innovation (RRI); - The Open Science Policy Platform (OSPP) promotes citizen science as one of the eight pillars of open science; - The European Citizen Science Association (ECSA) provides standards and guidelines for such initiatives. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of an institutional strategy on participatory research and a policy to support citizen science. - Limited knowledge among researchers about the methods and benefits of collaborating with the public. - Additional time and administrative resources required to plan and coordinate participatory activities. - Lack of formal recognition in academic evaluation of citizen science activities. - Ethical and legal uncertainties related to data protection and responsibilities in participatory research. 	<p>Current situation at USVT:</p> <p>The data from the questionnaire applied at USVT show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 64% of researchers state that they integrate citizen science initiatives in their projects, whenever possible and relevant. - This indicates a relatively high level of awareness, but with significant potential for expansion and consolidation. - Current initiatives are often ad hoc and there is no clear institutional strategy to systematically encourage citizen participation in research. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of an institutional framework: elaboration of an internal policy on citizen science, which would encourage the integration of the public in research, especially in life sciences, ecology, social sciences and education; establishment of a support group for participatory research, within the research/development office. - Training and support for researchers: Organization of workshops and trainings on citizen science methodologies, participatory ethics, public communication and the use of collaborative digital tools; Creation of an internal guide to good practices, with concrete examples of citizen involvement in research. - Creating partnerships with the community: Collaborations with NGOs, schools, libraries, museums, local authorities, to initiate joint participatory research projects; Launching pilot citizen science projects, financed internally or through grants, to involve citizens in data collection or participatory observation. - Promotion and recognition: Awards and public recognition for projects that actively integrate citizens; Organization of scientific events open to the public: Open Days, Living Labs, Science Cafes, etc.
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1.4. Gender equality (Principle 4):

All stakeholders should promote gender balance in research teams, management bodies, decision-making bodies, recruitment and promotion committees and advisory groups. This also includes promoting the integration of the gender dimension into the content of research, teaching and innovation activities, in order to improve the scientific quality, excellence and societal relevance of the knowledge produced. Gender equality also aims to combat gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Gender equality needs to be understood from an interdependent perspective, in which different power systems between gender and other social categories and identities intersect and reinforce each other. Sustainable institutional changes, guided by gender equality plans or similar, which allow for adequate reporting of non-compliance and include monitoring and evaluation systems, are appropriate mechanisms for promoting gender equality.

<p>-/+</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <p>The national legislative framework supports the application of the principle of gender balance in public institutions, including higher education and research. The Romanian Constitution guarantees equal rights for all citizens and prohibits discrimination of any kind, including on grounds of sex (art. 16 and art. 41). The updated Labour Code (Law no. 53/2003) establishes equal treatment between women and men in terms of employment relations, access to training, promotion and working conditions. Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities between women and men regulates specific measures to promote gender balance in all fields of activity, including education and research. In addition, Law no. 199/2023 on Higher Education, as amended and supplemented, establishes the principle of equal opportunities as a fundamental value in the education system, including human resources policies. However, the practical application of these regulations depends on institutional initiatives and the existence of concrete implementation plans at the local level.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>Although USVT complies with the legislative framework on equal opportunities, the full implementation of the principle of gender balance is limited by several institutional obstacles. First, women are underrepresented in management positions and in senior academic positions, which indicates imbalances in access to promotion and decision-making functions. Second, there is no formalized institutional strategy on gender balance, nor a dedicated action plan that includes measurable objectives, deadlines and clear responsibilities. This lack of strategic direction is accompanied by the absence of a system for monitoring gender indicators, which makes it difficult to truly assess progress in this area. In addition, possible cultural barriers or gender stereotypes may influence career choices, participation in projects or assuming leadership roles in research, especially in traditionally male-dominated fields. These elements highlight the need for a proactive institutional approach, based on data and supported by concrete policies.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT demonstrates a clear commitment to the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including gender balance in the academic and research environment. At the institutional level, procedures are implemented to prevent and combat gender discrimination, and the results of the HRS4R questionnaire show that 77% of respondents perceive the existence of effective mechanisms against gender-based harassment and violence. However, in the absence of a formalized institutional strategy or action plan dedicated to gender balance, the application of this principle remains partial. Women are still underrepresented in leadership positions and in senior academic positions, and USVT currently does not have a system for periodic monitoring of gender indicators in the recruitment, promotion or tenure processes. In this context, it is necessary to develop an explicit policy on gender balance, aligned with the requirements of the European Charter for Researchers, which should include clear objectives, corrective measures and well-defined institutional responsibilities.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and implement a Gender Equality Plan (GEP), in line with the requirements of the European Commission, which should include concrete objectives, measures and progress indicators regarding: gender balance in recruitment, promotion and academic leadership processes; prevention of gender discrimination and harassment; support for women's academic careers. - Monitor gender distribution at all stages of the research career (R1–R4) and in decision-making structures, with periodic publication of data in annual diversity and inclusion reports. - Ensure gender balance in selection and evaluation committees, at all stages of the recruitment, promotion and resource allocation processes. - Awareness campaigns and training on gender equity, addressed to all academic and administrative staff, to reduce prejudice and promote an inclusive culture. - Support measures for balancing professional and personal life, through flexible policies (teleworking, adapted hours), including for parents or people in the care of family members. - Creation of a dedicated structure for diversity and inclusion, which will provide expertise, advice and support in the implementation of policies on gender equality and other forms of equity. <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 9; Action Plan measure 10; Action Plan measure 11; Action Plan measure 12.</p>
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1.5. Accepting diversity (Principle 5):

A core principle of the European Research Area is to take into account diversity in a broader sense, including, inter alia, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, social diversity, disability, age or sexual orientation, and to combat discrimination on any grounds. Employers and/or funders should embrace diversity among their researchers, as different life experiences bring valuable perspectives to research projects.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher Education Law No. 199/2023 with subsequent amendments and qualifications – prohibits discrimination in the education system; - Law 202/2002 on equal opportunities between women and men; - Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination; - National Strategy for the social inclusion of persons belonging to vulnerable groups (2022–2027). <p>Relevant European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Charter for Researchers (2023): provides for equal treatment and respect for diversity without discrimination. - EU Strategy for Equal Opportunities (2020–2025) and European Research Area (ERA): promotes diversity and equity in research. - Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) – required for eligibility under Horizon Europe. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a formal and coherently applied D&I policy at the USVT level. - Low level of awareness among staff regarding the dimensions of diversity (e.g. disabilities, age, socio-economic status). - Lack of training or information sessions dedicated to the topics of inclusion, equity and bias. - Absence of indicators and monitoring mechanisms regarding diversity in recruitment, promotion or evaluation processes. - Partially adapted infrastructure for physical and digital access of people with special needs. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT promotes, at declarative and functional level, a climate of respect and openness towards diversity among research staff and students. There are general norms on fair treatment and inclusion, however:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no explicit and detailed policy on diversity and inclusion (D&I) applied transversally across all structures. - No major incidents of discrimination have been reported, but formal reporting, monitoring and intervention mechanisms are not well known or actively used. - Awareness of the inclusion of people with disabilities, gender, ethnicity, culture, age or social status diversity varies between departments and is often dependent on individual initiatives. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional policies and commitments: development and adoption of a policy on diversity, equity and inclusion (D&I), applicable to the entire academic community; public commitment to D&I through strategic and position documents (e.g. Diversity Charter, Code of Ethics). - Training and development: organizing regular workshops on diversity, unconscious bias, inclusion and intercultural communication; Integrating these topics into the continuing education programs of researchers and administrative staff. - Support mechanisms and structures: establishing an institutional diversity and inclusion committee: developing a confidential mechanism for reporting and managing discrimination or harassment; Creating a calendar of events dedicated to diversity, with the involvement of all faculties. - Accessibility and adaptability: ensuring physical and digital accessibility of infrastructure for people with disabilities; adapting recruitment, evaluation and promotion processes to eliminate systemic barriers. <p>USVT has a strong ethical foundation and an inclusive overall environment, but the lack of explicit institutional policies, support structures, and proactive measures regarding diversity creates a gap between intention and practice. Integrating the principle of <i>Acceptance of Diversity</i> into the organizational culture is essential for creating an equitable, safe, and inclusive academic environment for all members of the community.</p> <p>Proposals: Action Plan measure 13; Action Plan measure 14; Action Plan measure 15.</p>
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1.6. The research profession (Principle 6):

All researchers involved in the conception or creation of new knowledge should be recognised as professionals and treated accordingly. This should be evident from the beginning of their careers, regardless of the sector in which they work, namely at postgraduate level, and should include all levels, regardless of their national classification (e.g. employee, postgraduate student, doctoral candidate, postdoctoral fellow, civil servant).

Employers and funders should encourage and support non-linear and multi-career paths, which should be understood as paths characterised by geographical, disciplinary, sectoral and inter-organisational mobility (secondments). They should also encourage hybrid career paths that simultaneously combine different sectors and which should be considered equivalent to linear career paths.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher Education Law No. 199/2023 with subsequent amendments and additions; - Law No. 183/2024 on the status of research, development and innovation personnel; - National R&D Plan 2022–2027 – promotes the development of human resources in research; - National Code of Ethics and Professional Deontology of Scientific Research – issued by ANCSI. <p>Relevant European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Charter for Researchers (2023): provides for equal treatment and respect for diversity without discrimination; - Code of Conduct on the Recruitment of Researchers: supports the recognition of diverse careers and the development of transversal skills. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moderate level of familiarity with the strategic objectives of the research environment (only 69.4%); - Limited support for non-linear/hybrid careers – only 61% confirm this aspect; - Need for systematic information for teaching staff who are not involved in research projects; - Lack of clear internal policies regarding the continuous professional development of researchers; - Insufficiently developed administrative infrastructure to fully support research activity. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT registers a high level of awareness and assumption of the role of the researcher in the process of knowledge generation and ethical responsibility. The data from the questionnaire highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 71% of respondents state that they are involved in the conception of new scientific knowledge; - 88.3% make research methods and results available during controls; - 83–86% assume responsibility for the efficient management of resources and cooperation with audit bodies; - 75.8% comply with the obligation to inform the parties involved in the event of suspension/termination of a project; - 73–75% promote the social relevance of research and the efficient valorization of results. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education and continuing education: organization of trainings for critical and analytical thinking, including source evaluation techniques and scientific analysis; workshops for developing research leadership skills, project management, grant writing and working in interdisciplinary teams. - Institutional procedures and norms: drafting an official document on the status of the USVT researcher, including clarifying roles, rights and obligations; strengthening the code of ethics in research and introducing it into the mandatory training for researchers, including young doctoral students. - Ethical and equitable work environment: creating an environment that supports multiple or hybrid careers, including outside the traditional academic environment (only 61% perceive this support as present); encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration and equitable access to resources for all career levels. - Evaluation and transparency mechanisms: establishing clear and transparent evaluation and promotion criteria, based on scientific achievements, impact and contribution to research teams; introducing a feedback system and continuous performance evaluation, with formative purposes. <p>USVT has a solid and responsive professional core in terms of involving researchers in the process of knowledge creation and assuming professional responsibility. However, a strengthening of the institutional framework, continuous training and recognition of alternative career paths is necessary for a full alignment with European standards regarding the research profession.</p> <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 16; Action Plan measure 17; Action Plan measure 18.</p>
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GAP - ANALYSIS – UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES “KING MIHAI I” FROM TIMIȘOARA (USVT)

1.6.1. Professional attitude

Researchers should be familiar with the strategic objectives pursued by their research environment and the applicable funding mechanisms and should seek and obtain all necessary approvals before commencing their research or accessing the resources made available. Researchers should make every effort to ensure that their research is relevant to society and does not unnecessarily duplicate research previously carried out elsewhere.

There should be clear communication between researchers and employers, funders or supervisors when a research project is postponed, redefined or completed; if a research project is to be terminated early or suspended for any reason, this should be announced.

+/-	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law on Higher Education No. 199/2023; - Order No. 4067/2024 on the Code - Framework of University Ethics and Deontology/04.04.2024; - Law on the Status of Research, Development and Innovation Personnel No. 183/2024; - National Strategy for Research, Innovation and Smart Specialization 2022-2027: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/257922; - National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania 2030: https://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/strategia-nationala-pentru-dezvoltarea-durabila-a-romaniei-2030-i; - Digital transformation: the EU strategy explained: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/ro/article/20210414STO02010/transformarea-digitala-importanta-avantaje-si-politici-ue; - National Strategy for the development and support of digitalization: https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/ANEXA-1-13.pdf; - Authority for the Digitalization of Romania: https://www.adr.gov.ro/; - DECISION to approve the strategic framework regarding the internationalization of the higher education system (draft): https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/Proiect_HG_Cadru_strategic_internationalizare_IS.pdf; - HORIZON 2030 Progress Report – Synthesis: https://insse.ro/cms/files/POCA/RO-DUR-Raport-de-progres-ORIZONT2030-Sinteza.pdf. <p>National research structures and forums such as: the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Investments and European Projects, UEFISCDI, the National Research Authority, etc., continuously update the provisions, especially with reference to the use of funds allocated for research and higher education.</p> <p>Identified obstacles: The GAP analysis highlighted that the implementation of the "Professional Attitude" principle is hampered by the lack of clarity of researchers' roles, the pressure of teaching and administrative tasks and the absence of a coherent system for planning and evaluating scientific activity. Poor internal communication in teams, limited access to ethical support resources and the undervaluation of non-publicistic professional contributions affect real involvement.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT has adopted a USVT Research Strategy 2024-2029 (https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/cercetare/2024/Strategia%20de%20cercetare%20a%20USVT%202024-2029.pdf). The purpose of this 2024 strategy is to define the framework and direction for the university's continued development. In addition, USVT publishes the status of projects on the university's website (https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/cercetare-16).</p> <p>The Rector of USVT publishes an annual report that includes an assessment of the progress made and the obstacles encountered in achieving the various strategic objectives. Regarding the procedures and obligations in the implementation of projects, researchers are advised by the Project Management Unit (UMP): https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/cercetare-16/unitate-de-management-proiecte-11915).</p> <p>All procedures and forms are available online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational procedure regarding the management of research projects/contracts/grants from national and international competitions (COD: USAMVBTPCIT-PO-002) (https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/proceduri-11209); - Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Quality of the Technology Transfer Center (COD: USVT-R107). <p>For other duties related to professional and research ethics, see Principles 2 (regarding approval and monitoring of research projects by the Ethics Committee) and 6. According to Principle 3, the USVT Technology Transfer Center and the legal expert specialized in intellectual property should provide assistance in drafting patent applications and for contractual clauses in service agreements with third parties.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <p>Clarifying professional responsibilities through standardized sheets: Developing responsibilities sheets by career levels (R1–R4), which should include research, training, mentoring and dissemination activities with the aim of ensuring the assumption of roles and avoiding confusion regarding tasks.</p> <p>Digitalizing the planning and monitoring of scientific activity: Implementing an internal platform for reporting research plans and progress indicators, continuous training in ethics and professional responsibility, organizing mandatory courses and thematic workshops (international standards, reproducibility, co-authorship, data management).</p>
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1.6.2. Liability

Liability means taking responsibility for one's own actions in the course of conducting research. Researchers should be aware that they are accountable to their employers, funders or other related public or private bodies, as well as to society, in the latter case mainly for ethical reasons. Researchers funded by public funds are also accountable for the efficient use of taxpayers' money. They should therefore adhere to the principles of sound financial management in conditions of transparency and efficiency, and cooperate with any authorised audits of their research, whether carried out by their employers/funders or by ethics committees. In this respect, they have an obligation to serve as an example of ethical behaviour both to their peers and to society at large.

The collection and analysis methods, the results and, where appropriate, the details of the data, should be available for internal or external review, whenever necessary and as requested by the competent authorities. This is also important to ensure open data and to support the reproducibility of the results.

+/-	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law no. 206/2004 on good research conduct – regulates the ethical and professional responsibility of researchers, scientific audit and the obligation to report results; - Law no. 199/2023 on Higher Education – imposes professional responsibility towards the institution, funders and society; - Labour Code (Law no. 53/2003) – defines the obligations of loyalty and conscientiousness of employees; - Law no. 500/2002 on public finances – establishes requirements for transparency and efficiency in the use of public funds; - Law no. 98/2016 on public procurement – applicable to publicly funded projects; - Civil Code (Law no. 287/2009) – regulates professional liability in contractual relationships. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low level of awareness of public accountability – Not all researchers perceive accountability to society as an essential part of their professional role, especially in the context of the use of public funds. - Lack of transparent and accessible reporting tools – There is no unified internal system for public reporting of scientific activity and its impact (e.g. results, dissemination, social impact). 	<p>Current situation at USVT: As part of the employment contract and the individual contract between the researcher and USVT, researchers must be aware of and comply with the conditions of employment, including internal ethical and administrative guidelines. These may include, for example, rules on the use of animals in research (COD: USVT – R084: Bioethics Committee Regulations), conditions for the accumulation of functions or regulations on multiple affiliations. Researchers are generally informed about their responsibilities, and these aspects must be integrated coherently with the provisions of principles 1–5 of the European Charter for Researchers.</p> <p>USVT should strengthen internal accountability mechanisms by creating a clear framework of rules and reporting tools, accompanied by training and valorization of responsible behavior. In this way, transparency, efficiency in the use of resources and strengthening the relationship of trust between research and society can be ensured.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of an internal code of accountability and transparency – Framework document on the obligations of researchers towards funders, employers and society, integrated into institutional policies. - Creation of a digital results reporting system – Internal platform through which researchers can record their achievements, dissemination and impact, with audit and export function to stakeholders. - Training workshops on scientific accountability – Workshops on accountability towards funders, good practices in reporting, financial management and applied ethics.
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1.7. Free movement of researchers (Principle 7):

Funders and employers should promote the free movement of researchers and other research professionals, scientific knowledge and technologies, while attracting talent and avoiding a potential brain drain. They should recognise the importance of geographical, inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, intra- and transdisciplinary and virtual mobility as an important means of improving knowledge and professional development at any stage of a researcher's career, and fully value and recognise any mobility experience within their career progression/professional evaluation system.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national and European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers; - EU regulations on researcher mobility (e.g. Euraxess, Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme); - Romanian legislation on employment and recognition of qualifications (Law on Higher Education No. 199/2023, Law on the Status of Research, Development and Innovation Staff No. 183/2024, etc.); - National and international mobility programmes (Erasmus+, UEFISCDI, Horizon Europe, etc.). <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excessive bureaucracy in obtaining documents (visas, work permits). - Lack of a clear mechanism for the recognition of international experiences. - The need for dedicated institutional support for foreign researchers. Insufficient information on mobility opportunities. - Limited funding for international mobilities, especially for young researchers. 	<p>Current situation at USVT:</p> <p>The results show significant support from the academic community for the free movement of researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 82% fully agree that mobility (geographic, institutional, intersectoral, interdisciplinary) is recognized as essential at all stages of the career. - 80% appreciate the recognition of mobility experience in professional evaluation. - 78% believe that USVT encourages virtual mobility. - 73% recognize that USVT promotes the free movement of researchers and prevents brain drain – a lower percentage compared to the other questions, indicating a relative weakness. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintaining and expanding the Erasmus+ programme: Expanding international agreements; Including researchers from all career stages in mobilities; - Simplifying administrative procedures: Creating an operational guide for the integration of international researchers; Organizing good practice sessions for administrative staff. - Developing funding opportunities: Dedicated grants for international mobilities; Funds for PhD students and young researchers; Awards for involvement in international mobilities/projects. - Open access to research infrastructure: Collaborations for the shared use of research resources; Strategic partnerships for access to equipment, laboratories. - Support for international researchers: Reducing bureaucracy regarding visas and work permits; Standardized mechanism for the recognition of qualifications; Dedicated office for the integration of foreign researchers. - Information and promotion: Online portal with information on mobility and grants; Information sessions and regular webinars; Mentoring system to support mobility. <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 19; Action Plan measure 20.</p>
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1.8. Sustainability of research (Principle 8):

Researchers, employers and funders should promote the sustainable implementation of research activities in line with the European Green Deal, the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Researchers should be supported through an institutional culture of sustainable research management, as well as through training and mentoring based on the exchange of good practices. They should also take the lead in reducing the carbon emissions of their work, in a way that sets a positive example for other actors in the research community.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national and European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Green Deal and UN Agenda 2030 (SDGs); - Horizon Europe – conditionalities for integrating sustainability objectives into funded projects; - Romanian legislation on environmental protection and education for sustainable development (Higher Education Law, Environmental Protection Law); - European Charter for Researchers (2023) – the principle of responsibility of researchers towards the social and ecological impact of their activity. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a clear institutional framework for sustainability in research. - Poor development of training on sustainability-related topics. - Administrative infrastructure insufficiently adapted to monitoring and evaluating sustainability. - Difficulties in accessing sustainable funds and dependence on single sources of funding. - The need for motivational mechanisms (e.g. awards, formal recognition) for researchers who apply sustainable principles in their projects. 	<p>Current situation at USVT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75% of respondents fully agree that all parties involved in research support the sustainable implementation of research, in line with global policies (European Green Deal, UN Agenda 2030). - 69% indicate that they are supported in reducing carbon emissions through their research activities. - 67% believe that the university supports an institutional culture of sustainable research. - 66% appreciate the support through training and mentoring for sustainable development – lower percentage, indicating a weak point. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing an institutional framework for sustainable research: introducing standards for assessing the sustainability of research projects from the application phase; including sustainability criteria in the selection process of internal projects and in research partnerships. - Access to grants and funds dedicated to sustainable research: creating predictable and long-term funding mechanisms; diversifying sources: European funds, public-private partnerships, non-governmental organizations, sponsorships; funding programs oriented towards: energy efficiency, sustainable resource management and solutions with positive social impact. - Networks and consortia focused on sustainability: developing interdisciplinary consortia for sustainable research; creating online platforms for collaboration and dissemination of good practices and relevant results. - Promoting the culture of sustainability in research activity: organizing workshops, trainings and mentoring sessions on sustainability topics; Encouraging researchers to participate in international exchanges of good practices; Introducing recognition/awards for sustainable initiatives in research. - Reducing the ecological footprint: Incorporating carbon-reduction practices into all projects; Using research infrastructure in an energy-efficient manner; Encouraging the use of digital resources for collaboration and dissemination, reducing unnecessary physical mobility. <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 21; Action Plan measure 22; Action Plan measure 23.</p>
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Pillar II: Evaluation, recruitment and career advancement of researchers

2.1. Evaluation of researchers (Principle 9):

Research evaluation should allow for the assessment of the performance of researchers and research activities, in order to achieve the highest possible level of quality and impact. This requires recognising the increasingly diverse research outputs, activities and practices, including collaboration and open sharing of results, and ensuring high standards of research integrity. Evaluation should therefore be based primarily on qualitative analysis, where peer review is essential, supported by the responsible use of quantitative indicators.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>This legislative framework provides the foundation for the development of a fair, transparent and constructive institutional evaluation system, but it is necessary: to adapt the grids to the specifics of the research career (e.g. R1–R4); to balance quantitative and qualitative indicators; to use evaluation as a tool for professional development and not just for selection.</p> <p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law on Higher Education No. 199/2023: regulates the evaluation of teaching and research staff in higher education; provides for the annual evaluation of teaching and scientific activity, based on criteria established by the university senate; Introduces the principle of external evaluation through ARACIS, but also self-evaluation at the institutional level. - Law on the status of research, development and innovation staff No. 183/2024: requires the evaluation of the professional activity of research staff in relation to the objectives and plans assumed; Establishes the obligation of employing institutions to carry out periodic evaluations and to promote based on their results. - The Labor Code (Law no. 53/2003, republished): allows the employer to periodically evaluate the employee and use the evaluation in establishing professional development directions and substantiates professional dialogue and career planning, including in the public sector. - MECTS Order no. 6129/2016 on the evaluation of the activity of teaching and research staff: Establishes the framework model of the annual evaluation sheet for teaching and research staff in higher education and Criteria: teaching activity, scientific research, institutional involvement, administrative activities and international relations. - UEFISCDI / PNRR / Horizon Europe funding contracts: require periodic monitoring and reporting of individual and institutional progress based on contractually agreed performance indicators. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p><i>Evaluation excessively focused on publications and quantitative indicators</i> – essential activities such as mentoring, social involvement or the quality of the research process are rarely taken into account. <i>Lack of a clear and transparent evaluation methodology</i> – Criteria and procedures are not sufficiently communicated or applied uniformly within the institution. <i>Poor correlation between evaluation and institutional support</i> – Evaluation results are not always correlated with access to resources, recognition, or advancement opportunities.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT has a comprehensive, fair and development-oriented evaluation system that reflects all dimensions of academic activity. By increasing transparency, introducing constructive feedback and capitalizing on diverse contributions, evaluation becomes a real tool for recognition and professional progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulation on the periodic evaluation of the quality of teaching staff (USAMVBT – PG 001- R022); - Self-evaluation form for teaching staff performance (COD: USAMVBT - PG001 - FR - 022 - 01); - INTRANET platform: https://intranet.usab-tm.ro/. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reform of annual evaluation grids – Adaptation of criteria to include various activities: mentoring, public involvement, collaborations, data quality, professional responsibility. - Transparency and accessibility of evaluation criteria – Publication of evaluation grids and methodologies on the university’s internal platform. - Introducing a constructive feedback system – After each evaluation, organizing a short dialogue between the evaluated and the evaluator to identify strengths and development needs. - Differentiating the evaluation on levels R1–R4 – Personalized grids depending on the career stage and specific responsibilities. - Correlating the evaluation with support and recognition – Using the evaluation results for career planning, resource allocation, internal scholarships, awards or mentoring. <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 24; Action Plan measure 25; Action Plan measure 26.</p>
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2.2. Recruitment (Principle 10):

Employers and/or funders should establish open, transparent and merit-based recruitment and selection procedures, without penalising career breaks or cross-sector mobility. These should be geared towards excellence, gender equality and diversity and be tailored to the type of job advertised. Job advertisements should include a comprehensive description of the knowledge and skills required, including a description of working conditions and related rights, career development prospects and an overview of the timetable. Before selection, candidates should be informed about the recruitment process and selection criteria, the number of positions available and the career development prospects.

+/-	<p>Relevant national and European legislative framework:</p> <p>The implementation of the principle of fair and transparent recruitment of researchers at USVT is supported by a solid national legislative framework.</p> <p>According to the Higher Education Law no. 199/2023, teaching and research positions are filled through public competition, respecting the principles of meritocracy, transparency and equal opportunities. These are also detailed in HG no. 1336/2022, which provides for the publication of positions on international platforms such as EURAXESS and the assessment of applications based on professional skills.</p> <p>According to the Labor Code (Law no. 53/2003, updated) and OUG no. 137/2000, any form of discrimination in recruitment is prohibited, and atypical career paths should not be penalized.</p> <p>At the same time, the Administrative Code (OUG no. 57/2019) and the complementary acts on public administration (e.g. Law no. 503/2009, amending Consolidated Act no. 1365/2007), regulate the general principles of selection, managerial responsibility and continuous evaluation of staff in public institutions, including universities.</p> <p>These provisions are complemented by the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, which emphasize the importance of clear access standards, the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and the valorization of career breaks as a potential for professional development.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>Lack of feedback for candidates - Among the suggestions is a request to provide constructive feedback to rejected candidates to help them understand and improve their candidacy.</p> <p>Alignment with national and European requirements - it is requested that recruitment procedures be aligned with European standards and national legislation for coherence and transparency.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT has made significant progress in aligning its recruitment processes with the standards of the European Charter for Researchers. Selection procedures are largely perceived as transparent, fair and job-specific, and most researchers confirm the existence of support mechanisms for diverse and multidimensional careers. At the same time, the lifelong career model is actively supported.</p> <p>However, some obstacles persist, in particular regarding the recognition of the value of career breaks, the lack of personalized feedback for rejected candidates and the need to clarify selection criteria from the beginning of the process. A clearer alignment with national and European legislative requirements on fairness and inclusion in recruitment is also needed.</p> <p>In conclusion, USVT is on a positive path in implementing the “Recruitment” principle, but further measures are needed to strengthen the inclusive, predictable and career-oriented character of the selection process. These improvements will contribute to increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the institution among the national and international scientific community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulation on the election of employee representatives for the purpose of negotiating and signing the collective labor agreement at the USVT level (COD USVT - R081): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R081.pdf; - Methodology regarding the extension of individual fixed-term employment contracts for the position of university/research assistant and scientific researcher USVT (COD:USVT-M108):https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/m108/USVT_M108%20ed%202%20rev%202017_12_2024.pdf; - Collective labor agreement no. 189 of June 22, 2022: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/USAMVBT%20-%20CCM%20nr.189%20din22.06.2022.pdf; - Methodology regarding the filling of teaching and research positions in USVT (COD: USVT – M039): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/M039.pdf; - Regulation on the occupation of university assistant and research assistant positions for a fixed period - USVT (COD: USVT-R061): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/r061/USVT_R061_ed%205%20rev%200_16_04_2024.pdf; - Methodology regarding the extension of individual fixed-term employment contracts for the position of university/research assistant and scientific researcher (COD:USVT- M108): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/m108/USVT_M108%20ed%202%20rev%202017_12_2024.pdf; - Operational procedure for developing documents for the administration of the teaching process (COD: USVT-PEC - PO-002):https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/proceduri/pec-po-002/USVT%20_PEC_PO%20002_23_09_22.pdf. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <p>In order to align with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, USVT has launched a series of initiatives to strengthen an open, transparent and non-discriminatory recruitment process. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adapting selection procedures to the specifics of each position; - including detailed information in job advertisements on the required skills;
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- working conditions, as well as training selection committees on the principles of fair recruitment;- promoting the lifelong learning career model, encouraging assessment based on personal achievements, not on the institution of origin. Measures have been taken to ensure that career breaks are not penalized and that atypical professional paths are recognized. <p>For USVT to fully align with Principle 12 and the HRS4R standards, it is essential to strengthen the procedural and institutional framework for recruitment, with a focus on inclusion, flexibility and valorization of the diverse potential of researchers. The integration of national legislation and European good practices will ensure not only formal compliance, but also an inclusive and competitive academic culture, capable of attracting and retaining diverse talents.</p> <p><i>Proposals:</i> Action Plan measure 27; Action Plan measure 28.</p>
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2.2.1. Variations in CV timeline

Career breaks or variations in CV timelines should not be penalised but considered as career progression and therefore as a potential valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers towards a multidimensional career path. Candidates should therefore be allowed to submit evidence-based CVs reflecting a representative range of achievements and qualifications appropriate to the position being applied for.

<p>-/+</p>	<p>Career breaks or variations in the chronological order of CVs should not be penalized, but seen as a career progression and, consequently, as a potentially valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers towards a multidimensional career path.</p> <p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <p>The recognition of non-linear career paths, including career breaks, is supported by the national legislative framework on equal opportunities and non-discrimination. According to OUG no. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, discrimination based on gender, age, parental status, disability or any other aspect that may lead to career breaks (e.g. maternity/paternity leave, family care, etc.) is prohibited. The Labour Code (Law no. 53/2003, as amended) also requires employers to ensure equal treatment and recognition of prior professional experience, regardless of the nature of the professional career. In the academic context, the Higher Education Law no. 199/2023 supports the development of academic careers based on demonstrated competences, not exclusively on continuous chronological paths. These provisions are in line with the recommendations of the Code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers, which emphasises the importance of performance-based assessment, without penalising breaks in professional activity.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>Although there are positive initiatives, only 50% of respondents consider that career breaks are recognised as an integral part of professional development. These are still perceived negatively or implicitly penalised in the selection process. Only 52% agree that interruptions are valued as formative elements, and 65% state that they are not penalized, which indicates a lack of standardization and awareness among selection committees. Also, there are still no formal mechanisms for reintegration or equivalence of experiences acquired outside the traditional academic path, which may discourage candidates with unconventional paths.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT recognizes the importance of adopting an inclusive perspective on academic careers, in which non-linear career paths, interruptions and transitions are not penalized, but understood as part of the researcher’s development. Through these measures, USVT can strengthen its commitment to an academic culture that is fair, open and oriented towards the potential of each researcher.</p> <p>Recently, USVT has been focusing on clarifying its recruitment processes and on ways to optimize them. All relevant regulations and legislation in force are described on the university’s website (see website: https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/legislatie/concursuri-11881).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code of University Ethics and Deontology: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/Carta%20Universitara%20USV%20Timisoara.pdf; - Operational procedure regarding the organization and functioning of the Commission for the prevention and elimination of violence, corruption and discrimination in the school environment and the promotion of interculturality (COD: USVT-CTU-PO 004): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/proceduri/ctu-po/USVT-CTU-PO%20004%20ed%201%20rev%200%20din%2016.05.2024.pdf; - Gender equality plan: https://usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/inf-leg-per/Gender%20equality%20plan.pdf. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <p>USVT has taken important steps to recognize non-linear career paths, career breaks, and contributions made in alternative contexts. 79% of survey respondents confirmed that they are able to present evidence-based CVs that reflect a representative range of achievements and qualifications relevant to the position. Also, 52% of researchers believe that career breaks can be a valuable contribution to professional development, supporting a multidimensional career path. Guidelines and institutional policies are being developed to encourage holistic assessment of candidates, and among the proposed measures is the development of reintegration programs for researchers returning after a professional break.</p>
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2.2.2. Seniority in office

The level of qualifications required should be appropriate to the requirements of the job and not set in such a way as to constitute a barrier to entry. The assessment of qualifications should focus on the appreciation of the individual's achievements, rather than on the circumstances of those achievements or the reputation of the institution in which the qualifications were acquired. As professional qualifications can be acquired at an early stage of a long career, the lifelong professional development model should also be encouraged and recognised.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <p>The application of the principle is supported by national legislation, in particular: Law on Higher Education No. 199/2023, as subsequently amended and supplemented, which allows access to teaching and research positions based on scientific competences and performance; HG No. 457/2011 (updated) on the minimum standards for the occupation of teaching and research positions; and the Labour Code (updated) (Law 53/2003), which prohibits discrimination based on age or seniority and encourages equal opportunities.</p> <p>As a source of inspiration, at European level, there is the Circular on the Structure of Posts for Academic Staff in Universities of 13 June 2007 and other related notifications that promote an approach based on the global assessment of candidates – including research, teaching and personal skills – and not on formal seniority.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>The persistence of the perception of seniority as a formal criterion for advancement: although university legislation allows flexibility, in practice, career advancement is often associated with the number of years worked or seniority in education, not necessarily with the results or quality of research; Lack of explicit procedures that recognize non-linear trajectories: only 50% of respondents consider that career breaks are treated as professional development, which indicates a limited use of atypical paths (e.g.: research in industry, sabbaticals, mobility abroad); <i>Restricted access to senior positions for researchers with international experience but limited seniority in Romania:</i> some competition or internal evaluation rules, although legally compliant, may favor candidates with local seniority to the detriment of those with equivalent results from abroad.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT allows, according to current methodologies, the submission of evidence-based CVs and encourages lifelong professional development, which contributes to a more flexible approach to seniority. Assessments are declaratively focused on skills and achievements, and 74% of the respondents to the questionnaire confirm that the emphasis is placed on performance and not on the reputation of the institution of origin.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <p>To ensure full application of the Seniority principle (Code), USVT will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a clear institutional policy on the valorization of seniority, based on skills and professional impact, not on the strict duration of the activity; - Review internal evaluation and promotion procedures, so that they recognize diverse professional experiences, non-traditional paths and international mobility; - Include in job descriptions and recruitment guides a section dedicated to the recognition of continuous professional development; - Organize training sessions for competition committees, focused on holistic and fair evaluation of candidates.
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2.3. Selection (Principle 11):

As part of the recruitment process, the selection process should take into account the full range of candidates’ experience. While the focus is on their overall potential as researchers, the creativity and level of independence of the candidates should also be taken into account. Selection committees should bring together diverse and relevant expertise, skills and experiences to assess the candidate. There should be an appropriate gender balance and, where appropriate and possible, committees should include members from different sectors (public and private) and disciplines, as well as from other countries. A wide range of selection practices should be used wherever possible, such as peer review, face-to-face interview and online interview. Members of selection committees should be appropriately trained, in particular with a view to minimising gender bias or any other possible unconscious bias. After the selection process, all candidates should be informed about the strengths and weaknesses of their candidacy.

+/-	<p>Relevant national legislative framework: The selection of research and teaching staff at USVT is regulated by a complex national legislative framework, which supports the application of the principles of transparency, equity and professionalism. Among the essential regulations are the Higher Education Law no. 199/2023, Government Decision no. 1336/2022, as well as OUG no. 156/2024 on fiscal-budgetary measures and legislative amendments applicable to recruitment processes. Also applicable are M.E.N.C.S. Order no. 6129/2016, which approves the minimum CNATDCU standards and H.G. no. 1339/2023, which establishes the framework methodology for the competition for the filling of teaching and research positions in higher education. Aspects related to the necessary medical certificates are regulated by M.S. Order no. 1502/2024 and M.E. Order M.E. 4060/2024. These acts provide for clear competition procedures, based on merit and competence, and selection committees must be balanced and comply with strict impartiality criteria. The Labor Code (Law no. 53/2003, updated) and OUG no. 137/2000 provide the legal framework for preventing discrimination and guaranteeing equal opportunities in the selection process. In addition, European standards emphasize the need for written, motivated and non-prioritized evaluations of candidates, as well as the importance of disciplinary, institutional and international diverse selection committees, with an adequate gender balance.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the diversity of selection committees is limited, with the involvement of members from external sectors (industry, international) being low; - modern assessment methods (online interviews, external testing, narrative assessment) are partially used, which may affect the flexibility and fairness of the process; - insufficient recognition of the research potential and intellectual autonomy of candidates, which reduces the emphasis on creativity and initiative. <p>These aspects highlight the need for continuous professionalization and standardization of the selection process in line with European good practices.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: The selection process of researchers at USVT is governed by a national legislative framework harmonized with European principles, in particular with the provisions of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. All positions put up for competition comply with the requirements of Art. 7, subparagraph 8 of Ordinance no. 156/2024 and are published transparently. The USVT online platform ensures easy access to all essential information regarding the selection process: the applicable legislative framework, internal methodologies, regulations, operational procedures, competition calendar, list of documents required for the application file, checklist of minimum standards, structure of the candidate’s activity and information regarding the minimum starting salary for teaching titles. Through these measures, USVT demonstrates a clear commitment to transparency, predictability and compliance with national and European standards in the field of recruitment and selection of academic and research staff (see website: https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/concursuri-11881/ocuparea-posturilor-didactice-si-de-cercetare-11144 and https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/concursuri-11881/ocuparea-posturilor-pt-pers-didactic-auxiliar-si-contractual-11524).</p> <p>Proposed initiatives: USVT initiated a series of measures to align the selection process of researchers with the European standards set out in the Code of Conduct for Recruitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The selection process was oriented towards a holistic assessment, taking into account both professional skills and the creativity, independence and development potential of the candidates. - Selection committees bring together members with varied profiles and benefit from training on equity, diversity and the prevention of discrimination. - Clear ethical principles are also applied in the selection process, with anonymous evaluation of files being proposed to reduce subjectivity. The provision of constructive feedback for the evaluated candidates is encouraged, which supports transparency and professional learning. - Proposals have been made for the development of a standardized procedural guide on selection, as well as a commitment document for committee members, to ensure objectivity and accountability in the decision-making process. <p>Proposals: Action Plan measure 29; Action Plan measure 30; Action Plan measure 31;</p>
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2.3.1. Nondiscrimination

Employers and/or funders of researchers should not discriminate against researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinions or social or economic status.

+/-	<p>Respect for the principle of non-discrimination is essential to ensure an inclusive, fair and merit-based academic environment.</p> <p>Relevant national and European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Romanian Constitution (art. 16 and 41): Provides for equality of rights and the prohibition of any form of discrimination in employment and social relations. - O.G. no. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination: The basic act on the prohibition of discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, opinion, etc. Provides for the existence of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD), where complaints can be filed. - Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities between women and men: Aims at preventing and eliminating gender discrimination in the fields of employment, education and research. - Labor Code (Law no. 53/2003, art. 5): Prohibits any form of direct or indirect discrimination in employment relationships. - Higher Education Law no. 199/2023: Provides for the promotion of fairness and equal opportunities in access to education, employment and career development in the academic environment. - Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (art. 21): Prohibits any form of discrimination based on sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic characteristics, language, religion, opinion, disability, age, sexual orientation, nationality, etc. - Council Directive 2000/43/EC: On the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. - Council Directive 2000/78/EC: Establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. - Directive 2006/54/EC on gender equality: Provides for equal treatment in access to employment, training, promotion and working conditions, with a focus on combating gender discrimination. - Horizon Europe Programme – European Commission Guidelines: Require compliance with the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion as part of participation in EU-funded projects. <p>Identified obstacles: Lack of a clear and accessible mechanism for reporting discrimination – There is no detailed and visible internal procedure for reporting and resolving situations of perceived or real discrimination. Low level of awareness of rights and equal opportunities – Many researchers are not familiar with the legal framework or institutional policies on the prevention of discrimination.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT applies the provisions of national and European legislation on the prohibition of discrimination in employment and research, in accordance with Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC. The relevant national legislation is available to all employees. In addition, the university launches initiatives to actively support diversity, which aims to improve working conditions for international researchers, in the spirit of internationalization and institutional inclusion.</p> <p>Inclusion and non-discrimination are fundamental values of academic life at USVT. There is zero tolerance for any form of discrimination, in accordance with all internal regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University Charter: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/Carta%20Universitara%20USV%20Timisoara.pdf; - Code of ethics and university deontology: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/Carta%20Universitara%20USV%20Timisoara.pdf; - Code of Conduct - prevention and sanctioning of antisemitic incidents: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/Cod%20de%20conduita%20-%20preventia%20si%20sanctionarea%20incidentelor%20antisemite.pdf; - USVT Gender Equality Plan: https://usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/inf-leg-per/Plan%20privind%20egalitatea%20de%20gen_USVT.pdf. <p>USVT should develop a robust institutional policy of equal opportunities and diversity, create functional mechanisms for protection against discrimination and cultivate an inclusive organizational culture, in which each researcher has equal opportunities for development, contribution and recognition.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Periodic training on inclusion and non-discrimination – Dedicated sessions for academic and administrative staff, focused on preventing discrimination, microaggressions and institutional stereotypes. - Promoting diversity through internal awareness campaigns – Posters, digital campaigns, success stories, thematic events that value diversity as an institutional resource.
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2.4. Career development (Principle 12):

Employers and/or funders should introduce for all researchers, including highly qualified researchers, evaluation/appraisal systems for the periodic assessment of their professional performance, in a transparent manner, by an independent committee (and, in the case of highly qualified researchers, preferably an international committee). A career path focused on multiple careers, characterised by geographical, sectoral and inter-organisational mobility (secondments) or hybrid paths characterised by a simultaneous combination of sectors, deserve full recognition and should be considered equivalent to a linear career path.

+/-	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <p>The national legislative framework supports the development of research careers through several normative instruments. Law No. 199/2023 on Higher Education, as amended and supplemented, recognizes the right to continuous professional training and encourages the development of institutional policies on career development in higher education. Law No. 183/2024 on the status of research, development and innovation personnel defines clear professional hierarchies (research assistant, scientific researcher, etc.) and possible career paths. The updated Labor Code (Law No. 53/2003) also regulates the right of employees to equal access to training opportunities and to support in shaping their careers, including through periodic assessments and individual development plans. However, the lack of integrated national policies on postdoctoral careers and the limitations of institutional autonomy in correlating performance with promotion are factors that may hinder the full application of the principle in research institutions.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>Despite the efforts made, the career development of researchers at USVT is still affected by the lack of a unified and formalized institutional framework. Currently, there is no explicit institutional strategic policy that regulates medium and long-term career development, differentiated for each professional stage (including for postdoctoral students and temporary researchers). Access to professional support (mentoring, counseling, resources) varies considerably between faculties or departments, often being dependent on the direct initiative of team leaders. USVT also does not yet have an institutional mechanism to monitor the professional progress of researchers and the impact of the actions taken. In the absence of a correlation between performance and opportunities for advancement or career stabilization, the professional path of many researchers remains uncertain and fragmented.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT highlights important progress in supporting the professional career of researchers, but lacks a formalized institutional framework, with full and equitable coverage for all categories of staff.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and implement an institutional career development strategy, applicable to all researchers, regardless of contractual status or professional stage. The strategy will include clear objectives, support measures and monitoring tools. - Create an individual career plan for each researcher, developed together with a mentor or group coordinator, which highlights training needs, research objectives and professional development prospects. - Strengthen interdepartmental mentoring programs by designating experienced mentors to provide scientific, professional and motivational support to early-stage researchers. - Organize training sessions and workshops on: career planning in research and outside academia; writing project proposals; development of transversal skills (leadership, communication, networking). - Access to professional counseling and mobility opportunities, which support career development in national and international contexts, including in collaboration with the private sector or other sectors. - Periodic monitoring of career progress through annual assessments, constructive feedback and adjustment of individual plans according to the personal and strategic objectives of the institution. <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 32; Action Plan measure 33; Action Plan measure 34.</p>
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2.4.1. Coauthor

Co-authorship should be viewed favourably by institutions when evaluating staff as evidence of a constructive approach to research. Employers and/or funders should therefore develop strategies, practices and procedures to provide researchers, including those at the beginning of their research careers, with the necessary framework conditions to enable them to benefit from the right to be recognised and listed and/or cited, in the context of their actual contributions, as co-authors of papers, co-inventors of patents, etc., or to publish their research results independently of their supervisor(s).

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <p>In Romania, co-authorship is indirectly regulated by Law no. 8/1996 on copyright: Art. 4-5, the work carried out in collaboration implies co-authorship, with equal rights over the use. Law on Higher Education no. 199/2023 with subsequent amendments and additions – provides for the author’s right over the research work, including in an institutional environment. The Labor Code (updated) provides for the employee’s rights over the results of intellectual work under certain conditions (employer vs. employee).</p> <p>But there are no explicit regulations regarding the distribution of co-authorship within research teams, recognition in professional evaluation and the right of young researchers to publish independently.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>Currently, USVT does not have a specific code or regulation on co-authorship, which explicitly defines the rights of researchers to recognition, the criteria for assigning co-authorship and the right of researchers to independent publication (especially R1 and R2).</p> <p>There is no institutional mechanism to document individual contributions and to mediate potential conflicts regarding the order of authors or the lack of mention of contributions.</p> <p>Early-stage researchers (R1, R2) are not sufficiently supported in understanding: what their rights are regarding independent publication, how they can protect their contributions in research teams and how they can request formal recognition of their work in publications or patents.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: Within USVT, the practice of co-authorship is present in scientific activity, but there is still no clear and formalized institutional strategy regarding the recognition of individual contributions within collective works. The analysis of the internal questionnaire shows that most researchers are aware of the importance of ethics in research and the right to recognition of scientific contribution, but formal mechanisms are not developed to explicitly support and protect this aspect in the evaluation of academic career.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of an internal Code of Co-authorship, inspired by the model of other universities in Europe; - Development of norms regarding the recognition of contributions in publications, patents, projects; - Clarification and promotion of the right of R1-R2 researchers to publish independently, outside the coordination relationship; - Including co-authorship as a positive indicator in career evaluation and academic promotion; - Creation of an internal mediation mechanism for conflicts regarding the attribution of co-authorship; - Organizing periodic training sessions on publication ethics and co-authorship.
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2.4.2. Recognition of mobility experience

Any mobility experience, for example a stay in another country/region or placement in another research setting (public or private) or a move from one discipline to another or from one sector to another, whether as part of an initial research training or at a later stage of a research career or a virtual mobility experience, should be considered a valuable contribution to a researcher's professional development.

<p>-/+</p>	<p>The recognition of mobility experience remains an area with significant development potential within USVT. Although the existing procedural framework allows for the expression of a varied professional background and evidence-based CVs are accepted, the level of awareness and effective use of mobility is low. The results of the questionnaire reveal that mobility is not yet widely perceived as a strategic contribution to career development. Therefore, a proactive institutional approach is needed that includes explicit policies, concrete support measures and training for decision-makers involved in recruitment and assessment. Strengthening this principle will contribute to aligning USVT with European standards and creating an open, flexible and internationally competitive academic environment.</p> <p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Order of the Ministry of Education no. 4262/15.04.2024 for the approval of the Methodology regarding the academic mobility of students. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of explicit mechanisms for capitalizing on mobility: none of the four reports mentions a clear system of institutional recognition of intersectoral, interdisciplinary or international mobility, although this is an essential component in the evaluation and development of the researcher's career. - Underrepresentation in evaluation and recruitment: Although Pillar II ("Evaluation, recruitment and career advancement") mentions aspects such as the diversity of professional paths and the appreciation of varied contributions (e.g. mentoring, collaboration, interdisciplinarity), mobility itself is not treated distinctly as a professional value and there is no mention of the formal recognition of external research internships, international collaborations or academic exchanges. - Lack of policies or examples on virtual mobility: none of the reports refers to virtual mobility, an increasingly relevant concept in the context of post-pandemic international research. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: Even though researcher mobility is generally tolerated and occasionally supported, the data from the internal questionnaire show that there is still a limited perception of the added value of mobility in career assessment. Only 52% of respondents consider that such experiences are seen as a valuable contribution, and 50% associate them with professional development. This indicates a lack of a clear institutional culture that systematically promotes and valorizes intersectoral, international and interdisciplinary mobility.</p> <p>The USVT strategy focuses on three specific areas: improving the educational process; strengthening external collaboration at a global level; strengthening internal collaboration and a common institutional identity.</p> <p>A central element of the objective regarding external collaboration at international level is the integration of academic activities carried out within the faculties in all relevant sectors of society, both in Romania and abroad. At USVT, level there is an international relations department and all public information on the university website: https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/relatii-internationale-72.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting career diversity: 71% of respondents state that they have diverse careers, both in research and in other functions (e.g. teaching, administrative or in other sectors). This indicates a recognition of diverse professional paths, which may also include intersectoral or disciplinary mobility. - Support for career development: There are initiatives regarding the development of individual career plans, involvement in mentoring and career guidance activities, and encouragement of interdisciplinary and international collaborations. - Assessment based on a wide range of activities: Pillar II recognizes (in a proportion of 73%) the diversified assessment of research, not only based on publications. Although mobility is not specifically mentioned, there is institutional openness towards recognizing various types of contributions, which may also include mobility experience. - Openness to international collaboration (from open answers): Researchers request support for participation in national and international consortia, without administrative constraints, as well as collaborations with foreign universities.
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Pillar III: Working conditions and practices	
<p>3.1. Working conditions, financing and salaries (Principle 13):</p> <p>Employers and/or funders should ensure that working conditions for researchers, including those with disabilities, provide, where appropriate, the flexibility and accessibility considered essential for the successful conduct of research activities in accordance with applicable national law and the provisions of collective agreements concluded at national or sectoral level. They should aim to ensure working conditions that allow all researchers to reconcile their personal and professional lives. Particular attention should be paid, inter alia, to flexible working arrangements, part-time work, teleworking and sabbatical leave, as well as to the necessary financial and administrative provisions governing such arrangements. Employers should ensure a working environment that promotes the mental health and well-being of researchers, including appropriate procedures for preventing and combating gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.</p>	
<p>+/-</p> <p>The degree of awareness and compliance with this legislation is continuously ensured by optimizing procedures, administrative flows and organizational learning processes at the faculty and department level.</p> <p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <p>USVT has taken a series of measures to ensure compliance with the national legal framework on remuneration and funding conditions for research staff. Employment contracts concluded, both for a fixed and indefinite period, include clear provisions on salary rights and access to the public social security system, in accordance with the provisions of the Labor Code and the Higher Education Law. These normative acts are complemented by specific regulations on public funding of research and orders of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Research, which establish salary scales and resource allocation criteria. However, the lack of flexible mechanisms for correlating salary with individual performance and the volatility of research project funding may limit the full application of the principle in practice.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>In implementing the principle of fair funding and salaries, USVT faces a number of structural and systemic obstacles. First, the general level of research salaries is low, especially for researchers at the beginning of their careers or employed in fixed-term projects, which affects the attractiveness of scientific careers compared to other sectors. Second, research funding is often fragmented and uncertain, largely dependent on competitive access to grants, without the existence of institutional mechanisms for financial continuity between projects.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: The GAP analysis conducted at USVT highlights both progress in ensuring transparency and compliance with the legislation on remuneration, as well as systemic and institutional obstacles affecting the equity and attractiveness of a research career. These are reflected in the data from the questionnaire applied to researchers (Pillar III – Working conditions) and in the national legal context.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing transparency regarding salary rights and social benefits by developing a digital information guide that includes: salary levels by researcher categories (R1–R4); details on income taxation; clear information about contributions and rights in social protection systems (pensions, health, allowances, etc.). - Diversifying funding sources by: stimulating participation in national and international grant competitions; developing partnerships with the private and non-governmental sectors; administrative support for project writing and management. - Allocating additional financial resources for performance by: implementing reward schemes for researchers who achieve excellent results; granting bonuses or incentives for involvement in strategic projects of the institution. - Supporting salary equity and correlating income with responsibilities, especially in the case of beginning researchers (R1), who indicated lower salary levels and not correlated with the volume of work. - Strengthening the budgeting of long-term research positions, where the activity is recurring, to ensure the sustainability of human resources and job stability. <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 35; Action Plan measure 36; Action Plan measure 37.</p>

3.1.1. Research environment

Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that the most stimulating research or research training environment is created, providing appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including for remote collaboration through research networks, as well as the highest level of health and safety in accordance with Union, national or sectoral regulations. Funders should ensure that adequate resources are provided to support the agreed work programme. In particular, the availability of qualified support staff (e.g. professionals, including research managers and administrators) is important.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Although USVT provides a general framework for conducting research activities in accordance with legal requirements regarding occupational health and safety, the full implementation of a stimulating and modern research environment remains a partially achieved objective. Respondents to the questionnaire highlighted differences between departments in terms of access to infrastructure, resources, auxiliary staff and spaces dedicated to research.</p> <p>Furthermore, there is still no formalized institutional strategy for the periodic assessment of the research environment, and support for digital collaboration, international networks and online research platforms is not systematically implemented. Researchers' awareness of their rights and obligations related to occupational health and safety is uneven.</p> <p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law on Occupational Safety and Health No. 319/2006, together with HG 1425/2006, provides the framework for preventing occupational risks and ensuring a safe working environment in research activities; - Higher Education Law No. 199/2023 with subsequent amendments and completions which allows and encourages institutional investments in research and development infrastructure; - The updated Labor Code (Law 53/2003) guarantees the right to a safe and healthy working environment for all employees. <p>However, the lack of explicit internal regulations on the periodic assessment of the research environment, as well as limited financial resources, may represent obstacles to the full implementation of this principle. Also, the bureaucracy associated with public procurement may delay the modernization of equipment and infrastructure necessary for a competitive research environment.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT provides research infrastructure in most departments, including access to laboratories, equipment and technical support, in accordance with the legal regulations in force. In internal assessments, 59% of researchers consider that health and safety standards are respected, and 57% state that they have access to adequate auxiliary staff and resources for conducting research.</p> <p>The institution supports the participation of researchers in national and international projects, promotes interdisciplinary collaboration and provides access to continuous professional training. USVT has also initiated support measures for employee well-being, including counseling sessions, occupational stress prevention activities and work-life balance facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision no. 1425/11.10.2006 for the approval of the Methodological Norms for the application of the provisions of the Law on occupational safety and health (Law no. 319/14.07.2006) (https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/instructiuni-proprii-de-sanatate-si-securitate-in-munca-iosud/legislatie-ssm-psi-su-iosud); - Operational procedure regarding the organization and functioning of the Occupational Safety and Health Commission for emergency situations (COD: USVT-CTU-PO-003) (https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/proceduri/ctu-po/USVT-CTU-PO%20003%20ed%201%20rev%200%20din%2016.05.2024.pdf); - Regulation on the protection of personal data within USVT (COD: USVT – R087): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R087.pdf; - Own occupational health and safety instructions: https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/scoli-doctorale-66/instructiuni-proprii-de-sanatate-si-securitate-in-munca-iosud. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to safe working conditions adapted to national and European regulations; - Provision of resources and support equipment for research activity; - Creation of a stimulating environment for research and training; - Promotion of the well-being and mental health of researchers.
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	<p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Insufficient resources and unevenly developed infrastructure between departments;- Limited access to modern research spaces and digital collaboration infrastructure (remote collaboration, through digital networks or international platforms, is not explicitly mentioned in the GAP analysis as being systematically supported, as well as participation in international projects or collaboration with industry/non-academic environments);- Lack of an institutional policy regarding the periodic evaluation of the research environment.	
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3.1.2. Complaints

Employers and/or funders of researchers should establish appropriate procedures, in accordance with relevant national, Union or international rules and regulations, possibly in the form of an impartial mediator, to deal with complaints/appeals from researchers, including those concerning conflicts between supervisor(s) and early stage researchers (R1)/established researchers (R2). These procedures should provide all research staff with confidential and informal assistance in resolving employment conflicts, disputes and complaints, with the aim of promoting fair and equitable treatment within the institution and improving the overall quality of the working environment.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labour Code (updated) (Law no. 53/2003) – regulates individual labour disputes, complaints and the right to appeal; - Higher Education Law no. 199/2023 with subsequent amendments and competences – provides for ethics committees and decision-making structures for dispute resolution; - Law no. 571/2004 on the protection of whistleblowers – allows for confidential reporting of irregularities; - Law no. 544/2001 on free access to information of public interest – requires transparency in internal procedures. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of an ombudsman-type office or contact point for researchers; - Low visibility of complaint mechanisms, especially for early-stage researchers; - Absence of an anonymous and digital reporting system for sensitive complaints (e.g. harassment, discrimination, abuse of authority); - Lack of systematic training for academic leadership on conflict management. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: Within USVT, there are institutional procedures that regulate the resolution of complaints and appeals in an academic and professional context. According to the questionnaire applied to research staff (Pillar III), 66% of respondents indicated that procedures are available for handling complaints, including conflicts between supervisors and early stage researchers. Also, 69% of respondents confirm the existence of some forms of confidential and informal assistance for resolving internal disputes.</p> <p>However, there is currently no formalized ombudsman mechanism or an independent structure that provides an impartial, accessible and dedicated framework for researchers.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enforcement of internal regulations on labor conflicts and professional ethics; - Informal support provided by department management or through administrative channels; - Increased awareness of the need for dialogue and conflict prevention, reflected in the proposals in the questionnaire; - Specific initiatives to improve vertical communication within research teams.
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3.1.3. Participation in organizational governance

Employers and/or funders of researchers should recognise that it is entirely legitimate and even desirable for researchers to be represented in the relevant information, consultation and decision-making bodies of the institutions for which they work, in order to protect and promote their individual and collective interests as professionals and to actively contribute to the functioning of the institution.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national and European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Charter for Researchers: researchers must be actively involved in decision-making structures that affect their work. - Law on Higher Education (nr. 199/2023): regulates the participation of teaching and research staff at the level of senates and faculty councils. - Labor Code and internal regulations of universities: provide for rights to representation and information for employees. - HRS4R (HR Excellence in Research): recommends the involvement of researchers in institutional governance as an indicator of good governance and participation. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The effective participation of researchers in decision-making structures is not monitored or actively supported at all levels. - Formal representation is not accompanied by effective consultation mechanisms, especially for young researchers or those with temporary contracts. - Lack of training in academic leadership and institutional governance for researchers. - Significant differences between faculties/departments in terms of researchers' involvement in decision-making processes. 	<p>Current situation at USVT:</p> <p>According to the responses to the questionnaire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 72% of respondents consider it to be recognized as legitimate and desirable for researchers to be represented in the institution's information, consultation and decision-making bodies. - This high level of agreement indicates a formal recognition of the principle of participation, but does not directly reflect the actual degree of involvement of researchers in governance. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalization of participation in institutional governance: Clarification in regulations of the rights of representation for researchers in advisory and decision-making committees; introduction of a code of good practices for the involvement of researchers in governance; - Creation of consultative structures dedicated to researchers: faculty research forums, advisory councils of young researchers; periodic consultations between the administration and researchers' representatives. - Academic leadership training: organization of workshops and trainings for researchers on university governance, project management. - Transparency in the decision-making process: publishing the calendar of relevant meetings, activity reports and decisions adopted; providing mechanisms for expressing views outside formal structures (questionnaires, online consultations, open sessions).
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3.1.4. Financing and salaries

Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that researchers, regardless of their status, benefit from fair and attractive remuneration conditions (funding and/or salaries), accompanied by adequate and equitable social security benefits (including sickness and parental benefits, pension and unemployment benefits, invalidity benefits and benefits for accidents and occupational diseases) in accordance with applicable national law and the provisions of collective agreements concluded at national or sectoral level. This should include researchers at all career stages, including early-stage researchers (R1), in accordance with their legal status, performance and level of qualifications and/or responsibilities. Researchers should be informed of their rights and obligations in order to understand how their salaries are taxed and should benefit from transparent information on social protection rights, such as pension rights under the national pension scheme.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>The degree of awareness and compliance with this legislation is continuously ensured by optimizing procedures, administrative flows and organizational learning processes at the faculty and department level.</p> <p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <p>USVT has taken a series of measures to ensure compliance with the national legal framework on remuneration and funding conditions for research staff. <i>Employment contracts concluded</i>, both for a fixed and indefinite period, include clear provisions on salary rights and access to the public social security system, in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Labor Code</i> and the <i>Higher Education Law</i>. These normative acts are complemented by specific regulations on public funding of research and orders of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Research, which establish salary scales and resource allocation criteria. However, the lack of flexible mechanisms for correlating salary with individual performance and the volatility of research project funding may limit the full application of the principle in practice.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>In implementing the principle of fair funding and salaries, USVT faces a number of structural and systemic obstacles. First, the overall level of research salaries is low, especially for early-career researchers or those employed on fixed-term projects, which affects the attractiveness of scientific careers compared to other sectors. Second, research funding is often fragmented and uncertain, largely dependent on competitive access to grants, without institutional mechanisms for financial continuity between projects.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: The GAP analysis conducted at USVT highlights both progress in ensuring transparency and compliance with the legislation on remuneration, as well as systemic and institutional obstacles affecting the equity and attractiveness of a research career. These are reflected in the data from the questionnaire applied to researchers (Pillar III – Working conditions) and in the national legal context.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing transparency regarding salary rights and social benefits by developing a digital information guide that includes: salary levels by researcher categories (R1–R4); details regarding income taxation; clear information about contributions and rights in social protection systems (pensions, health, allowances, etc.). - Diversifying funding sources by: stimulating participation in national and international grant competitions; developing partnerships with the private sector and the non-governmental sector; administrative support for project writing and management. - Allocation of additional financial resources for performance by: implementing reward schemes for researchers who achieve excellent results; granting bonuses or incentives for involvement in strategic projects of the institution. - Supporting wage equity and correlating income with responsibilities, especially in the case of beginning researchers (R1), who indicated lower salary levels and not correlated with the volume of work. - Strengthening the budgeting of long-term research positions, where the activity is recurring, to ensure the sustainability of human resources and job stability.
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3.2. Job stability (Principle 14):

Employers and/or funders should take firm action to combat precariousness and support job security and stability, including by limiting the maximum total duration of fixed-term employment relationships and by setting a maximum threshold to limit fixed-term contracts to one third of the total human resources of researchers within an employer. Whenever permanent, long-term or recurring research tasks are carried out, permanent employment contracts should be the appropriate instrument.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <p>The national legislative framework supports the application of the principle of stability and permanence of employment in research. The updated Labour Code (Law no. 53/2003) clearly regulates the use of fixed-term contracts, establishing the limits of application and guaranteeing equal rights for temporary employees. Also, Law no. 183/2024 on the status of research, development and innovation personnel allows the employment of researchers for an indefinite period in research institutes, universities and other relevant entities, providing a legal basis for building stable scientific careers. In addition, Law no. 199/2023 on Higher Education with subsequent amendments and qualifications regulates the employment of teaching and research staff in higher education without imposing legal barriers regarding the transformation of temporary positions into permanent positions, thus providing flexibility to institutions in human resource management and the possibility of consolidating academic resources through coherent internal policies.</p> <p>At European level, the application of the principle of job stability is supported by normative instruments such as the Circular on the Job Structure for Academic Staff in Universities of 13 June 2007, together with the annexed Notification on the job structure, which define the qualification requirements and typology of academic positions, contributing to the standardisation of career paths and increasing predictability in employment. In parallel, the Law on Fixed-Term Employment, which transposes the EU Directive on Fixed-Term Work, regulates the use of temporary contracts and establishes clear conditions under which they can be applied. The law aims to prevent abuses regarding the repeated renewal of temporary contracts and to promote fair treatment of workers, including researchers, thus contributing to strengthening occupational stability in the academic and research sector.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>Although there are visible efforts to respect the principle of job stability, the data from the questionnaire reveal important obstacles such as: the persistence of fixed-term contracts without clear transitions; insufficient support for young researchers; lack of an attractive salary policy to ensure long-term stability.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT constantly monitors compliance with the legislation and the rights of employees with fixed-term contracts. In addition, awareness and compliance with the legislation on temporary employment is supported by optimizing recruitment procedures, administrative flows and organizational learning processes within faculties, departments and other structures.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <p>Recommendation of permanent contracts. The USVT states that it recommends: the use of permanent contracts for recurring research activities, when legally and budgetarily possible. This practice is supported by 65% of respondents, indicating a positive institutional intention.</p> <p>Measures to support early-stage researchers (R1-R2): Actions have been implemented to support young researchers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access to social protection and fair working conditions; - promoting their involvement in research teams and collaborative activities; - measures for professional integration and recognition of their contributions. <p>For example, 67% of respondents believe that early-stage researchers benefit from fair treatment regarding working conditions.</p> <p>Career continuity counseling and support services: USVT offers career counseling services for researchers on temporary contracts, in order to ensure transition and career development. 68% of respondents acknowledged the existence of this type of support. Support for integration into teams and avoiding excessive demands: Researchers at the beginning of their careers are encouraged to work in teams and avoid disproportionate assignment of tasks.</p> <p>Regarding the stability of research jobs, USVT has undertaken a series of actions aimed at ensuring compliance with the legal provisions on fixed-term employment contracts, especially for staff employed in research projects funded from national and international sources. The institution applies the regulations set out in the Labor Code and in research-specific legislation, ensuring clear and transparent contractual conditions (https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/legislatie).</p> <p>Proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan measure 38; Action Plan measure 39; Action Plan measure 40.
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3.2.1. Postdoctoral positions (R2)

Institutions employing postdoctoral researchers should establish clear rules and explicit guidelines on their recruitment and appointment, including the maximum duration and objectives of such an appointment. These guidelines should take into account previous periods spent in postdoctoral positions at other institutions and recognise that postdoctoral status should be transitional, with the primary aim of providing additional professional development opportunities for a research career, in the context of long-term professional prospects.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>USVT currently does not have a formalized institutional policy regarding the status and conditions of postdoctoral researchers. There are no explicit rules regarding the maximum duration of postdoctoral appointments, their formal objectives, or the integration of these positions into a clearly defined career path.</p> <p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher Education Law No. 199/2023, as subsequently amended and supplemented, allows for the funding and employment of postdoctoral researchers through national and international projects, but does not explicitly define the postdoctoral status. - The Labor Code (Law 53/2003) allows for fixed-term contracts, but does not regulate the transitional status of the postdoctoral researcher as a distinct stage in the academic career. - The structure of positions and the minimum standards for the occupation of teaching and research positions (HG 457/2011) do not include provisions on standardized postdoctoral positions in universities, which limits the possibility of their institutionalization. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a formal institutional framework for postdoctoral programs: USVT does not have, at the time of the GAP analysis, a specific strategy or regulation for the postdoctoral stage. Postdoctoral positions are managed ad hoc, through research projects, without a distinct academic identity or formal recognition of the postdoctoral researcher status. - Absence of clear rules regarding the duration and objectives of postdoctoral appointments: The maximum duration of the postdoctoral period is not systematically mentioned in employment announcements and contracts, and professional development objectives are rarely defined. - Lack of an integrated and predictable career path after the doctorate: There is no institutional mechanism for transition from postdoctoral to permanent positions (e.g. lecturer, scientific researcher grade III), which limits the attractiveness of postdoctoral positions and increases the risk of professional instability. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: In the context of the HRS4R process, USVT recognized the need to develop an institutional framework that supports the careers of researchers in the postdoctoral stage, especially through support, guidance and integration measures in long-term academic paths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulation on the organization and implementation of postgraduate training and continuous professional development programs (COD: USAMVBT – PG 001- R013): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R013.pdf. - Regulation on the conduct and organization of admission to postdoctoral programs in IOSUD-USVT Timișoara (USAMVBT - PG 001 R063): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R063.pdf. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access of postdoctoral students to continuous professional development opportunities: USVT offers researchers, including those in the postdoctoral stage, access to various forms of improvement: formal training, workshops, participation in conferences, online learning and collaboration in interdisciplinary networks (70% of respondents confirm the availability of these opportunities). - Promotion of lifelong learning: At USVT, there is a declarative openness to the European model of continuous professional development, including for researchers after completing their doctorate (71% of respondents state that they periodically improve their skills and abilities within the institution). - Integration of researchers in international and interdisciplinary projects: Postdoctoral students can be included in national and international research projects carried out at USVT, which offers opportunities for applied professional development and international exposure – an essential aspect at this stage of their career. <p>As part of the HRS4R process, USVT identified the postdoctoral stage as a vulnerable point, but also a strategic priority. This is reflected in the improvement plans for career development and recruitment, which also include the postdoctoral as an element to be strengthened.</p>
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3.3. Contractual and legal obligations (Principle 15):

Researchers at all levels should be familiar with national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing training and/or working conditions. This includes regulations on intellectual property rights, as well as the requirements and conditions established by any sponsor or funder, regardless of the nature of their contract. The employer and funders should make copies of these documents available in English. Researchers should adhere to these regulations by submitting the required outputs (e.g. dissertations, publications, patents, reports, new product development, etc.) as set out in the terms and conditions of the contract or an equivalent document.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national and European legislative framework:</p> <p>National and European legislation provides the necessary framework for implementing the principle of contractual and legal obligations, but institutional clarifications are needed (e.g. through job descriptions, internal guides and standardised procedures) for this principle to be easily and coherently applicable at all career levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law on Higher Education No. 199/2023 (regulates professional obligations, ethical responsibility, compliance with regulations and rights/obligations of teaching staff and researchers); - Labour Code – Law No. 53/2003, republished: Clearly defines the obligations of employees and employers, including in relation to the individual/collective employment contract, job description and internal rules; - Law No. 206/2004 on good conduct in research: Regulates the legal responsibilities of researchers, including with regard to integrity, plagiarism, data use and institutional obligations; - Civil Code (Law no. 287/2009): Provides for contractual obligations in professional relationships and sanctions in case of damages or non-compliance with commitments; - European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (2005): Clearly includes the principle of compliance with contractual and legal obligations, transposed into the HRS4R process and recognized by the EC. - Laws on public funding / research contracts (e.g. OUG 57/2002, Law 319/2003): Requires compliance with contractual provisions in national and international funded projects, including deadlines, indicators, dissemination, etc.; - Law on the status of research, development and innovation personnel no. 183/2024. <p>Identified obstacles: The implementation of the principle of “Contractual and legal obligations” is affected by the lack of a clear internal framework regarding the attributions of researchers. Unwieldy administrative procedures and the lack of correlation between professional evaluation and the responsibilities assumed in projects reduce the efficiency and motivation of researchers, generating risks in compliance with contractual obligations.</p>	<p>Current situation at USVT: At USVT, it is ensured, both at institutional and faculty/department level, that academic staff are familiar with national, sectoral and institutional provisions and working conditions. All researchers at USVT have a formal contractual relationship with the institution, in one of the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching staff with research responsibilities (usually tenured, with the exception of lower-ranking fixed-term positions); - Teaching staff with additional research contract(s); - Employed researchers, without teaching responsibilities, fixed-term; - PhD students (https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/documente-desfasurare-doctorat-3403/an-universitar-2024-2025). <p>General employment contracts comply with the standards set out in the Framework Law on Higher Education (199/2023). Contracts for externally funded research projects include clear provisions on the legal obligations of researchers — such as data management, privacy protection, use of electronic communication means, etc. Depending on the type of funding (internal or external), researchers contractually commit to comply with the conditions imposed by the funder. The Project Management Unit (UMP) facilitates the implementation of projects for all the aforementioned categories of researchers. Each project benefits from a dedicated project manager. The UMP uses standard contracts that explicitly detail the obligations of researchers (https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/USAMVBT%20-%20CCM%20nr.189%20din22.06.2022.pdf).</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a clear and accessible guide on the contractual and legal obligations of researchers, including: rights and responsibilities; intellectual property provisions; rules for reporting results and contractual provisions in the case of collaborative research. - Organize regular legal information sessions for researchers, especially those at the beginning of their careers, on: labor legislation applicable to research, institutional regulations and obligations towards funders and partners. - Clarify contractual provisions in job advertisements, so that candidates are fully informed about the obligations and rights arising from employment and possible research contracts. <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 41; Action Plan measure 42; Action Plan measure 43.</p>
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3.4. Dissemination and exploitation of results (Principle 16):

Open science should be practiced by all researchers to ensure, in accordance with the contractual arrangements that apply to them, that the results of their research are disseminated, made available and exploited openly, i.e. communicated, transferred to other research settings and, where appropriate, commercialised. It is expected that highly qualified researchers will take the lead in ensuring that research is fruitful and that results are either commercially exploited or made available to the public (or both) whenever the opportunity arises.

In this regard, researchers should be supported by employers and funders through training in relevant skills and by ensuring access to funding, infrastructure and support in an appropriate manner. Researchers' involvement in open science should be recognised, incentivised and rewarded by employers and funders in the recruitment process, career progression and evaluation of funding programmes.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law no. 206/2004 on good research conduct: Art. 2, 3 and 15-20: regulates the obligation of researchers to disseminate results correctly, respecting ethical standards, copyright, data integrity and the public's right to access information. Provides for sanctions for unjustified withholding of results and for lack of recognition of authorship. - Law no. 199/2023 on higher education, which requires higher education institutions to contribute to the dissemination of science and the transfer of knowledge to society and the economic environment. Supports partnerships and the exploitation of results through external collaborations. - Law no. 183/2024 on the status of research, development and innovation personnel. Researchers have the right and obligation to disseminate research results and exploit them, in compliance with employment contracts and funding agreements. It also regulates the rights to inventions and intellectual creations made during research. - Law no. 8/1996 on copyright and related rights: Provides the legal framework for protecting research results as intellectual works and regulates the licensing, dissemination and ownership regime for results. - Framework contracts for projects funded through UEFISCDI/PNRR/POCIDIF: Explicitly impose the obligation to disseminate results, including in an open access regime, and to report them on public platforms (e.g. ERRIS, PNCDI, Horizon Dashboard). <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a clear institutional dissemination strategy – There is no coherent and visible framework to guide researchers on the channels, forms and rules of dissemination adapted to different audiences. - Insufficient information on intellectual property rights – Many researchers are unaware of the protection, licensing or technology transfer procedures for their results. - Low valorization of non-academic dissemination – Scientific popularization activities, participation in the media or collaborations with the socio-economic environment are rarely officially recognized. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT should develop an integrated and sustainable strategy for the dissemination and exploitation of research results, supporting researchers through clear policies, access to resources, training and professional recognition. This will stimulate the scientific and socio-economic impact of research activity and strengthen the institution's position in the national and international knowledge ecosystem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulation for awarding the results of scientific research, innovation and technology transfer activities within USVT (COD: USAMVBT – PG 001- R088): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R088.pdf; - USVT Research Strategy 2024-2029: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/cercetare/2024/Strategia%20de%20cercetare%20a%20USVT%202024-2029.pdf; - Code of ethics and university deontology: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/Carta%20Universitara%20USV%20Timisoara.pdf; - University Charter: https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/universitate/file/Carta%20Universitara%20USV%20Timisoara.pdf. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of an institutional policy on dissemination and exploitation of results – Framework document that includes types of dissemination, rules for protecting information and principles on open access. - Creation of an internal fund to support dissemination – Dedicated budget to cover publication fees, conference participation or patent costs. - Training on intellectual property and technology transfer – Workshops and practical guides to support researchers in recording and capitalizing on their results. - Visibility for good dissemination practices – Monthly promotion of projects with real impact through newsletter, institutional website and social networks. <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 41; Action Plan measure 42; Action Plan measure 43; Action Plan measure 44.</p>
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3.4.1. Intellectual assets, including intellectual property rights

Employers and/or funders should ensure that researchers at all stages of their careers are adequately compensated for the benefits arising from the exploitation (where applicable) of the results of their research and innovation activities, guaranteeing, where appropriate, co-ownership of intellectual property rights, such as copyright. Employers and/or funders should address this explicitly in their intellectual asset management strategy and should make the strategy publicly available. The intellectual asset management strategy should cover the creation, management, ownership and use of all types of intellectual assets (including data, know-how, standards) and support open science.

The strategy should explicitly mention the provisions on ownership and access rights granted to researchers and/or, where applicable, their employers or other parties, including industry partners, as may be provided for in specific collaborative agreements or other types of agreements.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <p>Relevant legislation: USVT should align with the Romanian and European legislation in force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law no. 8/1996 on copyright and related rights. - Law no. 64/1991 on patents. - Law on higher education no. 199/2023 with subsequent amendments and qualifications – on the copyright regime in university research. - OG no. 57/2002, art. 75 – on the rights of the employing public institution over the creations of employees. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <p>Lack of a clear institutional policy on IPR: currently, there is no standardized and transparent procedure at USVT level that would formally specify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who owns the rights to the results? (researcher vs. institution vs. partners); - What happens in the case of partnerships with the private sector? - What benefits can researchers obtain from the exploitation of results (patents, licensing)? <p>Operational constraints: 27% of researchers indicate limitations related to IPR, due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of funds/infrastructure for formal protection of rights; - Problems related to anti-plagiarism programs that wrongly mark scientific terms as plagiarism; - Lack of clear procedures regarding the registration of results (e.g. patents, copyrights, software). 	<p>Current situation at USVT: Within USVT, compliance with ethics, integrity and intellectual property rules is assumed by a large part of researchers, as shown by the analysis of the responses to the internal questionnaire (81% of respondents declare that they avoid plagiarism and respect the principles of co-ownership and the rules of intellectual property rights at all stages of the research activity). This reflects a solid ethical culture and an increased awareness of the importance of protecting research results.</p> <p>However, currently, there is no formalized and specific institutional policy on intellectual property rights (IPR), and the regulatory framework for these rights in the context of scientific activity, collaborative projects or relations with external partners (including from the industrial environment) is insufficiently developed and insufficiently communicated.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <p>General application of IPR rules: 81% of researchers declare that they avoid plagiarism and respect the principles of co-ownership and the rules of IPR, at all stages of a research process. This high level of compliance shows a consolidated awareness among researchers of the importance of protecting the results of their work.</p> <p>Continuous training and information (questionnaire suggestions):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of courses on IPR, ethics and integrity. - Open access to anti-plagiarism software and other verification tools. - Promotion of clear rules on co-authorship and rights to publications and patents. - Implementation of a Code of Ethics that includes aspects related to collaborations, rights to results, conflicts of interest. <p>Support for young researchers (R1-R2): Identified need to support early-career researchers through information, advice and mentoring in the field of IPR.</p>
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3.4.2. Public involvement

Researchers should ensure that their research activities are communicated to society at large in a way that is understandable to non-specialists, thereby improving public understanding of science. Direct engagement with civil society and citizens will help researchers better understand public interest in research priorities and public concerns, and to harness the potential of co-design and co-creation with society, where appropriate.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>USVT promotes the public engagement of researchers as an essential responsibility, recognized by law and reflected in its institutional policies. USVT actively collaborates with society, encourages participation in public debates and promotes the exchange of knowledge and skills. Public engagement is included in the annual performance evaluation, and agreements with the media, cultural institutions, NGOs can reflect the level of public engagement of researchers at the university.</p> <p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher Education Law No. 199/2023 (as amended): The main purpose of research and development activity is to develop scientific and technological knowledge, in the interest of the progress of Romanian society and the increase in the competitiveness of the economy, and supports the social responsibility of research and the dissemination of results to the community. - Code of Ethics and Professional Deontology of the Researcher (approved by OMEN No. 5522/2018): Art. 2 letter i): the researcher has the responsibility to contribute to the formation of a scientific culture in society, by disseminating knowledge and communicating results to the general public and Art. 12: provides for the researcher's obligation to communicate science in an accessible language. - National Strategy for Research, Innovation and Smart Specialization (2022–2027): includes objectives regarding increasing the visibility and impact of research in society and promotes open science and citizen involvement in research (citizen science). - Law no. 544/2001 on free access to information of public interest: Provides a legal basis for requesting and communicating information from publicly funded research, supporting transparency and dialogue with society. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient capitalization of public engagement – Popularization activities, community engagement or media presence are not formally recognized in the evaluation of researchers' careers. - Lack of an institutional framework to support public engagement – There is no dedicated strategy or department/structure to coordinate and facilitate researchers' interaction with the general public. - Limited resources for science communication – Budgets, platforms or professional expertise dedicated to public communication are rare or insufficiently developed. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: USVT researchers, especially those funded by public funds, have a responsibility to actively interact with society, to make research results accessible and understandable to the general public, and to contribute to the development of a culture of knowledge and critical thinking. Public engagement involves non-academic dissemination activities, participation in public debate, collaborations with educational, cultural, or civic institutions, and the promotion of science as a common good.</p> <p>USVT promotes itself and participates in the organization of public events: https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/evenimente/USVT/;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wikipedia: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universitatea_de_%C8%98tiin%C8%9Bele_Vie%C8%9Bii_%E2%80%9ERegele_Mihai_I%E2%80%9D_din_Timi%C8%99oara; - Banat Agriculture Magazine: https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/extensie-universitara-88/revista-agricultura-banatului-11252); - Agroprint: USVT Publishing House publishes, in addition to research papers, books addressed to the general public, textbooks, brochures, leaflets, etc. <p>Public communication also takes place through several research stations, veterinary clinics, societies, and foundations of the USVT, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Young Naturalists' Resort: which has as its mission science, conservation, tourism, education and recreation. It is equipped with a conference room and accommodation spaces (https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/extensie-universitara-88/statiunea-tinerilor-naturalisti); - Didactic and Experimental Station, actively involved in educational and cultural projects (https://www.usab-tm.ro/ro/extensie-universitara-88/statiunea-didactica-si-experimental-10044); - University Veterinary Clinics: https://usab-tm.ro/ro/clinicile-veterinare-universitare-8981; - Student Entrepreneurial Society: https://usab-tm.ro/ro/facultate/sas-usa-tm; - Romanian-German Center for professional training and improvement in the field of agriculture (Agricultural School in Voiteg): https://scoalaagricola.ro/; - Excelsior Alumni USVT Foundation: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560557902343; - LearnX Lab: Innovation and digitalization at USVT Timișoara: https://www.pressalert.ro/2025/03/learnx-lab-inovatie-si-digitalizare-la-usvt-timisoara-foto/. <p>USVT should strengthen its public engagement component through a strategic and integrated approach, including recognition policies, support infrastructure, dedicated training and visibility for researchers active in relation to society. This openness to the public will contribute to increasing the relevance and trust in science and to strengthening the role of the university as an active social actor.</p>
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	<p>- Cultural resistance or the perception that public involvement is secondary. In some cases, involvement in public space is perceived as an optional activity, not as a professional responsibility.</p>	<p><i>Proposed initiatives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Integrating public engagement into the institution's research strategy – Developing an institutional policy that defines, encourages and capitalizes on the public engagement of researchers.- Creating a Scientific Communication and Public Relations Office – Dedicated structure to support researchers in public dissemination activities and collaboration with external actors.- Training in public and scientific communication – Workshops on accessible writing, media presentation, scientific storytelling and dialogue with the public.- Digital platforms and events dedicated to science for the public – Developing websites, podcasts, conferences, science cafes and partnerships with schools, museums, ONGs.
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Pillar IV: Research careers and talent development

The research community is characterised by a diversity of talents, skills, abilities, capacities and roles. The more these talents are encouraged and developed, the better the quality of research will be and the greater the societal relevance of the knowledge produced. Encouraging continuous professional development and skills training is necessary to maintain skills and to provide researchers with a wide range of career opportunities in the public and private sectors.

4.1. Capitalizing on the diversity of research careers (Principle 17):

Employers and/or funders should recognise that researchers could have highly diverse careers, both in research and in other roles. Typically, diversification includes mobility in all its forms: inter/intra-national, intersectoral, inter-institutional, inter- and transdisciplinary and virtual mobility. This implies a more talent-based and diversity-sensitive quality assessment, promoting the responsible use of parameters, taking into account the diversity of contributions and their potential impact, the diversity of activities and practices such as teaching and competences, peer review, research management and leadership, supervision, mentoring, knowledge exploitation, entrepreneurship and collaboration with industry, service to society, science communication and engagement with society, methodological rigour and open science practices, team science, among others, as well as mobility.

+/-	<p>Relevant national and European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Charter for Researchers – supports flexibility and diversification of careers, as well as recognition of experiences in all sectors. - HRS4R – Human Resources Strategy for Researchers – recommends institutions to promote multiple career paths and support transitions between fields. - National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation (SNCDI) – encourages cooperation between research and industry and the valorization of knowledge transfer. - European policies on Open Science and employability, especially in the context of Horizon Europe and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a formal strategy for promoting career diversity in research. - Insufficient information on career opportunities outside academia. - Lack of a mentoring framework dedicated to career diversification for young researchers. - Limited collaborations with non-academic sectors (industry, administration, NGOs) for integration into alternative careers. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: Career diversity is present in practice, but institutional support measures are less developed or visible, especially for researchers in the early stages of their careers.</p> <p>According to the data from the questionnaire applied to USVT researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 71% of respondents fully agree with the statement that USVT researchers have diverse careers (in research and other functions). - 65% believe that the institution takes measures to inform researchers, especially those at the beginning of their careers, about opportunities in different sectors. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional strategy for career diversity: integrating the principle into HR policies and internal communication; presenting examples of non-linear career paths in orientation sessions. - Information and support for early-stage researchers: organizing workshops, mentoring sessions, thematic seminars on alternative careers; developing an information portal with resources on career opportunities in different sectors. - Creating a feedback and best practice mechanism: promoting success stories of researchers who have explored alternative career paths; encouraging the exchange of experience between researchers from different fields. - Strategic partnerships: collaboration agreements with public institutions, private companies, NGOs and international institutes; internships or applied research for researchers outside the academic environment. <p>Proposals: Action Plan measure 48; Action Plan measure 49; Action Plan measure 50;</p>
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4.2. Career development and career counseling (Principle 18):

Employers and/or funders of researchers should develop, preferably within their human resources management system, a specific career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their careers, regardless of their contractual situation, including researchers working under fixed-term contracts. In this context, researchers should be supported in developing an individual career plan to identify the training and research activities needed to achieve their professional goals. This should include the availability of mentors who are involved in providing the necessary support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers, motivating them and helping to reduce any uncertainty about their professional future. All researchers should familiarise themselves with these provisions and formulas and act proactively and responsibly in their own career development.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework: The national legislative framework supports the development of research careers through several normative instruments. Law No. 199/2023 on Higher Education, as amended and supplemented, recognizes the right to continuous professional training and encourages the development of institutional policies on career development in higher education. Law No. 183/2024 on the status of research, development and innovation personnel defines clear professional hierarchies (research assistant, scientific researcher, etc.) and possible career paths. The updated Labor Code (Law No. 53/2003) also regulates the right of employees to equal access to training opportunities and to support in shaping their careers, including through periodic assessments and individual development plans. However, the lack of integrated national policies on postdoctoral careers and the limitations of institutional autonomy in correlating performance with promotion are factors that may hinder the full application of the principle in research institutions.</p> <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a strategic framework for career development differentiated by levels and contract types. - Inequity in access to professional resources, caused by the uneven decentralization of initiatives. - Lack of an institutional structure to centralize, coordinate and monitor the career development of researchers. - Inconsistent and fragmented career paths, especially for temporary researchers or those without a teaching position. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: Although USVT shows concern for the development of researchers' careers, this dimension remains affected by the lack of a unitary and formalized institutional framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no explicit institutional strategy, differentiated by career stages (e.g. doctoral student, postdoctoral student, senior researcher). - Access to professional support (mentoring, counseling, training) is unequal between faculties/departments and often depends on the individual initiative of team leaders. - Institutional mechanisms for monitoring professional progress, evaluating the impact of measures taken and correlating performance with advancement opportunities are lacking. - Temporary researchers (postdoctoral students, project associates) do not benefit from a coherent integration and career development policy. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development and implementation of an institutional career development strategy, applicable to all researchers, regardless of contractual status or professional stage. The strategy will include clear objectives, support measures and monitoring tools. - Creating an individual career plan for each researcher, developed together with a mentor or group coordinator, highlighting training needs, research objectives and professional development prospects. - Strengthening interdepartmental mentoring programs, by designating experienced mentors to provide scientific, professional and motivational support to early-stage researchers. - Organizing training sessions and workshops on: career planning in research and outside academia; writing project proposals; developing transversal skills (leadership, communication, networking). - Access to professional counseling and mobility opportunities, supporting career development in national and international contexts, including in collaboration with the private sector or other sectors. - Periodic monitoring of career progress through annual assessments, constructive feedback and adjusting individual plans according to the personal and strategic objectives of the institution. <p>Proposals: Action Plan measure 51; Action Plan measure 52; Action Plan measure 53.</p>
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4.3. Continuing professional development (Principle 19)

At all stages of their careers, researchers should proactively seek to continuously improve their professional development by regularly updating and expanding their skills and competencies, and their employer/funder should provide them with opportunities to do so. This can be achieved through a variety of means, including but not limited to formal training, workshops, conferences, online learning or collaboration within a team and its network. Particular attention should be paid to the training of early-stage researchers (R1), the majority of whom are PhD students at the beginning of their research careers.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national and European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law 199/2023, art. 120, par. (1) – universities ensure the professional development of staff; - OMEC 6129/2016, on the professional portfolio and HRS4R recommendations; - EU Recommendation 2022/2415 – creation of institutional structures for upskilling/reskilling; - European Charter and HRS4R Guide – transparency and fair access, equal support for development. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of an institutional strategy dedicated to continuous professional development (for all career stages, including R1). - Unequal access to training, influenced by contractual status, department or involvement in projects. - Training is occasional, not strategically planned and without clear correlation with individual career plans. - Lack of a coordination structure or a single point of contact for continuous training. - Training is not systematically recognized in annual evaluation or career development. - Information about training opportunities is not centralized and proactively communicated to all researchers. 	<p>Current situation at USVT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - USVT supports continuous professional development by participating in training programs organized within projects (POCU, Erasmus+, CNFIS, etc.) and through external collaborations. - Some faculties organize their own sessions (e.g. methodological workshops, teaching training, informal initiatives). - Access to training is facilitated for teaching staff, but more limited for researchers without teaching norms or those with temporary contracts (R1-R2). - There is no unified institutional strategy or formal procedure for planning continuous training, and training activity is not systematically correlated with performance evaluation. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a USVT policy that includes clear objectives, equity and accessibility criteria for R1-R4; - Develop an online tool/e-portfolio with diplomas, certificates, training evaluations; - Organize training on topics of interest: grant writing, ethics, Open Science, AI, etc.; - Career guidance sessions and support for young researchers in professional transition; - Feedback questionnaires, correlating training participation with individual performance evaluation <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 54; Action Plan measure 55; Action Plan measure 56.</p>
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4.3.1. Access to training and continuous professional development in the field of research

Employers and/or funders should ensure that all researchers, regardless of their career stage and contractual situation, are offered opportunities for professional development and improved employability, through access to measures aimed at the continuous development of skills and competences. Employers and funders should take measures to support the development and delivery of specific training courses, including in the form of micro-certifications, to ensure upskilling and reskilling opportunities for researchers in a lifelong learning model and to promote cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary mobility. Such measures should be regularly assessed for their accessibility, use and effectiveness in improving skills, competences and employability.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law on Higher Education No. 199/2023 with subsequent amendments and competences – regulates the organization of doctoral studies, the role of the doctoral supervisor, the rights and obligations of the doctoral student; - Order of the Ministry of Education No. 3020/08.01.2024 for the approval of the Framework Regulation on doctoral university studies – provides for the existence of an individual research plan, periodic reports, as well as a formal relationship with the supervisor; - Labor Code (updated) (Law No. 53/2003) – provides for the obligations of supervisors in the training and coordination of staff; - Law No. 183/2024 on the status of research, development and innovation staff; - Order of the Ministry of Education No. 4262/15.04.2024 for the approval of the Methodology on the academic mobility of students. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a coherent institutional plan for continuous professional development for all researchers (including R1 and postdoctoral fellows); - Inequality in access to training depending on contractual status and involvement in projects; - Lack of a system for periodic evaluation of the impact of training on performance and career; - Absence of a framework that encourages planned, not just occasional, participation in training activities; - Low involvement of line managers in facilitating researchers' access to training and personalized coaching. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: At USVT, researchers have partial access to continuing professional development through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participation in projects with career development components (e.g. POCU, Erasmus+); - training activities within research grants (workshops, conferences, internships); - involvement in advanced training courses in areas such as ethics, academic writing, applied research. <p>However, access is not uniform and there is no clear institutional policy to ensure the systematic participation of all researchers, regardless of their contractual status or funding source.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in courses and training within national and European projects; - Offering mobilities for professional development within Erasmus+ and other academic networks; - Organizing thematic workshops within faculties and doctoral schools; - Existence of an institutional openness towards online training (MOOC, e-learning) for transversal skills; - Formal recognition of participation in training through certificates/attestations included in professional files.
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4.3.2. Validation of skills

As part of the process of expanding the skills set of researchers, employers and/or funders should provide for an appropriate assessment of formal and non-formal training, including on-the-job skills and training, in particular in the context of international and professional mobility. The assessment should be carried out on the basis of harmonised criteria, in a fair and transparent manner and within a reasonable timeframe.

+/-	<p>Relevant national and European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Charter for Researchers – supports the recognition of all forms of professional development. - EC Recommendation on micro-certifications (2022) – provides a framework for the recognition of formal and non-formal learning. - European Strategy for Universities – includes the objective of creating a “European Education Area” with common validation of competences. - Law on Higher Education (Romania) and rules on lifelong learning. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a formalised mechanism for the validation of competences at institutional level. - Individual career plans do not (yet) include a section for the formal recognition of acquired competences. - Limited digital resources (platforms, self-assessment tools, e-portfolios). - Absence of a standardised methodological framework for the internal certification of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. 	<p>Current situation at USVT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 64% of researchers state that they are supported to develop a career plan, which indirectly implies the identification and recognition of acquired skills. - 61-62% agree that there are mentors and a general career development strategy – but no mechanisms for formal recognition/validation of acquired skills are explicitly mentioned (e.g. through micro-certifications, portfolios, digital badges, etc.). <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalization of the skills validation process: introduction of an institutional framework for the formal validation of skills acquired through training, research, mentoring or interdisciplinary collaborations; creation of electronic professional portfolios (e-portfolios) for researchers. - Internal and external certification systems: development of micro-certifications (micro-credentials) for courses, training or non-formal research activities; accreditation of these in partnership with external structures (e.g. EU Digital Credentials). - Integrating validation into individual career plans: plans should include learning objectives and mechanisms for self-assessment/validation of progress; use of a competence framework compatible with European standards (e.g. ESCO, DigComp, Open Science Competency Framework). - Mentoring with a validation component: introducing a mentoring format in which the mentor assesses and validates the competence developments of the mentee; recording these activities in a common platform.
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4.3.3. Teaching activity

Teaching is an essential means of structuring and disseminating knowledge and is a useful option in a researcher's career path. Teaching should benefit from scientific knowledge, use this knowledge and promote interest in research among students. Researchers' involvement in teaching should be fully supported and recognised and may vary at different stages of their careers. Particular attention should be paid to early-career researchers to ensure that they are properly supported and that teaching responsibilities (including teaching, tutoring, supervision and mentoring) are compatible with their research activities or research training activities.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher Education Law No. 199/2023 with subsequent amendments and additions – recognizes teaching and training of young researchers as part of the university career; - OMEN No. 6129/2016 – introduces the teaching portfolio in professional evaluation; - Labor Code (updated) (Law No. 53/2003) – enshrines the right to fair remuneration and recognition of contributions to intellectual work. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excessive or disproportionate teaching workloads for researchers at the beginning of their careers, in the absence of differentiated norms; - Lack of a systematic pedagogical training program for researchers and doctoral students involved in teaching; - Unequal remuneration or lack of formal recognition of researchers' involvement in teaching (especially for those employed exclusively for research); - Coaching and mentoring activities are not recognized as an integral part of teaching in professional evaluation. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: Teaching is explicitly integrated into USVT's institutional policies and practices. According to the USVT Strategy, the focus is on improving education and promoting research as a foundation for the teaching process. At the same time, teaching fees are developed as part of the institutional strategy, and teaching experience is a mandatory element in the professional portfolio in the selection and promotion processes of teaching and research staff.</p> <p>A permanent dialogue between researchers and management is encouraged regarding the balance between teaching and research activities, which contributes to a better harmonization of academic tasks.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of teaching as part of professional and career evaluation; - Integration of research into the educational process (research-based teaching); - Organization of punctual training sessions in teaching and digitalization of education; - Encouraging the involvement of R3-R4 staff in the training and mentoring of R1-R2 researchers; - Active institutional dialogue on the distribution of academic tasks and the balance between teaching and research.
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4.4. Supervision and mentoring (Principle 20):

Proper management of staff and teams is crucial in research work environments, as science is by definition a collaborative effort. The necessary training, tools and assessment mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that highly qualified researchers and principal investigators are able to manage their staff and teams in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, without gender or other bias, and to establish productive and cooperative professional relationships with their counterparts. This should contribute to the creation of healthy, equitable and creative environments where each person is respected, properly motivated and recognised, promoting their overall well-being.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher Education Law No. 199/2023 with subsequent amendments and additions – regulates the organization of doctoral studies, the role of the doctoral supervisor, the rights and obligations of the doctoral student; - Order of the Ministry of Education no. 3020/08.01.2024 for the approval of the Framework Regulation on doctoral studies – provides for the existence of an individual research plan, periodic reports, as well as a formal relationship with the supervisor; - Labor Code (updated) (Law no. 53/2003) – provides for the obligations of supervisors in the training and coordination of personnel; - Law no. 183/2024 on the status of research, development and innovation personnel; - Order of the Ministry of Education no. 4262/15.04.2024 for the approval of the Methodology on the academic mobility of students. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a unified institutional procedure for the designation of the supervisor outside doctoral programs; - Unclear communication of the direct supervisor for R1 researchers involved in grants or employed in institutes/departments without teaching status; - Lack of a formal tool for monitoring and evaluating the supervisory relationship; - Supervisors with multiple tasks (administrative/didactic), without clear allocation of time for mentoring. 	<p>Current situation at USVT: Within the doctoral programs and research projects implemented at USVT, there is an institutionalized practice of formally designating a supervisor or scientific coordinator for each early-stage researcher (R1-R2).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In doctoral schools, the doctoral supervisor is established upon admission, with clearly defined obligations through the doctoral study contract and the individual research plan; - In research projects, the activity manager or team coordinator usually provides professional guidance; - In some cases, there are informal coordinators or secondary mentors, especially in collaborative or interdepartmental projects. <p>However, these roles are not uniformly implemented or monitored, and researchers are not always clearly informed about the direct contact person for professional or administrative matters.</p> <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A formal academic supervision model is applied in doctoral programs, with semester reports and research plans validated by scientific committees; - Mechanisms for periodic review of doctoral students' activity are being developed in some faculties; - Interest was expressed, within the HRS4R questionnaire, in introducing transparent mechanisms for the designation and evaluation of supervision for all categories of researchers. <p>Proposals:</p> <p>Action Plan measure 57; Action Plan measure 58; Action Plan measure 59; Action Plan measure 60; Action Plan measure 61.</p>
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4.4.1. Relationship with supervisors

Researchers in training should establish a structured and regular relationship with their supervisor(s) and faculty/department representative(s) so that they can fully benefit from this relationship. Supervisors should also actively support early-stage researchers in particular by organising feedback meetings with them and by promoting training activities relevant to their work.

This includes, among other things, keeping track of progress and research results, obtaining feedback through reports and seminars, using this feedback and carrying out the work in accordance with agreed programmes, milestones, deliverables and/or research results.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law on Higher Education No. 199/2023 with subsequent amendments and competences – regulates the organization of doctoral studies, the role of the doctoral supervisor, the rights and obligations of the doctoral student; - Order of the Ministry of Education No. 3020/08.01.2024 for the approval of the Framework Regulation on doctoral studies – provides for the existence of an individual research plan, periodic reports, as well as a formal relationship with the supervisor; - Order No. 4067/2024 on the Code - Framework of University Ethics and Deontology/04.04.2024: Methodology for financing university scientific research within state higher education institutions: https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/281570. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of standardization at institutional level regarding the frequency and content of meetings with supervisors; - Informal and uneven communication – in some cases documented structures for feedback and interim evaluation are missing; - Insufficient clarification of supervisors' responsibilities and PhD researcher rights; - Significant differences between doctoral schools or departments in terms of the application of good practices regarding supervision; - Lack of an institutional mechanism for evaluating the researcher-supervisor relationship (e.g. satisfaction surveys, academic audit, reporting tools). 	<p>Current situation at USVT:</p> <p>Within the doctoral and postdoctoral programs conducted at USVT, the relationship between researchers and supervisors is regulated by study contracts and the regulations of the Doctoral Schools.</p> <p>This formally involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the appointment of a doctoral supervisor (or co-coordinator); - the preparation of a research plan with stages and deadlines; - the presentation of semi-annual or annual reports on the progress of the work; - the holding of internal scientific seminars within the research teams. <p>In the questionnaire applied as part of the GAP analysis, researchers R1 and R2 mentioned that the interaction with supervisors is generally positive, but there are differences between departments in terms of the quality, frequency and formalization of this relationship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The USVT University Charter – establishes the didactic and scientific responsibilities of the doctoral supervisors and the doctoral schools; Regulation on the organization and conduct of doctoral studies at the University of Life Sciences “King Mihai I” from Timișoara (COD: USVT - R075): https://www.usab-tm.ro/utilizatori/calitate/file/regulamente/R_075.pdf. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <p>USVT promotes a culture of professional supervision by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structured university leadership – supervisors are trained in the field of human resources (HR); - Organizing annual performance and personal development reviews (mandatory in the European public sector); - Launching a strategic project on the development of researchers' careers, with a focus on the mentoring and supervision relationship; - Strengthening the formalized dialogue between employee and superior, focused on well-being, progress and professional planning.
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4.4.2. Researchers with higher qualifications

Highly qualified researchers (R3 and R4) should pay particular attention to their multiple roles as supervisor, mentor, career advisor, project coordinator, manager or science communicator. They should perform their duties to the highest professional standards and have access to appropriate training. As regards the role of supervisor or mentor, highly qualified researchers should establish a constructive and positive relationship with early-stage (R1) and established (R2) researchers, so as to create the conditions for an effective transfer of knowledge and to allow for the continued successful development of their careers. This role is of great responsibility as it aims to support the career development of R1 and R2 researchers by communicating experiences and values in an environment of trust and confidentiality.

<p>+/-</p>	<p>Relevant national and European legislative framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Charter for Researchers – promotes equal treatment and recognition of all levels of qualification. - Labour Code and Higher Education Law (Romania) – regulates the status and promotion of researchers with scientific titles. - ARACIS and CNATDCU standards – define the minimum requirements for occupying advanced academic positions. - HRS4R guidelines – recommend the development of institutional policies to support the careers of advanced researchers. <p>Identified obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a clear strategy for capitalizing on highly qualified researchers. - Excessive bureaucracy in academic promotion and lack of real financial incentives. - Chronic underfunding of cutting-edge research activities. - Loss of valuable researchers due to brain drain and international competition. - Low external visibility of USVT achievements at the level of scientific excellence. 	<p>Current situation at USVT:</p> <p>This topic is not treated as a separate item in the analyzed questionnaire, but is indirectly reflected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - career development strategies; - support provided in continuous training and mobility; - level of involvement in international projects. <p>Proposed initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies dedicated to senior/highly qualified researchers: defining a strategy to capitalize on the expertise of researchers with advanced titles (doctors, doctoral supervisors, top researchers); integrating them into strategic committees, mentoring and academic governance. - Attracting and retaining elite researchers: creating incentive mechanisms - excellence scholarships, institutional grants, support for mobility; offering competitive academic positions and an attractive framework for experienced international researchers. - Developing an ecosystem favorable to excellent research: establishing elite research centers, led by senior researchers; stimulating the formation of international consortia, through logistical and financial support for Horizon Europe or MSCA applications. - Visibility and institutional recognition: creating a gallery of research excellence at USVT; periodic public recognition of the results of researchers with impact (ISI, patents, influenced public policies, etc.). <p>Conclusions from the general analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USVT has an institutional career development strategy that also includes researchers with advanced scientific titles. • However, specific policies or mechanisms for supporting and capitalizing on highly qualified researchers (e.g. PhD, habilitation, international experts) are not explicitly detailed. • There are no clear references to incentives for attracting, retaining or formally recognizing excellence in research.
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