

## REVISED ACTION PLAN 2024-2026

	Proposed Actions	GAP Principle(s)	Responsible Unit	Indicators/Targets	Current Status (Achieved; On-Going; To Be Achieved)
1.1.	<b>Ethical and professional aspects</b>				
1.2.	Update current internal regulations of MUV on funding frontier research.	1. Research freedom	Department of Academic Organization for Clinical Trials, Project Activity Department, Academic Council	Amendments in regulations for MUV Science Fund.	On-Going: The internal regulations are being updated in response to national requirements set by the Ministry of Education and Science. Key changes include labor funding adjusted from 40% to 35%, increased infrastructure project funding from BGN 50,000 to BGN 80,000, and scientific research funding increased to BGN 12,000. Scheduled for voting by the Academic Assembly on 13.12.2023.
1.3.	Update current internal regulations on commercialization and transfer of research results of MUV.	8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	Research Institute, Legal Department	Updated internal regulations on commercialization.	On-Going: The revision focuses on clarifying processes for intellectual property management and enhancing mechanisms for startup and spin-off support. Improved pathways for industry collaboration are also part of this ongoing effort. The update aims to maximize the impact of research outputs.
1.4.	Establish an office for Technology Transfer and Innovations.	8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	Research Institute, Legal & HR Departments	Established Office for Technology Transfer.	Achieved: Office for Technology Transfer and Innovations (OTTI) established on 20.04.2022, enhancing the university's capabilities in managing and commercializing research outputs. OTTI implements strategies for IP management, establishes industry partnerships, and supports startups. It is recognized as a rapidly developing regional TT Office by an EU strategic evaluation.

1.5.	Provide training in research management and entrepreneurship.	8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	HR Department, PhD School, Research Institute	Number of trainings and satisfaction feedback.	Ongoing: A series of structured thematic trainings have been conducted, focusing on Intellectual Property Rights, Technology Transfer, and Entrepreneurship. Examples include sessions on IP rights (28.07.2022), technology transfer basics (20.09.2022), advanced topics in technology transfer (15-16.12.2022), and a seminar on collaboration and commercialization (16-17.02.2024). These sessions equipped participants with tools for effective engagement in technology transfer and commercialization.
1.6.	Update data management policy and guidelines on cybersecurity.	2. Ethical principles; 4. Professional attitude; 7. Good practice	Information & Technology Dept., Academic Council	Updated data management policy disseminated.	Achieved: Data management policy updated to include a robust cybersecurity framework, covering strong password policies, multi-factor authentication, access control, data encryption, regular backups, employee training on cyber threats, and an incident response plan. These measures significantly enhance the university's resilience against cyber threats.
1.7.	Provide training in ethics in research.	2. Ethical principles	Career Development Department, PhD School, Ethics Committee	Training program, number of trainings, participants, satisfaction feedback.	Achieved: All doctoral students are mandated to complete courses on the Blackboard online platform. Courses include legal frameworks regulating doctoral training, research methodology, and the ethics of scientific research. This ensures that students understand ethical principles and research conduct standards.
1.8.	Provide foreign reviewers' involvement in the evaluation process for the MUV University Publishing Department.	3. Professional responsibility	University Publishing Department	Number of foreign reviewers involved in reviewing manuscripts.	Achieved: Esteemed foreign reviewers have been engaged, including experts from institutions like the University of Texas, University of Parma, Erasmus MC Sophia Children's Hospital, and others. Their involvement enriches the quality and credibility of MUV's scientific journals.

1.9.	Develop an Equal Opportunities Policy document.	10. Non-discrimination; 27. Gender balance; 34. Complaints/appeals	Research Institute, Legal Department, Academic Council, General Assembly	Equal Opportunities Policy document created.	Achieved: Policy adopted on 03.04.2023, publicly accessible, and applies to all members of the university community. It outlines principles such as non-discrimination, equal access, inclusivity, implementation and monitoring strategies, and procedures for addressing complaints related to discrimination or harassment.
1.10.	Establish an ombudsperson institution.	34. Complaints/appeals	Research Institute, Legal Department, HR, Academic Council, General Assembly	Ombudsperson institution established, position filled, and conflict resolution procedure integrated.	Achieved: Institution established on 07.03.2024, providing an independent and confidential avenue for conflict resolution. The ombudsperson handles a range of issues, from academic disputes to administrative difficulties, enhancing the university's supportive and responsive infrastructure.
1.11.	Update the Directive on attestation of MUV researchers with regard to comparable criteria for professional development and evaluation of postdoctoral researchers.	11. Evaluation/appraisal systems; 28. Career development	Quality Management and Accreditation Department, HR, Career Development, Legal Departments, Academic Council	Updated Directive on attestation in coherence with the Charter and Code.	To Be Achieved: No changes made since the previous submission. Current attestation cards are regulated under the Higher Education Act and apply exclusively to the periodic attestation of faculty members. Further updates are needed to ensure inclusion of additional researcher groups.
	<b>Recruitment and Selection</b>				
2.1.	Involvement of external evaluators in the MUV selection process.	14. Selection (Code); 10. Non-discrimination	Career Development Department, Legal Department, Academic Council	Updated internal regulations on Academic Staff Development to include external evaluators.	To Be Achieved: Regulatory constraints imposed by Bulgaria's National Centre for Information and Documentation (НАЦИД) limit the direct involvement of foreign evaluators. MUV is exploring alternative approaches, such as advisory roles, to incorporate international perspectives within regulatory limits.

2.2.	Extend the practice of publishing vacancies for researchers on the EURAXESS website and other similar platforms.	13. Recruitment (Code); 15. Transparency (Code)	Human Resource Department	Adoption of publishing research positions on EURAXESS and other platforms.	Achieved: MUV actively publishes vacancies on EURAXESS, including recent postdoctoral positions (e.g., Job References 128428, 100037, 69180, 69185). This practice aligns with the university's commitment to transparency and international recruitment.
2.3.	Translate internal regulations into English.	13. Recruitment (Code); 15. Transparency (Code)	Career Development Department	Bilingual internal regulations published on MUV's website.	Ongoing: Key internal regulations, such as those on commercialization, attestation, ethics, and intellectual property, have been translated into English and are available on MUV's website. This ongoing effort supports transparency and international engagement.
2.4.	Synchronize MUV regulations on academic staff development with the OTM-R policy.	16. Judging merit (Code); 17. Variations in CVs (Code); 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code); 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code); 20. Seniority (Code)	Career Development Department, Legal Department, Academic Council	Updated regulations on Academic Staff Development synchronized with the OTM-R policy.	To be achieved: MUV's attestation process will include recognition of mobility, multidimensional careers, micro-qualifications, innovation, patenting, and public engagement, aligning with modern academic career pathways.
2.5.	Explore the utilization of an IT tool to follow career progression.	As above	Information and Technology Department	Digital template for individual career development tracking developed.	Achieved: MUV has implemented a new IT tool to manage training and career progression for doctoral programs, funded by an EU project. The tool supports career tracking, administration, and integration with academic records. Training sessions for using this tool are ongoing.

2.6.	Explore and assess national and institutional policies for offering postdoctoral appointments. Define general principles related to postdoctoral appointments in coherence with the Charter and Code.	21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	Human Resource Department, Career Development Department, Legal Department, Academic Council	Updated policy for offering postdoctoral appointments in line with national legislation and EURAXESS categories.	Achieved: MUV's policy acknowledges the diversity of funding sources for postdoctoral projects, including international, national, and local funding. The policy has led to the appointment of 86 new postdoctoral researchers in various projects over the last two years.
2.7.	Develop a job description for the postdoctoral position.	21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	Human Resource Department, Career Development Department, Legal Department, Academic Council	Prepared job description for postdoctoral positions.	Achieved: Detailed job descriptions for postdoctoral positions, including responsibilities, qualifications, and application details, are published on EURAXESS (e.g., Job References 100037, 69180, 69185). This practice aims to enhance research skills and academic credentials through rigorous research and community involvement.
	<b>Working Conditions and Social Security</b>				
3.1.	Develop a Strategy for career development of MUV researchers for the period 2022-2026.	22. Recognition of the profession; 23. Research environment; 24. Working conditions; 28. Career development	Working group of representatives from HR, Career Development Departments, academic staff, Academic Council	Policy document.	To Be Achieved: With the change in university management and new rectorship, the strategy is under review to align with the new leadership's vision. Current programs are being reassessed, and new initiatives may be introduced to support researchers' career progression.

3.2.	Update internal labor regulations with regard to: - business leave during a mobility, - introduction of a "home office" (teleworking) and flexible working hours, specifically in the context of the current COVID pandemic environment.	24. Working conditions; 29. Value of mobility	Human Resource Department	Internal labor regulations updated.	Achieved: A new ordinance (P-100-819/23.11.23) from the rector provides guidelines on staff mobility, including travel arrangements, expenses, and temporary assignments. Provisions for teleworking and flexible working hours have also been implemented, adapting to the post-pandemic environment.
3.3.	Introduce remuneration for supervision of PhD theses.	26. Funding and salaries; 37. Supervision and managerial duties; 40. Supervision	HR Department, Career Development Department	Internal remuneration rules updated.	On-Going: Changes in remuneration are indirectly affected by funding adjustments from sources like the "Science Fund" and the Ministry of Education and Science's "Research Fund." MUV is aligning its compensation strategies with these financial structures to adequately support PhD supervision.
3.4.	Revise internal rules regulating research versus teaching workload in light of MUV's new status as a "Research University."	24. Working conditions; 28. Career development; 33. Teaching	HR Department, Educational Activity Directorate, Research Institute	Updated job descriptions reflecting the share of working time dedicated to research.	On-Going: Adjustments to balance teaching and research workloads are under consideration. The rector has allowed flexible working hours, and faculty can take approved days off. However, formal regulations for reducing teaching loads in favor of research are yet to be established.
3.5.	Establish a company at MUV for the economic realization of the results of scientific research and intellectual property.	31. Intellectual Property Rights; 32. Co-authorship	Research Institute, Department for Technology Transfer and Innovation, Legal Department	Company established.	On-Going: The "Medical University - Varna (MUVE-TEAM) Competition for Internal Projects on Applied Science and Innovation Research" is fostering the establishment of spin-off companies. Thirteen projects under this initiative are expected to drive innovation and patenting, starting in April 2024 and concluding in September 2025.

3.6.	Initiate revision of internal regulations with a focus on licensing agreements related to results produced in partnership with the business sector.	31. Intellectual Property Rights; 32. Co-authorship	Research Institute, Department for Technology Transfer and Innovation, Legal Department	Internal regulations updated (e.g., Regulations on commercialization, IP management).	On-Going: During the MUVE-TEAM initiative, business professionals participated in project evaluations (16-17 February), indicating the beginning of crafting agreements related to outcomes. This collaboration aligns research with market viability and business strategies, aiming to facilitate commercialization pathways.
	<b>Training and development</b>				
4.1.	Provide training in mentoring in research and academia settings for R2-R4 researchers.	36. Relation with supervisors; 37. Supervision and managerial duties	HR Department, Career Development Department	Number of trainings, number of participants trained, feedback from trainees.	Achieved: A postgraduate pedagogical 2-day course was held on 22.09.2023, led by Prof. Toncheva, focusing on enhancing mentoring skills. The training had 47 participants and was designed to strengthen researchers' ability to guide colleagues, thereby improving the university's academic environment.
4.2.	Develop a strategy for business-university relationships.	38. Continuing Professional Development	Department for Technology Transfer and Innovation of the Research Institute	Policy document.	Ongoing: Business professionals participated in the evaluation of 13 innovative projects under the MUVE-TEAM initiative on 16.02.2024. This strategy integrates business insights into research evaluation, setting the stage for future agreements on collaboration, intellectual property management, and commercialization.
4.3.	Provide training in Technology Transfer and Entrepreneurship.	38. Continuing Professional Development	Department for Technology Transfer and Innovation of the Research Institute, Career Development Department	Number of trainings, number of participants trained, feedback.	Achieved: A key lecture by Dr. D J Nag was delivered, focusing on technology transfer and entrepreneurship. The lecture, which is recorded and available online, provided insights into commercializing research and equipped attendees with entrepreneurial skills. The training is ongoing, emphasizing practical strategies for identifying research with commercial potential.

4.4.	Organize soft skills courses for PhD students and young researchers on an annual basis.	38. Continuing Professional Development	PhD School	Number of trainings, number of participants trained, feedback.	Ongoing: Mandatory soft skills courses for PhD students include "Communication Techniques and Presentation Skills" and "English for Academic Purposes." These courses, provided through the Blackboard platform, prepare students for effective communication and integration into the international research community.
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Proposed Actions	Status	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4	2026 Q1	2026 Q2	2026 Q3	2026 Q4
Ethical and Professional Aspects																					
1.1. Update current internal regulations of MUV on funding of frontier research projects	Ongoing																				
1.2. Update current internal regulations on commercialization and transfer	Ongoing																				
1.3. Establish an office for Technology Transfer and Innovations	Achieved																				
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1.5. Update data management policy and guidelines on cybersecurity	Achieved																				
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1.7. Foreign reviewers at MUV Publishing House	Achieved																				
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1.9. Ombudsperson institution established	Achieved																				
1.10. Updated Directive on attestation of MUV researchers (Charter and Code)	To be achieved																				
Recruitment and Selection																					
2.1. Involvement of external evaluators in the MUV selection process	To be achieved																				
2.2. Vacancies publication in EURAXESS	Achieved																				
2.3. Translate internal regulations in English	Ongoing																				
2.4. Synchronization of the MUV Regulations on academic staff with the OTM-R policy	To be achieved																				
2.5. IT tool to follow career progression	Achieved																				
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2.7. Job description for the postdoctoral position	Achieved																				
Working Conditions and Social Security																					
3.1. Strategy for career development of MUV researchers	To be achieved																				
3.2. Labour regulations with respect to mobility	Achieved																				
3.3. Remuneration for supervision of PhD thesis	Ongoing																				
3.4. Regulate teaching vs research workload	Ongoing																				
3.5. Establish spin-off company	Ongoing																				
3.6. Agreements related to results produced in a partnership with business	Ongoing																				
Training and Development																					
4.1. Training in mentoring for R2-R4 researchers	Achieved																				
4.2. Strategy for business-university relationship	Ongoing																				
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