



**Self-Assessment Report on the Implementation of Principles, laid down in the C&C,
at Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar”
(15th January 2012 – 31th March 2016)**

Introduction

In January 2012 Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar” was acknowledged “HR Excellence in Research” on the basis of published Internal Analysis¹ and Action Plan² for incorporating the *European Charter for Researchers* and the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*.

A working group was created in order to prioritise, coordinate and deal with the 36 identified actions in the action-plan. The working group includes different stakeholders representing the Board of the University (Vice-rector on R&D), the academic staff (professors and researchers) and the administrative departments (Human Resources, Project Management, and Finance). It met in February 2013, February 2014 and June 2015 to assess the implementation of actions.

One year after acknowledgement (in February 2013) the implementation of the action plan was evaluated by a working group. On the basis of the evaluation the priority activities for the next one-year period were displayed. The report was endorsed by the Academic Counsel of the VFU (Protocol №4/19.02.2013).

A *Midterm Self-Assessment Report for the Implementation of the Action-plan*³ for obtaining the logo “HR Excellence in Research” was worked and endorsed by the Academic Counsel of the VFU at February 2014. The report has been submitted to the European Commission, General Direction “Research and Innovation”.

An ongoing assessment of the results of action plan implementation and the readiness for external evaluation by the European Commission was endorsed by the Academic Counsel of the VFU (Protocol №9/25.06.2015).

The overall implementation of the action plan for the four years possession of HR-logo has been developed by a working group of VFU, led by prof. Pavel Pavlov, PhD – Vice-Rector in R&I, and endorsed by the University Counsel in Research on 6th of April 2016.

¹ http://www.vfu.bg/en/hr_logo/files/Internal_Analysis-VFU-EN.pdf

² http://www.vfu.bg/en/hr_logo/files/Action_plan_HR_VFU-EN.pdf

³ http://vfu.bg/en/hr_logo/files/HR_Self-assessment_2014-EN.pdf

The self-assessment report presents the efforts made by Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar” in the context of the HRS4R for the improvement of:

- (1) the ethical and professional aspects in research;
- (2) the recruitment of researchers;
- (3) the working conditions and
- (4) the career development through training.

All these four principles are laid down in the *European Charter for Researchers* and the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*.

The results are represented with the using of the action plan’s structured tables (see *Annex D*). This allows not only the follow-up of the implementation of each action, but also:

- the laid down aims, the evolution of what is achieved and what still has to be done;
- the link between the action and the context of the common implementation of dimensions;
- the dissemination of results, etc.

This type of presentation could demonstrate the level of achievement of the action plan, the existing evidences, etc.

According to the analysis the following main conclusions could be made:

- all 11 planned actions in *dimension I “Ethical and Professional Aspects”* are implemented. It should be emphasized, that the *Ethical Code for Research at VFU*, created by a VFU team, is used as the basis for the development of the *National Ethic Code of Conduct for Carrying out Research*. The last one is still preparing by the Ministry of Education and Science.

- It is implemented all 5 actions in *dimension II “Recruitment”*. The VFU’s accession to the European network EURAXESS in 2014 is a part of implementation of this dimension as well. VFU hosted the *Euraxess Road Show 2015*⁴ on the 29th of October 2015. The attraction and recruitment of foreign researchers is still outlining as a major difficulty. The team of VFU has experience in work in international research groups, but till now there is no one recruited researcher. It is recognized as a weakness the lack of direct links from the VFU web site to the EURAXESS site and the web-sites of other scientific networks, universities and institutes as well. It is still forthcoming the hard work on this dimension with the using of the experience, gained during the years.

- There are 13 actions, mentioned in the action plan in *dimension III “Working Conditions”*. Ten of them have been adopted. The other three of them were not in priority in the self-assessment period. The reason is there are not recruited foreign researchers at VFU. The main efforts were focused on creation of internal university legislation for ethics and monitoring mechanisms of its application, and on develop of measures for protection of intellectual property. It was very

⁴ http://vfu.bg/en/news/_5617b98807cf21 ; <http://www.euraxess.bg/sites/default/files/science4/Programme%20VFU.pdf>

important to promote them among VFU academics. The developing of monitoring system is laid down in the new action plan 2016-2020.

- All five planned actions in *dimension IV “Training”* are implemented. It has to be noted that more than 120 persons from the university academic staff passed training courses to improve the skills for conducting of research, methodology of research, specialized English language, and digital competences. The implementation of this dimension was the reason to select and include VFU in the programme of the mutual learning seminar ‘**Sharing experience to better implement the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)**’, organized by European Commission, GD “Research&Innovation” and held on 9th of October 2014 in Brussels, Belgium.

All planned actions are implemented step-by-step and introduced on the required university levels. The aim of the university management is the implementation of all principles, laid down in the *European Charter for Researchers* and the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*, because the **HR logo is an important sign for the VFU which certifies the system of maintaining the European quality for education and research.**

As a conclusion, it could be summarized that:

- 33 from 36 planned activities in the action plan have been implemented in the period of self-assessment. Only 3 actions were identified as non-priority for the period and are included in the actualized action plan 2016-2020.

- As a result of the implementation of *dimension IV “Training”*, VFU was selected to present its experience and good practice on the mutual learning seminar ‘**Sharing experience to better implement the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)**’, organized by European Commission, GD “Research&Innovation” (9th of October 2014, Brussels, Belgium);

- VFU promote HR–logo on national level by participation in EURAXESS Roadshow 2014, which took place in Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” and in Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, and in EURAXESS Roadshow 2015, which was held at VFU;

- *Ethical Code for Research at VFU* was used as a good practice for the *National Ethic Code of Conduct for Carrying out Research*, developed by the Ministry of Education and Science;

- It is established an environment at VFU, which increases motivation of researchers and academic staff to participate in international scientific projects, to develop research career and to realize motilities.

The self-assessment report was written by a team consisting of Prof. Pavel Pavlov, PhD – Vice-Rector in Research and the team leader, Assoc. Prof. Rositsa Petkova-Slipets, Ph D – HR Logo Contact Person, Scientific Secretary of the Faculty of Architecture and Researcher, and Assoc. Prof. Velislava Nikolaeva, PhD – expert R&I and Researcher.

The report was adopted by the University Council in Research on April 6th 2016.

The report was adopted by the Academic Council of VFU on November 25th 2016.

Annex I Implementation of the action plan - overview of the most important outcomes

On the following pages a short overview of the implementation of the actions, laid down in the action plan and the level of their implementation is given. The information is not chronologically, but follows the arrangement in the action plan.

The levels of implementation are classified in two categories as follows – adopted actions and non-priority actions in the period 2012-2016.

a) Dimension I: *Ethical and Professional Aspects*

ADOPTED ACTIONS

№	Principle	Planned Actions	Responsible / Deadline	Evidences / Notices
1	Research Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Update VFU’s research priorities taking into account national, European and international research priorities 	Vice-Rector for Research Scientific Secretaries, Experts in Research, International Projects Office Deadline: Yearly, starting in 2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The research priorities have been updated (AC, Protocol №6/22.12.2011; AC, Protocol №3/29.11.2013; AC, Protocol №4/19.12.2014; AC, Protocol №7/30.04.2015). 2. The key strategic priority research areas have been defined (Board of Trustees, Protocol №9/28.06.2013). 3. A new conceptual model for transformation of research at VFU is adopted (AC, Protocol №3/29.11.2013). 4. Research is widespread in the Strategy plan for development of VFU in the period 2012-2017 (AC, Protocol №1/12.10.2012). 5. Research on actual problems is laid down in the Rector’s Mandatory programme (Board of Trustees, Protocol №2/30.04.2013). 6. A <i>New vision for market-oriented research and consulting activities</i> has been adopted at VFU (AC, Protocol №2/31.10.2014)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organise seminars and workshops for researchers on European good practices and research achievements 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. VFU was a host of the second Mutual Learning seminar, organized by the Research and Innovation DG of the European Commission, entitled "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers", 21-22.06.2012 2. Several seminars were organized in the period. Some of the most important of them are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - „<i>Sustainable Development of the European Universities</i>”, Prof. D.Sc. Anna Nedyalkova, 12.04.2012 - „<i>The World Tendencies and Good Practices in the Higher Education at XXI Century</i>”, Prof. D.Sc. Anna Nedyalkova, 19.02.2013 - „<i>Internationalization of the Higher Education – Institutional Strategy and Policy</i>”, Prof. D.Sc. Anna Nedyalkova, 18.05.2013

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seminar on <i>topical issues of micro- and macroeconomics</i>, Prof. G. Vredeveld and Prof. R. MacDonald, University of Cincinnati, USA, 17-19 December 2013 - <i>“Leadership in a Global Environment. Global Aspects of the International Economic Relations”</i>, Prof. G. Vredeveld, University of Cincinnati, USA, Prof. J. O’Neal, University of Delaware, Prof. R. MacDonald, University “Saint Claude”, USA, 27-29 May 2012 - <i>“From Science to Business”</i>, Prof. L. Melville, University of Geneva, Switzerland, 16 September 2013 - <i>4 seminars on actual topics</i>, organized by VFU’s Office for Technological Transfer – September – October 2014 <p>3. In the period, VFU was an organizer and a host of more than 10 international conferences and scientific seminars with the participation of foreign researchers.</p> <p>4. VFU is included in “ICT Cluster – Varna” (AC, Protocol №5/17.12.2015)</p>
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	<p>➤ Provide opportunities for conducting high level research through participation in international organisations and projects</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A team from VFU worked out a project proposal on theme <i>“Smart Strategies for Black Sea Research Potential Development - SmartSea”</i>, which was applied for the pilot programme ERA Chairs of EC “Research & Innovation” in May 2013. The establishment of a research group with representatives from Coventry University Enterprises, England, University of Twente, Nederland and University Politehnica of Bucharest, Romania was intended in it. 2. It was written and awarded the project proposal <i>“Development of an innovative model for transfer of knowledge and innovations between VFU “Chernorizets Hrabar” and Coventry University”</i>. 3. At the present, it is working on 12 projects (TEMPUS, 7FP ect.) with different international teams. 4. VFU is an active partner in international programme “Erasmus +” and thereby provides opportunities for collaboration with foreign research teams. 5. VFU has contracts with more than 30 foreign universities, institutes and scientific organizations for collaboration in research projects and tasks. 6. In 2015, VFU starts the virtual platform <i>Smart Future</i> for exchange of knowledge and information between researchers, experts and teachers
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				from around the world. (http://smartfuture.vfu.bg/)
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2	Ethical principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Analysis of the legislation in Bulgaria and other countries and Code of Ethics in Research 	<p>Human Resources Department, Faculty of Law</p> <p>Deadline: By the end of March 2012</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A working group was formed to analyze the Bulgarian legislation and to set up an Ethical Code (Rector's Order №1642/26.06.2012) 2. An <i>Ethical Code for Research at VFU</i> was developed. It was approved by the Academic Council (Protocol №11/17.08.2012). The code is already applied. It is published and publicly available on the VFU website. (http://ejournal.vfu.bg/bg/pdfs/et.kodeks.pdf) 3. The <i>Ethical Code for Research at VFU</i> was used as a good practice for the <i>National Ethic Code of Conduct for Carrying out Research</i>, developed by the Ministry of Education and Science. 4. VFU academic community is familiar with the <i>Ethical Code for Research at VFU</i> through University Counsel in Research meetings and seminars. 5. A <i>Commission for Academic Ethics</i> is established. Its purpose is to monitor the observance of the <i>Ethical Code for Research at VFU</i> and ethical norms for research, including plagiarism.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set up an Ethical Code and an Advisory Committee for Ethics in Research, which mission should be to give advices upon these issues, to raise awareness and, if it is necessary, to issue alerts. 	<p>Human Resources Department, Vice-Rector for Research, Scientific Secretaries</p> <p>Deadline: By the end of June 2012</p>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organise seminars for researchers to popularize the Ethical Code 	<p>University Committee for Ethics in Research</p> <p>Deadline: Yearly, starting May 2014</p>	
3	Professional responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monitoring on VFU research topics for their accordance to universities missions and priorities; ➤ Monitoring on research done at VFU about observance of ethical norms and stimulating the loyal researchers. ➤ Monitoring on research projects implementation and publication activities to avoid potential conflicts. ➤ Control the plagiarism done by Advisory Committee for Ethics in Research. 	<p>University Committee for Ethics in Research, Vice-Rector for Research, Scientific Secretaries</p> <p>Deadline: Starting – 2014</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The <i>Institute for Doctoral Education</i> at VFU and the <i>University Council in Research</i> perform monitoring on research topics and their compliance with the university scientific priorities. 2. A procedure for publishing of research production is established. It includes scientific peer review and subsequent text (grammar and spelling) editing. 3. A <i>Commission for Academic Ethics</i> is established. Its purpose is to monitor the observance of the <i>Ethical Code for Research at VFU</i> and ethical norms for research, including plagiarism.

4	Professional attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following of the established in VFU procedures and relations in research ➤ Inform permanently all researchers about the university legal framework in force 	<p>Vice-Rector for Research, Scientific Secretaries, Supervisors</p> <p>Deadline: Permanently during the year</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University Council in Research operates at VFU. It is the main academic body, which activity is to coordinate and control research. 2. The expert in R&I and faculties scientific secretaries organize, assist and support research activities in all university units. 3. It is established and operated an orderly system for development, application and implementation of scientific tasks and projects.
5	Contractual and legal obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Training on these issues (minimum information on intellectual property rights, ethical principles, etc.) for researchers and heads of departments should become obligatory; ➤ Monitoring on the implementation of the annual reports of researchers by the departments 	<p>Human Resources Department, Vice-Rector for Research, Scientific Secretaries</p> <p>Deadline: Yearly, starting July 2014</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Two seminars for acquainting researchers with <i>Ethical code for Research at VFU</i> and with ethical norms for research production were carried out (on 17th of March and on 16th of October 2015). 2. It has been developed and now is used a <i>System for the annual assessment of the VFU's academic staff</i> with a part <i>Annual assessment of Research</i>
6	Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthening the policy for financial, ethical and professional accountability while fulfilling of the research projects and tasks 	<p>Vice-Rector for Research</p> <p>Deadline: Permanent during the year</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annually, the reports (incl. financial) for the implementation of research projects and tasks by faculties are developed. 2. It is approved a <i>Process card for application, implementation and reporting of projects at VFU</i> (ordinance №5/16.01.2015) 3. The documentation about the implementation of projects is done and kept at „International Affairs and Projects” Office and Finance Department. 4. Since 2013 the financial policy for research is discussed by the Academic Counsel (AC, №4/20.12.2013, AC, №3/30.10.2015). 5. It is adopted a <i>Procedure for using the fund “Research” and fund “Internationalization” at VFU</i> (AC, №7/30.04.2015) 6. Research projects are classified according the type of funding and application procedures are regulated (AC №3/29.11.2013)
7	Good practice in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regular update the working practices according to national legislation; ➤ Control on the working environment and taking precautions for health and safety. ➤ Training to make acquainted with data protection and confidentiality protection requirements 	<p>Human Resources Department</p> <p>Deadline: Yearly, starting August 2014</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annually actualization of the research priorities in the university units (faculties and departments). 2. Briefings for safety at work are held periodically, according the Law for Health and Safety at Work. 3. Two seminars for acquainting researchers with <i>Ethical code for Research at VFU</i> and with ethical norms for research production were carried out (on 17th of March and on 16th of October 2015).

8	Dissemination, exploitation of results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keep up the established processes and initiatives allowing regular dissemination of scientific information through the available for researchers' mechanisms and tools 	<p>Vice-Rector for Research Technological Institute, Media Centre, Printing-house, Departments</p> <p>Deadline: Permanent during the year</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A bulletin with information about current national and international funding programmes for research is developed by the „International Affairs and Projects” Office each month and is disseminated to all faculties and departments in the university. 2. Information about upcoming conferences, scientific seminars and other research events is available in the university intranet system. 3. The university printing-house and the university e-Journal help to disseminate the scientific information; 4. Networks such as LinkedIn, ResearchGate and Euraxess are very well known and highly used by the university academic staff. 5. The university library provides access to full-text scientific databases as ScienceDirect, EBSCO, JSTOR, etc. 6. In 2015, VFU starts the virtual platform <i>Smart Future</i> for exchange of knowledge and information between researchers, experts and teachers from around the world. (http://smartfuture.vfu.bg/)
9	Public engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relate project topics and research subjects with business sector and interests of the local communities. ➤ Involve researchers in cooperation with business, local and state authorities. 	<p>Vice-Rector for Research, Branch trusteeships, Departments</p> <p>Deadline: Permanent during the year</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is developed a <i>Conception for Research</i>, which is approved by the Academic Council on 20th December 2013; 2. It has been adopted research priorities and a <i>New vision for market-oriented research and consulting activities</i> (AC, Protocol №2/31.10.2014) 3. Partnerships in the field of research and expert-consulting activities. Contracts for scientific service have been signed with the Municipality of Varna and with companies in the region and the country. 4. Seven branch trusteeships have been established and operated with the main aim to set scientific and applied tasks, needed in business. 5. Branch trusteeships meetings in professional fields were held to formulate specific scientific and applied tasks. (AC, №6/25.04.2014) 6. There are realized examinations, research and projects, commissioned by the business. 7. VFU is included in “ICT Cluster – Varna” (AC, Protocol №5/17.12.2015)
10	Non discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Update the VFU's legal framework to reflect the non-discrimination legislation 	<p>Human Resources Department</p> <p>Deadline: By the end of May 2012</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The VFU's legal framework was updated in 2012 (AC, №9/4.05.2012) and in 2013 (AC, №1/19.09.2013).

11	Evaluation/ appraisal system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Control on the information about research activities. ➤ Ensure transparency of the assessment results aiming at increase/improvement of quality of research. 	Departmental Assessment Committee Deadline: Yearly, starting in June 2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It has been introduced and now it is applied a system for annual assessment of research activity of the academic staff. 2. The academic staff is regularly appraised (according to the Bulgarian Law for Higher Education) with an accent on the research activity. 3. Annually, the academic staff plans and reports its research activity. 4. Monitoring and reporting the activities on research projects and tasks.
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b) *Dimension II: Recruitment*

ADOPTED ACTIONS

№	Principle	Planned Actions	Responsible Deadline	Evidences / Notices
1	Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction of a policy of international openness: increase number of foreign researchers recruited. ➤ Strengthening the policy regarding openness of the recruitment of international researchers. ➤ Strengthening the communication policy regarding the recruitment of international researchers via web site. 	Vice-Rector for Research, Human Resources Department Deadline: Permanent starting from 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A campaign for popularization of VFU's HR Logo is provided abroad and as a result contracts with representatives from Germany, Poland and Kazakhstan are signed for scientific work of their researchers. 2. Close collaboration with researchers from USA, Russia, Italy, Germany, Israel, England, etc. Master classes, workshops, joint projects and other activities are organized. 3. It is a fact, that there are not recruited foreign researchers. The reasons could be found in several directions: - Bulgaria is not an attractive scientific research destination; - less developed research infrastructure compared to Europe; - low salaries. 4. The virtual platform <i>Smart Future</i> allows communication and exchange of experience between researchers, experts, students and PhD-Students not only from VFU, but also from other Bulgarian and foreign universities. (http://smartfuture.vfu.bg/)

2	Selection /Code/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Definition of selection criteria rendering in particular practical experience, creativity and scientific interests of candidates. ➤ Participation of wide-ranging specialists from different sectors as members of the Selection Committees ➤ Widening opportunities for publishing advertisements in Internet not only on the university web-site, but also on the global web-based resources as the pan-European Researchers Mobility Portal, EURAXESS etc. ➤ Preparation of supervisors for foreign PhD-students and postdoctoral fellows and development of action plan for attracting foreign researchers 	<p>Vice-Rector for Research, Human Resources Department, Departments, Scientific Secretaries Technological Institute</p> <p>Deadline: Starting 2012, Continuously</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selection criteria for recruitment were developed. They are described in Ordinance #3 for Academic Staff. 2. Since 2014 VFU “Chernorizets Hrabar” is member of the European network EURAXESS. 3. Nearly 50 PhD-Students have been attracted to study at VFU for the self-assessment period. Their supervisors have gone language courses and seminars for enhance the quality of research.
3	Judging merit (Code)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Definition of wide-ranging criteria in selection procedures reflecting quantitatively and qualitatively candidates’ potential. ➤ Putting on appropriate weight of face-to-face interviews with candidates, where they will have the possibility to claim competences they have and results they have achieved, the equivalence of which will be assessed by the competent Selection Committee. 	<p>Vice-Rector for Research, Human Resources Department, Departments</p> <p>Deadline: By the end of 2012</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A system for evaluation of specific skills (as language competences, mobility, and digital competences etc.) is developed. 2. Conditions for training and developing the potential of the university academic staff are created.
4	Recognition of mobility experience /Code/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Change in the existing legal framework to include mobility as indicator for recruitment. ➤ Promotion of mobility as a part of researchers career and emphasize its importance and advancement at recruitment. 	<p>Vice-Rector for Research, Human Resources Department, Scientific Secretaries</p> <p>Deadline: by the end of 2012</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mobility is included as one of the basic criteria in the system for career development, which is an inducement to participate in mobility as well. 2. Regular information about the mobility opportunities, given by the „International Affairs and Projects” Office. 3. During the self-assessment period more than 15 academic staff mobility to exchange experience in foreign universities in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, etc. were realized.

5	Recognition of qualification /Code/	➤ Working out systematic criteria for recognition of previous academic and/or professional qualifications	Vice-Rector for Research, Human Resources Department Deadline: by the end of 2012	1. Selection criteria for recruitment were developed. They are described in Ordinance #3 for Academic Staff.
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NON-PRIORITARY ACTIONS (for the period of self-assessment 2012-2016)

№	Principle	Planned Actions	Responsible Deadline	Notices
1	Recruitment (Code)	➤ Post on VFU's web-site useful links to another Bulgarian or foreign universities, institutes or research organizations in order to improve opportunities for work abroad.	Vice-rector for Research, Human Resources Department, Departments, Technological Institute Deadline: Permanent. Starting from 2014	- There is no information about research activities on the VFU's web-site; - There is no link to the EURAXESS site.

c) Dimension III: Working Condition

ADOPTED ACTIONS

№	Principle	Planned Actions	Responsible Deadline	Evidences / Notices
1	Recognition of the profession	➤ Observation of the established system of quantitative and qualitative regulatory requirements at VFU, concerning the recognition of the professional skills, by the Selection Committees while selecting and recruiting researchers.	Human Resources Department Deadline: Permanent	1. Selection criteria for recruitment were developed. They are described in Ordinance #3 for Academic Staff.

2	Research environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improvement of the university experimental research base. ➤ Establishment of research collaboration network on national and international level, including remote one. ➤ Effective functioning of the System of competitive project financing. 	<p>Vice-Rector for Research, Deans, Heads of Departments, Scientific Secretaries</p> <p>Deadline: Starting in 2012 and continuously</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The work environment in the university is fully renovated; 2. New research laboratories were established and the existing laboratories were renovated with own and external financing; 3. An <i>Office for Technological Transfer</i> was established and operates at VFU “Chernorizets Hrabar”. 4. The number of research tasks, worked in international teams, is increased. It has been worked on 15 international, 7 national and 3 regional projects in the period of self-assessment. 5. The distance contact forms with foreign universities are developed. The start was with the Coventry University, England. 6. It is adopted a <i>Procedure for using the fund “Research” and fund “Internationalization” at VFU</i> (AC, №7/30.04.2015) 7. The virtual platform <i>Smart Future</i> allows communication and exchange of experience between researchers, experts, students and PhD-Students not only from VFU, but also from other Bulgarian and foreign universities. (http://smartfuture.vfu.bg/)
3	Working condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implementation of the established systems of flexible working time and assessment of research activity at VFU 	<p>Human Resources Department</p> <p>Deadline: Permanent</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It has been developed and now is used a <i>System for the annual assessment of the VFU’s academic staff</i> that allows variety levels of engagement in lecturer, research and administrative activities (<i>Ordinance #3</i>, Instruction #5)
4	Funding and salaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Information campaigns for funding opportunities for researchers; ➤ Stimulation of researchers for participation in national and EU projects; ➤ Establishment of university research fund for supporting the researchers’ projects. 	<p>Vice-rector for Research, International Projects Office, Deans, Scientific Secretaries, PhD Supervisors</p> <p>Deadline: Start in 2014 and permanent</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monthly bulletins, compiled by the „International Affairs and Projects” Office, with information about present-day national and international funding programmes for research are disseminated to all faculties and departments at the university; 2. Participation in national and international projects is included as a criterion in the <i>System for the annual assessment of the VFU’s academic staff</i> and in the <i>University appraise procedure</i> (according to the Bulgarian Law for Higher Education). 3. It was founded a fund “Research”, which main purpose is to support research projects of researchers from VFU. 4. It is adopted a <i>Procedure for using the fund “Research” and fund “Internationalization” at VFU</i> (AC, №7/30.04.2015) 5. A <i>New vision for market-oriented research and consulting activities</i> has been adopted at VFU (AC, Protocol №2/31.10.2014)

5	Gender balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Analysis of the existing state of gender balance at all researchers university staff; ➤ Implementation of a monitoring system in this area; ➤ Promotion of a policy of equal opportunities at recruitment and working condition for female and male researchers to achieve better gender balance. 	<p>Human Resources Department</p> <p>Deadline: Until May 2012 and after that continuously</p>	<p>1. An analysis about the gender balance of the academic staff was made.</p>
6	Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preparation of strategy for career development of researchers in accordance to VFU's scientific and research priorities. 	<p>Vice-Rector for Research, Deans, Scientific Secretaries</p> <p>Deadline: Till September 2012</p>	<p>1. A working group was formed to develop a <i>Strategy for Career Development of the Academic Staff at VFU</i> (Rector's Order №1641/26.06.2012)</p> <p>2. <i>Strategic Frame for Career Development of the Academic Staff at VFU 2012-2017</i> was developed. It was approved by the Academic Council (Protocol №3/21.12.2012).</p> <p>3. There are developed a <i>System for Career Development of the Academic Staff at VFU</i> and <i>Methodology</i> of its application.</p> <p>4. The research priority areas have been updated (AC, Protocol №6/22.12.2011; AC, Protocol №3/29.11.2013; AC, Protocol №7/30.04.2015).</p>
7	Value of mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Taking better account of mobility in terms of career and appraisal, and particularly inter sectoral mobility (between the public and private sector) and interdisciplinary mobility; ➤ Stimulation of researchers for participation in national and international mobility; ➤ Provision of conditions for mobility of foreign researchers in VFU. 	<p>Vice-rector for Research, International Projects Office, Scientific Secretaries</p> <p>Deadline: Start in 2012 and permanent</p>	<p>1. Mobility is included as one of the basic criteria in the system for career development, which is an inducement to participate in mobility as well.</p> <p>2. Regular information about the mobility opportunities, given by the „International Affairs and Projects” Office.</p> <p>3. More than 27 foreign professors and researchers from Italy, Latvia, Russia, Slovak Republic and other countries have made their mobility at VFU in the period 2012-2016.</p>
8	Access to career advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Extending the functions of the university Career Center in direction to work with PhD-students and researchers. 	<p>Career Center</p> <p>Deadline: Start in 2014 and permanent</p>	<p>1. University Career Center expanded its database of employers and graduates of VFU. Database is available for PhD-students and researchers, enabling them to find work and cooperation.</p>

9	Teaching	➤ Observation of teaching activities in order not to disturb the research career	Front Office, sector Planning, Head of departments Deadline: Permanent	2. It has been developed and now is used a <i>System for the annual assessment of the VFU's academic staff</i> that allows variety levels of engagement in lecturer, research and administrative activities (Ordinance #3 , Instruction #5).
10	Complaints/appeals	➤ Analysis of the type of complaints/appeals until the present days and establish a system to prevent such conflicts through the creation of workshops for the exchange of best practices.	Human Resources department Deadline: By end of 2014	There are no complaints about incorrectly recruitment or failure to comply the recruitment criteria.

NON-PRIORITY ACTIONS (for the period of self-assessment 2012-2016)

№	Principle	Planned Actions	Responsible Deadline	Notices
1	Stability and permanence of employment	➤ Informing fixed-term researchers about implementation and abiding the social security principles for the period of their employment	Human Resources Department Deadline: Permanent	The action is not in priority, because there is no one recruited researcher in the university.
2	Intellectual property rights	➤ Development of a monitoring system in the field of intellectual property rights and co-authorship.	Faculty of Law, Technological Institute Deadline: Till September 2014	The monitoring system is still not developed, because the main priority during the self-assessment period was creation of internal university legislation for ethics and intellectual property and its promotion among VFU academics.
3	Co-authorship	➤ Development of a monitoring system in the field of intellectual property rights and co-authorship	Faculty of Law, Technological Institute Deadline: Till September 2014	

d) *Dimension IV: Training*

ADOPTED ACTIONS

№	Principle	Planned Actions	Responsible Deadline	Evidences / Notices
1	Relation with supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Observation of the performance of obligations of PhD-supervisors; ➤ Training of researchers in contemporary teaching methods. 	Vice-Rector for Research, Scientific Secretaries, PhD Supervisors Deadline: Start in 2014 and permanent	1.It has been introduced and now it is applied a system for annual assessment of research activity of the academic staff. 2.PhD-students are annually evaluated (according to the Bulgarian Law for Higher Education), which is an assessment of the PhD-supervisors as well. 3.More than 120 persons from the university academic staff, including PhD-supervisors, passed training courses in methodology of research, advanced educational strategies and technologies, modern web-technologies, modern technical equipment for auditorium work, ICT tools for presenting etc. 4. The research infrastructure (incl. laboratories, seminar rooms, etc.) is modernized.
2	Supervision and managerial duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improvement of the quality of supervision, especially of young researchers. ➤ Observation of performance of obligations of PhD-supervisors. ➤ Training researchers in contemporary teaching methods. 	Vice-rector for Research, Scientific Secretaries, PhD Supervisors Deadline: Start in 2012 and permanent	1.It has been introduced and now it is applied a system for annual assessment of research activity of the academic staff. 2.PhD-students are annually evaluated (according to the Bulgarian Law for Higher Education), which is an assessment of the PhD-supervisors as well. 3.More than 120 persons from the university academic staff, including PhD-supervisors, passed training courses in methodology of research, advanced educational strategies and technologies, modern web-technologies, modern technical equipment for auditorium work, ICT tools for presenting etc. 4.The research infrastructure (incl. laboratories, seminar rooms, etc.) is modernized. 5. More than 150 Bulgarian and foreign PhD-Students have been enrolled during the self-assessment period. Nearly 60 of them have been already acquired the educational and scientific degree “Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)”.

3	Continuing professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of a strategy for career development of researchers in accordance with VFU's scientific and research priorities. ➤ Stimulation of doctoral candidates to participate in conferences, workshops, training courses etc. with the main aim to improve their skills and to prepare them for professional life. 	Deans, Scientific Secretaries, Career Center Deadline: By September 2012	1.A working group was formed to develop a Strategy for Career Development of the Academic Staff at VFU (Rector's Order №1641/26.06.2012) 2. Strategic Frame for Career Development of the Academic Staff at VFU 2012-2017 was developed. It was approved by the Academic Council (Protocol №3/21.12.2012). 3. There are developed a System for Career Development of the Academic Staff at VFU and Methodology of its application. 4. It was adopted a <i>Conception for integrating students to research at Faculty of International Economics and Administration.</i> (AC, Protocol №4/20.12.2013) 5. The research priority areas have been updated (AC, Protocol №6/22.12.2011 and AC, Protocol №3/29.11.2013 AC, Protocol №7/30.04.2015).
4	Access to research training and continuous development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adequate planning of research activity to increase researchers' skills and competences for their professional development. ➤ Stimulation of doctoral candidates to participate in conferences, workshops, training courses etc. with the main aim to improve their skills and to prepare them for professional life. ➤ Monitoring of career development of PhDs after their completed their education; 	Scientific Secretaries, PhD Supervisors, Career Center Deadline: Start in January 2012 and permanent	1. It has been developed and now is used a <i>System for the annual assessment of the VFU's academic staff</i> that allows variety levels of engagement in lecturer, research and administrative activities (<i>Ordinance #3, Instruction #5</i>). 2. Annually, the academic staff plans and reports its research activity. 3. PhD-students participate in the conferences, organized by VFU, without paying fees, which is an inducement for them as well. PhD-students are a part of the university academic staff whereat they could use all opportunities for training and participation in seminars, which full-time lecturers have. 4. A part of PhD-graduates are recruited at VFU as lecturers. The others acquire the PhD-degree to develop professional career in the economical sector, in which they work.
5	Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improvement of quality of supervision, especially of young researchers. ➤ Observation of performance of obligations of PhD-supervisors. ➤ Application of advanced training methods in doctoral education by supervisors. 	Scientific Secretaries, PhD Supervisors Deadline: start in 2012 and permanent	1. It has been introduced and now it is applied a system for annual assessment of research activity of the academic staff. 2. PhD-students are annually evaluated (according to the Bulgarian Law for Higher Education), which is an assessment of the PhD-supervisors as well. 3. More than 120 persons from the university academic staff, including PhD-supervisors, passed training courses in methodology of research, advanced educational strategies and technologies, modern web-technologies, modern technical equipment for auditorium work, ICT tools for presenting etc.