

# **EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA**

## **RESEARCH STRATEGY**

**2017-2020**

## EUT in its second decennial

In its second decennial, EUT aims to consolidate its identity as the main centre of knowledge production in Albania and to further its transformation from an institution of higher education focused almost exclusively on teaching to an **elite research entity** whose academic output is respected and contributes to the improvement of teaching and student experience. To achieve these goals this strategy enumerates and details EUT's objectives and instruments to **structure, advance, standardise** and **internationalise** its academic research.

### 1. Vision

- 1.1 EUT aims to transform itself into a hub of expertise in the field of social sciences, humanities, legal studies, economy, and information technology. EUT's further aim is to become a *centre of excellence* for publishing high-quality research with a potentially important contribution in the national and regional policy debate. UET's objective is to fulfil these aims through collaborations with credible national and international partners.
- 1.2 Academic research at EUT is also, as importantly, undertaken towards perfecting teaching quality and student experience by improving the range and depth of expertise the faculty possess and thereby transferring knowledge to students and acquainting them at an early stage with the research process.
- 1.3 UET will erect and continuously perfect an appropriate research infrastructure enabling timely and quality research. This supportive infrastructure will contribute towards increasing the research output and cooperation with other research institutions by relying on funding from public and private entities and other international partners.
- 1.4 This research strategy reflects the university's philosophy and its research objectives. The strategy's implementation is based upon four elements: implementation mechanisms, which are development by the departments; integrated research plans, which are developed by the deans' offices; monitoring and evaluation, which is directed by the Academic Senate; and financing of uni- and multi-disciplinary projects, which is led by the Board for the Financing of Academic Research.

### 2. Context and Principles

- 2.1 The Strategy is based on the EUT statute, law 80/2015 "On higher education and scientific research in the institutions of higher education in the Republic of Albania," in line with the other strategies the university has approved, and builds upon the most current best practices (nationally and internationally), aiming to improve the university's reputation and increase its research and academic status.
- 2.2 EUT encourages and undertakes sustainable scientific research in line with the challenges faced by Albania aiming to impact the national research agenda by demonstrating the practical benefits of contemporary research that is based upon sound methodology and modern technology.

### 3. Strategic Objectives

Through scientific research EUT aims to:

- 3.1 Achieve and consolidate a recognition, regarding its teaching practices and research output, as one of the best universities in Albania and the Western Balkan region;
  - 3.1.1 Become the main centre for knowledge production on developments in the Albanian sphere in the Western Balkan region;

- 3.2 Aid in the advancement of knowledge and in the perfection of professional practice with the goal of impacting social and economic development through knowledge transfer beyond the academic community towards public and private institutions as well as interest groups;
- 3.3 Further perfect teaching and academic development at all levels so that students can experience a truly challenging and simultaneously welcoming academic environment;
- 3.4 Create a stimulating research environment for both students and academics alike through:
  - 3.4.1 The standardisation and internationalisation of academic research;
  - 3.4.2 Structuring a coherent system of research and certification for the academic staff;
  - 3.4.3 Continuous trainings and periodic certifications for the academic staff regarding their ability to publish original scientific knowledge;
  - 3.4.4 The further institutionalisation of the Grand Research Projects (GRP) and the research units in order to increase interdisciplinary research, maximise the use of human resources, and provide quality services to third parties interested in the scientific output provided by EUT.
- 3.5 Project and expand its reputation as a national centre of academic excellence.

#### 4. Enabling Sustainable Academic Research

- 4.1 To engage in sustainable academic research it is necessary to develop *implementing structures* that engage in empirical research and *support structures* that plan, lead and monitor research at EUT. Recruitment of high quality staff, their promotion and continuous development are necessary conditions for undertaking sustainable research, which will be the main focus of the university's implementing and support structures.
- 4.2 The strategic direction of academic research is set by the Vice Rector for Academic Research and Quality Assurance in cooperation with the Office of Academic Research and Doctoral Studies and the Academic Senate, which design, monitor, and evaluate the university's strategy through a medium and long-term perspective. These offices are responsible for the periodic update of the strategy and periodic gap analyses and action plans to implement it.
- 4.3 The management of academic research is characterised by:
  - 4.3.1 The implementation of academic research by the university's main units (departments and faculties);
  - 4.3.2 The required research infrastructure, which supports the main units and is further augmented by support structures such as the library, laboratories, and high-quality research staff capable of gaining research funding;
  - 4.3.3 The high level of academic staff who are provided continuous training and professional development;
  - 4.3.4 Institutional cooperation inside and outside EUT, through which new cooperation initiatives are discovered to further the effective use of funds and infrastructure;
  - 4.3.5 The overall regulatory framework of research at EUT, which enables the academic staff to undertake research following the best contemporary practices while following ethical standards and academic honesty during the research process.
- 4.4 Continuous development and improvement of mechanisms for the management of research and performance evaluation, by being mindful of progress in analogous institutions. The clear set up of the *Indicators of Academic Research Performance* is in line with this approach.

## 5. Implementation of Strategic Objectives

5.1 *Strategic Planning* at EUT is based upon a cyclical process, which begins with the setup of *Strategic Research Objectives* and proceeds with the selection - based on quality, scientific rigour and academic pertinence - of the research projects the university funds.

5.2 *Indicators of Academic Research Performance (IARP)* are developed to evaluate the implementation of EUT Strategic Research Objectives, which derive from this Strategy. The IARP is included in this strategy as an appendix.

5.3 *The Integrated Plans of Academic Research*, with well-delineated temporal limits, are designed with clear attribution of responsibilities and obligations for each of the offices involved in the research process from the academic units all the way to the administrative support offices. These Plans must delineate the financial cost also.

5.4 The *Centre for Research*, based on the EUT Statute and law 80/2015 “On higher education and scientific research in the institutions of higher education in the Republic of Albania,” assists the university’s research activities and organises methodological and professional development trainings for the academic staff in cooperation with national and international partners.

## 6. The Structure of Academic Research and Training/Development at EUT

Academic Research and Training/Development at EUT		
Research & Publications	Training and Certification	Research & Development
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grand Research Projects (GRP)                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Research Units (5-7 members)</li> <li>b. Individual Research Projects</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Publication Review Board of EUT Press</li> <li>3. Polis Journal</li> <li>4. Economicus Journal</li> <li>5. ASD Conference                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Proceedings</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Philosophical Annuals</li> <li>7. Dardha Symposiums on Liberalism</li> <li>8. Razma Literature Days</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Early Researcher Certificate</li> <li>2. Junior Researcher Certificate</li> <li>3. Senior Researcher Certificate</li> <li>4. Certificate in Research Methodology</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Pashko European Institute</i>: research grants and international scientific cooperation</li> <li>2. Office of Project Development and International Collaboration</li> <li>3. EUT Board of Financing for Research Activities</li> </ol>

## 7. Research Projects

7.1 **Grand Research Projects (GRP)** represent the main organising principle of research at EUT, are led by senior researchers, and encourage interdisciplinary research.

### 7.1.1 GRP and EUT:

- a. *Politics, Communication and Society*
- b. *From Big Data to Big Business*
- c. *New Growth Agenda*
- d. *Development Through Education*
- e. *Law: Between Efficiency and Justice*
- f. *Law and Public Institutions in Transformation*
- g. *Risk: The Game all Players Play*

**7.2** GRPs are the main instrument through which EUT directs and generates scientific research and academic publications. GRPs encourage interdisciplinary research, facilitate the coordination of research and the outreach to third parties interested in acquiring and using the university's research output. The GRPs are also an important mechanism for internal quality control of the academic output since, among others, they also decide on the papers that are accepted in EUT's yearly conference *Albanian Studies Days* and orient and assist junior research regarding their individual research projects.

**7.3** Housed under the GRPs, the research units are the main mechanism through which the objectives of the GRPs are materialised through empirical studies, which – simultaneously – fulfil the objectives of the GRPs and are in coherence with the overall goals of the researchers' individual research projects. The research units are also the main instrument, which welcomes and 'houses' incoming doctoral students who undertake research that fits the units' main research objectives and interests. Research units, being attached to the GRPs and incorporating doctoral candidates, develop research projects that cannot be shorter than three years.

**7.4** This organisational structure enables interdisciplinary research and simultaneously 'orients' EUT researchers towards those areas that are important to EUT and its partners.

## 8. Academic Journals Polis and Economicus

**8.1** The academic journals Polis and Economicus are the main instruments through which EUT 'communicates' with the outside academic world. EUT aims to transform both Polis and Economicus into the Albanian '**journals of record**' in the field of social sciences, humanities and economic and development studies respectively. The university aims to, within five years after the approval of this strategy, submit the journals for international ranking and twin them international prestigious academic publishers.

**8.2** Polis and Economicus serve to **1)** researchers and academics to publish original research articles and **2)** EUT to consolidate its emerging research identity.

**8.3** The journals are published **twice a year** and the working language is English. The articles undergo a rigorous double blind peer review and have to uphold well-delineated structural and scientific standards.

**8.4** Specifically:

**8.4.1** The Journals have dedicated web pages in which its articles are accessible to the research community free of charge.

**8.4.2** The journals undergo a continuous indexing process to increase their credibility, visibility, accessibility and prepare them for evaluation by the ranking services.

## **9. Publication Review Board of EUT Press**

- 9.1 EUT Press is one of the most successful mechanisms through which EUT has enriched academic publications in Albania by translating 'classical' works and publishing original academic research of emerging and established Albanian researchers. Due to the work done by EUT Press, Albanian research is richer and Albanian students have more opportunities to access and engage with up to date research.
- 9.2 Aiming to become the most trusted publishing logo for academic research in Albania, UET Press will have (by 2018) a dedicated review board that will undertake a preliminary evaluation of every proposal for the publication of original scientific research. The review board aims to establish and maintain a well-delineated ideational and methodological perspective and further strengthen the publication criteria for books holding the EUT logo.

## **10. Albanian Studies Days (ASD) Conference**

- 10.1 EUT aims to consolidate the ASD as the 'conference of record' on developments in the Albanian sphere in the Western Balkans.
- 10.2 For ASD to become the most prestigious academic conference in Albania it must be identified as such by the academic community and apply the following standards:
  - 10.2.1 The Conference's working language is English.
  - 10.2.2 Poster presentations are not allowed.
  - 10.2.3 Conference articles are submitted one week before the conference and uploaded onto the ASD webpage accessible to all conference participants.
  - 10.2.4 ASD has a dedicated web page in which all the conference papers are uploaded.
  - 10.2.5 For every presentation there is a discussant who presents a succinct analytical review of the presentation.
- 10.3 The totality of these standards will give ASD a strong scientific profile, which will further EUT's profile and facilitate the internationalisation of academic research at EUT.

## **11. Philosophical Annuals, Dardha Symposiums on Liberalism and Razma Literature Days**

- 11.1 EUT has established a new standard for its openness towards the 'outside world' for the exchange of ideas and for shaping the public debate on issues of cardinal importance to Albania. The Philosophical Annuals, Dardha Symposiums on Liberalism and Razma Literature Days are some of the most important venues through which the university aims to reintroduce philosophy into the public discourse, recreate a space for literature in universities, and enable the spread of liberal thought in Albania where statism and centralism are often the default reactions towards economic and political challenges.
- 11.2 EUT aims to further consolidate these activities and transform them into full scientific activities. From 2017 these meetings have become national scientific conferences where participants submit full papers, which then can be published in a proceedings book or in special issues in cooperation with Polis and Economicus.

## **12. Training & Certification**

- 12.1 EUT's academic staff must be able to produce original scientific knowledge and publish it in journals with impact factor. The university expects that its lecturers who have degrees of PhDs

and above must publish at least one article every two years in a journal with impact factor ranked by Thomson Reuters or Thomson Reuters Scimago Journal & Country Rank (SCOPUS, Elsevier B.V.).

- 12.2 From this perspective, in cooperation with the *Centre for Methodology and Research*, periodic one day or longer trainings (professional development and research) will be offered to increase the staff's ability to undertake independent research that concludes with articles published in journals with impact factor. The trainings will be divided into four categories: (1) Trainings for doctoral candidates; (2) Trainings for Junior Researchers; (3) Trainings for Senior Researchers; (4) Methodological Trainings.

#### 12.2.1 Trainings for Doctoral candidates – Certificate of Beginning

Besides supporting doctoral candidates with a structured PhD programme, which is essential or their methodological training, EUT will offer several 1-day trainings to enable doctoral students' to become successful researchers and contributors to academic life.

The trainings are based on material prepared by VITAE (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/about-us/our-history>), which is a company many higher education institutions in the UK rely on. Their materials and trainings will be adopted to the needs and realities of EUT.

1. Getting Started;
2. The first 90 days and the next 90 days;
3. Writing like a scientist;
4. Accessing, assessing, and analysing data;
5. Structuring a PhD thesis

#### 12.2.2 Trainings Junior Researchers – Certificate of Junior Research

Moving from being a PhD candidate into a full time researcher is one of the most delicate steps in one's academic career and therefore must be administered very carefully. The first years after the completion of the PhD researchers need special support and continuous trainings from their institutions in order to become integral parts of the academic staff, contribute to their departments, and publish in ranked academic outlets.

To achieve these goals, EUT will offer its junior researchers trainings prepared by VITAE (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/about-us/our-history>), which is a company many higher education institutions in the UK rely on. Their materials and trainings will be adopted to the needs and realities of EUT.

1. The engaging researcher
2. Enhancing professional effectiveness
3. Managing the academic career
4. Publish or perish

#### 12.2.3 Trainings for Senior Researchers – How to Lead a Research Team

As leaders of the GRPs and most research units, senior researchers are a key element for the advancement and standardisation of research at EUT and for the supervision and continuous training of junior researchers housed in the research units. Therefore, the training of senior researchers in the latest methods of collaborative research is of special importance

for the advancement of academic research at EUT.

#### 12.2.4 Methodological Trainings – Certificate of Methodology

The Achilles' heel for Albanian researchers and those working at EUT is scientific methodology. Most of the publications in Albania do not fulfil the required methodological standards to be published in journals with impact factor. Therefore, the methodological trainings aim to address these limitations and provide the staff the required practical knowledge to be successful researchers.

The trainings will be organised as non-formal seminars providing participants new skills for undertaking empirical research in social sciences, humanities, development studies and economics. The goal of the trainings will be to enable the research staff at EUT to rely on a commonly agreed set of rules for explaining social phenomena, critically evaluate the research design of peers, and to be able to write articles, which – at a minimum – can be accepted for review by journals with impact factor.

### 13. Research, Development and Technological Transfer

- 13.1 Research undertaken at EUT must not only follow international standards, but it must also be part of international research networks in Europe and beyond. From this perspective, the Pashko European Institute, and the Office of Project Development and International Collaboration are key instruments for the further opening of EUT towards third parties in order to gain increasing international funding for research and capacity building. Staff training, staff exchange, and participation in international research networks is the most effective way for the standardisation and internationalisation of research at EUT.
- 13.2 Besides its intrinsic value, every academic research holds (potentially) an extrinsic value, which can be monetarised in cooperation with third parties interested in it. From this perspective, the Office of Project Development and International Collaboration will serve as the bridge towards the business world so that, where possible, EUT research output can be put to the service of the business community in Albania.
- 13.3 Lastly, a key component of research and technological transfer is quality assurance and the certification of the scientific output of the academic staff. This process will be undertaken by the Board for the Financing of Academic Research, which evaluates the quality of the academic output, its potential to serve third parties, and to identify the limitations that necessitate staff training.

### 14. Financing and Resources

- 14.1 Research activity at EUT is financed through a two-tiered system: internal funding and external donations/grants/funds. EUT allocates its funds selectively to its faculties so that they undertake research that is in line with the university's goal to become a *centre of expertise* for academic research.
- 14.2 EUT's main internal funding will be directed towards the recruitment of researchers with international prestige, the support of young researchers and those in the middle of their career in order to have a balanced research team that can also engage in high-quality teaching.
- 14.3 EUT will rely heavily on the Office of Project Development and International Collaboration for gaining outside financing in order to widen and professionalise its interdisciplinary research portfolio. By becoming part of international consortiums, research networks, and EU-funded

research projects EUT can fulfil a number of goals such as internationalisation, increased academic output and improvement of the academic staff's ability to engage in high-quality research publishable in ranked academic outlets.

APPROVED BY UET ACADEMIC SENATE

## **CODE: G.I.11/ INDICATORS FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH PERFORMANCE**

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EUT's indicators for the measurement of academic research output are an integral part of a system designed for the objective measurement of academic outputs that impact the institution's reputation and the specific sectors to which they contribute. This system aims to combine a number of goals:

### **I. MAIN OBLIGATIONS**

Publications measured in this category aim to increase the quality of academic output by giving particular weight to publications in journals ranked in Scopus and Thomson & Reuters and books and book chapters published by reputable international publishing houses. As importantly, projects commissioned by EEI have an important value for encouraging academic staff to provide expertise to third parties under the EEI logo.

### **II. PRESENTATIONS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

The second category aims to measure and encourage the academic staff's engagement with the academic community where he/she is expected to contribute towards the advancement of scientific knowledge.

### **III. PROJECTS COMMISSIONED BY EUT AND PARTNERS**

The third category aims to encourage the academic staff's engagement in projects managed by the Office of Project Development and International Collaboration and/or EUT partners. These projects are financed by third parties, and in some cases by EUT, and their implementation follows the requests of the donor.

### **IV. EXPERTISE FOR THIRD PARTIES**

The fourth and final group aims to encourage and measure the academic staff's engagement with the non-academic community outside EUT as a proxy for projecting and expanding EUT's reach in the professional community and across the Albanian media spectrum.

The indicators for the measurement of academic output aim to assist EUT academic staff in planning and carrying out the yearly research activities in fulfilment of his or her contractual obligations to EUT as it regards teaching, academic qualifications and advancement of academic ranks, and research. These indicators aim to encourage the staff to engage in high-quality research that increases the university's profile while simultaneously increasing outside funding through which both the institution and the researchers can benefit. At the end of every academic year, all academic staff have to report regarding their academic output and then a follow up meeting is organised by the Office of Research and Doctoral Studies, which then determines whether the required obligations have been met and the second instalment of the research grant can be disbursed.

#### **Notes:**

- 1. Under the category MAIN OBLIGATIONS the academic staff must fulfil at least one of its elements.*
- 2. Surplus points under any category are transferred in the succeeding academic year.*
- 3. Surplus teaching load can be converted by following this coefficient: 4 teaching hours = 1 point.*
- 4. For co-authored articles the points are divided by the number of authors except for when the co-authors are members of the same EUT research unit.*
- 5. For all contract disbursements under point III that are offered by EUT or EUT partners, the payment is divided as follows: 50% in favour of the academic personnel and 50% in favour of EUT.*
- 6. For all contract disbursements under point III and IV that are won by the academic staff member independently of EUT structures, the payment is divided as follows: 75% in favour of the lecturer and 25% in favour of EUT.*
- 7. Payments in favour of EUT, as detailed in points 5 and 6 above, are deducted from the second allotment of the research grant.*

**INDICATORS FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH PERFORMANCE**

No.	Obligation/Output	Points
<b>I</b>	<b>MAIN OBLIGATIONS</b>	
1	Project initiated/commissioned by EEI	25
2	Original scientific article published in a journal ranked in <b>Scopus</b>	25
3	Original scientific article published in a journal ranked in <b>Thomson &amp; Reuters</b>	50
4	Chapter in edited book (published by reputable international publishing houses[1])	25
5	Book (published by reputable international publishing houses [2])	75
<b>II</b>	<b>Presentations and Other Publications</b>	
1	Original scientific article published in EUT journals (Polis and Economicus)	15
2	Published book reviews (EUT Press or otherwise)	5
3	Peer reviews to articles under review for EUT journals	2.5
4	Presentation in EUT national conference	5
5	Presentation in EUT international conference	10
6	Scientific book published by Albanian publishing house	50
7	Academic text book in Albanian	50
8	Translation of scientific book	20
9	Editing of scientific book	10
10	Original scientific article published in indexed journals	10
11	Publication in national conference proceedings	5
12	Publication in international conference proceedings	15
13	Peer reviewer for international scientific journals in OECD countries	5
<b>III</b>	<b>PROJECTS COMMISSIONED BY EUT AND PARTNERS</b>	
	Project commissioned by the Office for project Development and International Collaboration	
1	Write up of concept notes and assistance for project applications	5
2	Engagement as project coordinator (1 working day in the project = 2 points)	2/day
3	Engagement as project member/expert (1 working day in the project = 1 point)	1/day
4	Consulting for EUT Consulting & other EUT partners (1 working day = 1 point)	1/day
<b>IV</b>	<b>EXPERTISE FOR THIRD PARTIES</b>	
<b>a</b>	<b>Consulting and expertise for Third Parties</b>	
1	Consulting and expertise for national organisations	15
2	Consulting and expertise for international organisations	20
3	Project director for academic regional project	20
4	Project director for academic international project (OECD)	25
5	Organiser/lead of session/panel in national/regional conference	5
6	Organiser/lead of session/panel in European/international conference	10
7	Membership in academic/scientific/professional national board	7
8	Membership in academic/scientific/professional international board	10
9	Member of PhD jury in Albania (outside EUT)	5
10	Member of PhD jury outside Albania	7
11	External PhD examiner (outside EUT)	5
12	Chairman of Steering Board	15
13	Member of Steering Board	10
14	Guest lecturer in Albanian/regional university	5
15	Guest lecturer in Western university (OECD)	10
<b>b</b>	<b>Mediation (only professional appearances not political opining)</b>	
1	Media articles in non-scientific outlets	2.5
2	Appearances in visual media (professional expertise)	2.5
3	Other materials/activities deemed reasonable by the evaluating committee	

The minimum number of points required by members of the academic staff per category:

Doctor/PhD	50 points
Prof. Asoc. Dr	75 points
Prof. Dr	100 points

bulevardi: Gjergj Fishta, (ish npv nr.2)  
tel: 068 20 16 616  
info@uet.edu.al  
www.uet.edu.al

