



National Academy of
Theatre and Film Arts
Kr. Sarafov

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National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts “Krastyo Sarafov”

HRS4R GAP ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts “Krastyo Sarafov” (NATFA) is Bulgaria’s leading higher education institution in the fields of theatre, film, screen arts, and creative practice. As a public higher education institution with a strong artistic and academic tradition, NATFA integrates education, artistic practice, and research as interconnected and mutually reinforcing dimensions of its mission.

Research at NATFA is predominantly practice-based, encompassing artistic research, scholarly research in the arts and humanities, and interdisciplinary work at the intersection of arts, technology, and society. Research activities are undertaken primarily by teaching academic staff and doctoral candidates in accordance with the national legislative framework governing higher education, academic careers, and research. Although NATFA is not formally organised as a dedicated research institution, it maintains a sustained and nationally significant research profile. A substantial proportion of Bulgaria's advanced research in theatre and film studies is produced by the Academy's academic staff and disseminated through its peer-reviewed and indexed publications, including the NATFA Yearbook and the annual Research Bulletins, which are accessible through the institutional digital library and international databases such as EBSCO and CEEOL.

NATFA’s engagement with the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) reflects a strategic commitment to strengthening research careers in the arts, improving researchers’ working conditions and career-development opportunities across all career stages, aligning institutional policies and practices with the European Charter for Researchers (2023) and the HR Excellence in Research process, and embedding the values of excellence, academic integrity, transparency, equality, inclusion, and sustainability throughout its research environment.

The Academy approaches the HRS4R process not as a compliance exercise but as a strategic framework for institutional development, supporting organisational learning, evidence-based reflection, and continuous improvement. Particular attention is given to the specific characteristics of scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research, the hybrid nature of research careers within the cultural and creative sectors, and the national regulatory framework within which NATFA operates.

This Gap Analysis represents NATFA's first comprehensive institutional assessment of its alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Drawing upon institutional documentation, stakeholder consultation, and qualitative evidence, it identifies both established strengths and areas requiring further development. Many of the Academy's strengths have developed through established academic practice, artistic collaboration, European partnerships, and departmental initiatives. The Gap Analysis therefore provides the evidence base for a realistic and proportionate Action Plan that builds on these existing strengths while strengthening institutional coordination, visibility, communication, monitoring, and formalisation in support of the long-term development of research careers at NATFA.

Methodology, governance and stakeholder engagement

Governance structure for the HRS4R process

The implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) at NATFA is guided by a governance structure designed to ensure institutional ownership, inclusiveness, transparency, and alignment with the Academy's strategic priorities. In accordance with national legislation and institutional practice, overall responsibility for research policy and research strategy formally lies with the Rector. As NATFA does not currently have a dedicated statutory position of Vice-Rector for Research, preparation and coordination of the HRS4R process are carried out by the Vice-Rector for International Affairs and Projects, ensuring continuity between research policy, internationalisation, and project development.

NATFA's HRS4R process is undertaken in the context of its participation in the WIRE by FilmEU project. A Steering Committee was formally appointed within the project governance structure to oversee the

process, while a dedicated HRS4R Working Group was established to prepare the Gap Analysis and support the development of the Action Plan. The Steering Committee held 16 biweekly meetings between mid-October 2025 and mid-June 2026 to plan the process, consider questionnaire and focus-group findings, identify institutional gaps, and prepare the Gap Analysis, Action Plan, and related documents. Biweekly meetings with WIRE by FilmEU project partners supported methodological consistency and alignment with the alliance's shared strategic framework.

The HRS4R Working Group includes representatives of teaching academic staff and researchers across career stages (R1-R4), academic management, the Quality Assurance Office, the Ethics Committee, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office, Human Resources, and administrative staff supporting research and international activities. This composition ensures balanced representation across career stages and functional roles, bringing together policy-level and day-to-day research perspectives. Oversight is further provided through NATFA's established governance structures. The *Regulation for the Implementation of the European Charter for Researchers and the Recruitment of Researchers – OTM-R Policy of NATFA* were reviewed and approved by the Academic Council at the end of January 2026. The Gap Analysis and Action Plan will be reviewed and approved by the Academic Council in accordance with institutional procedures.

For the purposes of this document, institutional research leadership refers to the institutional function responsible for research policy and strategy at NATFA. Operational responsibility for individual actions may be delegated to designated members of the Rectorate, faculty leadership, or relevant administrative units, according to the nature of each measure.

Methodological approach

The Gap Analysis was developed using a mixed, qualitative, and evidence-based methodology tailored to NATFA's profile as a specialised higher education institution in theatre, film, and audiovisual arts. The methodology aimed both to assess formal alignment with the European Charter for Researchers and to capture the lived experience of researchers working within NATFA's scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research environment.

The analysis combined three complementary methods: systematic document analysis of national and institutional frameworks; a structured internal questionnaire; and focus-group discussions building on the questionnaire findings. This design ensured that the analysis reflects both the formal regulatory framework and the everyday realities of research practice, while remaining appropriate to the Academy's size and profile.

Document analysis

A comprehensive review of national legislation, institutional regulations, strategic documents, and internal procedures established the baseline level of alignment with the European Charter for Researchers. It covered national higher education and research legislation, including the *Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* (ADASRB) and related regulations; institutional strategies concerning research, academic staff development, sustainability, and gender equality; regulations on ethics, doctoral education, recruitment, attestation, and promotion; and relevant institutional policies and practices. The review identified areas where institutional practice already aligns with the Charter and areas requiring further development.

Questionnaire consultation

Between 14 and 21 December 2025, NATFA conducted a structured internal questionnaire aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and adapted to NATFA's research environment. Fifteen respondents took part, including academic staff and researchers across career stages (R1-R4), as well as staff involved in research management and project implementation. The questionnaire explored researchers' perceptions of institutional practice across the principal thematic areas of the

European Charter for Researchers, providing an initial assessment of existing strengths and areas for development.

The questionnaire was used to identify perceived strengths and implementation gaps and to provide a structured basis for the subsequent focus-group discussions and the calibration of implementation levels. Given NATFA's size and the qualitative scope of the consultation, its findings are treated as thematic insights rather than statistically representative results.

Focus-group discussions

Following the questionnaire, NATFA conducted structured focus-group discussions with representatives of its research community. Participants included researchers across career stages (R1-R4) representing scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research, together with staff experienced in research management, quality assurance, supervision, and project coordination. Building on the questionnaire findings, the focus-group discussions examined these themes in greater depth, with particular attention to research assessment and career progression; recruitment and selection; working conditions, workload, and work-life balance; supervision, mentoring, and professional development; Open Science, ethics, artificial intelligence, and intellectual property; sustainability; diversity and inclusion; and institutional support.

The focus-group discussions enabled participants to validate and contextualise questionnaire findings, reflect critically on institutional practice, and identify strengths and gaps that were not always evident from formal regulations alone, particularly those relating to scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research and the hybrid nature of research careers within the cultural and creative sectors.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement was central throughout the HRS4R process. Researchers across career stages participated through the internal questionnaire, focus-group discussions, representation in the HRS4R Working Group, and structured feedback during the internal review of the Gap Analysis and Action Plan. This participatory approach ensured that the perspectives of early-career and emerging researchers were considered, the realities of scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research were reflected, and the identified priorities correspond to institutional needs rather than solely to formal compliance requirements.

External consultation took place through NATFA's participation in the FilmEU Alliance and the WIRE by FilmEU project. Regular meetings with partner institutions informed the overall methodology and alignment with European good practice, particularly in relation to mobility, international cooperation, and open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment.

Calibration of implementation levels

Implementation levels ("Fully implemented", "Almost but not fully implemented", "Partially implemented", "Insufficiently implemented") were determined using combined evidence from institutional documentation, formal policies, documented practices, questionnaire responses, and focus-group feedback. A deliberately conservative approach was adopted: "Fully implemented" was assigned only where policy and practice were consistently aligned and positively confirmed through stakeholder consultation. Lower ratings indicate areas requiring consolidation, formalisation, improved visibility, or additional institutional support. This approach provides a realistic self-assessment and a robust basis for the HRS4R Action Plan.

Link to the action plan

The Gap Analysis findings directly inform the HRS4R Action Plan. Priority actions were identified according to their relevance to researchers' working conditions and career development, their impact across different career stages, including researchers engaged in scholarly, artistic, and practice-based

research, their feasibility within the national regulatory framework, and their contribution to NATFA's long-term institutional development.

The Action Plan is designed to build on existing institutional strengths while addressing clearly identified areas for development. It focuses on strengthening institutional coordination, visibility, communication, monitoring, and formalisation, thereby supporting the sustainable development of research careers and the continuous enhancement of the research environment at NATFA.

The Gap Analysis and Action Plan are published on NATFA's website at <https://natfiz.bg/en/>.

PILLAR 1: ETHICS, RESEARCH INTEGRITY, OPEN SCIENCE AND EQUALITY

Ethics, research integrity, Open Science, equality, diversity, and sustainability at NATFA are grounded in national legislation, institutional regulations, established ethical procedures, and active participation in European cooperation frameworks. The Academy has a comprehensive Ethics Code, an active Ethics Committee, established practices for plagiarism prevention and open dissemination of research, a Gender Equality Plan currently undergoing renewal, and growing institutional engagement with equality, diversity, and inclusion through the FilmEU Alliance. Existing practice provides a strong foundation across this pillar. The principal areas for further development concern strengthening institutional coordination, formalisation, communication, training, and systematic monitoring, together with the integration of emerging issues, including artificial intelligence, research data management, sustainability, and equality, diversity, and inclusion, within a coherent Academy-wide framework.

Principle 1: Ethics and research integrity

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Researchers must follow recognised ethical standards and research integrity principles (e.g., ALLEA European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity), avoid misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, and ensuring honesty, reliability, objectivity, and independence in research.

Status

NATFA has a comprehensive Ethics Code for Employees and Teaching Staff, originally adopted on 12.02.2008 and most recently amended on 21.10.2025, with supplements voted by the Academic Council on 28.11.2025 and officially registered on 1.12.2025. The Code is fully compliant with national legislation and applies to research, teaching, artistic practice, governance, recruitment, evaluation, and institutional decision-making.

The Ethics Committee includes representatives of academic staff, administrative staff, students, and doctoral candidates, ensuring broad stakeholder representation (Article 3(2)). It operates under clear procedures: reviewing violations, examining written complaints, guaranteeing presumption of innocence (Article 3(5)), and recommending sanctions to the Rector (Article 4). Ethics compliance is integrated into all academic procedures including competitive selection procedures for academic positions, elections for management roles, and procedures for obtaining scientific degrees (Article 5).

In January 2026, the Academic Council formally adopted the *Regulation for the Implementation of the European Charter for Researchers and the Recruitment of Researchers – OTM-R Policy of NATFA* (NATFA OTM-R Policy), providing an institutional regulatory basis for embedding the Charter's principles, including ethics and research integrity, into NATFA's governance framework.

For plagiarism detection, NATFA uses the StrikePlagiarism system provided by the Ministry of Education, mandatory for all written research outputs. The ADASRB, Article 2(18) further requires scientific juries to assess plagiarism in all evaluated works.

The December 2025 questionnaire confirms high awareness and adherence to ethical principles, research integrity, and professional conduct among researchers. In recent months, NATFA has also organised dedicated institutional sessions focused on revising and interpreting the Ethics Code in relation to the Academy's mission and research and artistic practices.

Gap analysis

While ethical standards and research integrity are well embedded at the level of policy, governance, and institutional culture, several areas for improvement were identified:

- No explicit reference to the ALLEA European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, the primary European framework referenced in the 2023 Charter
- No formal training program on research ethics and integrity for all researchers
- Emerging technologies not yet systematised: Responses to the questionnaire and internal discussions highlight that the application of ethical principles to emerging research practices, particularly in relation to artificial intelligence (AI), generative technologies, and intellectual property (IP) in artistic research, is still evolving. Ethical guidance related to AI currently exists primarily through disciplinary discussions, teaching practice, and expert knowledge, rather than through a consolidated institutional framework.

Contextual strengths

As a leading institution in creative arts education, NATFA demonstrates advanced practice-based engagement with AI ethics, including:

- ongoing faculty-level discussions (notably in the Faculty of Screen Arts) on AI, IP, and authorship;
- recognised institutional expertise in IP and AI;
- a micro-credential developed under C-Accelerate Plus, funded by EIT HEInnovate, including a dedicated module on IP and AI, delivered at BA, MA, and PhD levels;
- doctoral research projects explicitly focused on AI-related topics;
- preparation of a train-the-trainers programme to further embed ethical and legal awareness.

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

The identified gap is not the absence of ethical governance, but rather the lack of a unified, institution-wide framework explicitly addressing AI ethics and AI-related research integrity, linking research, teaching, artistic practice, and doctoral supervision. Additionally, explicit alignment with the ALLEA European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and formal research integrity training would strengthen the framework.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
1.1 Add ALLEA European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity to Ethics Code	Q4 2026	Ethics Committee	Amendment adopted
1.2 Develop annual research integrity training	Q1 2027	Institutional research leadership + Ethics Committee	1 training/year delivered
1.3 Develop and adopt institutional guidelines on AI ethics, IP, and artistic research, aligned with the Ethics Code	Q2 2027	Ethics Committee + Faculty heads	Guidelines adopted
1.4 Integrate AI ethics into research ethics review, doctoral supervision, and staff induction	Q3 2027	Institutional research leadership + Doctoral School	Integration documented

Principle 2: Freedom of scientific research

Implementation:

++ Fully implemented

Charter requirements

Researchers should enjoy academic freedom to define research questions and methods, develop and challenge ideas, disseminate results, and associate professionally, while pursuing research for societal benefit within appropriate quality assurance frameworks.

Status

Academic freedom at NATFA is comprehensively guaranteed by national legislation, in particular Article 20 of the Higher Education Act, which explicitly protects freedom of teaching, scientific research, artistic expression, learning, and cooperation with national and international partners. This legislative framework provides a robust and enforceable foundation for freedom of scientific and artistic research.

These guarantees are institutionally embedded in the *Regulations for the Organisation and Activities of the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts 'Krastyo Sarafov'* (ROA), which establish academic autonomy, self-governance, and the inviolability of institutional premises (Article 4). Academic staff have the right to freely define course content, conduct research and artistic activity, disseminate results, use institutional facilities, and participate in research projects and competitive selection procedures for academic positions (Article 36). Research oversight mechanisms, such as approval of doctoral dissertation topics and evaluation procedures for academic progression, function as quality assurance instruments and do not restrict researchers' freedom to define research questions or methodologies.

Questionnaire results from December 2025 confirm that researchers perceive a high degree of freedom in thought, expression, theory development, methodological choice, dissemination of results, and professional association. No concerns were raised regarding undue restrictions on academic freedom, and the existing legal and institutional framework is considered sufficient without the need for additional institutional policy instruments.

Contextual strengths

As a leading institution in creative arts education, NATFA demonstrates particular strengths supporting research freedom:

- Strong alignment with national legislation guaranteeing academic freedom and institutional autonomy
- Clear ethical and professional standards embedded in the institutional Ethics Code, ensuring responsible exercise of freedom
- Practice-based research culture that encourages experimentation, critical inquiry, and artistic risk-taking
- High level of awareness among researchers regarding their professional and societal responsibilities.

Gap analysis

No gaps identified. Academic freedom is comprehensively guaranteed by Article 20 of the Higher Education Act and institutionally embedded in the ROA (Articles 4 and 36). The approval processes for doctoral themes and research for academic progression represent appropriate quality assurance mechanisms rather than restrictions on freedom. A standalone institutional policy is not necessary given the robust legislative framework.

Assessment

Rating: Fully implemented

Academic freedom is guaranteed by national legislation, institutionally anchored in the ROA, operationally respected, and positively reflected by researchers in the December 2025 questionnaire.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
2.1 (Conditional) If required by assessors, adopt institutional provisions on academic freedom into the NATFA OTM-R Policy	As needed	Academic Council	Provisions adopted

Principle 3: Open science

Implementation:

-/+ Partially implemented

Charter requirements

Researchers should apply Open Science practices by sharing results as openly as possible (e.g., open access, FAIR data, open tools where relevant), supporting transparency, reproducibility, and open peer practices, and enabling citizen or participatory approaches where appropriate.

Status

NATFA operates within Bulgaria's national Open Science framework, which requires open access to publicly funded research and encourages integration with the *Bulgarian Portal for Open Science* (BPOS) and the *European Open Science Cloud* (EOSC).

While NATFA does not yet have a formal institutional Open Science policy, substantial practices are embedded in operations. The *Yearbook* and *Research Bulletins* are published in open access through the institutional digital library, EBSCO, and CEEOL. The *Centre for Semiotic Studies* website also operates under open access principles. All institutionally published materials are free of charge for researchers.

Research outputs and doctoral theses are stored digitally in the Academic Library and accessible through the library platform. From 2017, all PhD theses and habilitation materials must be uploaded to the *National Centre for Information and Documentation* (NACID), ensuring national-level open access. Artistic outputs, including theatre recordings, films, posters, are accessible through the library portal, with further dissemination through public screenings, performances, and festivals.

NATFA does not yet have institutional Research Data Management (RDM) guidelines and follows external platform requirements (NACID, EBSCO, CEEOL) for deposited materials.

While NATFA receives a limited amount of annual institutional funding designated for research, available resources are not sufficient to establish dedicated institutional mechanisms for supporting Article Processing Charges (APCs) or broader Open Science investments. Consequently, support for Open Science focuses primarily on structural measures, including open-access institutional publications, digital storage, and library services. Additional support for research dissemination is provided through externally funded projects and programmes such as Erasmus+.

Contextual strengths

- Strong alignment with national Open Science legislation and infrastructure
- Established open access institutional publications free of charge for researchers
- Comprehensive digital accessibility of doctoral theses and artistic outputs
- Engagement with national and international Open Science infrastructures, including NACID, EBSCO, CEEOL
- Artistic research outputs inherently oriented toward public accessibility
- Institutional culture supportive of open dissemination and public engagement

Gap analysis

Despite strong practices, several gaps were identified:

- No formal institutional Open Science policy, despite national legislative requirements
- No institutional Research Data Management guidelines aligned with FAIR principles
- Limited institutional mechanisms to support open-access publishing in external venues, as the available institutional research funding is insufficient to provide systematic financial support for publication costs (e.g. Article Processing Charges)
- No dedicated institutional open-access repository formally integrated with BPOS or EOSC
- Citizen science and participatory research methodologies not systematically formalised, although relevant in selected artistic and community-based contexts

Assessment

Rating: Partially implemented

NATFA demonstrates strong Open Science practices through open access institutional publications, digital accessibility of research and artistic outputs, and compliance with national and project-based dissemination requirements. However, the absence of a formal institutional Open Science policy, Research Data Management guidelines, and a dedicated open access repository prevents full compliance with national legislation and Charter expectations.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
3.1 Develop and adopt an institutional Open Science Policy	Q4 2026	Institutional research leadership & Library	Policy adopted
3.2 Develop Research Data Management guidelines aligned with FAIR principles	Q1 2027	Library & Institutional research leadership	Guidelines adopted
3.3 Establish a mechanism to support Open Access publication fees (within budgetary constraints)	Q2 2027	Institutional research leadership & Finance	Mechanism operational
3.4 Explore integration with the Bulgarian Portal for Open Science (BPOS)	Q3 2027	Library & IT	Integration plan developed
3.5 Integrate Open Science principles into doctoral training	Q4 2027	Doctoral School	Module integrated

Principle 4: Gender equality

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Institutions should ensure gender equality and aim for balanced representation at all levels, implement gender equality measures and safeguards, and provide safe, respectful working conditions, including prevention and response to gender-based violence and harassment.

Status

NATFA operates within a national legislative framework that guarantees gender equality through the *Constitution* and the *Protection against Discrimination Act*, and the *National Strategy for Gender Equality (2021–2031)*. These provide the legal basis for equal treatment, work-life balance, and the prevention of discrimination and gender-based violence. Parental leave follows national legislation, providing maternity leave at 90% of salary for approximately 410 days, followed by childcare leave until the child reaches two years of age.

At institutional level, NATFA adopted a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for the period October 2023–December 2025, addressing work-life balance, gender balance in management and decision-making,

equality in recruitment and research, and the prevention of sexual harassment. This plan has since expired; a renewed GEP is currently in development and is expected to be formally adopted by the Academic Council. Building on this foundation, work is underway to further develop institutional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) structures within the FilmEU framework. As a member of the FilmEU European University Alliance, NATFA participates in the implementation of the Joint Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy developed at alliance level as part of the institutional transformation process. Institutionally, NATFA has designated an EDI Officer who serves as the Academy's representative within the FilmEU EDI structure and coordinates local implementation activities. The development of a fully operational institutional EDI structure is currently underway and has not yet been fully established. Principles of equality, dignity, and non-discrimination are embedded in the Ethics Code and are overseen by the Ethics Committee. In addition, a Psychological Support Centre provides confidential counselling to staff and students, contributing to the prevention of harassment and psychosocial risks.

Balanced gender representation is maintained across the Academy's leadership, including the Rectorate (4 women and 3 men) and among the deans. Among recruited academic staff (R2–R4), women constitute the majority: 96 FTE in total, comprising 56 women and 40 men (58%/42%). This includes 45 R2 researchers – assistants and chief assistants holding a PhD but not yet habilitated (28 women, 17 men); 30 R3 associate professors, who are habilitated (16 women, 14 men); and 21 R4 professors (12 women, 9 men). Beyond recruited staff, NATFA's wider researcher community also includes 43 R1 doctoral candidates (20 women, 23 men), supported through state-funded doctoral scholarship, employment contract, or both, bringing the total researcher community (R1-R4) to 139 FTE (76 women, 63 men). Gender balance is largely field-driven, reflecting the specialised nature of artistic disciplines and limited applicant pools in certain areas. Recruitment and promotion are based on institutional needs and professional portfolios rather than predefined quotas. The GEP further includes measures supporting flexible working arrangements and staff with caring responsibilities.

Contextual strengths

- Gender Equality Plan adopted with defined strategic priorities; renewed plan currently in development
- Active participation in the implementation of the FilmEU Joint EDI Policy
- Designated institutional EDI Officer coordinating local implementation
- Non-discrimination principles embedded in Ethics Code
- Psychological Support Centre
- Detailed institutional data on gender composition across all career stages (R1-R4), demonstrating consistent gender balance without formal quotas
- Work-life balance measures and support for artistic practice

Gap analysis

While relevant policies and structures are in place, the following gaps were identified:

- The current Gender Equality Plan (October 2023-December 2025) has expired; a renewed GEP is in development but not yet formally adopted.
- The institutional EDI structure is being developed and currently relies on a single designated EDI Officer; formalisation of this function, including clearer coordination mechanisms with the Ethics Committee, is still underway
- Awareness of EDI policies and available support services remains uneven across the institution.
- Systematic monitoring and reporting of equality indicators are not yet fully established

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA demonstrates a strong commitment to gender equality through balanced representation in academic leadership, merit-based recruitment and promotion procedures, comprehensive work-life balance provisions under national legislation, and institutional safeguards against discrimination and harassment. Gender equality principles are embedded in institutional policies and supported by the Gender Equality Plan (currently being renewed), the Ethics Code, the Psychological Support Centre, and active participation in the FilmEU Joint Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy.

The principal areas for further development relate not to gender equality outcomes, but to the timely adoption of the renewed GEP and the continued establishment of a fully operational institutional EDI structure. The Academy currently relies on a designated EDI Officer to coordinate implementation within the broader FilmEU framework, while institutional EDI governance, coordination mechanisms, monitoring, and visibility are still being developed. Strengthening these structures will further consolidate NATFA's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion in line with the Charter requirements.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
4.1 Finalise and formally adopt the renewed Gender Equality Plan	Q4 2026	Institutional research leadership + EDI Officer	Renewed GEP adopted by Academic Council
4.2 Further develop and formalise the institutional EDI function, including clear roles, responsibilities, and coordination with the Ethics Committee.	Q1 2027	Institutional research leadership + EDI Officer	Institutional EDI function formally established; coordination mechanism adopted
4.3 Improve the visibility of the Gender Equality Plan, FilmEU Joint EDI Policy, and available EDI support services	Q2 2027	EDI Officer + Communications	Information accessible online
4.4 Introduce systematic monitoring and annual reporting of gender equality and EDI indicators	Q3 2027	EDI Officer + HR	Annual EDI monitoring report produced
4.5 Deliver regular awareness and training activities on equality, inclusion, prevention of harassment, and respectful working environments.	Q4 2027	EDI Officer + Ethics Committee	At least one institutional awareness or training activity delivered annually

Principle 5: Embracing diversity

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Institutions should embrace diversity broadly (including disability, age, ethnic origin, religion/belief, sexual orientation and social diversity), ensure inclusive working conditions and non-discrimination, and mitigate unconscious bias in recruitment, evaluation, and workplace culture.

Status

Building on the gender equality framework described under Principle 4, this principle considers the broader institutional approach to diversity and inclusion. NATFA operates within a robust national and institutional non-discrimination framework. The constitutional and legislative provisions described under Principle 4, together with institutional structures such as the *Ethics Code*, the Ethics Committee, the Gender Equality Plan, the designated EDI Officer, and the Psychological Support Centre, provide the foundation for promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion across the Academy. As a member of the FilmEU European University Alliance, NATFA also participates in the implementation of the *Joint Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy*. This principle therefore focuses on how diversity and inclusion are implemented in practice.

Physical accessibility across the NATFA campus is progressively improving. Three out of four campus buildings are fully accessible, and reasonable accommodation for staff and students with disabilities or specific needs is provided upon request and applied in practice in accordance with national legislation.

International diversity among doctoral candidates and staff remains limited, primarily due to national legal requirements mandating instruction and doctoral studies in the Bulgarian language. At the same time, NATFA maintains active international engagement through the regular hosting of visiting professors and artists from abroad, which contributes to intercultural exchange in teaching, research, and artistic practice.

Recruitment, promotion, and evaluation procedures are standardised, transparent, and legally regulated. Selection processes involve formally appointed scientific committees (juries), written peer evaluation reports, and approval by Faculty Councils. Appeal mechanisms are available in accordance with national legislation, ensuring procedural fairness and accountability.

Dedicated training on diversity and unconscious bias is not yet provided on a systematic basis. Relevant elements related to ethics, academic policy, and professional conduct are included in doctoral training. Diversity indicators can be monitored through the internal HR system, although they are not yet consolidated into regular institutional reporting.

Contextual strengths

- Strong national and institutional non-discrimination framework
- Functioning Ethics Committee, designated EDI Officer, and Psychological Support Centre
- Improving physical accessibility of campus infrastructure
- Reasonable accommodation applied in practice
- Transparent and standardised recruitment and evaluation procedures
- Regular international engagement through visiting professors and artists
- Internal HR capacity to monitor diversity indicators

Gap analysis

- The institutional EDI function is still being developed and diversity-related responsibilities are not yet fully consolidated
- Formal procedures for accessibility and reasonable accommodation are not yet documented institution-wide
- Systematic training on diversity and unconscious bias is not yet provided
- International diversity remains constrained by national language requirements
- Diversity indicators are not yet consolidated into regular institutional monitoring and reporting

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA complies with national non-discrimination legislation and promotes inclusive practices in recruitment, accessibility, and institutional support services. Diversity is respected in practice and

supported through existing institutional mechanisms. The principal areas for further development relate to the continued establishment of the institutional EDI function, the formalisation of accessibility procedures, systematic awareness-raising, and regular monitoring of diversity indicators.

Proposed actions

(Actions 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 under Principle 4 also contribute to diversity objectives. The following actions are diversity-specific.)

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
5.1 Formalise procedures for reasonable accommodation and accessibility	Q1 2028	EDI Officer + Administration	Procedures published
5.2 Deliver regular awareness-raising and training activities on diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias	Q2 2028	EDI Officer + Ethics Committee	At least one activity per year
5.3 Explore measures to support international engagement within national language constraints	Q4 2027	Institutional research leadership	Measures identified

Principle 6: The Researcher

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Researchers are professionals whose work should be valued from early career stages, and institutions should support non-linear and hybrid career paths and mobility. Researchers should act responsibly and transparently, seek necessary approvals, communicate progress, and be accountable for ethical conduct and sound use of resources, including openness to scrutiny where applicable.

Status

At NATFA, doctoral candidates are formally recognised as researchers contributing to the creation of new knowledge through scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research, rather than solely as students. They may be supported through a state-funded doctoral scholarship, an employment contract, or both. Researchers at all career stages are recognised as professionals, with research valued alongside teaching and artistic practice.

The Academy supports non-linear and hybrid career paths characteristic of research in the creative arts. Researchers commonly combine research, teaching, artistic practice, and administrative responsibilities. Mobility is supported through Erasmus+, other exchange programmes, institutional invitations, and project-based secondments. Professional development begins during doctoral studies through individual study plans, regular progress reviews, and supervisor guidance. Beyond the doctoral stage, researchers benefit primarily from departmental mentoring and peer support, while the further development of structured career-development guidance is addressed under Principle 18, *Career development and advice*.

Researchers are informed about institutional strategic goals through departmental meetings, Faculty meetings, Academic Council sessions, and annual institutional development reports. Research topics undergo appropriate approval procedures, ensuring relevance and avoiding unnecessary duplication. Communication regarding progress, delays, or completion is maintained through supervisory relationships and established reporting structures.

NATFA sustains an active research culture supporting quality, transparency, and professional development. The annual interdisciplinary conference Text and Image provides a platform for presenting completed research, with proceedings published in peer-reviewed and indexed volumes. A monthly or bimonthly Academic Research Seminar offers a forum for presenting ongoing work and

receiving peer feedback. Artistic research is disseminated through performances, screenings, exhibitions, and festivals, while collaboration with theatre, film, and media sectors strengthens research valorisation and societal relevance.

Researchers are expected to conduct their work responsibly and transparently, obtain the necessary institutional approvals, communicate research progress through established reporting mechanisms, and comply with the principles of research integrity set out in the Ethics Code and related institutional regulations. Research methods and outputs are subject to internal scrutiny through supervision, attestation, and evaluation procedures, as well as external scrutiny through peer review, project reporting, and funder audits. Open Science practices (see Principle 3) further reinforce transparency, openness, and accountability where applicable.

Researchers involved in externally funded projects are additionally accountable for the responsible and transparent use of resources in accordance with funder requirements, institutional procedures, and applicable legislation. Financial management includes regular reporting, monitoring, and audit cycles, while training in financial management is available on an elective basis.

Contextual strengths

- Doctoral candidates formally recognised as researchers with professional status
- Support for non-linear careers combining research, teaching, and artistic practice
- Mobility opportunities through Erasmus+ and project-based secondments
- Clear institutional communication of strategic goals and research expectations
- Strong research culture supported by an annual refereed conference and regular academic research seminars
- High societal relevance and visibility of artistic research outputs
- Established accountability, reporting, and audit mechanisms for funded projects

Gap analysis

- Professional-development resources for early- and mid-career researchers would benefit from further consolidation, particularly regarding researcher responsibilities, institutional procedures, research integrity, project participation, and professional practice. Further development of structured career guidance is addressed under Principle 18
- Financial management training is available but elective and not systematically integrated for all researchers with project responsibilities.

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA recognises researchers as professionals from the doctoral stage onward, supports diverse and non-linear career paths, ensures responsible research conduct and accountability through established institutional procedures, and sustains a strong research culture through peer exchange, public dissemination, and transparent evaluation processes. Remaining areas for development relate to the further consolidation of professional-development resources for early- and mid-career researchers, the systematic integration of financial-management training for researchers with project responsibilities. Structured career guidance and institutional career-development services are addressed under Principle 18, *Career development and advice*.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
6.1 Develop and consolidate professional-development resources for early- and mid-career researchers on researcher responsibilities, institutional procedures, research integrity, project	Q4 2026	Institutional research leadership + HR	Resources available and communicated to

participation, and professional practice, coordinated with relevant actions under Principles 1, 15, 18, and 19.			relevant researcher groups
6.2 Integrate financial management training into mandatory induction for researchers with project responsibilities.	Q1 2027	Institutional research leadership + Finance	Training module developed and delivered at least once per year; attendance recorded.

Principle 7: Free circulation of researchers

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Institutions should promote mobility and free circulation of researchers, knowledge, and technology (including virtual mobility), recognise mobility experience in appraisal and career progression, and ensure administrative arrangements enable mobility and portability of grants and social protections in line with national rules.

Status

Outgoing researcher mobility is a regular and well-established practice at NATFA. Researchers at all career stages participate in international research stays, conference presentations, teaching exchanges, and collaborative projects. Mobility is supported through Erasmus+ staff mobility, national mobility schemes, and project-based funding, enabling sustained international engagement and professional development.

NATFA regularly hosts visiting professors and artists from abroad, contributing to international and intercultural exchange in teaching, research, and artistic practice. Longer-term incoming researcher mobility remains limited, primarily due to national legal requirements mandating instruction and doctoral studies in the Bulgarian language. Despite this constraint, short-term academic visits and project-based collaborations provide ongoing opportunities for international exchange.

Mobility experience is formally recognised and valued in recruitment, promotion, and attestation procedures. International, inter-institutional, and interdisciplinary mobility contributes additional points in the national documentation system administered by NACID, which plays a central role in academic career progression and appraisal.

Virtual mobility is practised at NATFA, particularly within international research and artistic projects where collaboration is conducted predominantly online. This form of mobility complements physical exchanges and supports continuity of international cooperation, although it is not yet systematically documented or formally distinguished in institutional records.

Inter-sectoral mobility is supported primarily through project-based collaboration and additional agreements with industry, cultural institutions, and other external partners. These arrangements enable researchers to engage across institutional and sectoral boundaries while maintaining their affiliation with NATFA. At present, inter-sectoral mobility is largely opportunistic and project-driven rather than structured within a dedicated institutional framework.

Portability of grants and social security provisions is regulated at national level. NATFA has established administrative capacity to support compliant grant management and researcher mobility procedures, although the institution has not yet encountered a case requiring the formal transfer of a grant between institutions.

Contextual strengths

- Outgoing mobility well-established and regularly practised
- Regular hosting of visiting professors and artists from abroad
- Mobility formally recognised in recruitment, promotion, and attestation (NACID points)
- Virtual mobility practised through international project collaboration
- Inter-sectoral engagement supported through agreements and project-based secondments
- Multiple mobility funding sources (Erasmus+, national schemes, project funds)
- Grant portability possible under national regulations

Gap analysis

- Incoming mobility limited: national language requirements constrain longer-term incoming researcher mobility, despite strong English competence among staff and regular short-term international engagement
- Inter-sectoral mobility is supported primarily through projects, partnerships, and agreements but is not yet structured within a coordinated institutional framework for placements, secondments, and collaboration with external organisations.
- Virtual mobility is practised but is not yet systematically documented or formally recognised in institutional records.

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA demonstrates strong support for the circulation of researchers through well-established outgoing mobility, regular international engagement, and formal recognition of mobility in career progression. Remaining gaps relate to constraints on longer-term incoming mobility (due to national language requirements) and the absence of a coordinated institutional framework for inter-sectoral mobility and systematic documentation and recognition of virtual mobility.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
7.1 Explore options to facilitate incoming researcher mobility within language constraints (e.g., short-term stays, English-medium workshops, joint formats)	Q1 2027	Institutional research leadership + International Office	Options identified
7.2 Develop a coordinated institutional framework for inter-sectoral mobility, including industry and cultural-sector placements, project-based secondments, and structured collaboration with external organisations.	Q1 2028	Institutional research leadership + Faculties	Framework adopted
7.3 Introduce systematic documentation and recognition of virtual mobility within institutional records.	Q1 2028	Institutional research leadership + HR	Virtual mobility systematically recorded and recognised.

Principle 8: Sustainability of research

Implementation:

-/+ Partially implemented

Charter requirements

Researchers and institutions should promote sustainable research practices aligned with the European Green Deal and SDGs, foster a culture of sustainability through guidance and training, and reduce

environmental impacts of research activities, using instruments such as the MSCA Green Charter where relevant.

Status

NATFA has developed an institutional strategy that includes a sustainability plan. A dedicated, stand-alone sustainability policy is currently under development but has not yet been formally adopted. Sustainability-related measures are implemented primarily through strategic intentions and operational practices rather than through a consolidated institutional framework.

At campus level, practical green initiatives are in place, including waste reduction and recycling practices, substitution of traditional lighting with LED technology, and the application of green production principles in theatre and film set design where feasible. These measures demonstrate an emerging culture of environmental responsibility embedded in NATFA's educational and artistic activities.

In research practices, there is an increasing preference for virtual participation in meetings, conferences, and collaborative activities where appropriate, as well as for environmentally responsible travel options. However, these practices are not yet guided by formal institutional guidelines and are not systematically implemented across all research activities.

Dedicated training or structured awareness-raising activities on sustainable research practices have not yet been introduced at institutional level. At present, NATFA does not operate institution-wide research programmes explicitly focused on sustainability, environmental themes, or the Sustainable Development Goals.

Artistic research at NATFA has nevertheless engaged with sustainability-related themes through participation in international projects such as EMPACT and In-Situ, which explored environmental and social sustainability through creative and practice-based approaches. Within Erasmus+ and other EU-funded projects, NATFA follows green charter and sustainability requirements as stipulated by funders, although these requirements are not yet systematically integrated beyond individual project contexts.

Contextual strengths

- Institutional strategy already includes a sustainability dimension
- Campus-level green initiatives in place (recycling, LED lighting, green production practices)
- Emerging preference for virtual participation and environmentally responsible travel
- Artistic research engagement with sustainability through international projects (EMPACT, In-Situ)
- Compliance with sustainability and green requirements in EU-funded projects

Gap analysis

- No formal institutional sustainability policy: policy development is ongoing but not yet completed
- No training or awareness-raising activities on sustainable research practices
- Sustainability themes are not yet systematically integrated into research and doctoral training
- Sustainable research practices, including travel, events, and resource use, are not yet supported by formal institutional guidelines
- Limited documentation and monitoring of sustainability measures and research-related environmental impact

Assessment

Rating: Partially implemented

NATFA demonstrates awareness of sustainability requirements and has initiated concrete green measures at campus level. Artistic research has addressed sustainability themes through international

projects, and EU project requirements are followed where applicable. However, the absence of a formal sustainability policy, training activities, systematic research integration, and monitoring mechanisms represents a significant gap relative to the expectations of the 2023 Charter.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
8.1 Adopt an institutional sustainability policy addressing research activities	Q2 2027	Institutional research leadership + Administration	Policy adopted
8.2 Develop institutional guidelines for sustainable research practices (travel, events, resource use)	Q3 2027	Institutional research leadership	Guidelines published
8.3 Introduce awareness-raising or training activities on sustainable research practices	Q4 2027	Institutional research leadership + Administration	At least one activity per year
8.4 Explore integration of sustainability themes into research and doctoral training	Q1 2028	Doctoral School + Faculties	Options identified
8.5 Establish basic monitoring of research-related environmental impact	Q2 2028	Administration	Monitoring initiated

PILLAR 2: RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION

NATFA operates within a well-established national and institutional framework governing researcher assessment, recruitment, selection, and academic career progression. Procedures are legally regulated, peer-based, transparent, and responsive to the particular characteristics of scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research. The Academy recognises diverse research outputs, teaching, artistic work, mobility, project participation, supervision, and professional achievement in recruitment, attestation, and career progression. Existing practices provide a robust basis for fair and merit-based decision-making. Further development will focus on strengthening institutional consistency through regular training for scientific and evaluation committee members, broader recognition of Open Science and individual contributions to collaborative work, clearer guidance on ethical authorship practices, and increased international visibility of recruitment opportunities.

Principle 9: Researchers' assessment

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Researchers' assessment should be primarily based on qualitative peer judgement, responsibly supported by quantitative indicators, and recognise diverse outputs, activities, career paths, Open Science practices, mobility, and societal impact, while ensuring ethics, integrity, equality, and appropriate training for evaluators.

Status

Researchers at NATFA are assessed through a formal, transparent, and merit-based system operating at two complementary levels: assessment during recruitment to academic positions and periodic attestation for career progression. Both processes are regulated by national legislation (ADASRB) and institutional rules, ensuring consistency, legality, and predictability.

Recruitment assessment is conducted by scientific committees (juries) appointed in accordance with national legislation and selected on the basis of recognised expertise relevant to the candidate's disciplinary or artistic field. Candidates are evaluated through peer review, written evaluation reports, and formal voting procedures approved by Faculty Councils, ensuring field-specific competence and academic credibility. Periodic attestation is conducted every three years for junior academic staff and every five years for senior academic staff. Researchers submit a structured self-report covering the attestation period, documenting scientific and artistic research outputs, publications and creative works, participation in research projects, teaching activities, development of new programmes and courses, administrative responsibilities, participation in academic life, mobility, and expert activities.

The assessment framework explicitly reflects the specificities of artistic and practice-based research alongside theoretical and scientific scholarship in the arts and humanities. The national NACID documentation system recognises a wide range of outputs appropriate to this diversity, including peer-reviewed publications, books and chapters, films, theatre productions, exhibitions, performances, festival selections, and other artistic achievements. Open-access publications are recognised and positively valued within the national assessment framework, while broader Open Science practices (e.g. FAIR data and open methodologies) are not yet formally reflected in the assessment criteria.

A broad spectrum of academic activities is formally recognised, including teaching, supervision, mentoring, leadership and coordination roles, project participation, workshops and masterclasses, international mobility, conference participation, and expert work. Collaborative outputs, intrinsic to film and theatre practice, are fully acknowledged, with points allocated according to the researcher's role and contribution within the team.

Attestation relies on peer-based evaluation by the academic community. Submitted documentation is reviewed by academic staff, who vote anonymously on a scale from 1 to 10 across defined evaluation categories. Student evaluations contribute to the assessment of teaching quality. A designated institutional committee oversees the process and ensures procedural integrity. Researchers achieving scores above 8.50 receive performance-related financial rewards, with higher scores corresponding to higher remuneration.

Evaluators are appointed on the basis of recognised expertise and experience. However, standardised training on assessment criteria, responsible evaluation, and bias awareness has not yet been systematically introduced.

Contextual strengths

- Formalised, transparent attestation regulated by national and institutional frameworks
- Explicit recognition of diverse research outputs – artistic, practice-based, and scientific – appropriate to the field
- Recognition of diverse activities: teaching, supervision, mobility, projects, administrative roles
- Open-access publications recognised and positively valued within the assessment framework
- Collaborative work formally recognised with role-based attribution
- Peer-based evaluation with anonymous voting and student input
- Performance-linked reward system incentivising quality

Gap analysis

- Training for evaluators not standardized: Scientific committee members for recruitment are selected based on recognised expertise and national requirements, and attestation involves qualified peers; however, standardised training on assessment best practices and bias mitigation is not yet systematically provided
- Open Science practices beyond publications not yet formalized: While open-access publications are recognised and positively valued within the assessment framework, broader Open Science practices (FAIR data, open methodologies) are not yet explicitly integrated into assessment criteria
- Team contributions: While collaborative work is recognised, mechanisms to formally document and credit individual contributions within teams could be strengthened

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA operates a comprehensive, transparent, and merit-based assessment system that recognises diverse outputs, activities, and career paths appropriate to artistic and practice-based research, as well as theoretical and scientific scholarship in the arts and humanities. The main gaps relate to standardised training for evaluators, fuller integration of Open Science practices beyond publications, and strengthened documentation of individual contributions in collaborative outputs.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
9.1 Develop standardised training for members of scientific committees and evaluation committees, coordinated with Actions 10.1 and 11.1	Q1 2027	Institutional research leadership + HR	Training programme adopted
9.2 Explore integration of broader Open Science practices (FAIR data, open methods) into assessment criteria	Q1 2027	Institutional research leadership + Library	Options identified
9.3 Strengthen documentation of individual contributions in collaborative outputs	Q2 2027	Faculties + HR	Guidance issued

Principle 10: Recruitment

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Recruitment procedures should be open, transparent, and merit-based, without penalising career breaks or non-linear career paths, and should provide clear information on requirements, working conditions, career prospects, and timelines.

Status

Recruitment of researchers at NATFA is conducted through open, transparent, and merit-based procedures in full compliance with national legislation governing higher education and academic appointments (ADASRB). All academic positions are publicly announced on NATFA's official website, published in the State Gazette, and circulated internally in accordance with legally defined procedures. International dissemination of vacancies currently takes place primarily through institutional and partner networks. The Academy recognises that wider dissemination through European platforms such as EURAXESS would further strengthen its Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment practices.

Recruitment advertisements provide clear information on the requirements for the position and the applicable procedural timelines. Remuneration is determined within the nationally regulated framework for academic positions, with additional components reflecting factors such as length of service and acquired scientific degrees. The recruitment process follows a strict statutory schedule, and candidates are informed in advance about selection stages, criteria, and decision-making bodies. Recruitment decisions are documented through written peer-review reports and formal Faculty Council decisions, ensuring transparency, traceability, and the possibility of appeal.

Selection is carried out by formally appointed scientific committees whose members are chosen in accordance with national legislation and on the basis of recognised expertise relevant to the candidate's disciplinary or artistic field. Evaluation is peer-based and considers academic, artistic, and professional achievements, including research outputs, artistic portfolios, teaching experience, and professional practice. Recruitment decisions reflect disciplinary specificity and institutional needs rather than predefined demographic targets. In some highly specialised artistic and practice-based fields, the pool of suitably qualified applicants may be limited, reflecting the specific professional and disciplinary requirements of the positions concerned.

Career breaks and non-linear career paths, including maternity leave, long-term mobility, and sabbaticals, are not penalised. Candidates are encouraged to submit evidence-based CVs presenting a representative range of achievements appropriate to the position, including artistic outputs, practice-based research, and theoretical or scientific scholarship. Positions are publicly advertised nationally and are open to international applicants within the framework of Bulgarian legislation governing language of instruction and doctoral education.

Unsuccessful candidates receive feedback on the outcome of their application. Results of the institutional GAP questionnaire confirm a high level of trust among researchers in the transparency, fairness, and predictability of recruitment procedures.

Contextual strengths

- Publicly advertised and legally regulated recruitment procedures
- Clear, merit-based selection criteria aligned with artistic and practice-based research, as well as theoretical and scientific scholarship
- Evidence-based CVs encouraged, recognising diverse achievements
- Career breaks and non-linear paths not penalised
- Transparent timelines and communication with candidates

- Feedback provided to unsuccessful applicants
- Positions open to international candidates within national legal constraints

Gap analysis

- Training for committee members: While scientific committee members are selected based on recognised expertise and follow national requirements, standardised training on fair recruitment principles and bias mitigation is not yet systematically provided
- International visibility: Positions are publicly advertised nationally; international visibility (e.g., EURAXESS) could be enhanced within existing legal frameworks

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA operates open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment procedures fully aligned with national legislation. Recruitment recognises diverse achievements and career paths, does not penalise career breaks, and ensures procedural clarity and feedback. Remaining gaps relate to the absence of standardised training for committee members and opportunities to strengthen international visibility of recruitment opportunities.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
10.1 Develop training for scientific committee members on fair recruitment principles, coordinated with Actions 9.1 and 11.1	Q1 2027	Institutional research leadership + HR	Training available
10.2 Explore options to enhance international visibility of vacancies (e.g. EURAXESS)	Q4 2026	HR + International Office	Options identified

Principle 11: Selection

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Selection should consider the whole range of candidates' experience, focusing on overall potential, creativity (innovative methods, approaches, outputs), and level of independence. Selection committees should bring together diverse expertise, have adequate gender balance, and where feasible include members from different sectors, disciplines, or countries. Committee members should be trained to minimise bias. All candidates should be informed of the strengths and weaknesses of their application. Employers should not discriminate on any grounds.

Status

Selection procedures at NATFA are conducted through formally appointed scientific committees operating within a structured, transparent, and legally regulated framework.

Scientific committees are proposed and elected by the Department Council and approved by the Faculty Council. For doctoral candidates, committees consist of three internal and two external evaluators. For associate professor and professor positions, committees comprise four internal and three external evaluators with a majority holding professorial rank. This structure ensures broad disciplinary expertise, strong academic authority, and rigorous peer assessment.

Given the narrow and highly specialised nature of theatre and film studies, with a limited pool of qualified professors nationally and internationally, committee composition prioritises recognised

disciplinary expertise, artistic competence, and external participation. This approach ensures academically sound evaluation while reducing potential bias through external participation and collective peer review. An institutional review of scientific committee composition for academic-position procedures announced between November 2023 and March 2026 demonstrates balanced gender representation overall: of 98 committee memberships across 14 procedures, 52 (53%) were held by men and 46 (47%) by women. Gender balance is therefore achieved in practice at aggregate level, although it is not currently monitored as a formal indicator when individual scientific committees are constituted.

Committee members assess submitted materials through written evaluation reports addressing the candidate's qualifications, creativity, research independence, and overall potential. Following jury voting, all materials are submitted to the Faculty Council for final decision.

Non-discrimination is embedded procedurally. Scientific committees do not meet candidates until the final stage, ensuring that assessment is based on documented merits rather than personal interaction. All jury reviews are published online one month prior to the final meeting, enabling transparency and public scrutiny.

All candidates, including unsuccessful applicants, receive detailed feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their application through the published evaluation reports.

Contextual strengths

- Majority of committee members holding professorial rank, ensuring strong academic authority and rigorous peer assessment
- Structured, multi-stage selection process (jury review, Faculty Council decision)
- Explicit assessment of creativity, independence, and scientific and artistic research outputs
- Strong procedural safeguards ensuring non-discrimination
- High transparency through advance publication of evaluation reports
- Detailed feedback provided to all candidates
- Balanced gender representation in scientific committees in practice (53% men and 47% women across 14 academic-position procedures announced between November 2023 and March 2026).

Gap analysis

- Training for committee members: As noted under Principles 9 and 10, while committee members are selected based on recognised expertise and experience in accordance with national legislation, standardised training on fair selection principles, bias mitigation, and responsible evaluation practices is not yet systematically provided
- Gender representation in scientific committees is balanced overall in practice, but gender balance is not currently monitored as a formal indicator when individual committees are constituted.

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA operates a rigorous, transparent, and merit-based selection system grounded in peer review and recognised disciplinary expertise. Selection procedures effectively safeguard academic quality, creativity, and non-discrimination. Gender representation in scientific committees is balanced overall in practice. The remaining areas for further formalisation relate to standardised training for committee members and systematic monitoring of gender balance in committee composition.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
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11.1 Include fair selection and bias-awareness components in training for scientific committee members (linked to Actions 9.1 and 10.1)	Q1 2027	Institutional research leadership + HR	Training integrated
11.2 Introduce systematic monitoring of gender balance in the composition of scientific committees	Q4 2026	HR	Gender composition of scientific committees systematically recorded and monitored

Principle 12: Career progression

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Employers should introduce regular, transparent evaluation and appraisal systems for all researchers, conducted by independent committees. Career progression should recognise non-linear and hybrid career paths alongside linear ones and take into account the full range of research outputs, activities, research behaviour, and mobility. Co-authorship should be valued positively, with recognition of individual contributions, and researchers, especially early-career researchers, should receive guidance on ethical authorship practices.

Status

NATFA operates a clear and transparent academic career progression pathway (assistant – assistant professor – associate professor – professor), regulated by national legislation and institutional rules. Assistant positions are fixed-term, while subsequent academic positions are permanent. Eligibility for appointment and promotion requires evidence of achievement across all mandatory categories of academic, scholarly and artistic activity, ensuring balanced professional development rather than excellence in a single performance dimension.

At the same time, the regulatory framework explicitly accommodates non-linear and hybrid career progression. Articles 65 and 73 of the *Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at NATFA* (RASP-NATFA) recognise different forms of prior experience for appointment to the academic positions of associate professor and professor, including academic employment, teaching and research activity, artistic and creative activity, and professional practice with demonstrated achievements. The RASP-NATFA therefore enable researchers and practitioners with different academic, artistic, and professional trajectories to enter and progress within the academic career structure. In addition, Article 73(2) allows candidates who have not previously held the academic position of associate professor to compete for a professor position, subject to additional requirements concerning scholarly or corresponding artistic and creative achievements. These provisions formally recognise non-linear and hybrid career paths alongside conventional linear academic progression.

Career progression is supported by a regular and transparent periodic attestation system. Junior academic staff are evaluated every three years and senior academic staff every five years. Attestation is conducted by an independent committee composed of NATFA members who are not themselves subject to evaluation in the same cycle and includes academic staff representing different career stages (R1-R4), as well as non-academic staff and a student representative, ensuring plural perspectives, procedural fairness, and institutional accountability. The attestation process follows the peer-based evaluation procedures described under Principle 9 and provides a transparent framework for career progression and performance appraisal.

Positive evaluation and career progression require documented achievement across multiple mandatory categories reflecting the full scope of academic, scholarly and artistic work. These include scientific and artistic research outputs, publications and citations, teaching and supervision, mobility and international activities, participation in research and artistic projects, professional awards and recognition, administrative responsibilities, and contributions to academic life. In addition, Articles 65 and 73 recognise corresponding artistic and creative achievements alongside conventional scholarly outputs for appointment to the academic positions of associate professor and professor. This multidimensional approach ensures that progression is based on sustained professional achievement across the full range of academic responsibilities rather than on a single performance indicator.

Researchers pursuing non-linear and hybrid careers that combine teaching, scholarly, artistic and practice-based research, mobility, and institutional service are explicitly recognised within the career progression framework. Mobility experience, including geographical, inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, and international mobility, is formally recognised through the national NACID system and contributes to career progression. Collaborative work is positively valued as co-authored publications are recognised in accordance with national legislation, while individual roles and contributions in collaborative scholarly and artistic outputs are documented and assessed. Institutional guidelines on co-authorship, authorship attribution, and ethical authorship practices, however, have not yet been formally developed, and structured training on ethical authorship and contribution practices is not yet systematically provided for early-career researchers.

International participation in attestation committees is limited by the Bulgarian language used throughout the procedure. This reflects the national regulatory framework rather than an institutional policy and is therefore considered a structural constraint rather than an actionable institutional gap.

Contextual strengths

- Clear and transparent academic career progression pathway
- Regular attestation cycles with independent, multi-stakeholder committees
- Formal recognition of non-linear and hybrid career paths: Articles 65 and 73 of RASP-NATFA recognise different academic, teaching, research, artistic, and professional routes to academic positions; Article 73(2) also allows progression to professor without previously holding the position of associate professor, subject to additional requirements.
- Multidimensional eligibility requirements recognise the full range of relevant achievements, including artistic and practice-based research, theoretical and scientific scholarship, teaching, professional experience, mobility, and service.
- Mobility and international engagement formally valued in appraisal
- Collaborative work, scholarly and artistic research outputs systematically recognised
- Performance-linked reward system incentivising quality and sustained engagement

Gap analysis

- No co-authorship guidelines: While co-authorship is recognised, institutional guidelines on authorship attribution and ethical authorship practices are not formalised
- No training on ethical authorship: Training for early-career researchers on authorship rights, responsibilities, and ethical practices is not yet provided

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA operates a clear, transparent, and merit-based career progression system supported by regular evaluation, recognition of diverse and non-linear career paths, and performance-linked rewards. Career progression reflects the full range of academic, scholarly and artistic activities required for eligibility. The remaining actionable gaps relate primarily to the formalisation of co-authorship and authorship guidance and structured training on ethical authorship and contribution practices. Limited international

participation in attestation committees represents a structural constraint arising from the language of the procedure rather than an actionable institutional gap.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
12.1 Develop institutional guidelines on co-authorship and authorship attribution	Q1 2027	Institutional research leadership + Ethics Committee	Guidelines adopted
12.2 Integrate ethical authorship and contribution practices into doctoral training and early-career induction	Q4 2027	Institutional research leadership + Doctoral School	Training integrated

PILLAR 3: WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES

Researchers at NATFA benefit from stable employment conditions, social protection, flexible working arrangements, access to shared teaching and research facilities, participation in academic governance, and established procedures for complaints and appeals. These arrangements operate within a strong national legal framework and are supported by the Academy's institutional regulations, rank-based remuneration structures, health and safety procedures, and psychological-support provision. Academic employment is predominantly permanent following statutory competitive appointment procedures, while fixed-term and project-based appointments are managed within national legal requirements. The principal areas for further development concern strengthening institutional coordination and communication regarding researchers' working conditions, clearer recognition of research and artistic-production time alongside teaching workloads, improved guidance on long-term social security and pension rights, strategic planning for research infrastructure, strengthened informal dispute-resolution support, and more visible career-development services for researchers employed on temporary or project-funded contracts.

Principle 13: Working conditions, funding and salaries

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Institutions should provide flexible, accessible, and family-friendly working conditions, ensure a stimulating and safe research environment (including for remote collaboration), put in place procedures for complaints/appeals and participation in governance, and guarantee fair remuneration and social protection for researchers at all stages.

Status

NATFA complies with national labour legislation and provides a standard 8-hour/5-day working week, complemented by the nationally recognised provision for a flexible ('non-fixed') working schedule that allows researchers to organise their working hours around teaching, research, and artistic production. Remote work is widely practised for research activities not requiring archive, studio, or library access, enabling researchers to combine professional and personal responsibilities. All appointed researchers are covered by the national social security system, with rights to sickness, healthcare, parental leave, pension contributions, and unemployment benefits. Additional voluntary health insurance is available.

NATFA provides access to teaching and research facilities, including rehearsal rooms, studios, workshops, screening rooms, and the Academic Library, and applies national occupational health and safety standards with regular staff training. The Academy does not operate dedicated, stand-alone state-of-the-art research infrastructure beyond these facilities, due to structural and spatial limitations of the existing campus infrastructure. As a result, much research activity – particularly practice-based and artistic research – is conducted within shared teaching and production spaces or off-campus. A Psychological Support Centre open to all staff and students supports mental health and well-being.

Researchers and doctoral candidates are represented in institutional information, consultation, and decision-making bodies, including the Academic Council, Faculty Councils, and standing committees. In accordance with the *Higher Education Act* and NATFA's institutional regulations, the Academy's governance is primarily exercised by elected academic staff, ensuring that researchers play a central role in institutional decision-making, strategic development, and academic self-governance. Complaints are handled through established legal and institutional procedures, including the Ethics Committee.

Teaching workload is standardised by academic rank, with differentiated teaching hours for assistant, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor positions. Research and artistic production time are not formally regulated within workload planning, and reporting of research time is not mandatory.

All researchers receive monthly payslips providing transparent information on gross salary, tax deductions, and social security contributions. Pension contributions are clearly indicated on the payslip in accordance with national regulations. Individual pension projections are not provided as supplementary documentation.

Contextual strengths

- Legally compliant and flexible working time arrangements supporting work–life balance.
- Universal social security coverage and access to additional health insurance.
- Psychological Support Centre and regular health and safety instruction.
- Transparent, rank-based salary structures with automatic seniority increments.
- Monthly payslips clearly displaying salary components, social security contributions, and tax information.
- Researcher-led institutional governance through elected academic bodies.
- Established complaint and appeal mechanisms, including oversight by the Ethics Committee.

Gap analysis

- Teaching workload is explicitly regulated by academic rank; however, research and artistic production time are not formally integrated into workload planning or documented. This creates ambiguity regarding expectations and recognition of research effort alongside teaching.
- While monthly payslips provide essential information on taxation and social security contributions, there is no consolidated, explanatory guidance (e.g. at induction) on pension rights, long-term social security arrangements, or how contributions translate into future entitlements.
- The absence of dedicated research-only infrastructure limits access to specialised research spaces and equipment across disciplines.
- A designated ombudsperson or formalised informal dispute-resolution function for researchers is not yet in place.

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA provides flexible, legally compliant working conditions with transparent remuneration structures and social protection. Key areas for further development include clearer institutional recognition of research time alongside teaching, improved guidance on long-term social security and pension rights, strengthened infrastructure planning within existing constraints, and enhanced informal conflict-resolution support.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
13.1 Develop institutional guidance on recognition of research and artistic production time in relation to teaching workloads (without mandating time reporting).	Q3 2027	Institutional research leadership + Faculties + HR	Guidelines adopted and referenced in departmental planning
13.2 Prepare supplementary guidance on pension rights and long-term social security benefits and make it available at induction and via HR channels.	Q2 2027	HR	Guidance document published and disseminated
13.3 Explore designation of an ombudsperson or informal dispute-resolution function for researchers	Q4 2027	Institutional research leadership + Ethics Committee	Feasibility study completed; decision adopted.

13.4 Integrate research infrastructure priorities into strategic and capital investment planning within existing spatial constraints	Q2 2028	Rectorate + Faculties + Administration	Infrastructure priorities documented in strategic plan.
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Principle 14: Stability of employment

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Institutions should counter precarity by supporting job security and stability, using permanent or open-ended contracts for long-term or recurrent tasks, and ensuring that researchers on fixed-term contracts receive appropriate career development support.

Status

Employment at NATFA is governed by the *Bulgarian Labour Code*, the *Higher Education Act*, the ADASRB, and the institution's internal regulations, which provide stable, long-term employment for academic staff recruited through legally regulated competitive selection procedures.

Fixed-term contracts are used primarily for assistant positions, in accordance with national legislation, with contract durations of two or four years depending on the candidate's doctoral status. Assistant positions are embedded within a defined academic career-development pathway. Assistants who have not yet obtained a doctoral degree are encouraged to pursue doctoral studies, while two-year assistant contracts apply where completion of the doctoral degree is imminent. Following acquisition of the doctoral degree, assistants may progress towards the permanent academic position of assistant professor through the applicable statutory procedure, including the public announcement of a competitive selection procedure. Academic positions above assistant are appointed on permanent contracts following successful completion of the relevant statutory selection process. Fixed-term contracts may also be used for specific temporary or project-based needs.

The structure of academic employment is monitored annually, including the number of professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and assistants employed by the Academy. These data provide a regular overview of the structure of permanent and fixed-term academic employment, since assistant positions are held on fixed-term contracts, and are reported to the General Assemblies of the Faculties and of the Academy.

All researchers are covered by the national social security system and benefit from statutory employment protection. Career stability and professional development are further supported through regular attestation procedures. The Centre for Career Development provides career-development services, although information about these services is not yet systematically communicated to researchers employed on fixed-term or project-based contracts.

Contextual strengths

- Predominantly permanent employment for academic staff following statutory recruitment procedures.
- Comprehensive legal framework ensuring employment protection and social security.
- Fixed-term assistant contracts regulated by national legislation, with clearly defined durations linked to doctoral status and embedded within a defined academic career-development pathway.
- Academic employment patterns are monitored annually and reported to the General Assemblies of the Faculties and of the Academy.
- Regular staff attestation supporting career development and employment stability.

Gap analysis

- Information on available career-development services is not yet systematically communicated to researchers employed on fixed-term or project-based contracts.

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA provides a high degree of employment stability, supported by strong legal protection and predominantly permanent academic employment. Fixed-term assistant employment is embedded within a defined academic career-development pathway, including opportunities for doctoral progression and subsequent participation in competitive procedures for permanent academic positions. Academic employment patterns are systematically monitored and reported annually. The remaining area for further formalisation concerns the consistent communication of available career-development services to researchers employed on fixed-term or project-based contracts.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
14.1 Ensure researchers on fixed-term or project-based contracts receive information on career development services provided by the Centre for Career Development.	Q2 2027	HR + Centre for Career Development	Career development information included in induction materials and employment documentation.

Principle 15: Contractual and legal obligations

Implementation:

-/+ Partially implemented

Charter requirements

Researchers should be familiar with regulations governing their work (contracts, funder rules, IP, data protection, knowledge security, health and safety) and institutions must provide clear, accessible documentation and support to ensure compliance.

Status

NATFA operates under a comprehensive national and institutional legal framework governing employment, higher education, research, intellectual property, data protection, occupational health and safety, and other obligations relevant to researchers.

Academic staff receive an employment contract together with a position-description template specifying the duties and responsibilities associated with the relevant academic position. These documents provide the principal formal basis for informing employees of their professional and contractual obligations. New employees are also required to familiarise themselves with the applicable occupational health and safety regulations and formally acknowledge that they have done so. Periodic occupational health and safety training is provided.

Relevant national legislation and institutional regulations are publicly accessible through NATFA's institutional website. However, national legislative documents and NATFA's internal regulations are generally not available in English. Standard position-description templates for academic positions are likewise not available in English.

The standard position-description templates do not yet comprehensively address a number of obligations that have become increasingly relevant to the research environment, including data protection, intellectual property, AI-related responsibilities, cybersecurity, and knowledge security. Awareness of intellectual property obligations and the legal implications of AI-assisted creation is

developing through dedicated teaching, expert support, institutional discussions, and emerging guidance, but this information is not yet consolidated within a single institutional framework.

Support concerning contractual and legal obligations is provided through existing institutional structures, including HR, occupational health and safety procedures, project-management and compliance arrangements, and relevant expert support. However, these different forms of support are not yet systematically integrated into induction for new academic staff and doctoral candidates or brought together through a single, easily accessible reference resource.

Contextual strengths

- Comprehensive national and institutional regulatory framework governing researchers' employment and professional obligations.
- Employment contracts and position-description templates formally define the responsibilities associated with academic positions.
- Relevant legislation and institutional regulations are accessible through the NATFA website.
- New employees are required to familiarise themselves with occupational health and safety regulations and formally acknowledge this, supported by periodic occupational health and safety training.
- Awareness of intellectual property and AI-related obligations is developing through teaching, expert support, institutional discussions, and emerging guidance.
- Existing HR, project-management, and expert structures provide support in relation to specific contractual and legal requirements.

Gap analysis

- No consolidated, user-friendly guide in Bulgarian and English brings together researchers' broader contractual, legal, and compliance obligations, particularly regarding funder requirements, intellectual property, data protection, cybersecurity, and knowledge security.
- Standard position-description templates for academic positions do not yet comprehensively address relevant obligations concerning intellectual property, data protection, AI-related responsibilities, cybersecurity, and knowledge security, and are not available in English.
- Induction for new staff and doctoral candidates does not systematically address legal and contractual obligations.

Assessment

Rating: Partially implemented

NATFA has a strong regulatory basis for contractual and legal compliance. Academic staff receive employment contracts and position-description templates defining their responsibilities, relevant legislation and institutional regulations are publicly accessible, and occupational health and safety obligations are formally communicated to new employees and supported by periodic training. However, the mechanisms through which researchers are informed and supported remain only partially consolidated. There is no single bilingual reference resource bringing together researchers' principal contractual, legal, and compliance obligations; standard position-description templates do not yet comprehensively address several increasingly relevant areas and are not available in English; and induction does not yet systematically cover key contractual and legal obligations.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
15.1 Revise the standard position-description templates for academic positions to incorporate relevant contractual and legal obligations, including intellectual property, data protection, AI-related responsibilities, cybersecurity, and knowledge	Q2 2027	HR + Legal Advisor	Revised Bulgarian and English position-description templates approved and

security, and make the templates available in Bulgarian and English.			introduced for academic positions.
15.2 Integrate key legal and contractual obligations into induction for new academic staff and doctoral candidates.	Q3 2027	HR + Doctoral School	Induction content updated and implemented; attendance recorded.
15.3 Develop a concise bilingual reference guide for researchers summarising key contractual, legal, and compliance obligations, identifying available institutional support, and linking to the relevant authoritative legislation and institutional regulations.	Q4 2027	Institutional research leadership + Legal Advisor	Bulgarian and English guide published online and incorporated into induction materials.

Principle 16: Dissemination and exploitation of results, intellectual assets and public engagement

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Researchers and institutions should practice Open Science, disseminate and exploit research results (including commercialisation where appropriate), manage intellectual assets transparently and fairly, and engage with the public to ensure research is understandable and socially relevant.

Status

NATFA actively disseminates scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research outputs through institutional publications, open-access channels, conferences, performances, exhibitions, screenings, festivals, and partnerships with cultural and educational institutions. The Academy's annual *Text and Image* conference provides an established institutional forum for presenting and discussing research and artistic research, complemented by the *NATFA Yearbook*, *Research Bulletins*, Academic Research Seminars, and other public and academic dissemination formats. Elements of Open Science practice are embedded in these activities, including open-access publications and digital archiving of doctoral theses and artistic works (see also Principle 3).

Research results are also exploited through their direct integration into NATFA's educational activities. New knowledge, methodologies, creative practices, technological developments, and research outcomes generated through scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research inform teaching content, curriculum development, doctoral training, workshops, and other educational formats. This close relationship between research and teaching provides an important pathway through which research results are transferred to students and incorporated into the Academy's educational practice. Where relevant, research results are also transferred through professional and cultural-sector collaboration, public presentation, and project-based activities.

Intellectual assets arising from scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research are managed within the applicable national and institutional framework, supported by growing expertise in intellectual property and the implications of AI-assisted creation. Educational initiatives, including the *IP in the Age of AI* micro-credential, expert support, faculty-level discussions, and emerging institutional guidance contribute to researchers' capacity to identify and appropriately manage intellectual assets. However, NATFA does not yet have a consolidated institutional approach to intellectual-assets management across the research lifecycle, including identification, documentation, protection where appropriate, dissemination, and potential exploitation.

Public engagement is an established feature of NATFA's research and artistic culture. Performances, screenings, exhibitions, festivals, conferences, public discussions, and other formats bring research and

artistic practice into direct interaction with audiences and contribute to cultural development, education, public dialogue, and engagement with contemporary social issues. This reflects NATFA's broader mission as a public cultural and educational institution.

Open Science practices are recognised within NATFA's research activities and supported through open-access dissemination and digital archiving. Limitations concerning institutional financial support for Open Science dissemination are addressed under Principle 3 and are therefore not duplicated as a separate gap or action under this principle.

Contextual strengths

- Extensive dissemination channels for scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research, including the annual *Text and Image* conference, institutional publications, Academic Research Seminars, performances, screenings, exhibitions, festivals, and other public formats.
- Open-access institutional publications and digital archiving supporting the visibility and accessibility of research outputs.
- Research outcomes and research-generated knowledge, methodologies, and practices are integrated into teaching, curriculum development, and doctoral training.
- Research results are also transferred, where relevant, through professional and cultural-sector collaboration, public presentation, and project-based activities.
- Strong culture of public engagement connecting scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research with cultural development, education, professional practice, and wider society.
- Developing expertise and educational provision concerning intellectual property, AI-assisted creation, and the management of intellectual assets.
- Open Science practices are recognised within institutional research activities; limitations concerning financial support for Open Science dissemination are addressed under Principle 3.

Gap analysis

- A consolidated institutional approach to the management of intellectual assets across the research lifecycle, including identification, documentation, protection where appropriate, dissemination, and potential exploitation, is not yet established.

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

Dissemination, exploitation, and public engagement are core institutional strengths, with broad societal impact and strong alignment with Open Science principles. The remaining area for further formalisation concerns the systematic management of intellectual assets across the research lifecycle.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
16.1 Develop an institutional framework for intellectual-assets management covering the identification, documentation, protection where appropriate, dissemination, and potential exploitation of intellectual assets arising from scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research.	Q1 2028	Rectorate + Legal Advisor + Ethics Committee	Institutional framework adopted and published.

PILLAR 4: RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Research career development at NATFA is supported by a clear national and institutional regulatory framework, stable academic employment structures, and a strong tradition of integrating research, artistic practice, and teaching. The Academy has a formal *Strategy for the Development of the Academic Staff*, regularly monitored through recruitment planning, attestation procedures, and analysis of research profiles and generational balance. Career progression pathways are transparent and well understood by researchers, while scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research outputs are explicitly recognised in evaluation and promotion procedures. Researchers benefit from international mobility, project participation, lifelong learning, departmental mentoring, peer learning, and close professional collaboration, particularly in scholarly, artistic, practice-based, and interdisciplinary fields. These contextual strengths provide a solid foundation for the further systematisation of career guidance, continuous professional development, mentoring, and researcher support across career stages and contractual situations.

Principle 17: Valuing diverse research careers

Implementation:

+/- Almost but not fully implemented

Charter requirements

Institutions should recognise and value researchers' diverse career paths (inter-sectoral, inter-institutional, interdisciplinary, geographical, and virtual mobility), develop talent-based and diversity-sensitive quality assessment, and support awareness of career opportunities across all sectors and cultures of diversification.

Status

NATFA recognises that researchers in the fields of theatre, film, and audiovisual arts frequently pursue diverse and hybrid professional trajectories, combining academic work with artistic practice, research, cultural leadership, entrepreneurship, collaboration with industry, and engagement with public and cultural institutions. Researchers commonly move between academia and professional creative practice throughout their careers, bringing experience from different sectors into teaching, research, and artistic production. The recognition of non-linear and hybrid career paths within formal career progression is addressed in greater detail under Principle 12, *Career Progression*.

The Academy's evaluation and career-progression framework formally recognises diverse academic, artistic, and professional career trajectories. Articles 65 and 73 of RASP-NATFA recognise different forms of experience for appointment to the academic positions of associate professor and professor, including academic, teaching and research experience, artistic and creative activity, and professional practice with demonstrated achievements. They also allow the required research contribution to be demonstrated through a published monograph or equivalent scientific publications, or through corresponding artistic and creative achievements in the arts. These provisions provide a formal basis for talent-based and diversity-sensitive assessment by allowing merit to be demonstrated through different forms of experience and achievement and by accommodating the specific characteristics of scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research.

Mobility in its different forms contributes to NATFA's diverse research careers. Researchers participate in geographical and international mobility, inter-sectoral collaboration, and increasingly in virtual mobility through international research, artistic, educational, and project-based activities. The mechanisms for inter-sectoral and virtual mobility, including their documentation and formal recognition, are addressed under Principle 7, *Free Circulation of Researchers*. Under the present principle, the relevant issue is the extent to which these experiences are presented to researchers as possible components of diverse and non-linear career pathways.

Career development is supported through departmental mentoring, professional networks, alumni engagement, the Centre for Career Development, and close collaboration with theatres, production companies, festivals, museums, and other cultural organisations. However, structured institutional guidance illustrating the full diversity of research careers and opportunities within and beyond academia remains limited.

Contextual strengths

- Formal career-progression requirements recognise different forms of academic, research, teaching, artistic, and professional experience (Articles 65 and 73 of RASP-NATFA)
- Scholarly publications and corresponding artistic and creative achievements are formally recognised as legitimate forms of achievement for appointment to the academic positions of associate professor and professor (Articles 65 and 73).
- The regulatory framework provides a formal basis for talent-based and diversity-sensitive assessment, accommodating disciplinary diversity and different forms of scholarly, artistic, practice-based, and professional achievement.
- Strong connection to the cultural and creative industries, facilitating inter-sectoral engagement and professional exchange.
- Different forms of mobility and international collaboration contribute to researchers' professional development.
- Active departmental mentoring, professional networks, and alumni engagement supporting career development.

Gap analysis

- Institutional guidance does not yet systematically present the diversity of research careers available within and beyond academia, including inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary, geographical, international, entrepreneurial, and virtual opportunities, particularly for early-career researchers.
- Diverse research career pathways and achievements are not yet systematically showcased through institutional communication.

Assessment

Rating: Almost but not fully implemented

NATFA demonstrates a strong institutional culture that values diverse research careers and recognises varied professional achievements within recruitment, evaluation, and career development. Its assessment framework is responsive to disciplinary diversity and the specific characteristics of artistic and practice-based research, while different forms of mobility and international collaboration contribute to researchers' professional development. Further progress depends primarily on strengthening structured career-development guidance on diverse career pathways and increasing the visibility of diverse career profiles and achievements through institutional communication.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
17.1 Develop guidance materials illustrating diverse research and artistic career profiles, including hybrid, inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary, geographical, international, entrepreneurial, and virtual career pathways, using case studies and alumni examples.	Q3 2027	Centre for Career Development + Faculties	Guidance published; examples from at least five researchers
17.2 Integrate guidance on diverse research career pathways and opportunities into mentoring and career-development activities.	From Q4 2027	Centre for Career Development + Faculties	At least one annual career-development activity delivered; attendance recorded

17.3 Systematically showcase diverse research and artistic career pathways and achievements through institutional communication.	From Q1 2028	Institutional research leadership + Communications	Dedicated section created; regular updates
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Principle 18: Career development and advice

Implementation:

-/+ Partially implemented

Charter requirements

Institutions should draw up a career development strategy for researchers at all career stages and contractual situations, support individual career planning, provide mentoring, and ensure access to career guidance, job placement assistance, and information on career development within and beyond the institution.

Status

NATFA has a formal *Strategy for the Development of the Academic Staff*, approved by the Academic Council and regularly monitored through recruitment planning, attestation procedures, and analysis of research profiles and generational balance. The Strategy covers teaching academic staff and researchers across career stages (R1-R4). Career pathways are clearly defined through national legislation and institutional regulations governing academic degrees, academic positions, and career progression, ensuring transparency and legal certainty.

Career development is supported through departmental mentoring, Heads of Programmes, senior academic staff, research supervisors, project leaders, and professional peer networks. Doctoral candidates receive structured guidance through individual study plans, regular progress reviews, and supervision, while early-career researchers receive advice on research, artistic practice, teaching, mobility, and preparation for academic career progression.

NATFA operates a Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office, which provides a foundation for researcher career guidance, professional networking, and engagement with employers and alumni. Career opportunities within and beyond academia are supported through collaboration with theatres, film and audiovisual production companies, festivals, museums, cultural institutions, creative-sector partners, and alumni networks.

Researchers employed under project-funded contracts are recruited and remunerated in accordance with the relevant R1-R4 researcher profile and applicable institutional and national regulations. However, because these appointments depend on externally funded projects, their duration and availability cannot always be anticipated through regular institutional workforce planning.

While these arrangements provide meaningful support, career guidance remains largely department- or project-based and has not yet been fully consolidated into a consistent institution-wide model for individual career planning, transition support, researcher-specific career guidance, and placement assistance across all career stages and contractual situations.

Contextual strengths

- Formal and regularly monitored *Strategy for the Development of the Academic Staff* covering researchers across career stages from R1 to R4.
- Transparent academic career pathways established through national legislation and institutional regulations.
- Structured career-development support for doctoral candidates through supervision, individual study plans, and progress reviews.

- Guidance for early-career researchers through Heads of Programmes, senior academic staff, research supervisors, and project leaders.
- Existing Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office providing a foundation for expanded researcher career guidance, networking, and placement support.
- Strong links with theatres, film, audiovisual, and cultural sectors supporting career opportunities within and beyond academia.
- Researchers employed on project-funded contracts are recruited and remunerated in accordance with the relevant R1-R4 researcher profile.

Gap analysis

- Researcher career guidance, placement assistance, professional networking, and transition support are not yet fully coordinated through a clearly defined institution-wide service covering all career stages and contractual situations.
- Structured support at key career-transition points, including doctoral completion, early-career entry, progression to higher academic positions, transitions beyond academia, and completion of project-funded appointments, is not yet systematically coordinated.
- Optional tools and resources supporting individual career planning and documentation of career-development objectives are not yet available.

Assessment

Rating: Partially implemented

NATFA has established substantial foundations for researcher career development through its Strategy for the Development of the Academic Staff, structured doctoral support, departmental mentoring, and the existing Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office. Further progress depends primarily on consolidating these resources into a coordinated researcher career-development service accessible across career stages and contractual situations, strengthening support at key career-transition points, and providing practical tools for individual career planning. Actions under Principles 17 and 20 complement these developments by addressing awareness of diverse career pathways and mentoring and supervision, respectively.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
18.1 Formalise the mandate of the Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office for researcher career guidance, professional networking, placement assistance, and transition support within and beyond academia.	Q2 2027	Institutional research leadership + Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office	Mandate adopted; researcher career-guidance services published online
18.2 Establish structured career-guidance activities at key career-transition points, including doctoral completion, early-career entry, progression to higher academic positions, transitions beyond academia, and completion of project-funded appointments.	From Q3 2027	Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office + Faculties	Minimum two activities per year; attendance recorded
18.3 Develop optional individual career-development planning templates and resources to support guidance provided by Heads of Programmes, supervisors, project leaders, and mentors.	Q4 2027	Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office	Templates and guidance resources published online and communicated to researchers
18.4 Strengthen coordination between the Strategy for the Development of the Academic Staff, the Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office,	From Q1 2028	Institutional research leadership +	Annual coordination meeting held;

departmental mentoring, and project leaders to support researchers across R1-R4 and different contractual situations.		Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office	researcher career-development activities reviewed across R1–R4 and contractual situations.
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Principle 19: Continuous professional development

Implementation:

-/+ Partially implemented

Charter requirements

Researchers should be given opportunities to continually improve skills and competencies through training, workshops, conferences, e-learning, and collaboration. Institutions should ensure accessible development across all career stages, support mobility, foster entrepreneurial competences, recognise teaching, and provide CPD for supervisors and mentors.

Status

Researchers at NATFA have access to and participate in continuous professional development through national and European programmes (including Erasmus+ staff mobility), discipline-specific learning embedded in artistic and pedagogical practice, international conferences, seminars, workshops, project-based training, professional collaboration, lifelong learning opportunities offered through the Centre for Furthering Education, and specialised training delivered through European projects and networks, including partner institutions, European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) initiatives, and European Commission programmes and initiatives. Recent European projects, including C-Accelerate Plus, have provided structured training in innovation, entrepreneurship, intellectual property, and commercialisation, with researchers and doctoral candidates at different career stages participating in dedicated seminars, courses, and workshops. Participation in CPD is recognised within attestation and evaluation procedures, and funding may be available, subject to project eligibility, available institutional resources, and applicable financial rules.

Teaching is recognised as a core academic activity and is valued in evaluation and recruitment to higher academic positions. Doctoral education integrates disciplinary knowledge with broader professional development through supervision, individual study plans, and research training. Researchers across different career stages and contractual situations also benefit from departmental learning, peer exchange, project participation, mobility opportunities, and practice-based professional development.

Professional development relevant to supervision and mentoring is supported through doctoral education, pedagogical practice, and institutional experience. However, opportunities for supervisors and mentors are not yet coordinated through a regular institution-wide CPD offer.

Although participation in CPD is recognised and encouraged, the Academy does not yet systematically monitor the accessibility, uptake, effectiveness, or outcomes of CPD activities across departments, career stages, and contractual situations. The institutional electronic academic system provides a technical basis for coordinating and communicating CPD opportunities; however, dedicated functionality supporting researcher CPD has not yet been configured and operationalised.

Contextual strengths

- Active participation in national and international continuous professional development opportunities, including Erasmus+ mobility, European projects and networks, and discipline-specific professional learning embedded in artistic and pedagogical practice.

- Recognition of continuous professional development, mobility, and teaching within researcher evaluation and career progression.
- Lifelong learning opportunities supported through the Centre for Furthering Education.
- Access to specialised training delivered through European projects, partner institutions, European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) initiatives, and European Commission programmes and initiatives, including structured entrepreneurship and innovation training through projects such as C-Accelerate Plus involving researchers and doctoral candidates at different career stages.
- Existing institutional electronic academic system providing a foundation for coordinated management and communication of CPD activities.

Gap analysis

- CPD provision is not yet systematically mapped and coordinated to ensure comprehensive coverage across all researcher career stages and contractual situations, including doctoral candidates, early-career researchers, academic staff, project-based researchers, and researchers returning after career breaks.
- Strategic alignment of CPD with institutional and transversal skill priorities requires strengthening to ensure the long-term sustainability of provision in areas such as AI literacy, Open Science, research integrity, project and financial management, entrepreneurship, and digital competences beyond individual project funding.
- No systematic institutional mechanism is currently in place for monitoring CPD accessibility and uptake, assessing effectiveness, and periodically identifying researchers' priority development needs.
- Continuous professional development specifically supporting supervisors and mentors is not yet organised as a regular, coordinated institutional offer.
- Dedicated functionality for coordinating and communicating researcher CPD opportunities through the institutional electronic academic system has not yet been configured and operationalised.

Assessment

Rating: Partially implemented

NATFA provides and recognises a broad range of continuous professional-development opportunities through international mobility, project participation, conferences, discipline-specific learning, lifelong learning, doctoral education, teaching, and artistic practice. Teaching and mobility are recognised within evaluation and career progression, while European projects have strengthened institutional capacity in entrepreneurship, innovation, and other transversal competences. However, CPD provision remains decentralised and is not yet systematically mapped, coordinated, monitored, or supported through dedicated institutional functionality across all researcher career stages and contractual situations. Further development is required to establish a coordinated institutional CPD framework, strengthen strategic planning and accessibility, introduce proportionate monitoring of uptake and effectiveness, provide regular CPD for supervisors and mentors, and improve visibility through the institutional electronic academic system.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
19.1 Map internal and external CPD opportunities relevant to research, supervision, mentoring, teaching, mobility, and transversal skills, identifying provision for researchers across different career stages and contractual situations.	Q2 2027	Centre for Career Development + Institutional research leadership	Mapping report completed and published internally

19.2 Develop a coordinated institutional CPD framework with annual priorities, drawing on activities delivered through the Centre for Furthering Education, European projects, partner institutions, and other European initiatives and addressing relevant transversal competences, including AI literacy, Open Science, research integrity, project and financial management, entrepreneurship, and digital competences	From Q3 2027	Institutional research leadership + Centre for Career Development + Centre for Furthering Education + Faculties + Doctoral School	Annual CPD plan published, including provision relevant to supervision and mentoring
19.3 Establish a mechanism for monitoring CPD accessibility and uptake, assessing effectiveness, and periodically identifying researchers' priority development needs.	From Q1 2028	Institutional research leadership + Centre for Career Development + HR	CPD participation monitored by career stage and researcher group; periodic feedback and needs assessment undertaken
19.4 Develop, configure, and operationalise, subject to technical feasibility, dedicated CPD functionality within the institutional electronic academic system to improve the visibility, accessibility, and coordination of professional-development opportunities.	Q4 2027	Institutional research leadership + IT + Centre for Career Development + HR	Dedicated CPD functionality, or an equivalent centrally maintained CPD information and coordination space, operational and updated at least quarterly.

Principle 20: Supervision and mentoring

Implementation:

-/+ Partially implemented

Charter requirements

Institutions should ensure supervisors have expertise, time, and training; establish clear progress and feedback procedures; and support multi-faceted mentoring by senior researchers (R3–R4), especially for early-career researchers.

Status

Doctoral supervision at NATFA is governed by national legislation and institutional regulations, providing a transparent and well-defined framework for doctoral education. Each doctoral candidate is assigned one or more supervisors and an individual study plan defining research objectives, methodology, expected outputs, milestones, study courses, publication activity, participation in conferences, teaching, and administrative responsibilities. Doctoral research topics are selected within the Academy's recognised fields of research and artistic practice, ensuring the availability of appropriate supervisory expertise. Supervisors are appointed on the basis of their academic, artistic, and professional expertise relevant to the doctoral topic. Only experienced researchers meeting national eligibility requirements may act as doctoral supervisors. Where appropriate, particularly for interdisciplinary research proposals, two supervisors may be appointed to provide complementary expertise and support.

Supervision is recognised as an important academic responsibility and is formally recognised within academic career progression and periodic attestation. Institutional regulations require supervisors to dedicate a minimum of 30 working hours annually to each supervised doctoral candidate. Supervisors have clearly defined academic and mentoring responsibilities, including guidance on research design

and methodology, supporting academic and artistic development, reviewing written work, providing regular feedback, monitoring progress, and mentoring doctoral candidates towards successful completion.

Doctoral progress is monitored through structured reporting procedures. Doctoral candidates submit progress reports twice annually to their Department Council and Faculty Council, accompanied by written supervisor evaluations. These procedures provide formal opportunities for feedback, identify challenges, monitor progress against the individual study plan, and support timely adjustments where necessary. In addition, research in progress is discussed within departments and may be presented at the Academy's regular Academic Research Seminar, providing opportunities to receive feedback from a wider interdisciplinary academic community.

Supervisors have access to professional-development opportunities through supervisory and pedagogical training initiatives; the Centre for Furthering Education; European projects, partner institutions, European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) initiatives, and European Commission programmes; institutional seminars; and external professional-development activities. While these opportunities provide valuable support, they are currently delivered through selected initiatives rather than a regular, coordinated institutional CPD programme for supervisors and mentors.

Beyond doctoral supervision, mentoring continues primarily through departmental culture, collaboration with senior academic staff, artistic practice, research projects, and professional networks. Early-career researchers receive guidance from Heads of Programmes, senior colleagues, research supervisors, and project leaders. However, these arrangements remain largely based on departmental practice and individual initiative. NATFA has not yet established a coordinated institutional mentoring framework with designated mentors, formal mentor–mentee matching, common mentoring standards, or systematic monitoring of mentoring relationships.

Contextual strengths

- Robust national and institutional framework governing doctoral supervision.
- Appointment of experienced supervisors with topic-relevant academic, artistic, and professional expertise.
- Supervision formally recognised within academic career progression and periodic attestation.
- Clearly defined supervisory responsibilities, minimum supervision time, and structured progress monitoring supported by regular feedback and written evaluations.
- Existing supervisory and pedagogical training initiatives providing a foundation for a coordinated institutional CPD programme for supervisors and mentors.
- Strong departmental culture of informal mentoring and peer support for early-career researchers.

Gap analysis

- No unified institutional mentoring framework defining roles, responsibilities, expectations, and quality standards beyond doctoral supervision.
- Mentoring for early-career researchers after completion of the PhD relies primarily on departmental practice and individual initiative rather than coordinated institutional arrangements.
- Formal mechanisms for mentor–mentee matching, monitoring mentoring relationships, and evaluating mentoring effectiveness have not yet been established.

Assessment

Rating: Partially implemented

NATFA has established a comprehensive and well-regulated doctoral-supervision system supported by national legislation, experienced topic-relevant supervisors, clearly defined supervisory responsibilities, dedicated supervision time, structured progress monitoring, multiple opportunities for scholarly

feedback, and formal recognition of supervision within academic career progression and periodic attestation. Supervisors have access to professional-development opportunities, while early-career researchers benefit from strong departmental mentoring cultures.

However, mentoring beyond doctoral supervision remains primarily dependent on departmental practice and individual initiative. A coordinated institutional mentoring framework, regular and structured CPD for supervisors and mentors, formal mentor–mentee matching, common quality standards, and systematic monitoring of mentoring relationships have not yet been established. The planned actions will therefore move NATFA from strong doctoral-supervision practice and informal mentoring towards a more consistent institutional model supporting researchers across career stages.

Proposed actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible	KPI
20.1 Develop and adopt an institutional supervision and mentoring framework defining roles, responsibilities, quality standards, and expectations for supervisors, mentors, and researchers across career stages.	Q3 2027	Institutional research leadership + Doctoral School	Framework adopted and communicated institution-wide
20.2 Establish a regular institutional CPD programme for supervisors, mentors, and senior researchers (R3–R4), building on existing supervisory and pedagogical training initiatives and coordinated with Principle 19, Continuous professional development.	From Q1 2028	Doctoral School + Centre for Career Development	At least one supervision- and mentoring-related CPD activity delivered annually; participation recorded
20.3 Develop and implement a structured institutional mentoring programme for early-career researchers, including voluntary mentor–mentee matching and guidance for mentors.	Q2 2028	Faculties + Centre for Career Development	Mentoring programme launched; mentor–mentee participation recorded

APPENDIX 1: EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS – HRS4R GAP ANALYSIS OVERVIEW TABLE

European Charter for Researchers: GAP analysis overview – reference date: July 2026			
Principle	Implementation level	Status and the gap: to what extent NATFA meets the principles	Initiatives undertaken and/or suggestions for improvement:
Pillar 1: Ethics, Integrity, Gender, and Open Science			
1. Ethics and research integrity	+/-	Gaps: - No explicit reference to the ALLEA European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity; - No formal training programme on research ethics and integrity for all researchers; - Ethical guidance related to AI currently exists primarily through disciplinary discussions, teaching practice, and expert knowledge, rather than through a consolidated institutional framework. Impediments: - Rapid evolution of AI technologies and research practices. - Complexity of authorship and intellectual-property issues in collaborative and AI-assisted artistic research.	Undertaken: - Ethics Code for Employees and Teaching Staff, adopted in 2008 and most recently amended in 2025. - Ethics Committee with broad representation of academic staff, administrative staff, students, and doctoral candidates, operating under established institutional procedures. - Mandatory plagiarism screening through StrikePlagiarism for doctoral dissertations and other written research outputs. - Institutional discussions and awareness-raising activities supporting implementation of the Ethics Code and research-integrity principles, reflected in the high level of awareness reported through the December 2025 institutional questionnaire. - Research ethics, intellectual property, and artificial intelligence incorporated into teaching, doctoral supervision, and specialised training, including the IP in the Age of AI micro-credential course developed under the C-Accelerate Plus project. - NATFA OTM-R Policy adopted by the Academic Council in January 2026. New proposals: 1.1 Add an explicit reference to the ALLEA European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity to the Ethics Code. 1.2 Develop and implement annual research-integrity training for researchers across all career stages. 1.3 Develop and adopt institutional guidelines on AI ethics, intellectual property, and scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research, aligned with the Ethics Code. 1.4 Integrate AI ethics into research ethics review, doctoral supervision, and staff induction.
2. Freedom of scientific research	++	No gaps identified. Academic freedom is comprehensively guaranteed through national legislation and institutional regulations. A standalone institutional	Undertaken: - Academic freedom guaranteed by Article 20 of the Higher Education Act. - Academic autonomy and self-governance embedded in the Regulations for the Organisation and Activities of the National

		policy is not considered necessary under the current legislative framework. Impediments: None identified.	Academy for Theatre and Film Arts (Articles 4 and 36). - Approval procedures for doctoral dissertation topics and academic career progression operate as quality assurance mechanisms and do not restrict researchers' freedom to define research questions or methodologies. - High level of confidence in academic freedom confirmed through the December 2025 institutional questionnaire. New proposal conditional: 2.1 If required by assessors, incorporate explicit provisions on academic freedom into the NATFA OTM-R Policy.
3. Open Science	-/+	Gaps: - No formal Open Science Policy. - No Research Data Management (RDM) guidelines aligned with FAIR principles. - Limited mechanisms to support open-access publishing in external venues, as available research funding is insufficient to provide systematic financial support for publication costs, including Article Processing Charges (APCs). - No dedicated open-access repository formally integrated with the Bulgarian Portal for Open Science (BPOS) or the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). - Citizen science and participatory research methodologies are not yet systematically formalised, although they are relevant in selected artistic and community-based contexts. Impediments: - Limited institutional research funding for Open Science infrastructure and systematic support for publication costs. - Reliance on national and external infrastructures and platforms for research-output storage, access, and dissemination. - Research-data management in scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research requires approaches adapted to diverse outputs, copyright, intellectual-property, and ethical considerations.	Undertaken: - Open-access publication of the NATFA Yearbook and Research Bulletins through the institutional digital library, EBSCO, and CEEOL. - Open-access dissemination through the Centre for Semiotic Studies website. - Digital storage and public accessibility of doctoral dissertations, habilitation materials, and artistic outputs through the Academic Library and the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID). - Compliance with national Open Science requirements and engagement with relevant national infrastructures and dissemination platforms, including NACID, EBSCO, and CEEOL. - Support for open dissemination through library services and externally funded projects and programmes, including Erasmus+. New proposals: 3.1 Develop and adopt an Open Science Policy. 3.2 Develop Research Data Management guidelines aligned with FAIR principles. 3.3 Establish a mechanism to support Open Access publication fees within available budgetary resources. 3.4 Explore integration with the Bulgarian Portal for Open Science (BPOS). 3.5 Integrate Open Science principles into doctoral training.
4. Gender Equality	+/-	Gaps: - The Gender Equality Plan (October 2023–December 2025) has expired. - The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) structure is still being developed and currently relies on a single designated EDI Officer; formalisation of the function and coordination mechanisms with the Ethics Committee are still underway.	Undertaken: - A renewed Gender Equality Plan is currently in development. - Active participation in the implementation of the FilmEU Joint Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy. - Designated EDI Officer coordinating local implementation within the FilmEU framework.

		- Awareness of EDI policies and available support services remains uneven across the Academy. - Systematic monitoring and reporting of gender equality and EDI indicators are not yet fully established. Impediments: - Field-driven recruitment pools limit the practical use of gender targets or quotas.	- Principles of equality, dignity, and non-discrimination embedded in the Ethics Code and overseen by the Ethics Committee. - Psychological Support Centre providing confidential counselling and support for staff and students. - Balanced gender representation across researcher career stages (R1–R4), academic leadership, and decision-making bodies. - National legislative provisions supporting equal treatment, work–life balance, parental leave, and protection against discrimination. New proposals: 4.1 Finalise and formally adopt the renewed Gender Equality Plan. 4.2 Further develop and formalise the institutional EDI function, including clear roles, responsibilities, and coordination with the Ethics Committee. 4.3 Improve the visibility of the Gender Equality Plan, the FilmEU Joint EDI Policy, and available EDI support services. 4.4 Introduce systematic monitoring and annual reporting of gender equality and EDI indicators. 4.5 Deliver regular awareness and training activities on equality, inclusion, prevention of harassment, and respectful working environments.
5. Embracing diversity	+/-	Gaps: - Diversity-related responsibilities within the developing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) function are not yet fully consolidated. - Formal procedures for accessibility and reasonable accommodation are not yet documented institution-wide. - Systematic training on diversity and unconscious bias is not yet provided. - International diversity remains constrained by national language requirements. - Diversity indicators are not yet consolidated into regular institutional monitoring and reporting. Impediments: - National language requirements for instruction and doctoral training limit opportunities for international recruitment and participation. - The sensitive nature of some diversity-related data limits the scope of systematic monitoring.	Undertaken: - Established national and institutional non-discrimination framework. - Ethics and EDI structures supporting diversity and inclusion. - Psychological Support Centre providing confidential support to staff and students. - Progressive improvement of physical accessibility, with three of four campus buildings fully accessible. - Transparent and standardised recruitment and evaluation procedures. - Internal HR capacity to monitor diversity indicators. - Regular hosting of visiting professors and artists from abroad, supporting intercultural exchange. New proposals: 5.1 Formalise procedures for reasonable accommodation and accessibility. 5.2 Deliver regular awareness-raising and training activities on diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias. 5.3 Explore measures to support international engagement within national language constraints.

		- Infrastructure constraints affect the pace of full physical accessibility improvements.	
6. The Researcher	+/-	Gaps: - Professional-development resources for early- and mid-career researchers are not yet fully consolidated, particularly regarding researcher responsibilities, institutional procedures, research integrity, project participation, and professional practice. - Financial-management training is available but elective and not systematically integrated for researchers with project responsibilities. Impediments: - Hybrid researcher roles commonly combine research, teaching, artistic practice, and administrative responsibilities. - Professional-development opportunities are largely dependent on individual projects, departmental practices, and available external funding.	Undertaken: - Doctoral candidates are formally recognised as researchers and may be supported through state-funded doctoral scholarships, employment contracts, or both. - Hybrid and non-linear careers combining research, teaching, and artistic practice are recognised and supported. - Mobility opportunities are available through Erasmus+, other exchange programmes, institutional invitations, and project-based secondments. - Professional development during doctoral studies is supported through individual study plans, regular progress reviews, and supervisor guidance. - An active research culture is supported through the annual Text and Image conference, regular Academic Research Seminars, and public dissemination of artistic research. - Research accountability is supported through supervision, attestation, peer review, project reporting, and funder audits. New proposals: 6.1 Develop and consolidate professional-development resources for early- and mid-career researchers on researcher responsibilities, institutional procedures, research integrity, project participation, and professional practice, coordinated with relevant actions under Principles 1, 15, 18, and 19. 6.2 Integrate financial-management training into mandatory induction for researchers with project responsibilities.
7. Free circulation of researchers	+/-	Gaps: - Longer-term incoming researcher mobility remains limited. - Inter-sectoral mobility is not yet structured within a coordinated institutional framework for placements, secondments, and collaboration with external organisations. - Virtual mobility is not yet systematically documented or formally recognised in institutional records. Impediments: - National language requirements for instruction and doctoral studies constrain	Undertaken: - Strong outgoing mobility through Erasmus+, national mobility schemes, and project-based funding. - Regular hosting of visiting professors and artists from abroad. - Mobility formally recognised in recruitment, promotion, and attestation, including through NACID points. - Virtual mobility practised through international research and artistic projects. - Inter-sectoral engagement supported through project-based collaboration and agreements with industry, cultural institutions, and other external partners. New proposals:

		longer-term incoming researcher mobility.	7.1 Explore options to facilitate incoming researcher mobility within language constraints, including short-term stays, English-medium workshops, and joint formats. 7.2 Develop a coordinated institutional framework for inter-sectoral mobility, including industry and cultural-sector placements, project-based secondments, and structured collaboration with external organisations. 7.3 Introduce systematic documentation and recognition of virtual mobility within institutional records.
8. Sustainability of research	-/+	Gaps: - A formal institutional sustainability policy addressing research activities has not yet been adopted. - Sustainable research practices, including travel, events, and resource use, are not yet supported by formal institutional guidelines. - No systematic training or awareness-raising on sustainable research practices is currently provided. - Sustainability themes are not yet systematically integrated into research and doctoral training - Documentation and monitoring of sustainability measures and research-related environmental impact remain limited. Impediments: Infrastructure constraints affect the scope and pace of sustainability-related implementation.	Undertaken: - The institutional strategy includes a sustainability dimension. - Campus-level green initiatives include recycling, LED lighting, and green production practices. - Virtual participation and environmentally responsible travel are increasingly encouraged where appropriate. - Artistic research has addressed sustainability through international projects, including EMPACT and In-Situ. - Sustainability and green requirements are applied in EU-funded projects where required by funders. New proposals: 8.1 Adopt an institutional sustainability policy addressing research activities. 8.2 Develop institutional guidelines for sustainable research practices (travel, events, resource use). 8.3 Introduce awareness-raising or training activities on sustainable research practices. 8.4 Explore integration of sustainability themes into research and doctoral training. 8.5 Establish basic monitoring of research-related environmental impact.
Pillar 2: Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment, and Progression			
9. Researchers' assessment	+/-	Gaps: - Standardised training on assessment best practices, responsible evaluation, and bias awareness is not yet systematically provided for members of scientific and evaluation committees. - Broader Open Science practices beyond open-access publications, including FAIR data and open methodologies, are not yet explicitly integrated into assessment criteria. - Mechanisms for documenting and crediting individual contributions within	Undertaken: - A formal and transparent two-level assessment system covers recruitment and periodic attestation. - Diverse scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research outputs are formally recognised. - A broad range of activities is recognised, including teaching, supervision, mobility, project participation, administrative responsibilities, and expert work. - Collaborative outputs are recognised through role-based attribution of individual contributions.

		collaborative outputs could be further strengthened. Impediments: - The diversity of scholarly, artistic, and practice-based outputs requires assessment approaches appropriate to different forms of research and collaborative practice.	- Assessment is peer-based, with anonymous voting in attestation and student input on teaching quality. - Performance-related financial rewards recognise high attestation results. New proposals: 9.1 Develop standardised training for members of scientific committees and evaluation committees, coordinated with Actions 10.1 and 11.1. 9.2 Explore integration of broader Open Science practices (FAIR data, open methods) into assessment criteria. 9.3 Strengthen documentation of individual contributions in collaborative outputs.
10. Recruitment	+/-	Gaps: - Standardised training on fair recruitment principles and bias mitigation is not yet systematically provided for members of scientific committees. - International visibility of vacancies could be further enhanced, including through European platforms such as EURAXESS, within existing legal frameworks. Impediments: - National language requirements for instruction and doctoral education constrain the scope of international recruitment. - Highly specialised artistic and practice-based fields may generate limited pools of suitably qualified applicants.	Undertaken: - Academic positions are publicly advertised through NATFA's official website, the State Gazette, and established institutional channels. - Recruitment advertisements provide clear information on position requirements and procedural timelines; remuneration is determined within the nationally regulated framework for academic positions. - Selection is peer-based and merit-based, recognising scholarly, artistic, practice-based, teaching, and professional achievements. - Evidence-based CVs are encouraged, allowing candidates to present diverse achievements appropriate to the position. - Career breaks and non-linear career paths are not penalised. - Recruitment procedures follow transparent statutory timelines, with candidates informed about selection stages and criteria. - Feedback is provided to unsuccessful candidates. - Positions are open to international applicants within national legal constraints. New proposals: 10.1 Develop training for scientific committee members on fair recruitment principles, coordinated with Actions 9.1 and 11.1. 10.2 Explore options to enhance international visibility of vacancies (e.g. EURAXESS).
11. Selection	+/-	Gaps: - Standardised training on fair selection principles, bias mitigation, and responsible evaluation practices is not yet systematically provided for members of scientific committees. - Gender balance in scientific committees is achieved overall in practice but is not	Undertaken: - Scientific committees combine internal and external evaluators in accordance with statutory requirements, with a majority holding professorial rank. - Committee composition prioritises recognised disciplinary expertise, artistic competence, and external participation.

		yet systematically monitored as a formal indicator of committee composition. Impediments: - In highly specialised artistic and practice-based fields, the limited pool of suitably qualified professors and experts may constrain the systematic application of gender-balance considerations when individual committees are constituted.	- Gender representation across 14 academic-position procedures announced between November 2023 and March 2026 was balanced overall, with 53% men and 47% women among committee memberships. - Candidates are assessed through written evaluation reports addressing qualifications, creativity, research independence, and overall potential. - Scientific committees do not meet candidates until the final stage, supporting assessment based on documented merits. - Committee reviews are published online one month before the final meeting, ensuring transparency and public scrutiny. - All candidates receive detailed feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their application through published evaluation reports. - Final decisions are taken by the Faculty Council following scientific committee evaluation and voting. New proposals: 11.1 Include fair selection and bias-awareness components in training for scientific committee members (linked to Actions 9.1 and 10.1). 11.2 Introduce systematic monitoring of gender balance in the composition of scientific committees.
12. Career Progression	+/-	Gaps: - Institutional guidelines on co-authorship, authorship attribution, and ethical authorship practices are not yet formalised. - Structured training for early-career researchers on authorship rights, responsibilities, and ethical contribution practices is not yet systematically provided. Impediments: - The use of Bulgarian throughout the legally regulated attestation procedure limits the practical participation of international committee members.	Undertaken: - NATFA operates a clear and transparent academic career-progression pathway, while formally recognising non-linear and hybrid career paths. Articles 65 and 73 of NATFA's Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions (RASP-NATFA) recognise different academic, teaching, research, artistic, and professional routes to academic positions; Article 73(2) also allows progression to professor without previously holding the position of associate professor, subject to additional requirements. - Regular periodic attestation is conducted every three years for junior academic staff and every five years for senior academic staff. - Attestation is conducted by an independent, multi-stakeholder committee representing different career stages and including non-academic staff and student representation. - Career progression and attestation recognise multidimensional achievement across scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research, teaching and supervision, mobility and international activities, projects,

			professional recognition, administrative responsibilities, and contributions to academic life. - Mobility and international engagement are formally recognised in career progression, including through the national NACID system. - Collaborative scholarly and artistic work is positively recognised, with individual roles and contributions documented and assessed. - Performance-linked rewards recognise quality and sustained professional achievement. New proposals: 12.1 Develop institutional guidelines on co-authorship and authorship attribution. 12.2 Integrate ethical authorship and contribution practices into doctoral training and early-career induction.
Pillar 3: Working Conditions and Practices			
13. Working Conditions, Funding & Salaries	+/-	Gaps: - Teaching workload is formally regulated by academic rank, but research and artistic production time are not formally integrated into workload planning or documented. - Supplementary guidance on pension rights and long-term social security benefits is not yet consolidated or systematically provided. - NATFA does not have dedicated research-only infrastructure beyond shared teaching, artistic-production, and research facilities. - A designated ombudsperson or formalised informal dispute-resolution function for researchers is not yet in place. Impediments: - The integration of teaching, research, and artistic production within academic roles and shared facilities creates practical challenges for the formal recognition of research and artistic production time in workload planning. - Structural and spatial constraints of the existing campus limit the development of dedicated research infrastructure.	Undertaken: - Flexible working-time arrangements, including the nationally recognised non-fixed working schedule, support the combination of teaching, research, artistic production, and personal responsibilities. - Remote work is widely practised for research activities that do not require access to archives, studios, libraries, or other on-site facilities. - Researchers have access to shared teaching and research facilities, including rehearsal rooms, studios, workshops, screening rooms, and the Academic Library. - National occupational health and safety requirements are applied, with regular staff training. - The Psychological Support Centre provides mental-health and well-being support to staff and students. - All appointed researchers are covered by the national social security system, including sickness, healthcare, parental leave, pension, and unemployment protection; additional voluntary health insurance is available. - Teaching workload is standardised by academic rank. - Monthly payslips provide transparent information on gross salary, taxation, and social security contributions. - Researchers participate in institutional governance and decision-making through elected academic bodies. - Established complaint and appeal procedures are available, including through the Ethics Committee.

			New proposals: 13.1 Develop institutional guidance on recognition of research and artistic production time in relation to teaching workloads (without mandating time reporting). 13.2 Prepare supplementary guidance on pension rights and long-term social security benefits and make it available at induction and via HR channels. 13.3 Explore designation of an ombudsperson or informal dispute-resolution function for researchers. 13.4 Integrate research infrastructure priorities into strategic and capital investment planning within existing spatial constraints.
14. Stability of employment	+/-	Gaps: - Information on available career-development services is not yet systematically communicated to researchers employed on fixed-term or project-based contracts. Impediments: None specifically identified	Undertaken: - Academic employment is predominantly permanent following statutory recruitment procedures. - Fixed-term contracts are used primarily for assistant positions in accordance with national legislation, with durations of two or four years depending on doctoral status, as well as for specific temporary or project-based needs. - Assistant employment is embedded within a defined academic career-development pathway: assistants are supported in progressing through doctoral studies and, following acquisition of the doctoral degree, may subsequently compete for an assistant professor position through the applicable statutory competitive procedure. - Academic employment patterns, including the numbers of professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and assistants, are monitored annually and reported to the General Assemblies of the Faculties and of the Academy. - Researchers benefit from comprehensive employment protection and national social security coverage. - Regular attestation supports career development and employment stability. New proposals: 14.1 Ensure researchers on fixed-term or project-based contracts receive information on career development services provided by the Centre for Career Development.
15. Contractual & legal obligations	-/+	Gaps: - No consolidated, user-friendly guide in Bulgarian and English brings together researchers' broader contractual, legal, and compliance obligations, particularly regarding funder requirements,	Undertaken: - NATFA operates within a comprehensive national and institutional regulatory framework governing researchers' employment and professional obligations. - Academic staff receive employment contracts and position descriptions specifying

		intellectual property, data protection, cybersecurity, and knowledge security. - Standard position-description templates for academic positions do not yet comprehensively address relevant obligations concerning intellectual property, data protection, AI-related responsibilities, cybersecurity, and knowledge security, and are not available in English. - Induction for new academic staff and doctoral candidates does not yet systematically address key legal and contractual obligations. Impediments: None specifically identified	the duties and responsibilities associated with their positions. - Relevant national legislation and institutional regulations are publicly accessible through the NATFA website. - New employees are required to familiarise themselves with occupational health and safety regulations and formally acknowledge this; periodic occupational health and safety training is also provided. - HR, project-management, and other institutional structures provide support concerning specific contractual and legal obligations. - Awareness of intellectual property and AI-related obligations is developing through teaching, expert support, institutional discussions, and emerging guidance. New proposals: 15.1 Revise the standard position-description templates for academic positions to incorporate relevant contractual and legal obligations, including intellectual property, data protection, AI-related responsibilities, cybersecurity, and knowledge security, and make the templates available in Bulgarian and English. 15.2 Integrate key legal and contractual obligations into induction for new academic staff and doctoral candidates. 15.3 Develop a concise bilingual reference guide for researchers summarising key contractual, legal, and compliance obligations, identifying available institutional support, and linking to the relevant authoritative legislation and institutional regulations.
16. Dissemination, intellectual assets & public engagement	+/-	Gaps: - Intellectual-assets management is not yet consolidated within an institutional framework covering identification, documentation, protection where appropriate, dissemination, and potential exploitation across the research lifecycle. Impediments: None specifically identified	Undertaken: - Extensive dissemination channels for scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research, including the annual Text and Image conference, institutional publications, Academic Research Seminars, performances, screenings, exhibitions, festivals, and other public formats. - Open-access institutional publications and digital archiving of doctoral theses and artistic works. - Research outcomes and research-generated knowledge, methodologies, and practices are integrated into teaching, curriculum development, and doctoral training. - Research results are also transferred through professional and cultural-sector collaboration, public presentation, and project-based activities where relevant.

			- Strong public-engagement culture connecting research and artistic practice with cultural development, education, professional practice, and wider society. - Intellectual-property and AI-related awareness is supported through teaching, expert support, institutional discussions, and the IP in the Age of AI micro-credential. - Open Science practices are recognised within institutional research activities; limitations concerning financial support for Open Science dissemination are addressed under Principle 3. New proposals: 16.1 Develop an institutional framework for intellectual-assets management covering the identification, documentation, protection where appropriate, dissemination, and potential exploitation of intellectual assets arising from scholarly, artistic, and practice-based research.
Pillar 4: Research Careers and Talent Development			
17. Valuing Diverse research Careers	+/-	Gaps: - Institutional guidance does not yet systematically present the diversity of research careers available within and beyond academia, including hybrid, inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary, geographical, international, entrepreneurial, and virtual opportunities, particularly for early-career researchers. - Diverse research career pathways and achievements are not yet systematically showcased through institutional communication. Impediments: None specifically identified	Undertaken: - Formal career-progression requirements recognise different forms of academic, research, teaching, artistic, and professional experience (Articles 65 and 73 of RASP-NATFA). - Scholarly publications and corresponding artistic and creative achievements are formally recognised as legitimate forms of achievement for appointment to the academic positions of associate professor and professor (Articles 65 and 73). - The regulatory framework provides a formal basis for talent-based and diversity-sensitive assessment, accommodating disciplinary diversity and different forms of scholarly, artistic, practice-based, and professional achievement. - Strong connections with the cultural and creative industries facilitate inter-sectoral engagement and professional exchange. - Different forms of mobility and international collaboration contribute to researchers' professional development. - Departmental mentoring, professional networks, alumni engagement, and the Centre for Career Development support career development. New proposals: 17.1 Develop guidance materials illustrating diverse research and artistic career profiles, including hybrid, inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary, geographical, international,

			entrepreneurial, and virtual career pathways, using case studies and alumni examples. 17.2 Integrate guidance on diverse research career pathways and opportunities into mentoring and career-development activities. 17.3 Systematically showcase diverse research and artistic career pathways and achievements through institutional communication.
18. Career Development & Advice	-/+	Gaps: - Researcher career guidance, placement assistance, professional networking, and transition support are not yet fully coordinated through a clearly defined institution-wide service covering all career stages and contractual situations. - Structured support at key career-transition points, including doctoral completion, early-career entry, progression to higher academic positions, transitions beyond academia, and completion of project-funded appointments, is not yet systematically coordinated. - Optional tools and resources supporting individual career planning and documentation of career-development objectives are not yet available. Impediments: - The duration and availability of externally funded research appointments depend on project funding cycles, limiting the extent to which longer-term career and transition planning can be anticipated.	Undertaken: - A formal and regularly monitored Strategy for the Development of the Academic Staff covers researchers across R1–R4 career stages. - Transparent academic career pathways are established through national legislation and institutional regulations. - Doctoral candidates receive structured career-development support through supervision, individual study plans, and progress reviews. - Early-career researchers receive guidance through Heads of Programmes, senior academic staff, research supervisors, and project leaders. - The Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office provides a foundation for researcher career guidance, networking, alumni engagement, and placement support. - Strong connections with theatres, film and audiovisual production companies, festivals, museums, and other cultural-sector organisations support career opportunities within and beyond academia. - Researchers employed on project-funded contracts are recruited and remunerated in accordance with the relevant R1–R4 researcher profile. New proposals: 18.1 Formalise the mandate of the Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office for researcher career guidance, professional networking, placement assistance, and transition support within and beyond academia. 18.2 Establish structured career-guidance activities at key career-transition points, including doctoral completion, early-career entry, progression to higher academic positions, transitions beyond academia, and completion of project-funded appointments. 18.3 Develop optional individual career-development planning templates and resources to support guidance provided by Heads of Programmes, supervisors, project leaders, and mentors.

			18.4 Strengthen coordination between the Strategy for the Development of the Academic Staff, the Centre for Career Development and Alumni Office, departmental mentoring, and project leaders to support researchers across R1–R4 and different contractual situations.
19. Continuous professional development	-/+	Gaps: - CPD provision is not yet systematically mapped and coordinated to ensure accessible opportunities across researcher career stages and contractual situations. - Strategic alignment of CPD with institutional and transversal skill priorities requires strengthening, particularly in areas such as AI literacy, Open Science, research integrity, project and financial management, entrepreneurship, and digital competences. - No systematic institutional mechanism is currently in place for monitoring CPD accessibility and uptake, assessing effectiveness, and periodically identifying researchers' priority development needs. - Continuous professional development specifically supporting supervisors and mentors is not yet organised as a regular, coordinated institutional offer. - Dedicated functionality for coordinating and communicating researcher CPD opportunities through the institutional electronic academic system has not yet been configured and operationalised. Impediments: - Teaching, administrative, research, and artistic responsibilities may constrain the time available for researchers, particularly early-career researchers, to participate in CPD. - Some specialised CPD opportunities depend on external project funding, which can affect their continuity and long-term availability.	Undertaken: - Active participation in national and international continuous professional-development opportunities, including Erasmus+ mobility, European projects and networks, and discipline-specific professional learning embedded in artistic and pedagogical practice. - Recognition of continuous professional development, mobility, and teaching within researcher evaluation and career progression. - Lifelong learning opportunities supported through the Centre for Furthering Education. - Access to specialised training delivered through European projects, partner institutions, EIT initiatives, and European Commission programmes and initiatives. - Structured entrepreneurship and innovation training delivered through European projects such as C-Accelerate Plus, involving researchers and doctoral candidates at different career stages. - Existing institutional electronic academic system providing a foundation for coordinated management and communication of CPD activities. New proposals: 19.1 Map internal and external CPD opportunities relevant to research, supervision, mentoring, teaching, mobility, and transversal skills, identifying provision for researchers across different career stages and contractual situations. 19.2 Develop a coordinated institutional CPD framework with annual priorities, drawing on activities delivered through the Centre for Furthering Education, European projects, partner institutions, and other European initiatives, and addressing relevant transversal competences, including AI literacy, Open Science, research integrity, project and financial management, entrepreneurship, and digital competences. 19.3 Establish a mechanism for monitoring CPD accessibility and uptake, assessing effectiveness, and periodically identifying researchers' priority development needs. 19.4 Develop, configure, and operationalise, subject to technical feasibility, dedicated CPD functionality within the institutional electronic

			academic system to improve the visibility, accessibility, and coordination of professional-development opportunities.
20. Supervision & Mentoring	-/+	Gaps: - No unified institutional mentoring framework defining roles, responsibilities, expectations, and quality standards beyond doctoral supervision. - Mentoring for early-career researchers after completion of the PhD relies primarily on departmental practice and individual initiative rather than coordinated institutional arrangements. - Formal mechanisms for mentor–mentee matching, monitoring mentoring relationships, and evaluating mentoring effectiveness have not yet been established. Impediments: None Identified.	Undertaken: - Robust national and institutional framework governing doctoral supervision. - Appointment of experienced supervisors with topic-relevant academic, artistic, and professional expertise. - Supervision formally recognised within academic career progression and periodic attestation. - Clearly defined supervisory responsibilities, minimum supervision time, and structured progress monitoring supported by regular feedback and written evaluations. - Existing supervisory and pedagogical training initiatives providing a foundation for a coordinated institutional CPD programme for supervisors and mentors. - Strong departmental culture of informal mentoring and peer support for early-career researchers. New proposals: 20.1 Develop and adopt an institutional supervision and mentoring framework defining roles, responsibilities, quality standards, and expectations for supervisors, mentors, and researchers across career stages. 20.2 Establish a regular institutional CPD programme for supervisors, mentors, and senior researchers (R3-R4), building on existing supervisory and pedagogical training initiatives and coordinated with Principle 19, Continuous professional development. 20.3 Develop and implement a structured institutional mentoring programme for early-career researchers, including voluntary mentor–mentee matching and guidance for mentors.