

APPROVED

by Resolution No. SPN-33 of 21 May 2024

of the Senate of Vilnius University

**THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMITMENTS  
OF THE RESEARCH ASSESSMENT REFORM AGREEMENT  
OF VILNIUS UNIVERSITY**

Vilnius University (hereinafter the ‘University’) has 15 faculties with over 23,000 students across bachelor, master, and doctoral study cycles, employs over 3,000 academic employees, and implements research in more than 30 fields.

The diversity of research fields is acknowledged in the Statute of the University – the main document regulating the activity of the University. At the University, different research results and research papers created in different research fields are assessed. Following the tradition, such diversity is integrated into many processes implemented at the University. The expert assessment as the main instrument for assessing research has been applied at the University for over a decade, and national and international experts are involved in the processes of recruiting academic employees. The University also highlights the importance of academic leadership and training of early-career researchers (for detailed information, see the Vilnius University Regulations for the Organisation of Teaching Staff and Research/Art Staff Recruiting Competitions and Certification approved by Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. S-2018-12-4 of 20 November 2018 “On the Approval of the Vilnius University Regulations for the Organisation of Teaching Staff and Research/Art Staff Recruiting Competitions and Certification” ([wording of Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. SPN-56 of 19 December 2023](#)) (hereinafter the ‘Regulations’). Part of budget appropriations received by the University is allocated for research activities carried out by University researchers (these appropriations are distributed in accordance with the descriptions of the Formal Assessment of Research and Experimental Development and Artistic Activities of Universities and Research Institutes as well as the Comparative Expert Assessment of Research and Experimental Development of Universities and Research Institutes approved by Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania No. V-1593 of 2 September 2021 “On the Implementation of Items 2(3)–2(4) of Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No. 149 of 1 March 2017 “On the Implementation of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Higher Education and Research””).

In November 2022, the University joined the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (hereinafter the ‘CoARA’), expressing the aim to implement the research assessment reform agreement. Taking into account the Coalition agreement of 19 July 2022 and following the fundamental principles of CoARA established thereby, members of the Coalition shall undertake to implement an action plan, based on which the institution's documents related to research assessment are reviewed and updated.

The draft Regulations, approved by Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. SPN-56 of 19 December 2023, were prepared in order to implement the amendments of [the Republic of Lithuania Law on Higher Education and Research](#) and other related legal acts establishing required and preferred competencies for career stages of teaching staff and research/art staff and the scope of skills corresponding to each career stage. A wide discussion on the Regulations resulted in the representation of all research areas and fields at the University in the amendment of legal acts and preparation of new recommendations for legal documents (and processes) of the University related to the implementation of the Regulation by taking into account both Lithuanian legal regulation and also CoARA commitments related to research activities and their assessment processes.

The table presents the action plan for implementation of the commitments of the Research Assessment Reform Agreement of Vilnius University. It should be noted that not all commitments set out in the Coalition agreement have been included in the plan. The commitments listed here are the ones to the implementation of which the University may directly contribute.

<b>CoARA commitment</b>	<b>Description of implementation of commitments</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
<p>1. To recognise the diversity of contributions to and careers in research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research.</p>	<p>The current system of research assessment at the University covers such indicators (among others) as ranking or citation counts and other qualitative indicators (metrics) of journals publishing research articles. The commitment will be implemented to achieve these aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognition of research diversity and integration of diverse research activity into the Regulations.</li> </ul>	<p>1. Establishment of working groups that will represent different research fields to identify criteria for assessment of researcher career stages and to suggest possible amendments to the Regulations.</p>	<p>Working groups established.</p>	<p>April 2024</p>
		<p>2. Preparation of the draft Regulations.</p>	<p>The draft Regulations prepared for consideration.</p>	<p>November 2024</p>

<p>2. To base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.</p>	<p>The University should recognise and assess diverse forms of research results, apply qualitative assessment criteria and take the specificity of research fields into account. The improvement of the application of assessment criteria and methodologies should foster the practice based on qualitative assessment and inclusive research culture. The aims of this commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- qualitative indicators to be applied only to determine the eligibility for participation in a competition;</li> <li>- qualitative assessment to be recognised as the main principle of competition procedures;</li> <li>– consultations and training of the members of recruiting/certification commissions of the</li> </ul>	<p>1. Preparation of recommendations for qualitative assessment and selection criteria for recruiting/certification commissions and the Central Admissions Commission.</p>	<p>A set of recommendations approved according to the procedure established by the University.</p>	<p>November 2025</p>
		<p>2. Preparation of guidelines for candidates for University positions.</p>	<p>Guidelines for candidates prepared.</p>	<p>November 2025</p>
		<p>3. Consultations and training of the members of recruiting/certification commissions and the members of the Central Admissions Commission.</p>	<p>The members of the recruiting/certification commissions and the Central Admissions Commission prepared for selection of candidates.</p>	<p>January 2026</p>

		4. Review and amendment of University legal acts related to the assessment of the outcome of academic activity.	The Rector's orders/Senate resolutions reviewed and amended.	December 2026
3. To avoid using research organisation rankings when assessing academic achievements (to avoid using indicators applied in these rankings for the assessment of individual researchers).	Although metrics are a convenient tool of assessment, it does not always reflect the quality and relevance of research outcomes as well as their impact on the society. Moreover, the specificity and diversity of research should be taken into consideration (e.g. interdisciplinary research , dissemination of research outcomes in other language than English). The aims of this commitment: - to avoid ranking academic achievements by using metrics.	1. Preparation for an expert assessment of research and experimental development activity of research and study institutions in 2028.	Meetings with core academic units, consultations.	November 2025
			Preparation of the development plans of research fields.	December 2025
			Monitoring of academic achievements of research fields developed at the University.	December 2027

<p>4. To develop qualitative research assessment criteria by improving assessment procedures, tools, and processes.</p>	<p>This commitment will be implemented when performing the activities provided for in commitments No. 2 and 4.</p>		<p>December 2027</p>	
<p>5. To raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use.</p>	<p>It is very important to introduce the academic community of Vilnius University to the latest approaches and share the latest research assessment trends. The processes must be transparent and well-formed. The guidelines of assessment criteria, assessment procedures, and criteria for decision-making must be available for all parties concerned. The aims of this</p>	<p>1. University employees administrating admissions and certification procedures.</p>	<p>Training of University employees administrating recruitment prepared for selection of candidates.</p>	<p>December 2026</p>

<p>commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- introduce the culture of the qualitative assessment in the University community and create conditions for inclusive contribution to the implementation of the Coalition agreement;</li> <li>- provide the required assistance and recommendations for the participants in the assessment process.</li> </ul>	<p>2. Creation of the platform intended for questions and answers related with recruiting and certification requirements and processes as well as quality. assessment.</p>	<p>Online platform.</p>	<p>December 2026</p>
	<p>3. Promotion of Open Science activities, inclusion of research data into the research data sharing platform MIDAS (where applicable).</p>	<p>More active participation of the University community and non-academic employees in Open Science activities, visits of Open Science experts, trainings of non-academic employees.</p>	<p>November 2024</p>

<p>6. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition.</p>	<p>It is essential to foster collaboration and accelerate progress toward effective evaluation processes. By exchanging insights and strategies with CoARA groups, institutions can learn from one another's achievements and challenges. It will lead to the development of a unified system.</p>	<p>Active participation in CoARA activities and discussion groups, notification of the University community on the implementation of Coalition agreements, ongoing discussions and decisions, organisation of discussions.</p>	<p>University's community contributing to the implementation of CoARA</p>	<p>December 2027</p>
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