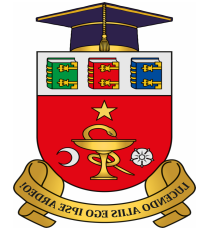




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**Project: IROconnect - Modernization and Digital Transformation for
IROs in Higher Education Institutions**

THE STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION

Authors: Evelina GHERGHELEGIU, Natalia TIBUH, Veronica ICHIM,
Dorian SASU, Lilia TRICOLICI

Nicolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Institutional profile

Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy of the Republic of Moldova (USMF) is a public higher education institution with a strong national and international presence in medical and pharmaceutical education. The university provides a comprehensive academic offering across multiple levels of study, including integrated higher education (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy taught in Romanian, English, French, and Russian), undergraduate programs (*Optometry, Nursing, Public Health, Physiokinetotherapy and Rehabilitation, Radiological Technology*), master's programs (*Human Nutrition, Mental Public Health, Molecular Technologies in Health, Public Health Management, Advanced Nursing, etc.*), and residency training in various medical and pharmaceutical specialties.

The university serves a diverse student population, with 6,624 bachelor's degree students (of which approximately 1,786 are international), 74 master's students, and 359 PhD candidates in the academic year 2024–2025. The educational and research activities are supported by 822 academic staff and 69 administrative staff, reflecting a high institutional capacity for teaching, training, and knowledge transfer.

With programs offered in multiple languages and a high proportion of international students, USMF stands as a key regional hub for medical education and a growing international academic and research partner.

1.2 Main Areas Targeted for Improvement through the Internationalization Strategy

In alignment with its vision to strengthen international visibility, academic competitiveness, and global engagement, the university's internationalization strategy will focus on the following priority areas:

1. Enhancing international mobility and participation in global academic networks with increased inbound and outbound mobility for students, residents, academic and administrative staff and strengthening cooperation within Erasmus+, AUF, Horizon Europe, and other international programs;
2. Diversifying and consolidating international partnerships through expansion of the academic and research collaborations beyond traditional regions;
3. Developing structured cooperation models leading to joint teaching modules, summer schools, and eventually joint/double degree programs;
4. Improved support services for international students and staff, enhancing pre-arrival guidance, integration activities, visa support, and intercultural inclusion services;
5. Advancing digital transformation in internationalization processes from partially manual workflows to integrated mobility management tools and adopting Erasmus Without Paper (EWP), CRM systems, and automated workflows;



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6. Strengthening research internationalization and doctoral collaboration with increased participation in international clinical trials, joint research networks, and multi-country doctoral or postdoctoral programs;
7. Improving institutional visibility and positioning in global ranking systems (Webometrics, SCImago, UniRank, etc.) and promote open science contributions;
8. Professional development and capacity-building of IRO staff with structured training opportunities on project management, digital mobility tools, rankings intelligence, international recruitment, legal compliance, and intercultural competencies;
9. Establishing student-centered networking collaborations with student associations such as the Association of Medical Students and Residents and exploring complementary engagement through ESN (Erasmus Student Network) partnerships.

II. CURRENT STATE OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

2.1. Vision and Mission and Values for Internationalization

University's overall vision for internationalization

Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy aspires to be a globally recognized academic and clinical excellence center in medical and pharmaceutical education, scientific research, and patient care, actively integrated into the international higher education and healthcare ecosystem. Internationalization vision seeks to strengthen the university's presence on the global stage by promoting high-quality standards, fostering intercultural academic cooperation, and contributing to global health development. It serves as a strategic driver for enhancing academic quality, promoting intercultural competence, expanding global partnerships, increasing mobility, and aligning institutional practices with international standards (WFME, EHEA, ESG). Through international cooperation, the university aims to improve the competencies of its graduates, strengthen research competitiveness, and contribute to global public health.

Thus, USMF aspires to be a globally recognized, socially responsible medical university—integrated into the European Higher Education and Research Areas—where international education, research, and clinical practice raise health outcomes at home and abroad.

Internationalization Mission

Aligned with the University's overall mission and strategic development objectives, the mission of internationalization is to internationalize education, research, and services by aligning programs with WFME/EHEA/ESG standards; preparing graduates for multicultural health systems; expanding high-impact global partnerships; advancing mobility and joint training; and employing digital transformation (EWP/CRM/AI) to ensure quality, transparency, and equity for all learners and partners as well as



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promote national values and contribute to global public health solutions through international collaboration.

This mission reflects the university's commitment to providing high-quality educational, clinical, and professional development services while responding proactively to national and international trends in healthcare and medical education.

Core Values guiding internationalization

The internationalization process is built upon the University's institutional values, which define its identity and guide strategic development:

Value	Relevance to Internationalization
Quality & Excellence	Alignment with European and global educational and healthcare standards; accreditation and continuous quality assurance.
Performance & Innovation	Adoption of international best practices, digital transformation, and research-driven international competitiveness.
Creativity & Innovation	Fostering interdisciplinary and cross-cultural innovation through global collaboration.
Responsibility (Individual and Institutional)	Ethical behavior, global health accountability, and responsible international partnerships.
Beneficiary Satisfaction	Ensuring international students, staff, and partners benefit from high-quality services and support.
Motivation & Academic Community Development	Encouraging participation in international research, mobility, and joint programs.
Teamwork & Communication	Promoting intercultural communication, collaborative learning, and cross-border teamwork.
Proactive Partnerships	Developing strategic alliances with universities, research institutions, healthcare providers, and NGOs worldwide.

If your university does not currently have an internationalization strategy, what are the main reasons for its absence?

Although internationalization is clearly identified as one of the nine strategic domains in the university's Strategic Development Plan (2021–2030), a standalone internationalization strategy has not yet been formally developed. This is due to:

- The institutional priority to first implement broader structural reforms in education, research, clinical practice, and digital transformation as part of the Strategic Plan;
- Limited dedicated resources and staff time to lead a full strategy development process;
- The need to consolidate current achievements and build internal capacity before formalizing a comprehensive and measurable strategy;
- Ongoing alignment with evolving national and regional policy frameworks related to EU integration and higher education modernization.

A dedicated internationalization strategy is planned as the next step, once internal systems, capacities, and stakeholder readiness are further developed.



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How does the internationalization mission align with the university's broader mission and strategic goals?

Internationalization is fully aligned with the university's broader mission to advance medical education, develop high-level professionals, promote scientific research, and contribute to healthcare excellence nationally and globally. It directly supports several goals outlined in the Strategic Development Plan (2021–2030), including:

1. International accreditation and alignment with global medical standards;
2. Increasing student and staff participation in international mobility and research networks;
3. Enhancing institutional visibility and competitiveness in global rankings;
4. Expanding cross-border collaboration in education, clinical practice, and science;
5. Cultivating multicultural competencies among future healthcare professionals;
6. Supporting Moldova's integration into the European Higher Education and Research Area.

By embedding internationalization into the university's long-term development vision, USMF ensures coherence between its mission, national policy commitments (e.g., "European Moldova 2030"), and its aspiration to be recognized as a modern, globally engaged medical university.

2.2 Geographic Priorities, Policy Alignment, and Funding Sources for Internationalization

The university's internationalization efforts are guided by a set of clearly defined geographic priorities. Collaboration is strategically focused on European Union countries, particularly through Erasmus+ mobility, joint research, and capacity-building initiatives. Strong emphasis is placed on French-speaking countries, supported by membership in the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) and targeted recruitment of Francophone students. Regional cooperation with Romania and other neighboring states plays a significant role in promoting cross-border academic collaboration and shared healthcare initiatives. Additionally, the university is expanding its engagement with the United States and other high-performing medical education systems to enhance research and clinical training standards.

These priorities are closely aligned with key national and regional development frameworks, including the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030," the National Action Plan for EU Accession (2024–2027), the South East Europe 2030 Strategy, and the European Neighbourhood Policy. Together, they reinforce the university's alignment with European integration, quality assurance in higher education, and global health priorities. Funding for internationalization comes from a mix of international funds (including European Union programs such as Erasmus+ and multilateral sources such as AUF and Horizon Europe), international student tuition fees, and to a lesser extent, bilateral cooperation projects and national co-financing schemes. These sources enable the university to support mobility, modernize programs, strengthen partnerships, and enhance its international competitiveness.



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2.3 The university's current internationalization status and key achievements.

The data below reflect a steady and structured advancement in the university's internationalization process over the past three academic years.

Current Internationalization Status and Key Achievements

Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy demonstrates a dynamic and steadily advancing internationalization process, integrating global standards in education, research, and institutional visibility. Since 2022–2023, the university has adopted its second institutional strategy and action plan for internationalization, which provides the foundation for structured development in this area. A significant share of academic staff — 384 (35%) — demonstrate foreign language proficiency at levels B1–C2, supporting teaching, research, and international collaboration.

Although no joint degree programs are currently reported, the presence of study programs in international languages in Russian, English and French (noted since 1999) indicates progress toward curricular internationalization and readiness for future joint initiatives.

Thus, the university demonstrates robust engagement in academic mobility, growing linguistic capacity, and strategic alignment with international standards. The sustained high percentage of foreign students and increasing inbound mobility reflect enhanced international visibility and institutional attractiveness. Future priorities may include expanding joint study programs and strengthening strategic partnerships to consolidate global integration.

In-house Internationalization

The University hosts a diverse international community, with over 2,000 international students from 32 countries enrolled primarily in full-degree programs in Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmacy. The share of foreign students remains high, varying between 32–45%, confirming the university's strong regional and international appeal.

Academic mobility is supported through incoming and outgoing students engaged in Erasmus+ and bilateral exchanges. There has been a consistent increase in student and staff academic mobility. From 6 incoming and 49 outgoing students mobilities (2022–2023) to 64 incoming and 30 outgoing (2024–2025), showing growth in visibility and attractiveness for international students. With Staff mobilities, a stable pattern with approximately 15–21 incoming and 30–36 outgoing participants per year, maintaining a balanced exchange dynamic. USMF fosters a multilingual academic environment, offering 142 courses in foreign languages (English and French) and engaging 425 faculty members in international-language teaching. The University actively promotes staff mobility and professional development, with 100 incoming and 165 outgoing academic and administrative staff participating in training, conferences, and teaching missions.



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International Collaboration and Partnerships

The University maintains an extensive network of 28 active international cooperation agreements, including 7 Erasmus+ inter-institutional agreements, 8 Memoranda of Understanding, and 13 bilateral partnership agreements across Europe and beyond. These collaborations encompass education, research, and public health initiatives with institutions from Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Poland, Romania, Portugal, Ukraine, Georgia, and others. USMF also benefits from international funding through research grants, capacity-building projects, donations, and tuition fees from international students.

International Research and Academic Visibility

The University participates in 22 international research grants and maintains 21 agreements dedicated to scientific cooperation. It has achieved a remarkable publication output, with over 300 papers indexed in Web of Science, ISI, and SCOPUS, generating more than 4,000 citations in 2024. USMF shows continuous growth in global rankings:

- 1st nationally in the *Webometrics* “Excellence” chapter (2024) and 263rd in Central and Eastern Europe;
- Present in SCImago Institutions Rankings, advancing over 1,000 positions globally between 2023 and 2024;
- Listed among the top 10% globally in the *Global Aggregate Ranking* 2024;
- Included in *MosIUR*, *EduRank*, *UniRank*, and *UNIRANKS* rankings;
- 2nd nationally for its *Institutional Repository* (25,898 publications).

International Outreach and Events

USMF organized or co-hosted 44 international events in 2024, including conferences, workshops, and expert visits, and participated in over 20 international education fairs across India, the UAE, and Qatar. The University’s English-language website (<https://www.usmf.md/en>) and strong digital presence (ranked 1st nationally on YouTube and X/Twitter) further enhance its global visibility and engagement.

In conclusion, *Nicolae Testemițanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy (USMF) demonstrates a dynamic internationalization trajectory: multilingual programs (Romanian/English/French/Russian), a high share of international students, structured mobility through Erasmus+ and bilateral exchanges, and growing staff and student participation. Research internationalization advances via 22 international grants, 300+ indexed publications and rising citations, and improved positions across ranking systems (Webometrics, SCImago, etc.). Partnerships include 28 active agreements (Erasmus+ IIAs, MoUs, bilateral contracts) across Europe and beyond.

This Strategy articulates a clear Vision and Mission, defines strategic objectives derived from SWOT analysis, establishes governance and monitoring mechanisms, and sets a 2025–2027 roadmap. Digitalization (*Erasmus Without Paper*, *CRM*, *e-signature*, *AI support*) is a cross-cutting enabler. Student integration is strengthened through AMSR leadership complemented by targeted ESN



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collaboration. The document specifies capacity-building actions, key performance indicators, and review cycles to ensure sustained progress and impact. Future priorities: expand joint study offers, deepen strategic partnerships, and strengthen short-term/blended mobility.

III. SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths (*internal enablers*)

1. High international student enrollment (2,050+ students from 32 countries) confirms strong institutional attractiveness and competitiveness, especially in Medicine.
2. Multilingual academic environment, with 425 staff teaching in English or French and 142 foreign-language courses.
3. Diverse international partnerships, including Erasmus+ agreements, MoUs, bilateral contracts, and research collaborations across Europe and beyond.
4. Growing academic and research mobility among both students and faculty (100+ incoming and 165 outgoing staff).
5. Robust research internationalization, evidenced by 22 ongoing international research grants, growing publication output, and an increasing global citation rate.
6. Positive global ranking trajectory (Top national performer; significant rise in Webometrics, SCImago, Global Aggregate Ranking).
7. Strong institutional visibility through active international events (44 in one academic year) and presence in global educational fairs.
8. Institutional Repository with high visibility, ranked 2nd nationally, supporting open science culture.
9. Institutional strategy and commitment to internationalization, demonstrated through structured mobility participation and multilingual program offerings.

Weaknesses (*internal limitations*)

1. Absence of joint/double degree programs, limiting deeper curricular integration with international partners.
2. Limited incoming student mobility (only 14 incoming exchange students), indicating a need to enhance attractiveness for short-term academic stays.
3. No internationalized postgraduate (Master/PhD) recruitment strategy, reflected in low international enrollment beyond the bachelor level.
4. Uneven student mobility participation, with outgoing mobility exceeding incoming mobility and limited national student engagement in mobility.
5. Administrative and academic workload constraints may limit full engagement in international project development and implementation.
6. Dependence on a limited number of regions (Europe, South Asia) poses risks to diversification and long-term sustainability.
7. Insufficient support services for international students and staff (e.g., housing, integration programs, alumni networks).



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Opportunities (*external growth areas*)

1. Rising global demand for medical education in English, especially in Europe, Africa, and Asia.
2. EU mobility and capacity-building programs (*Erasmus+*, *Horizon Europe*, *CBHE*) for curriculum internationalization, staff development, and international accreditation.
3. Potential for developing joint degree programs and international summer schools to attract short-term learners.
4. Expansion of international research consortia and cross-border professional networks.
5. Emergence of digital internationalization models (*COIL – Collaborative Online International Learning*, *virtual exchanges*).
6. Diaspora engagement for academic and clinical partnerships, mentorship, and innovation.
7. Growing potential to align with UN Sustainable Development Goals (*SDGs*) for visibility in socially responsible rankings and funding schemes.

Threats (*external risks*)

1. Geopolitical instability in the region may affect the perception of safety among prospective international students.
2. Increasing competition from regional and global medical universities with similar offerings in English.
3. Regulatory changes in international student visa requirements in key source countries could impact enrollment.
4. Financial dependency on tuition fees from international students poses risk if demand declines.
5. Potential language and cultural adaptation challenges may affect student retention and satisfaction.
6. Brain drain of academic staff, attracted by better financial incentives abroad.

In conclusion the University has a solid foundation for long-term international growth, with strong visibility, high international enrollment, and expanding research networks. Strategic focus should now shift toward:

- Diversifying mobility programs,
- Launching joint degrees and interdisciplinary global programs,
- Enhancing support mechanisms for international participants, and
- Deepening integration into international research and education networks.

IV. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION (2025 – 2027)

1) Enhance academic & research mobility

Implement EWP end-to-end (OLA, digital recognition), publish a Mobility Playbook, launch Mobility Ambassadors with AMSR/ESN, and develop short/blended programs (BIPs).



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- 2) Diversify and deepen global partnerships:** adopt a partnership lifecycle, prioritize EU/francophone/regional plus targeted US/De/It/Tr, and hold an annual partnership review day.
- 3) Advance digital internationalization:** adopt Mobility CRM, roll out e-signature and automated approvals, build BI dashboards, and pilot AI assistance for FAQs and partner communications.
- 4) Internationalized curricula & joint/double degrees:** map curricula for COIL and micro-credentials; target 2 joint modules/year, 1 summer school/year, and first joint degree by 2027.
- 5) Grow international research collaboration & doctoral engagement:** create a Grant Studio for HE/COST proposals, nominate a Research Internationalization Lead, and align with Open Science practices.
- 6) Student experience & integration (AMSR + ESN):** co-design Welcome Day, Buddy system, and Language Café; build a one-stop digital portal; run an annual International Student Survey.
- 7) Build staff capacity and culture:** deliver GAU/IROconnect modules, establish learning circles and knowledge transfer, and formalize role specializations.
- 8) Visibility, branding, rankings, & sustainability:** introduce rankings intelligence with annual targets, ethical recruitment pilots, and diversified funding through Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, AUF, COST.

V. GOVERNANCE & IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

Leadership & bodies:

1. Rectorate/Senate: policy approval; resource allocation.
2. Internationalization Steering Committee (ISC): Pro-Rectors (education/research), Head of IRO (chair), QA, IT, Finance, Student Affairs, AMSR & ESN reps; meets quarterly.
3. Department of International Affairs (IRO): program delivery; KPI reporting.
4. Digitalization Officer (within IRO): EWP/CRM/e-signature; data dashboards.
5. Faculty International Coordinators: academic recognition, COIL, mobility mentoring.
6. Research Office: grants & joint PhDs; aligns with ERA/Open Science.
7. QA Office: ESG/WFME compliance; survey oversight.

RACI snapshot:

1. Strategy & KPIs: R—Head IRO / ISC; A—Rectorate; C—QA/Finance; I—Faculties.
2. EWP/CRM/e-signature: R—Digitalization Officer; A—Head IRO; C—IT/Legal; I—Faculties.
3. Joint degrees/COIL: R—Faculty Coordinators; A—Pro-Rector (Education); C—QA/Legal; I—IRO.
4. Grants (HE/COST): R—Research Office; A—Pro-Rector (Research); C—IRO/Finance/Legal; I—Faculties..



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VI. TRAINING OF THE STAFF RELATED TO INTERNATIONALIZATION

6.1 The current state of staff training

A structured analysis of USMF international office team's competencies from the perspective of the key functional areas of a modern University International Office, followed by the identified strengths, gaps, and recommendations for capacity development revealed the following situation:

Key Competency Areas of a University International Office

Core Competency Areas	Description
Strategic Leadership & Policy Development	Designing and implementing institutional internationalization strategy
Project Management & Funding Acquisition	Managing Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, AUF, DAAD, CBHE, CEEPUS, etc.
Partnership & Network Development	Bilateral agreements, academic diplomacy, rankings engagement
Mobility Management (Students & Staff)	Erasmus+ KA1, bilateral mobility, credit transfer, EWP systems
International Marketing & Recruitment	Recruitment strategies, branding, fairs, digital outreach
Intercultural Communication & Integration Services	Support for incoming international students/staff
Quality Assurance & Data Reporting	KPIs, rankings, mobility metrics, accreditation requirements
Legal, Visa & Regulatory Knowledge	Student visas, residence permits, GDPR, ethical recruitment
Digitalization in Internationalization	COIL, virtual mobility, CRM tools, mobility platforms
External Communication & Public Diplomacy	Stakeholder communication, internal awareness building
Research Internationalization Support	Links to international research grants and joint PhDs

Team Competency Mapping (based on Bios)

Competency Area	Evelina Gherghelegiu	Veronica Ichim	Natalia Tibuh	Lilia Tricolici	Dorian Sasu
Strategic leadership & policy-making	✓ Strong	⚠ Medium	⚠ Medium	✗ Minimal	⚠ Growing (policy interest stated)
International project management (EU, UN, AUF, etc.)	✓ Advanced	✓ Medium	✓ Medium	⚠ Entry-level (as project assistant)	✓ Strong (via clinical trial PM experience)
Erasmus+ / mobility coordination	✓ Oversight	⚠ Limited	✓ Coordinator	⚠ Limited	✓ Coordinator role
Partnership development & academic diplomacy	✓ Advanced	✓ Strong (Francophone relations)	⚠ Medium	✗ Limited	⚠ Emerging (policy involvement)
International student/staff recruitment & marketing	⚠ Limited	⚠ Limited	⚠ Potential	✗ None	✗ None
Intercultural communication & stakeholder engagement	✓ Strong	✓ Strong	✓ Strong	⚠ Basic	✓ Strong (multinational research collaboration)
Communication & public engagement	⚠ Medium	⚠ Medium	✓ Strong (former PR deputy chief)	⚠ Basic	⚠ Medium
Legal/visa/regulatory expertise	✗ Not explicit	✗ Not explicit	✗ Not explicit	✗ Not explicit	✗ Not explicit



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Competency Area	Evelina Gherghelegiu	Veronica Ichim	Natalia Tibuh	Lilia Tricolici	Dorian Sasu
Research internationalization support	✅ Strong research policy link	⚠️ Medium (AUF research ties)	✅ Strong	❌ None	✅ High (clinical trials & academic research)
International rankings/data analysis	⚠️ High potential	❌ Not shown	❌ Not shown	❌ Not shown	❌ Not shown
Digital/virtual internationalization (COIL, platforms)	❌ Needs development	❌ Needs development	⚠️ Potential	❌ None	❌ None
Quality assurance (ESG/WFME/international accreditations)	✅ Strong potential	⚠️ Medium	⚠️ Medium	❌ None	⚠️ Potential (clinical protocol knowledge)
Alumni & diaspora engagement	✅ Strong	⚠️ Limited	⚠️ Limited	❌ None	⚠️ Potential (former trainee networks)
Operational support, documentation, reporting	⚠️ Medium	✅ Medium	✅ Medium	✅ Operational focus	⚠️ Medium

The Department benefits from a well-balanced team with complementary competencies across leadership, partnership development, mobility management, research internationalization, and operational support:

- Strategic Leadership & Policy Expertise

Dr. Evelina Gherghelegiu (Acting Head, medical doctor, researcher) brings strong leadership in international policy, global health diplomacy, and strategic planning. With a proven record in large-scale project management across global agencies (UNICEF, WHO, UNAIDS), she drives institutional alignment with international standards and oversees strategic positioning and global engagement.

- Partnership Development & Francophone Cooperation

Veronica Ichim (Deputy Head) contributes extensive experience in managing bilateral cooperation, especially with French-speaking partners. Her work with AUF projects reinforces the university's footprint in Francophone academic networks and supports the development of structured academic collaborations.

- Project based Mobility Management & International Communication

Natalia Tibuh (Erasmus+ Coordinator, Senior Methodist) has solid experience in student and staff mobility coordination, academic recognition procedures, and communication strategies. Her background in public relations strengthens outreach, student engagement, and promotion of international opportunities.

- Research-Driven Internationalization & Clinical Partnerships

Dr. Dorian Sasu (Medical doctor, Erasmus+ coordinator, researcher) brings strong competencies in academic collaboration and international clinical trials under Good Clinical Practice (GCP) and ICH guidelines. His experience makes him well-positioned to lead research internationalization, joint doctoral initiatives, Horizon Europe participation, and the promotion of science diplomacy.

- Operational, Documentation & Compliance Support

Lilia Tricolici (Inspector) contributes essential administrative support and experience in project assistance and documentation monitoring. She is well suited for developing expertise in mobility



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administration, visa support, digital database management, and compliance workflows (Erasmus+ documentation, EWP integration, digital signatures).

Overall Team Assets:

- Strong leadership and policy direction
- Proven capacity in international project management
- Established networks in EU, Francophone, and donor environments
- Operational expertise in student and staff mobility
- Research-based collaboration potential in clinical and academic fields
- Good understanding of global health cooperation and donor ecosystems
- A solid foundation for future specialization (digitalization, QA, research mobility, compliance)

6.2 Team growth potential and existing competency gaps

Growth potential

Growth Area	Team member(s) best positioned
Research-driven internationalization, Horizon Europe	Dorian
Rankings, QA alignment (WFME/ESG), strategy leadership	Evelina
COIL/digital mobility and outreach	Natalia
Expansion of Francophone/global South partnerships	Veronica
Visa, digital workflows, student services compliance	Lilia

This consolidated profile demonstrates that the team already possesses strong foundational expertise, with clearly defined areas for specialization that support the university's transition toward a fully strategic, research-engaged, and digitally enabled internationalization model.

Identified Gaps / Areas for capacity strengthening

Gap	Why it matters?	Who could lead or need support?
Lack of clear role in international student recruitment & marketing	Growing competition in medical education	Could be developed jointly; Natalia's communications background useful
Limited expertise in visa/legal compliance, GDPR, student integration services	Critical for international student satisfaction	Specialized training needed
Absence of dedicated roles in international rankings and data intelligence	Rankings now influence funding and visibility	Evelina could oversee; training needed
No clear specialization in virtual mobility & COIL digital internationalization	Global trend in universities	Could be allocated to Natalia or Veronica
Insufficient formal focus on international alumni & diaspora engagement	Key for network-building and research collaboration	Strategic expansion effort
Limited structure around quality assurance of mobility programs (ESG, WFME)	Needed for WFME-compliant accreditation	Needs institutional alignment
No designated function for research internationalization support (joint PhDs, Horizon Europe)	Necessary for ranking and reputation	Could align with Evelina's research experience



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Role Optimization Recommendation (future structure)

Role Area	Potential Lead
International strategy & rankings	Evelina
Francophone & AUF partnerships	Veronica
Erasmus+ & student/staff mobility	Natalia
Project assistant, visa documentation & compliance support	Lilia
Research collaborations, joint doctorates & Horizon Europe	Dorian
(NEW) International recruitment & digital marketing	New/Develop Natalia or Veronica
(NEW) Quality assurance & accreditation standards (WFME, ESG)	Evelina & Dorian
(NEW) Legal/visa compliance & multicultural integration	Lilia (training needed)
(NEW) COIL/virtual exchange officer	Natalia or Dorian after training

Competency Development Roadmap (2025–2027), structured around each team member and aligned with European (EAIE/EHEA), Erasmus+, and WFME-relevant internationalization competencies is divided by (1) *Core development priorities*, (2) *Required training*, (3) *Expected outcomes* and (4) *Timeline* (short-term: 2025, mid-term: 2026, long-term: 2027) and is briefly summarized below:’

Year	Key competency focus	Target staff
2025	Mobility digitalization, strategic leadership, partnership expansion	Evelina, Natalia, Veronica, Lilia
2026	Joint programs, doctoral collaboration, recruitment & marketing	Dorian, Natalia, Veronica
2027	Science diplomacy, compliance leadership, ranking intelligence	Evelina, Dorian, Lilia

6.3 Needs Assessment for Training

Below is a structured and comprehensive needs assessment for training, aligned with:

- The research and analysis conducted above (team capacities, gaps, digitalization status, SWOT, future strategy).
- The identified institutional challenges in internationalization and digital transformation.
- The upcoming GAU-provided IROconnect training modules on *Digitalization, AI, Global Collaboration, and Funding/Proposal Writing*.

The needs assessment identifies the skills and competencies required by the Department of International Relations and European Integration (USMF) to support future internationalization priorities, including digital transformation (EWP, CRM, automation), enhanced mobility services, international research collaboration, global partnership development and grant writing and funding competitiveness. Based on recent institutional assessments, the following gaps were revealed:



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Area	Current situation	Identified gaps
Digital Mobility Management	Reliance on manual processes and Google Drive	Lack of training in EWP, CRM systems, digital signatures, AI-based automation
Use of AI in internationalization	No prior AI-based support in IRO	Need to understand AI for mobility support, partner mapping, and workflow automation
Data-driven decision-making	Data exists but not fully analyzed for strategy	Limited skills in dashboarding, KPI tracking tools (Power BI, AI insights)
Soft skills in negotiation & partnership engagement	Existing partnerships strong in Francophone/EU areas	Need advanced negotiation skills for broader regions (USA, Asia, Horizon Europe consortia)
Intercultural and stakeholder communication	Active student-facing roles managed by AMSR	Need structured intercultural competence training for staff handling diverse partners/students
Faculty engagement in internationalization	Engagement varies greatly by department	Staff require skills to advocate and motivate faculty participation
Grant writing & proposal management	Some project management experience exists but not institutionalized	Lack of structured training in EU proposal writing (Horizon Europe, Erasmus+ CBHE), budgeting, evaluation criteria
Science diplomacy & research networking	Strong individual expertise (e.g., Dorian), but not systematized	Need training on positioning university in multi-institutional consortia
Team capacity standardization	Different staff members have varying levels of digital and internationalization expertise	Need a shared baseline and specialization tracks

Training needs aligned with GAU (IROconnect) modules

GAU/IROconnect module	Relevant institutional needs	Target staff
Module 1: Digitalization, AI, Mobility Tools, Transformation Strategy	EWP integration, CRM use, reduction of manual processes, AI for mobility queries & partner discovery	Evelina, Natalia, Dorian, Lilia
Module 2: Networking, Negotiation, Intercultural Communication, Faculty Engagement	Strengthening global negotiation capacity, intercultural strategy, faculty participation promotion	Veronica (partnerships), Natalia (mobility), Evelina (strategy), Lilia (support roles)
Module 3: Proposal Writing, Budgeting, Funding Opportunities	Enhancing institutional participation in Horizon Europe, Erasmus+ KA2/CBHE, COST, AUF, NIH collaborations	Evelina (strategy), Dorian (research collaboration), Veronica (partnerships), Natalia (proposal communications)

Training priorities per role

Staff Member	Priority Areas	Justification
Evelina	Digital strategy implementation, science diplomacy, funding leadership	Lead internationalization strategy
Veronica	International negotiations, consortia-building in Francophone/EU spaces	Partnership expansion
Natalia	AI-based mobility tools, virtual mobility, digital dashboards	Primary mobility process handler
Dorian	AI for research networking, Horizon Europe proposals, digital collaboration tools	Research-driven internationalization
Lilia	Digital workflow tools, EWP documentation, intercultural communication	Process support and documentation

Training needs and expected outcomes overview

Category	Focus area	Details / specific competencies
Immediate Training Needs (Short-Term)	Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) & CRM Systems	Understanding and operating Erasmus Without Paper framework and Customer Relationship Management platforms for mobility processing



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Category	Focus area	Details / specific competencies
Medium-Term Needs	AI in Mobility & Communication	Using AI tools to automate communication with partners and mobility workflows
	Cloud-Based Partnership Management	Training in cloud systems for partnership tracking, document storage, and collaborative workflows
	Networking & Negotiation	Skills for building, maintaining, and negotiating international academic and research partnerships
	EU Project Proposal Writing & Budgeting	Writing competitive project proposals and managing financial planning for EU-funded initiatives
	Horizon Europe & COST Action Management	Training to manage, coordinate, and report under major EU research & innovation frameworks
	AI-Supported KPI Dashboards	Training in developing and interpreting AI-enabled dashboard analytics for mobility and collaboration KPIs
	COIL & Virtual Mobility Integration	Implementing Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and digital mobility schemes
Expected Outcomes	Faculty Engagement Strategies	Techniques to motivate and increase academic staff participation in mobility and partnership programs
	Efficiency & Digital Compliance	Increased mobility efficiency, stronger EWP alignment, and automation of workflows
	Digital Empowerment	Enhanced readiness for digital and AI-based collaboration tools
	Staff Confidence	Improved staff confidence in AI, digital tools, and virtual internationalization
	Grant Success	Higher success rate in acquiring EU and international funding
	Research Attractiveness	Strengthened university capacity to attract research-oriented collaborations
	Unified Digital Culture	Standardized and enhanced digital capacity across IRO team

6.4 Actions regarding Training Programmes and Initiatives

Specific Training Modules	Delivery Methods	Target Audience	Timeline for Implementation	Responsible	Estimated Resources Required	KPIs for Training Effectiveness
1. Digital Mobility Management & Erasmus Without Paper (EWP)	Workshops (GAU/IROconnect), peer-to-peer learning, webinars	Evelina, Natalia, Dorian, Lilia	Short-term (within 6 months)	IRO + IT Department	Trainer fees, digital platform access	- % of Erasmus+ processes digitized - Reduction in document processing time - Staff confidence survey
2. AI and Automation for IRO Workflow Optimization	Online course + hands-on lab, mentorship by GAU experts	Dorian, Natalia, Evelina	Short-term (6–12 months)	IRO + Digitalization Officer	AI tool licenses, technical support	- Use of AI in FAQs/workflows - Reduction in manual inquiry handling - Post-training skill application
3. Proposal Writing & Budgeting for EU and International Calls (Erasmus+, Horizon Europe)	Intensive online training (GAU Module 3), mentorship groups, proposal writing clinics	Evelina, Dorian, Veronica, Natalia	Medium-term (6–12 months)	IRO + Research Office	Trainers, proposal templates	- Nr. of proposals submitted - Proposal quality score - Increase in funding success rate
4. Negotiation, Networking & Faculty Engagement for	Role-play workshops, simulation-based learning,	Veronica, Evelina, Natalia	Medium-term (1 year)	IRO + HR Dept.	External trainers, venue	- Nr. of new/strengthened partnerships - Faculty participation increase - Partner feedback



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Global Partnerships	shadowing senior negotiators					
5. Intercultural Communication & International Student Support	Blended learning (webinars + in-person case studies), staff-student dialogue sessions, mobility staff exchanges	Lilia, Natalia, AMSR support staff	Short-term (within 6 months)	IRO + Student Affairs	Materials, trainers	- International student satisfaction scores - Decrease in support-related complaints
6. COIL & Virtual Mobility Development	Staff exchange, collaborative online workshops with partner universities	Dorian, Natalia, faculty mobility coordinators	Medium-term	IRO + Academic Affairs Office	Technical training, digital platforms	- Number of COIL modules piloted - Participation growth in blended mobility
7. Digital KPI Dashboard & Data Analytics (Power BI / Tableau)	Practical workshop + mentoring	Evelina, Natalia	Long-term (1–2 years)	IRO + Institutional Research Office	Software, trainers	- Implementation of dashboards - Data-driven reporting frequency increase
8. Internal Mentorship & Knowledge Transfer Program (Post-training skill sharing)	Peer-to-peer mentoring, internal “learning circles”	All IRO staff (especially new hires)	Ongoing	Evelina (coordination)	No-cost (internal)	- Number of internal training sessions - Staff satisfaction with knowledge transfer

The implementation of a structured and adaptive training framework represents a cornerstone for strengthening USMF’s internationalization capacity. By aligning professional development initiatives with the university’s strategic objectives and digital transformation priorities, the institution ensures that staff possess the necessary competencies to manage complex mobility systems, engage in international partnerships, secure external funding, and operate within a globally competitive higher education environment. Ongoing monitoring, regular evaluation, and periodic adaptation of training initiatives will enable the university to continuously improve institutional performance, enhance service quality for international stakeholders, and support the long-term goal of positioning USMF as a leading, globally connected medical university.

VII. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism:

- How will the progress on the Training Programmes and Initiatives will be regularly monitored? (e.g., review meetings, who will be in charge of monitoring etc).
- What data will be collected and how often?



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7.1 Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for Training Programmes and Initiatives

Progress will be monitored through a structured, multi-level evaluation process integrated within the university's internationalization governance and professional development framework.

Monitoring activity	Frequency	Responsible
Review of training participation and completion	After each training module	IRO training coordinator / Head of International Relations
Follow-up evaluation of training outcomes (skills application, challenges)	Quarterly	IRO + HR Department
Semi-annual progress meetings on staff competency development	Every 6 months	Head of IRO + Digitalization Officer + Mobility Coordinators
Annual review of the alignment between staff training progress and institutional internationalization priorities	Annually	Strategic Development Office + IRO Head
Reporting to university leadership	Once per academic year	Director of IRO / Internationalization Committee

A designated **Training Monitoring Officer** within the Department of International Relations will coordinate data collection, reporting, and follow-up.

What data will be collected and how often?

Data Collected	Indicator Type	Frequency	Source / Responsible
Number of staff participating in each training	Quantitative	Per session	IRO training records
Completion rates and certification status	Credentials	Per module	HR / Training provider
Self-assessed confidence and competence improvement	Qualitative (pre/post-surveys)	Immediately post-training	IRO
Application of acquired skills in daily tasks (e.g., EWP use, proposal drafting, AI use)	Performance indicator	Quarterly	Supervisor feedback
Number of proposals submitted or partnerships initiated post-training	Outcome-based	Semi-annually	IRO + Research Office
Reduction in mobility processing errors or delays	Process efficiency	Quarterly	Mobility coordinators
Feedback from international students/partners on improved communication/service quality	External feedback	Annually	IRO / QA Office
Contribution to institutional KPIs (e.g., increased mobilities, new partnerships)	Strategic impact	Annually	Strategic Development Office

Data findings will guide adjustments to training priorities. Underperforming areas will trigger additional mentoring or tailored workshops. Successful modules may be expanded institution-wide and the results will inform future capacity-building plans and staff specialization pathways.

7.2 Review and Adaptation

- How often will the Training Programmes and Initiatives be formally reviewed and potentially adapted? (e.g., every 3 years).



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Frequency of Review and Adaptation

The Training Programmes and Initiatives will be reviewed at **two levels**:

1. Quarterly operational review – conducted by the Training & Quality Steering Group to:

- Monitor implementation progress
- Analyze KPI trends and feedback from staff
- Adjust short-term training priorities if needed (e.g., in response to regulatory changes, Erasmus+ updates, partner requirements)

2. Annual strategic review – carried out as part of the institutional staff development and internationalization performance cycle to:

- Reassess competency needs based on strategic objectives, accreditation requirements, and workload evolution
- Incorporate lessons learned, staff feedback, and new international opportunities
- Update the 3-year competency development roadmap and individual Personal Development Plans (PDPs)
- Approve adaptation or reallocation of training formats, content, or delivery methods

VIII. DIGITALIZATION FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION

8.1 The current state of digitalization supporting the university's internationalization

At Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, digitalization plays a *supporting — though not yet fully integrated —* role in the implementation of internationalization processes. The Department of International Affairs and European Integration has begun transitioning from traditional manual workflows to more digitally enabled systems, particularly within Erasmus+ mobility coordination and international project management. However, this transformation is still in a developmental phase and relies heavily on basic tools rather than specialized systems.

Current practices and existing digital tools

- Partial digitalization of international mobility management: Erasmus+ mobility processes (including nomination, selection, and learning agreements) are documented both electronically and on paper. Administrative processes such as student/staff selection, document validation, and recognition are executed through a combination of manually managed workflows and shared drives;
- Google Drive used as the primary digital storage tool: the Department uses Google Drive for storing mobility agreements, application files, mobility documentation, and partnership materials. This system supports collaborative document access within the IRO but does not offer



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full workflow automation, structured categorization, or integration with university-wide systems;

- Digitalization leadership emerging: the Erasmus+ Coordinator (also acting as a de facto digitalization officer) has begun optimizing data management, streamlining mobility processes, and exploring future tools aligned with EU standards such as Erasmus Without Paper (EWP);
- Digital communication channels are active: E-mail, institutional cloud storage, and basic cloud-based forms are used to coordinate with students, partner institutions, and academic units;
- Some learning and process optimization happens through international practice: participation in Erasmus+ mobility, clinical research networks, capacity-building projects, and conferences supports informal digital competency development among staff.

8.2 Current limitations and digital gaps

Limitation	Impact
No dedicated IRO management platform (e.g., Mobility Online, MoveOn)	High manual workload, risk of duplication/errors
Paper-based validation and signature processes	Slow approvals and limited transparency
Lack of integration with university IT systems (student registry, HR, finance)	Multiple data entries, limited reporting accuracy
Limited security controls within existing storage system	Potential vulnerability in access control and version management
No CRM for tracking partnerships and agreements	Difficult to manage lifecycle and historical engagement
EWP not yet implemented	Risk of misalignment with upcoming EU digital mobility requirements
No digital dashboards for tracking KPIs on mobility, partnerships, or projects	Decision-making is manual and time-intensive

8.3 Digital literacy and capacity status

Staff members have not yet received formal training in digital mobility tools or document automation systems. There are no institutional digital transformation training programs targeting IRO processes. There are recognized gaps in digital competencies, including:

- Workflow automation
- Secure data management
- Digital signature usage
- CRM and mobility database tools
- Integration of mobility processes with institutional databases

Despite this, staff recognize digitalization as essential to future efficiency, scalability, and international compliance. According to the Erasmus+ Coordinator and digitalization officer, the university is positioned to gradually move toward:

1. Full transition to digitized mobility management in alignment with Erasmus Without Paper (EWP);
2. Adoption of automated workflows for partner contracts, approvals, and mobility recognition;



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3. Implementation of digital signature platforms;
4. Integration of mobility databases with central academic systems;
5. Development of a centralized digital platform for partnership tracking, grant portfolios, and mobility statistics;
6. A structured staff training program on digital competencies, workflow management, and data privacy;
7. Institutional strategy for digital transformation aligned with broader modernization goals.

In conclusion, the current digitalization of internationalization processes at SUMPh is in a transitional stage—functionally active but still largely manual, with strong reliance on basic cloud-based tools and individual digital initiatives rather than an institutional system. The university possesses foundational practices, motivated staff, and alignment with Erasmus+ objectives, but now requires a strategic shift toward integrated platforms, automation, formal staff upskilling, and compliance with digital mobility standards such as EWP. With targeted investment and structured capacity development, SUMPh is well positioned to transition to a fully modern, digitally enabled internationalization model.

IX. Challenges, opportunities and benefits of digitalization in IROs

The digital transformation of International Relations Offices (IROs) represents a key component in enhancing operational efficiency, increasing transparency, and strengthening global academic partnerships. However, the process is accompanied by a series of challenges, while also opening new avenues for development and innovation, described in the table below:

Challenge	Description / Impact
Budget constraints	Limited financial resources hinder acquisition of advanced digital tools and subscription-based platforms.
Lack of expertise	Staff may lack digital skills necessary to implement and fully utilize new systems.
Resistance to change	Traditional mindsets may slow adoption of digital workflows and automation processes.
IT infrastructure limitations	Outdated hardware, slow systems, or lack of integration between institutional platforms may impede digitalization.

To address these limitations and foster operational improvement, several digital tools and automation mechanisms are identified as critical enablers of efficiency. The introduction of a university-wide document management system with structured storage, access controls, and version tracking would significantly improve document organization, security, and traceability. Workflow automation tools for validation and approval processes could substantially reduce administrative delays and minimize human error. Integrating IRO platforms with institutional databases would streamline data entry and enhance mobility tracking. The adoption of digital signature solutions would eliminate the dependency on manual approval processes, while the full integration of Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) would align the institution with European digital requirements, particularly in the areas of mobility agreements and grant management.



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Looking ahead, the future of digital transformation at Nicolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy is expected to focus on building a fully integrated and centralized digital environment. A unified platform for international mobility, document processing, and partnership management would substantially decrease manual workloads while improving data accuracy and accessibility. Full implementation of EWP will enhance compliance with Erasmus+ standards and facilitate smoother data exchange with international partners. Furthermore, structured capacity-building programs aimed at developing staff competencies in digital tools, workflow automation, and AI-assisted communication are essential to ensuring a smooth transition toward a digitally mature IRO ecosystem. Data integration with institutional systems will further enhance decision-making capabilities through real-time analytics and performance monitoring.

At present, the institution has not yet fully adopted a structured and comprehensive digitalization framework for international relations; however, it has introduced initial practices such as the use of Google Drive for document storage and collaboration. This solution, while not fully advanced, has facilitated accessibility, digital sharing, and reduction of paper dependency. As the university progresses toward a more robust digital infrastructure, tools such as Erasmus Without Paper and workflow automation systems are expected to become best practices, offering a replicable model for other institutions seeking to modernize their IRO operations.

In conclusion, while certain structural and financial challenges remain, the path toward digital transformation presents substantial opportunities for enhancing international operations, increasing institutional competitiveness, and elevating the quality of global engagement through efficiency, transparency, and innovation.

X. Actions regarding the future digitalization for internationalization

Specific Digital Projects	Technologies to be Adopted	Target Audience	Timeline	Responsible	Estimated Resources Required	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
1. Implementation of Erasmus Without Paper (EWP)	Erasmus Dashboard, OLA, EWP APIs	Erasmus+ staff, mobility students, faculty coordinators	Short-term (Year 1)	IRO + IT Dept.	Training for staff; technical integration support	- 100% Erasmus+ processes handled digitally - Reduction in processing time by 30%
2. Adoption of a Mobility CRM/Management System	DreamApply, Mobility Online, MoveOn (or custom module)	IRO staff, faculty mobility officers	Medium-term (Years 1–2)	IRO + IT Dept. + Mobility Coordinator	Licensing fees; initial setup; digital workflows training	- All mobility data centralized - Improved tracking & reporting accuracy by 50%
3. Digital Signature & Approval Workflow Integration	E-signature tools (DocuSign, Adobe Sign, GOV e-Sign)	IRO, Rectorate, Deans, students	Short-term (Year 1)	IRO + Rector's Office + IT Dept.	Legal compliance assessment; subscription costs	- 80% of approvals processed digitally - Processing time reduced by 40%



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Specific Digital Projects	Technologies to be Adopted	Target Audience	Timeline	Responsible	Estimated Resources Required	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
4. COIL & Virtual Mobility Integration	Learning platforms (Moodle, Teams, Zoom), COIL methodology	Academic staff, international students, digital mobility coordinators	Medium-term (Years 2–3)	IRO + E-learning Center	Training for staff; IT support; digital pedagogy workshops	- Min. 2 COIL partnerships/year - Increase in blended mobility by 20%
5. Digital Partnership & Agreement Tracking Database	Partnership CRM (Airtable, Notion, SharePoint database)	IRO & partner institutions	Short-term (Year 1)	Veronica + Lilia + IT Dept.	Minimal software cost or integration	- 100% agreements archived digitally - Improved recall & monitoring
6. Development of a Global Mobility KPI Dashboard	Power BI, Tableau, Google Data Studio	IRO leadership, Rectorate	Medium-term (Year 2)	IRO + Institutional Research Unit	Data integration, BI specialist support	- Quarterly reporting dashboards - Data accuracy & transparency enhanced
7. AI-assisted support for mobility FAQs and guidance	AI-based chatbot (ChatGPT API or custom) for Erasmus queries	Students, staff, incoming applicants	Long-term (Years 3+)	IRO + IT Dept.	AI API license, assistant training	- 24/7 student mobility assistance - Reduction in repetitive inquiry volume by 50%
8. Digital Training Hub for IRO Staff	LMS-based micro-modules, webinars (EWP training, GDPR, digital tools)	IRO staff, faculty coordinators, admin staff	Short-term and ongoing	IRO + HR Dept.	Training content, subscriptions	- 100% staff trained - Annual digital competencies assessment

XI. Monitoring, evaluation, and review

11.1 Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

- How will the progress on the digitalization supporting the university's internationalization will be regularly monitored? (e.g., review meetings, who will be in charge of monitoring etc).
- What data will be collected and how often?

Progress on the digitalization initiatives supporting internationalization will be monitored through a structured system integrated into the university's strategic implementation and quality assurance processes. The table below summarizes the monitoring activities planned, their frequency as well as the key responsible person:

Monitoring Activity	Frequency	Responsible
Review of digital project implementation status (EWP, CRM, e-signature, mobility dashboards, etc.)	Quarterly	Department of International Relations & European Integration (IRO) in coordination with IT Department
Operational follow-up meetings (specific to each digital project)	Monthly / as needed	Project focal points (e.g., Erasmus+ Coordinator, Digitalization Officer)
Annual evaluation of digitalization outcomes in relation to internationalization goals	Annually	IRO + Strategic Development Office + Quality Assurance Department



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Monitoring Activity

Reporting to university leadership (Rectorate/Senate)

Frequency

Once per
academic year

Responsible

Head of International Relations Department

The **Erasmus+ Coordinator/Digitalization Officer** will act as the primary monitoring focal point, consolidating updates from involved units and preparing summary progress reports.

What data will be collected and how often?

Data Collected	Indicator Type	Collection Frequency	Source / Responsible
Number of mobility applications processed digitally	Quantitative	Monthly	IRO digital platform / CRM
Reduction in processing time (pre- vs post-digitalization)	Efficiency metric	Semi-annually	Erasmus+ Coordinator
Number of agreements managed via digital database/CRM	Quantitative	Quarterly	Partnerships officer
Number of staff trained in new digital systems	Capacity metric	After each training cycle	IRO + HR Department
Student and staff satisfaction with digital mobility services	Qualitative (survey-based)	After each mobility cycle	IRO + QA Department
Degree of EWP integration and usage	Compliance indicator	Semi-annually	Digitalization Officer + IT Department
BI dashboard updates on mobility trends, partner engagement, digital workflows	Analytical metric	Quarterly	Mobility Data Team
Issues/technical downtimes/feedback logs	Risk indicator	On-going	IT support team

Findings will be used to adjust implementation timelines, re-prioritize resources, refine staff training needs, and introduce corrective actions. Data will feed into an annual “Digitalization in Internationalization Progress Report” to be reviewed by university leadership. Successful models will be scaled institution-wide or integrated into broader digital transformation initiatives.

11.2 Review and Adaptation

- How often will the digitalization supporting the university’s internationalization be formally reviewed and potentially adapted?

The digitalization initiatives supporting internationalization will be reviewed on a regular and strategic basis to ensure relevance, efficiency, and alignment with evolving institutional priorities, international standards (e.g., Erasmus+ digital compliance, WFME/ESG requirements), and user needs. Formal review frequency is presented in the table below:

Review Type	Frequency	Purpose	Responsible
Operational review	Semi-annually	Assess implementation progress, address technical or procedural issues, and improve user experience	IRO + IT Department + Mobility Coordinators



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Review Type	Frequency	Purpose	Responsible
Strategic digitalization review	Annually	Evaluate impact on internationalization performance, alignment with university strategy, and compliance with European digital standards	Head of IRO + Strategic Development Office + QA Department
Full digitalization strategy update	Every 2–3 years or following major policy/technological changes	Adapt long-term direction based on institutional growth, new funding opportunities, EWP requirements, and national/EU reforms	University Leadership + IRO + External digital experts (if required)

XII. STRATEGY-LEVEL MONITORING & KPIs

As baseline is established Academic Year 2024–2025. Targets will be confirmed after baseline validation.

Objective	KPI (annual)	2026 Target	2027 Target
Mobility growth & balance	Incoming/outgoing students total; incoming $\geq 40\%$	+15%	+25%
Staff mobility	Teaching/training mobilities	+20%	+30%
Digitalization	% Erasmus processes digital (EWP/OLA/e-sign)	90%	100%
Partnerships quality	% active agreements with ≥ 1 activity/year	70%	80%
Joint offer	New joint modules/summer schools/joint degrees	4 / 2 / 0	6 / 3 / 1
Research internationalization	HE/COST proposals (win-rate)	10 ($\geq 15\%$)	14 ($\geq 20\%$)
Student experience	Intl. student satisfaction ($\geq 4/5$)	≥ 4.2	≥ 4.3
Visibility & rankings	Maintain #1 national Webometrics Excellence; +5–10% in 2 systems	on track	achieved
Capacity building	% IRO/faculty coordinators trained	80%	100%
Compliance & QA	ESG/WFME-aligned audits completed	1	2

XIII. RELATIONSHIP WITH ESN (ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK)

Objective: To strengthen collaboration with local ESN to improve student mobility experiences and support services

13.1 The current state of the collaboration with local / international ESN organization

At present, the collaboration of Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy (SUMPh) with the local and international Erasmus Student Network (ESN) remains limited. This situation is largely influenced by the university's strong and well-established partnership with the



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Association of Medical Students and Residents (AMSR), which plays a central role in supporting mobility-related student services.

The AMSR has taken on responsibilities typically associated with ESN structures, including:

- Welcoming and mentoring incoming Erasmus+ students,
- Facilitating cultural and social integration activities,
- Assisting with orientation and academic adaptation,
- Supporting outgoing students with peer guidance and experience-sharing.

Given the active contribution and capacity of this student-led association—particularly due to its deep understanding of the medical academic context and international student needs—the university has not yet formalized a broader collaboration framework with ESN at the local or international level.

However, SUMPh acknowledges the potential added value of stronger engagement with ESN structures, especially in expanding cross-university mobility support, enhancing European student networking opportunities, and improving visibility within the wider Erasmus+ community. A future strategic direction may include exploring complementary partnerships with ESN branches while consolidating the successful involvement of AMSR in mobility-related support.

Opportunities for Expanding Collaboration with ESN

While current support for student mobility is effectively managed through the Association of Medical Students and Residents (AMSR), there are clear opportunities to complement these efforts through enhanced collaboration with local and international Erasmus Student Network (ESN) structures. Establishing or deepening engagement with ESN could bring several strategic benefits aligned with the university's internationalization goals. Potential areas of collaboration with ESN include:

Area	Added Value
Expanded European student integration	ESN can connect incoming students with wider international cohorts beyond medical networks.
Broader visibility in the Erasmus+ community	SUMPh's presence within ESN platforms may enhance institutional visibility and attractiveness to mobility candidates.
Access to established peer-support models	ESN mentorship formats (e.g., buddy systems) could complement existing AMSR initiatives.
Participation in ESN-led events and campaigns	Enables students to engage in international projects, social inclusion campaigns, and European-level student advocacy.
Joint cultural and intercultural activities	ESN experience in intercultural exchange could strengthen the welcoming environment for foreign students.
Contribution to digital mobility and inclusion tools	ESN often collaborates with digital projects such as Erasmus+ apps and student engagement platforms.

Possible collaboration models

- **Co-existence model:** AMSR continues leading medical-specific mobility mentoring, while ESN is engaged for broader European integration and networking activities.



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- **Joint initiative model:** AMSR and ESN co-organize international student events, campaigns, and intercultural activities.
- **Strategic partnership model:** SUMPh becomes an official partner institution within the national ESN network, ensuring institutional-level collaboration and visibility.

Next steps to be explored

1. Explore formal engagement opportunities with ESN Moldova or ESN partner institutions.
2. Facilitate an introductory meeting between AMSR and ESN representatives to define complementary roles.
3. Pilot one ESN-supported integration or cultural event per academic year.
4. Assess feedback from incoming and outgoing students to evaluate added value and sustainability.

This approach allows SUMPh to maintain the strengths of its current AMSR collaboration while gradually expanding European-level student networking and support services through ESN engagement.

13.2 Actions regarding the future collaboration with local / international ESN organization

Specific Projects / Activities	Target Groups	Timeline	Responsible Actors	Estimated Resources Required	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Risks	Mitigation Measures
1. Introductory Meeting & Partnership Alignment Workshop (ESN-AMSR-IRO)	AMSR members, ESN representatives, IRO staff, Erasmus+ students	Short-term (within months)	6 IRO + AMSR + ESN	Staff time, meeting logistics	- Collaboration framework established - Meeting report completed	Lack of stakeholder interest or misalignment of roles	Early stakeholder engagement and clear definition of complementary functions
2. Pilot "Welcome Day with ESN Support" for Erasmus+ Students	Incoming students; mentors; volunteers	Erasmus+ AMSR ESN Short-term (next academic intake)	IRO + AMSR + ESN	€200-500 (event materials, refreshments)	- 1 co-organized event - ≥80% student satisfaction	Low student participation or schedule conflicts	Align timing with academic calendar; promote via multiple channels
3. Joint Cultural & Social Integration Events (e.g., International Evening, Language Exchange Café)	Incoming and outgoing students; local students	Medium-term (within 1 year)	ESN + AMSR + IRO	€500-1,000/event	- Min. 2 events/year - ≥85% satisfaction	Limited engagement due to academic workload	Schedule during low-intensity academic periods; hybrid events
4. ESN-Led Buddy System Complementing AMSR Mentorship	Incoming students; AMSR mentors; ESN volunteers	Medium-term (next academic year)	ESN + AMSR + IRO	Volunteer-based; buddy training	- Buddy network established - 1 buddy per incoming student	Volunteer burnout or low continuity	Introduce recognition system (certificates, awards)
5. Participation in ESN International Campaigns (e.g., SocialErasmus, Mov'in Europe)	Mobility students; socially engaged students	Medium-term (1-2 years)	ESN + AMSR + IRO	Promotional resources; coordination	staff - Participation in ≥1 ESN campaign/year	Competing institutional priorities	Integrate campaigns with existing university events
6. Inclusion of SUMPh in ESN Mobility Promotion Networks	Prospective students; candidates	outgoing mobility Long-term (years)	(2+ IRO + ESN National/Regional)	Branding materials; marketing coordination	- SUMPh presence in ESN channels - +10-15% outgoing mobilities	Low visibility or branding inconsistencies	Assign marketing focal point; ensure messaging alignment
7. Mobility Ambassadors Programme (SUMPh-AMSR-ESN)	Former students; leaders	Erasmus+ student Long-term	IRO + AMSR + ESN	Ambassador training, promotional kits (€1,000/year)	- Programme established - ≥10 ambassadors/year - increased mobility interest	Insufficient applicant interest	Introduce incentives (certificates, online visibility, priority in mobility selections)



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13.3 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism:

- How will the progress on actions regarding the collaboration with local / international ESN organization will be regularly monitored? (e.g., review meetings, who will be in charge of monitoring etc).
- What data will be collected and how often?

Monitoring of collaboration progress with local / international ESN organizations

Progress on actions related to collaboration with ESN will be monitored through a structured, periodic review mechanism integrated into the existing internationalization governance framework of the university. Monitoring will be coordinated by the Department of International Affairs and European Integration, with the Erasmus+ Coordinator (or designated ESN liaison officer) acting as the primary focal point. Collaboration updates will also involve representatives from AMSR (Association of Medical Students and Residents) and, where applicable, ESN partners.

Monitoring Mechanisms

Monitoring Activity	Frequency	Responsible
Progress review meetings (ESN–AMSR–IRO)	Quarterly	IRO + Erasmus+ Coordinator
Evaluation of implemented activities/events	After each event	Event Lead (ESN/AMSR/IRO)
KPI tracking (e.g., number of events, participants, satisfaction rates)	Semi-annually	Monitoring Coordinator within IRO
Annual collaboration effectiveness assessment	Annually	Head of International Affairs + ESN Liaison
Reporting into internationalization strategy progress report	Once per academic year	IRO

Tools used for monitoring

Tool / Instrument	Purpose
Activity/action tracking sheet	Logging progress and responsibilities
Event feedback forms (incoming/outgoing students)	Assess event satisfaction and impact
Satisfaction surveys	Measure engagement and quality perception
KPI dashboard (mobility & student engagement metrics)	Quantitative monitoring of outcomes
Annual summary report to university leadership	Consolidated overview and strategic recommendations

Review and adaptation

The collaboration with local and international ESN organizations will be reviewed on a regular and structured basis to ensure alignment with student needs, university strategic goals, and evolving internationalization trends. Findings from monitoring activities will be used to adjust the scope or design



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of collaborative activities, reallocate responsibilities or resources where necessary, scale up successful initiatives (e.g., welcome events, buddy system) and address barriers such as low participation or insufficient visibility. Formal Review Frequency will consist of:

1. **Annual strategic review** – a formal evaluation will be conducted once per academic year as part of the broader internationalization progress review. This will assess effectiveness, relevance, student engagement outcomes, and integration with institutional objectives.
2. **Mid-year checkpoint** (optional) – if needed, an interim review may be held at the end of each mobility semester (e.g., post-Erasmus intake) to evaluate initial results and implement quick improvements.

The reviewing process will be led by the Department of International Affairs and European Integration, involving Erasmus+ Coordinator/ESN liaison as operational lead, AMSR representative with student implementation lead, ESN partner representative if collaboration is bilateral/formalized and the Head of International Relations for the strategic oversight.

XIV. INTEGRATED ROADMAP (2025-2027)

2025 — Build & digitize: approve strategy, install ISC and Digitalization Officer; procure CRM/Mobility system; configure EWP & e-signature; launch dashboards; deliver GAU/IROconnect Modules 1–2; start Grant Studio; pilot COIL; run Welcome Day + Buddy; Partnership CRM live.

2026 — Scale & integrate: EWP full cycle and paperless processes; 2–3 summer schools; additional joint modules; finalize joint degree MoUs; expand BI dashboards; pilot AI FAQ; submit ≥ 10 HE/COST proposals; ethical recruitment pilots.

2027 — Consolidate & accredit: launch first joint degree (subject to QA/Legal); mature AI support and analytics; expand COIL/blended mobility; ESG/WFME-aligned audit; publish 3-year impact report; update strategy (2028–2030).

XV. ANNEXES

If necessary.