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APPROVED

Protocol No 164

**EKA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES  
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR  
SCIENCE AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY  
2021-2023**

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of science and research is a priority axis for the overall development of the country, governed by a number of strategic and normative documents at national level:

**The Latvian National Development Plan 2021-2027 (NDP 2027).** NDP2027 is hierarchically the highest national medium-term development planning document. It also sets medium-term priorities in the field of education and science, highlighting the direction of action: Science for the development of society, the economy and security.

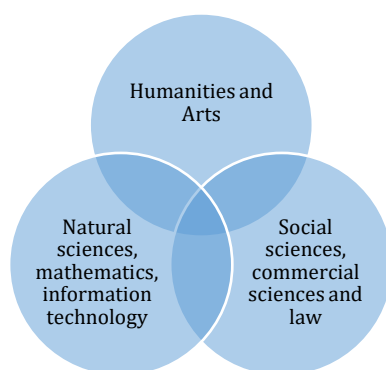
**The Science, Technology Development and Innovation Guidelines 2021-2027 (STDIG2027).** STDIG2027 contributes to the achievement of the strategic objectives set out in NAP 2027 in line with the goals and objectives of the directions “Science for the Development of Society, the Economic and Security” and “Quality, accessible and inclusive education” of the priority “Knowledge and Skills for Personal and National Growth”.

The policy challenge of the STDIG is to develop a research and development (R&D) system that ensures a sustainable development of R&D human capital, knowledge, skills, competences and technologies, thereby contributing to the acquisition of quality education and skills, enhancement of social and economic welfare and security, improvement of the quality of life and transition to a climate-neutral economy.

The development of science and creative activity is one of the EKA's priorities as defined in the EKA Development Strategy - EKAAS2023 ([https://www.augstskola.lv/upload/EKA\\_Strategija\\_2023\\_V14022019.pdf](https://www.augstskola.lv/upload/EKA_Strategija_2023_V14022019.pdf)).

The objective of this priority is “To achieve high-level internationally recognized research and innovation results, which are promoted through targeted collaboration among academic staff, students, local and international cooperation partner universities as well as industry representatives, thus ensuring research-based studies, appropriate for the scientific qualifications of the academic staff and the research needed by industry”.

EKA implements study programmes in different thematic groups, which, in turn, promote a multidisciplinary approach to carrying out research and creative work.



### Scientific vision of EKA

In 2023, the EKA University of Applied Sciences is a science-based and innovation-oriented higher education institution recognized in Latvia and Europe:

- where highly motivated and qualified employees (mainly holding a doctoral degree) are attracted to perform scientific and academic activities,
- where interdisciplinary research areas have been developed,
- where academic staff and students are actively involved in research and creative activities,

- where international scientific and creative activities take place on regular basis,
- which actively cooperates with other universities, institutions and employers in Latvia and abroad in order to strengthen its research capacity.

Our success pillars are:

**Interdisciplinary approach to study process implementation.** EKA implements study programmes in different thematic groups which, in turn, promote a multidisciplinary approach to carrying out research and creative work:

1. Social sciences, commercial sciences - study directions "Economics", "Business management, administration and real estate management " (hereinafter referred to as "Management direction") and "Law";
2. Natural sciences, mathematics, information technology – the study direction "Information technology, hardware, electronics, telecommunications, computer, and computer science " (hereinafter "IT direction")
3. The humanities and arts - study direction "Arts".

**Intercultural environment.** In today's globalized world, successful business is based on cross-cultural literacy, which provides opportunities to navigate freely in the international market. By combining the economy and culture in its conception, by offering study programmes in different languages, by giving its students the opportunity to participate in seminars of foreign professors and master study courses abroad, by organizing international scientific and creative events, EKA is preparing business people for their work in the international business environment.

**Creative and innovative approach to study.** EKA provides both a face-to-face and distance learning process in the e-environment, offering e-studies where lectures, seminars and tutorials with teachers, as well as examinations take place in online virtual classrooms. EKA students are provided with the opportunity to acquire knowledge through the innovative infrastructure of EKA: business simulations, DIG laboratory, court hall and artistic creation rooms. EKA academic staff actively uses digital tools for study courses and teaching methods that facilitate the active involvement of students in the study process.

In order to achieve the objectives of scientific and research development, **the Development Strategy for Science and Creative Activity of the EKA University of Applied Sciences** (in Latvian - *Ekonomikas un kultūras augstskolas Zinātnes un radošās darbības attīstības stratēģija*, acronym – ZRDAS2020) was developed in 2021, which is a university-level medium term planning document, which has been developed within the framework of a higher level planning document "Development Strategy of the EKA University of Applied Sciences" (in Latvian - *Ekonomikas un kultūras augstskolas attīstības stratēģija*, acronym - EKAAS).

ZRDAS2023 has been developed in line with the aims and objectives defined in the document "Guidelines for Science, Technology Development and Innovation 2021 - 2027" (<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/7053> )

The objectives and performance indicators of ZRDAS2023 are defined to facilitate effective research-based study process by applying the active 'students as researchers' approach.

The ZRDAS2023 Action plan is drawn up and implemented annually by the EKA University of Applied Sciences on the basis of priority axes and defined objectives of ZRDAS2023.

The Vice Rector for Science of the EKA University of Applied Sciences shall be responsible for the elaboration of ZRDAS2023, strategy Action plans and the achievement of their objectives.

## THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Several stakeholders have been involved in the ZRDAS2023 development process: EKA administration, EKA academic staff and representatives of administrative staff, EKA students and employers.

On 3 February 2021, an administrative meeting was held with the EKA study programme directors. In the course of the meeting, the priorities for the development of scientific and creative activity in 2021-2023 were discussed. A decision was taken to set up work groups for the development of ZRDAS2023. The heads of work groups were appointed and their provisional members were identified. Mandatory requirements were: (1) at least one representative from employers, (2) at least one EKA student/graduate, (3) at least 3 teachers involved in the implementation of the study direction programmes.

A work group for each study direction of EKA was established. On 15 February 2021, Rector's order No. 2-16/21/06 on establishing a work group for drafting the Development Strategy for Science and Creative Activity for the period of 2021-2023 was signed.

### 1. Members of the work group for the study direction "Economics":

- Programme directors: Dr.oec., EKA professor Vita Zariņa; Dr.oec., EKA professor Staņislavs Keišs.
- Academic staff: EKA lecturer Tatjana Daudiša, EKA lecturer Edgars Čerkovskis.
- Representatives of employers: Dainis Locāns, Executive Director of the Latvian Business Advisory Association.
- Graduate: Kaspars Karaševskis, study programme "Business Administration".

### 2. Members of the work group for the study direction "Management, Administration and Real Estate Management":

- Programme directors: Dr.oec., EKA professor Inga Šīna; Mg.iur., EKA assistant professor Natālija Verina; MBA, EKA assistant professor Jeļena Budanceva.
- Academic staff: EKA assistant professor Ieva Andžāne, EKA assistant professor Ilona Lejniece, EKA assistant professor Ksenija Ijevļeva.
- Representatives of employers: Sergejs Grodņikovs, JSC Rietumu Banka, Head of Public Relations, Advertising and Marketing; Eva Mareka Šaknere, OC Vision Personnel Department Project Manager.
- Graduate/ student: Rita Vidže, study programme "Interior design", Ieva Iraida, study programme "Culture Management".

### 3. Members of the work group for the study direction "Information technology, hardware, electronics, telecommunications, computer, and computer science":

- Programme director: Mg oec. Jurijs Radionovs.
- Academic staff: EKA assistant professor Andrejs Liepiņš, EKA guest lecturer Maksims Žigunovs, EKA guest lecturer Egmonts Treiguts, EKA assistant professor Mārcis Pinnis, EKA assistant professor Patriks Morevs, EKA guest lecturer Tatjana Tambovceva.
- Representative of employers: Jānis Tupulis, LATA Chairman of the Board.
- Graduate: Aivars Herings, study programme "Information Technologies".

### 4. Members of the work group for the study direction "Law":

- Programme director: Dr.iur., EKA assistant professor Karina Zalcmane.
- Academic staff: EKA assistant professor Marina Kamenecka-Usova, EKA guest lecturer Larisa Saukāne.
- Representative of employers: Julija Belkina, LNK Charity Fund and FindaNote, Recruitment and Communications Board Member, PR expert
- Graduate/ student: Agris Zarņš, study programme "Law"

5. Members of the work group for the study direction "Art":

- Programme Directors: Mg.art., EKA assistant professor, Ksenija Miļča; Dr.oec. EKA guest lecturer Kaspars Šteinbergs.
- Academic staff: EKA assistant professor Kristiana Kazarjana, EKA guest lecturer Kitija Almane, EKA guest lecturer Lāsma Bringina, EKA researcher Viktorija Priļenska, EKA guest lecturer Sabīne Andersone-Moore, EKA guest lecturer Rihards Valters.
- Representative of employers: Agris Tauriņš, "Projekcijas Dizains" Ltd. designer, technologies expert, project manager; Laura Vilsons, Member of the Board of the Latvian Game Developer Association
- Graduate/student: Karlīna Jansone, study programme "Interior design", Beāte Baļuka, study programme "Computer game design and graphics"

The heads of the work groups submitted their proposals on objectives, performance indicators and target values of performance indicators to the EKA Vice rector for Science. This information was compiled and led to the development of the initial draft of the ZRDAS2023 and its Action Plan.

On 11 August 2021, EKA management meeting was held, attended by the Chairperson of EKA Board, EKA Rector and EKA Vice Rector for Science. During the meeting, amendments and additions to the initial versions of ZRDAS2023 and its Action plan were discussed and made.

The meeting of EKA academic staff, EKA Programme directors and EKA students took place on 15 September 2021, during which the participants carried out an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of EKA scientific and creative activity (see Table 2).

At the meeting of the EKA Scientific Council on 16 September 2021 (Protocol No 1), its members discussed the results of the SWOT analysis in order to ensure that the objectives of the ZRDAS2023 and the indicators included in its Action Plan allow for the elimination of defined weaknesses and the full use of identified development opportunities.

On 17 November 2021, ZRDAS2023 was approved by the EKA Senate meeting (Protocol No 164).

## ANALYSIS OF THE BACKGROUND SITUATION

On 30 June 2021, the academic staff of EKA consisted of more than 140 people, 55 of whom were elected to the academic posts of EKA (incl. 34 persons (62 %) with a doctor's degree. Several EKA academic staff members elected to academic positions have received the rights of experts of the Latvian Council of Science (as of 30.06.2021. – 32%).

Since 2011, the EKA University of Applied Sciences organizes an international scientific conference. Since 2017, it has been organized under the title *Emerging Trends in Economics, Culture and Humanities*. A new logo of the conference was also presented in that year. (<https://www.augstskola.lv/?parent=619&lng=lva>) At present, the etECH Conference has three strategic partners: Alberta College (Latvia), Walsh College (USA) and Sumy State University (Ukraine).

Despite the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemics, the etECH Conference was organized in 2020 and 2021 using the video conference system BigBlueButton (BBB) and the ZOOM platform. In 2021, more than 100 participants from 18 countries participated in the conference with their contributions. etECH2021 was organized in six virtual sections involving participants with 62 reports on the results of their studies.

Each year, conference abstract proceedings are published as part of the etECH Conference. The best articles are published in the EKA scientific journal "Economics and Culture". The magazine is issued twice a year (in June and December) by the International Publishing House SCIENDO. The magazine has OPEN ACCESS status, all articles have a DOI number. (<https://content.sciendo.com/view/journals/jec/jec-overview.xml>)

Student International Scientific Practical Conferences have been organized by the EKA University of Applied Sciences since 2012. Since 2015, it has been organized in cooperation with the strategic partner of the EKA – Alberta College. In 2021, 177 research abstracts and 111 full text articles were submitted to the conference by the students of EKA and other universities. In addition, 23 descriptions of student creative work were submitted to the section of EKA Arts study direction (descriptions of the pieces of work of the study programme "Interior design" and descriptions of the games developed by the study programme "Computer game design and graphics").

Since 2015, EKA in cooperation with Alberta College has been issuing a collection of scientific articles "Collection of Student Scientific Research Papers". A collection of conference abstracts is published within the framework of a joint conference organized by EKA and Alberta College. In addition, in the field of Arts, a collection "Descriptions of Students' Creative Projects and Work of Art" is published, which brings together descriptions of the pieces of artwork created by the students of the study programme "Interior design" and computer game descriptions made by the students of the study programme "Computer game design and graphics".

Every year, EKA defines its priority research directions. EKA priority in science is interdisciplinary research. This means that several research projects can be carried out within one research direction involving the academic staff and students from different study directions. A coordinator is appointed for each research direction, who leads the work of the research group and is responsible for research results in the direction. The 2021/2020 priority research areas are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1** EKA priority research areas 2020 /2021

NAME OF THE RESEARCH AREA	STUDY DIRECTION
Circular economy	Economics
Digital economy: trends, opportunities and challenges	Economics Management science
Social innovations and social entrepreneurship	Management science
ICT studies	IT
Cultural studies	Management science
Creative Industries and Design	Arts
Emerging Trends in Law	Law

In order to describe the current situation at the EKA University of Applied Sciences in the field of scientific and creative activity, in the meeting of the EKA academic staff, students and administration, strengths and weaknesses were discussed and summarized (Table 2) which were taken into account when defining the objectives of ZRDAS2023.

**Table 2** Strengths and weaknesses of the EKA University of Applied Sciences in the field of scientific and creative activity

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research is integrated into the study process as a mandatory requirement</li> <li>• The academic staff has the opportunity to publish their research results in EKA scientific publications</li> <li>• Students have the opportunity to publish their research results in EKA scientific publications</li> <li>• There is a system of support for research on which the academic staff has been informed</li> <li>• There is a comprehensive international scientific conference with a high brand value</li> <li>• There is a separate publication for students – collection “Descriptions of Students’ Creative Projects and Work of Art”</li> <li>• Students and academic staff are aware of the possibility of participating in the EKA conferences</li> <li>• EKA academic staff have their papers published in the publications indexed in SCOPUS/WoS databases</li> <li>• EKA has its academic staff members who are actively involved in the research work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students have not been sufficiently informed about the importance of carrying out research/creative activity</li> <li>• Narrowly defined research directions that do not cover all economic/management areas</li> <li>• Low citation index of publications by EKA academic staff</li> <li>• There is weak cooperation with representatives of other universities in the development of joint publications</li> <li>• There is weak cooperation with business sector representatives in research</li> <li>• There are few international students who are able to participate fully in research</li> <li>• Students are not motivated to engage in research</li> <li>• Insufficient cooperation between EKA academic staff in research</li> <li>• EKA academic staff and students lack knowledge of the practical application of research methods</li> <li>• The EKA scientific Journal has not been included in SCOPUS/WoS database</li> <li>• Research work is not included in the workload of EKA academic staff</li> <li>• There is a low number of active researchers in the study directions of IT, Art and Law</li> <li>• There is no technical support for EKA academic staff for submitting applications for scientific projects</li> </ul>

## **PRIORITIES OF THE EKA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

### **Priority “Quality Assurance in research and creative activity” (Pr1)**

Higher education institutions have the duty to perform scientific activity (Article 19(1) of the Law on Scientific Activity). For the purpose of carrying out the scientific activity, a higher school requires academic staff with scientific qualifications, which is evidenced both by a doctor's degree and an expert status of the Latvian Scientific Council, as well as by high quality scientific publications. The evaluation of the quality of research and creative activity is also based on the achievements of the academic staff and students, as well as on the achievements of EKA in project implementation and funding attraction.



### **Priority "Involvement of academic staff in research and creative activity in each study direction" (Pr2)**

One of the criteria for assessing a study direction is "The involvement of academic staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation". In order to achieve results in this area, EKA is planning to introduce new practices for establishing international research teams. In addition, it is envisaged to set up an academic staff assessment system, where the research and creative activity criteria will play an important role, as well as a corresponding financial motivation system.

### **Priority "Involvement of students in research and creative activity in each study direction" (Pr3)**

"Student involvement in scientific research" is an important criterion in the assessment of study directions.

The EKA University of Applied Sciences implements study programmes in five study directions:

1. Economics
2. Business management, administration and real estate management (hereinafter referred to as "Management")
3. Information technology, computer engineering, electronics, telecommunications, computer management and computer science (hereinafter referred to as "IT")
4. Law (hereinafter referred to as "Law")
5. Arts

EKA's priority in the study process is research-based studies, which include the integration of the "students as researchers" approach in study programmes at all levels. "Students as researchers" in the context of higher education means a pedagogical approach aimed at supporting students to engage in order to complement their knowledge and enhance their skills. (Walkington, The Higher Education Academy, 2015)

### **Priority "Cooperation in research and creative activity" (Pr4)**

In defining the objectives for promoting cooperation in research and creative activity, cooperation is addressed from various viewpoints:

- Institutional cooperation – cooperation between EKA academic staff
- National cooperation – cooperation of EKA academic staff with academic staff of other Latvian higher education institutions
- International cooperation – cooperation of EKA academic staff with academic staff of foreign universities
- EKA cooperation with the business sector (academic-corporate collaboration)

### **Priority "EKA reputation" (Pr5)**

The scientific reputation is a prerequisite for the improvement of the overall image of the university in the academic environment, which, in its turn, promotes the visibility of the university among students, facilitates cooperation with other universities and institutions, provides for the loyalty of academic staff.

The objectives and corresponding performance indicators have been defined within the priorities. The results have been defined on the basis of weaknesses (see Table 2), as well as taking into account EKAAS strategic priorities and the recommendations from the accreditation committees of the study directions "Economics", "Management" and "Law" in 2021.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY PRIORITIES OF THE EKA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

### PRIORITY "QUALITY ASSURANCE IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY" (Pr1)

**Pr1\_Objective 1.** To ensure the quality of the study process by involving academic staff with advanced research competences

#### Indicators of the results of Pr1\_1

**Pr1\_1\_R1** Number of doctor degree holders elected to academic positions of EKA (% of the total number of staff elected to the academic positions of EKA)

**Pr1\_1\_R2** Number of academic staff elected to the academic position of EKA professors and/or associated professors

**Pr1\_1\_R3** Number of EKA academic staff – approved experts of the Latvian Council of Science (% of the total number of elected academic staff members with a doctor degree)

**Pr1\_Objective 2.** To ensure achievements of research and creative activity at the EKA University of Applied Sciences

#### Indicators of the results of Pr1\_2

**Pr1\_2\_R1** Number of scientific papers in the publications indexed in SCOPUS/Web of Science/ERIH+ databases per year

**Pr1\_2\_R2** Number of other publications per year

**Pr1\_2\_R3** Number of books/monographs issued by EKA or EKA academic staff per year

**Pr1\_2\_R4** Number of commissioned studies/innovation projects per year

**Pr1\_2\_R5** Number of research-oriented projects (projects with a research component) where EKA acts as a coordinator or partner

**Pr1\_2\_R6** Share of attracted external research funding in the total research budget per year

**Pr1\_2\_R7** Number of publications per year

**Pr1\_2\_R8** Number of commercialised products (services, prototypes, ideas)

### PRIORITY "INVOLVEMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY IN EACH STUDY DIRECTION" (Pr2)

**Pr2\_Objective 1.** To ensure academic staff a possibility to engage in research and creative activity

#### Indicators of the results of Pr2\_1

**Pr2\_1\_R1** Number of scientific conferences and seminars organized by EKA per year

**Pr2\_1\_R2** Number of EKA scientific publications (journals, proceedings) where academic staff may publish the results of their research

**Pr2\_1\_R3** Number of research teams organized by EKA

**Pr2\_Objective 2.** To develop research competences of EKA academic staff and motivate them to engage in research and creative activity

**Indicators of the results of Pr2\_2**

**Pr2\_2\_R1** Number of training or informative seminars/workshops for EKA academic staff for developing their research competences

**Pr2\_2\_R2** Number of scientific publications that have received EKA funding

**Pr2\_2\_R3** Number of EKA academic staff members who have received a financial bonus for the results of their research/creative activity

**Pr2\_Objective 3.** To support achievements of research and creative performance of EKA academic staff

**Indicators of the results of Pr2\_3**

**Pr2\_3\_R1** Share of EKA academic staff with scientific publications indexed in SCOPUS/web of Science/ERIH+ databases

**Pr2\_3\_R2** Share of EKA academic staff with achievements in creative activity

**Pr2\_3\_R3** Share of EKA academic staff participating in international scientific conferences with reports or creative activities, including EKA Conference "Emerging trends in Economics, Culture and Humanities (etECH).

**Pr2\_3\_R4** Participation of EKA academic staff with reports/abstracts in etECH Conference

**Pr2\_3\_R5** Number of EKA academic staff involved in international research teams

**Pr2\_3\_R6** Number of EKA academic staff participating in scientific projects or other projects with research components

**PRIORITY "INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY IN EACH STUDY DIRECTION" (Pr3)**

**Pr3\_Objective 1.** To ensure students a possibility to engage in research and creative activity

**Indicators of the results of Pr3\_1**

**Pr3\_1\_R1** Number of scientific conferences and seminars organized by EKA for students

**Pr3\_1\_R2** Number of EKA scientific publications (journals, proceedings) where students may publish the results of their research

**Pr3\_Objective 2.** To develop research competences of EKA students and motivate them to engage in research and creative activity

**Indicators of the results of Pr3\_2**

**Pr3\_2\_R1** Number of training or informative seminars/workshops for EKA students for developing their research competences and raising their interest in research

**Pr3\_2\_R2** Number of study courses, the study results of which envisage student ability to carry out research or creative work

**Pr3\_Objective 3.** To support achievements of research and creative performance of EKA students

**Indicators of the results of Pr3\_3**

**Pr3\_3\_R1** Number of published scientific articles / descriptions of creative work carried out by EKA students

**Pr3\_3\_R2** Number of EKA students participating in international scientific seminars and conferences, including EKA Student Conference (number of abstracts/reports/pieces of work displayed)

**Pr3\_3\_R3** Number of EKA students participating in scientific projects/projects with a research component or in studies

#### **PRIORITY "COOPERATION IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY" (Pr4)**

**Pr4\_Objective 1.** To strengthen existing and establish new cooperation with other higher education institutions, organisations and employers in the field of scientific and creative activities in Europa, Asia, Africa and North America

##### **Indicators of the results of Pr4\_1**

**Pr4\_1\_R1** Number of agreements with other higher education institutions and other organisations and in the field of creative activity

**Pr4\_1\_R2** Number of applications for research projects developed in cooperation with other higher education institutions and other organisations

**Pr4\_1\_R3** Number of joint publications of EKA academic staff

**Pr4\_1\_R4** Number of joint publications with researchers from other Latvian universities

**Pr4\_1\_R5** Number of joint scientific publications with foreign researchers

**Pr4\_1\_R6** Number of studies in cooperation with the business sector

#### **PRIORITY "EKA REPUTATION" (Pr5)**

**Pr5\_Objective 1.** To promote the enhancement of EKA scientific reputation and the creation of a positive image in the local and international academic and scientific community

##### **Indicators of the results of Pr5\_1**

**Pr5\_1\_R1** Number of students from foreign universities participating in the EKA Student Conference

**Pr5\_1\_R2** Number of international participants in the EKA International Scientific Conference "Emerging trends in Economics, Culture and Humanities (etECH)".

**Pr5\_1\_R3** Number of scientific publications of EKA indexed in the Web of Science/SCOPUS databases

**Pr5\_1\_R4** Hirsch index of EKA academic staff in SCOPUS, Web of Science, Google Scholar databases

**Pr5\_1\_R5** Number of scientific publications of EKA academic staff in Q1/Q2 journals

**Pr5\_1\_R6** Participation of EKA academic staff in the activities of the Editorial Boards and Committees of scientific publications indexed in SCOPUS/ Web of Science / ERIH+ databases

**Pr5\_1\_R7** Participation of EKA academic staff in reviewing scientific papers in publications indexed in SCOPUS/ Web of Science / ERIH+ databases

**Pr5\_1\_R8** Participation of EKA academic staff in the scientific/organization committees of international scientific conferences (except etECH)