

STRATEGY

for development of occupational area

9.2. Military science

at Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy

for the 2018 - 2023 period

I. Introduction

This strategy for the development of occupational area 9.2. *Military science* at Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy is aimed to outline the prospects for the educational and scientific policy and its supporting activities in the said occupational area in the period from 2018 to 2023. It is based on the adopted Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, the analysis of the current state, the development tendencies ahead of the higher education system in Bulgaria, and the traditions of Bulgarian maritime education, as well as the acquired experience in the scientific area.

The effort is to be focused on ensuring quality of education by utilising an adapted approach to the students for teaching and acquiring knowledge and skills in order to:

- prepare the cadets for active and thoroughgoing fulfilment of their prospective functional obligations at the military units in the Navy;
- create a wide-ranging base of competencies and contribute to potential career development within the occupational area of *Military science* on low and intermediate managerial levels;
- support the development of the students as persons by building multidisciplinary knowledge, systematic thinking and a wide array of professional competencies;
- facilitate and stimulate academic research and innovations within the sphere of national security and defence.

II. Vision for the development of occupational area 9.2. *Military science*

The mission of Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy in the occupational area of *Military science* consists of creating and adapted response to the security and defence needs. That is to be achieved by providing high-quality education and qualifications for specialists with the required set of specialised knowledge and skills.

The vision of Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy for the development of occupational area 9.2. *Military science* from 2018 to 2023 includes continuity and affirmation of the existing strive for innovative, effective and efficient education. Further key points to be highlighted as future development goals for the period within the scope of this strategy include:

- develop and enhance the links between maritime education, science and the Navy of the Republic of Bulgaria;
- uphold the established positions of the occupational area of *Military science* as a responsible and active social partner, who works for the benefit of the national interest, for the formation of maritime policies of the country and the society at large;
- reinforce the cooperation with foreign maritime and naval academies and conduct training in international environment by realising teaching staff and student

mobility's, as well as by conducting computer-assisted tactical exercises, utilising the capabilities of a naval tactical simulator;

- maintain an academic culture based on state-of-the-art forms of delivering education, interactive supervision, academic variety, transparency, clear rules and procedures;

- emphasise on the significance of the academic community and invest in the academic staff and the administration for realising the vision of the Naval Academy with regard to the occupational area of *Military science*.

The requirements derive from the need to meet the challenges of the ever-changing maritime security paradigm and the contemporary requirements to the sphere of education and science.

III. Approaches for the realisation of the vision for the development of occupational area 9.2. Military science: strategic priorities, objectives and progress indicators for their accomplishment

The current status of the occupational area of *Military science* allows building on the achievements in the period by forming a highly competent academic and teaching team and by providing high-quality administration for the processes. The training structure and the educational management system are modern, the academic content is up-to-date and adequate to the qualification requirements, the amount of ongoing research activities is vast; This has been recognised in the form of the accreditation of the occupational area obtained from the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, the active partnerships maintained with maritime education institutions in the country and abroad, the investments of sizeable amounts in the educational infrastructure, quality of life and the development of the academic staff.

The goals and ambitions of the vision for the programme period of the strategy for the development of the occupational area of *Military science* for the period from 2018 to 2023 are related to the achievement of even higher results in research and education activities. The requirements on the part of the Navy as the employer and main user of the offered educational product call for the dynamic development of the occupational area by combining tradition and innovation for the determination of the following strategic priorities:

1. The training within the occupational area of Military science is to be characterised by the introduction of innovative approaches to meet the challenges at hand, conducive for the formation of favourable conditions for stimulating the intellectual activities of the students, as well as for research, projects and transfer of knowledge.

It is necessary to develop the capacities of the cadets in training to think creatively and to be active in their inherent activity, with critical attitude to the problematic issues they are faced with, being autonomous and enterprising in seeking any new solutions. The students are to be developed as undertaking, inquisitive, and ethical citizens, actively committed to their own training and to solving the complicated issues before the maritime sector and the global challenges before the society.

Syllabus and curriculum design is to conform to the interests of the students and to the dynamic changes in the external environment. The syllabi and curricula need to be orientated to practice and to reflect the trends in the domestic and international research in the sphere of security and defence. To realise the strategy above, the following two main sets of objectives need to be pursued:

1.1. Enhance the interrelation between science and practice

- Design new syllabi and update the existing ones in cooperation with the competent entities facilitate and stimulate academic research and innovations within the sphere of national security and defence.

- Transfer knowledge and the lessons learned in the course of the exchange with external partners.

- Use a wide array of competencies in the interest of developing novel educational programmes, interdisciplinary by nature, which are to reflect the future needs of the maritime entities, business and society in relation to security and defence.

- Transfer the top research achievements into educational capacities for the students and further investments in training and teaching activities.

Indicators:

- Increased degree of satisfaction from the realisation of the cadets from the training, reflected in the Academy's rating.

- Periodic update of the syllabi in accordance with any occurring changes in armament and equipment, with renewal at least once in every three years.

- Develop at least one interdisciplinary programme within the time horizon herein.

- All the curricula within the occupational area of *Military science* shall be designed and updated in cooperation with representatives of competent institutions from the sphere of security and defence.

1.2. Realisation of educational and professional mobility

- Include academic mobility in the curricula.

- Have a period in training at a partner European university through academic exchange programmes and enhance the possibilities for mobility.

Indicators:

- Plan for academic mobility in the curricula.

- Have a period in training at a partner European university through academic exchange.

2. Reinforce the positions of the occupational area of *Military science* as an inclusive academic environment

The goal over the strategic period is to achieve even greater visibility and applicability of the educational, research and expert activities realised for the benefit of the security of the society. The emphasis is on the formation of a favourable academic environment for the management of innovations in the field of technologies, as well as on the diversification of the existing models and the

development of new ones for the transfer of knowledge between Bulgarian and foreign institutes of high education.

A priority in the activities in the area is to expand and elaborate on the network of strategic partnerships in order to develop the policies of Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy. To reach the desired end state, it is necessary to stipulate clear criteria for partner selection and a system for the management the relationship with them. To accomplish this prioritised goal, a programme goal of the occupational area of *Military science* is tasked with the following objectives:

2.1. Stimulate scientific empirical and theoretical academic research and expert activities for the benefit of the security of the society and the defence of the country.

- Develop an institutional academic environment within the occupational area of *Military science* to create innovations based on scientific research, as well as for the management of innovation activities.

- Enhance and enrich the existing models for the transfer of skills by diversification of the services and the products offered within the training, as well as stimulate academic entrepreneurship.

- Establish a visible and recognisable image of occupational area 9.2. *Military science* in the academic circles in the country and abroad.

Indicators:

- Increase the applicable and utilised results from academic, research, and expert activities.

- Offer access to syllabi from the area within training programmes and certify the competences acquired thereby.

- Disseminate and publish research and expertise in the sphere of security and defence in the framework of academic cooperation.

- Publish 20% of research in the area of maritime security in English language.

2.2. Gain social trust for the occupational area of *Military science*

- Expand the strategic partnership of the occupational area of *Military science* in academic and occupational aspect.

- Intensify the initiatives to include the competent institutions in the sphere of security and defence of the country into the educational and research activities.

- Identify and invest in the academic staff with capacities for realising activities beyond the institutional academic boundaries.

Indicators:

- Lay down clear criteria for selecting partners from the Security and Defence sector by identifying common strategic priorities and goals, based on long-term mutual interest.

- Design a flexible and adaptive programme for the management of the relationships with partners, including proactive and reactive activities.

- Determine a single, coordinated and visible for the society 'entrance gate' for external partners for participation and inclusion in the educational and research activities of the occupational area.
- Teach 10% of the total number of classes of the academic disciplines with direct and indirect involvement of specialists from the competent institutions from the sphere of security and defence.
- Enlist specialists from the competent institutions from the sphere of security and defence as co-authors in at least 10% of the studies and publications by the academic staff from the occupational area/
- Coordinate the titles of dissertations and theses with representatives of competent institutions from the sphere of security and defence.

3. Provide the resources required for the vision and achieve efficiency in the performed activities

Resource support is of utmost importance for the development of the occupational area of *Military science*. Enhancing the quality of education is tightly related to the maintenance of state-of-the-art training facilities, the performance of academic research, and the satisfaction of the high demands put forward by the users of the educational product. Effort needs to be aimed at surmounting the existing challenges and fully conforming to the requirements of the Higher Education Act of the Republic of Bulgaria. The openness of the system for training foreign military cadets and civilian students necessitates meeting the requirements by international institutions as well. Another important process is the one of continuous monitoring of the requirements to the maritime security and safety environment. These points need to be taken into account and supported with resources during the syllabus and curriculum design, as well as in the course of training itself. Resource flows should also be streamlined towards the effective achievement of the underlying goals and the satisfaction of the specific needs of the potential users of the educational product: the institutions within the sphere of security and defence and the students themselves.

Resource use plans need to allow for the realisation of investments in the infrastructure related to occupational area 9.2. *Military science*. The allocation of limited budget funds and the maintenance of ongoing activities within narrow constraints are beneficial for keeping a good budget discipline, but it inevitably reflects on the investments in the training facilities and the development of the available human resources. Underfunding the main processes would have a visible negative effect on the activities. In terms of quality and quantity it could lead to the demotivation of the students and the teaching staff, decrease of the incentives for the users of the educational product, diminishment of adaptability and of the capabilities for development for conducting the core activities. Making the mistake of underfunding the research activities may well hamper the capacities of enlisting and retaining the services of high-potential lecturers.

In such environment, the approach to resource management must support the efforts by the academic staff to achieve the best possible results in their activities and find spheres and possibilities that would allow the decommitment of funds for new

investments in strategic priorities like infrastructure, educational and research programmes, and last but not least in human resources. A possible approach for enhancing efficiency is encouraging flexibility and adaptability, self-control and incentives for cost savings and further improving the quality of the activities. Resource optimisation leads to achieving three groups of strategic objectives:

3.1. Further develop and expand the existing forms of training yielding different educational degrees

- Seek new sources of income, including finding new niches in domestic and international scientific projects.
- Continue to train foreign cadets.
- Emphasise on bachelor and doctoral programmes.
- Design new educational products for a broader spectrum of users.
- Design a marketing and information strategy directed at cadet applicants and domestic and international entities and organisations related to security.
- Thoroughly utilise the technology of digital education in conjunction with the established traditional forms.
- Develop pedagogical novelties, web-based training and implement technological innovations in both the existing and new programmes.
- Expand training without conferring degrees to supplement the existing educational programmes.

Indicators:

- Training for foreign cadets.
- Train for cadets for entities in the sphere of security and defence, e.g. the Ministry of the Interior, etc.
- Educational products developed or updated within the last 5 years.
- Educational products developed or updated within the last 3 years.
- Percentage of the academic disciplines offering electronic textbooks and learning materials.

3.2. The financial strategy is to ensure the capability for continued investment in the growth of the occupational area

- Develop models for the management and budgeting of the educational and scientific project, and achieve a greater degree of financial self-sustainment and flexibility of the occupational area of *Military science*.
- Analyse the possibilities to improve the budgeting management of the occupational area of *Military science*, whereby assigning the educational standards and the requirements to the qualification of the graduates, as well as budgeting the activity on the basis of the procedures of the planning-programming-budgeting system.
- Full resource support of the activities, at the same time realising savings in the teaching, ancillary activities and management.
- Develop capacities for designing innovative approaches for attracting public sources of funding for specific priorities.

- Intensify the training process.
- Realise economy of scale by combining and coordinating the curricula of the different majors.

Indicators:

- Develop a system for the management and budgeting of the educational and scientific projects.
- Strive for return of investment from the educational programmes and the ancillary activities.
- Allowable classroom area in sq. m per student in accordance with the requirements of the Regional Inspectorate for the Preservation and Control of Public Health (RIOKOZ): 8 sq. m.
- Allowable laboratory area for research activities in sq. m per tenured researcher available to the occupational area: 18 sq. m.
- Number of computers available per 100 students in training for a degree: 10.
- Relative share of the newly acquired library units on paper and in electronic form for the last 5 years, related to the training in the occupational area: 7%.
- Textbooks, teaching aids and training materials, developed by lecturers from the occupational area: increase by 20%.
- Number of core disciplines provided with their own textbooks, teaching aids and training materials related to the total number of core disciplines: 80%.

4. Maintain an academic culture based on interactive leadership, academic variety, transparency, clear rules and procedures

A prerequisite for achieving the established goals is to create and cultivate a uniform and supportive physical, virtual, cultural and social environment shared among the students and lecturers. This environment of creativity should be continuously perfected in order to encourage the personal realisation of each member of the community and to assist in achieving a sustainable institutional development. It is of utmost importance that the academic community be aware of how its educational, exploratory, artistic and creative activities contributes to the overall functioning of Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy.

The application of interactive methods of communication and providing transparency and openness in decision-making are the main emphasis of modern academic environment. They are an essential aspect of the academic culture at Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy. They will be implemented by achieving the following objectives:

- Use interactive models in the leadership and management of the occupational area of *Military science*. Provide transparency and an equal footing for the participation of the academic community in the realised university activities.
- Ensure academic continuity and enrichment of the occupational area.
- Develop clear procedures and rules for enhancing the quality of life and labour for the students and the academic staff.

- Enhance the information infrastructure of the occupational area of *Military science* as an essential element for the successful growth of Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy and the academic community.

- Provide a stable but flexible and effective communications infrastructure and virtual environment, determined by the needs and requirements of the students and the academic staff, for the benefit of the effective management of the occupational area of *Military science*.

Indicators:

- Achieve the main objectives regarding the management of the occupational area of *Military science* by forming provisional target groups.

- Seek the student's opinion on 100 of the disciplines taught at the occupational area. Include at least 67% of the students in the evaluations of their satisfaction from the separate disciplines and the overall training.

- Make available part of the academic documentation and grant free access to it via the website of Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy.

- Involve student representatives in reviews of qualification characteristics, curricula and syllabi.

- Involve student representatives in the work of the departmental council of the core department.

5. Invest in the academic staff when realising the vision for the development of the occupational area of *Military science*.

The presence of highly-qualified and motivated academic staff is a prerequisite for the realisation of the vision for the development of the occupational area of *Military science*. The requirements are determined by the accreditation criteria and the results of the recognised research activities. The following two sets of objectives derive from the strategic goal:

5.1. Emphasise on the recruitment, selection, development and retention of the academic staff.

- Raise the profile of the work and academic career within the occupational area of *Military science*.

- Recruit and select valuable academic staff.

- Enhance the programme for the preparation and the professional development of newly hired lecturers.

- Stimulate the academic growth of the academic staff, the contacts with practice, as well as expert participation in work groups.

Indicators:

- Number of hours for the professional development of the staff.

- Number of tenured staff members in the occupational area.

- Number of staff from the occupational area distinguished with international, domestic and in-house awards per year.

5.2. Reaffirm mutual respect, equal opportunity, individual contribution recognition as leading values in the organisational culture

- Design suitable organisational practices, taking into account the ever-changing requirements to academic labour, and stimulate enterprise in lecturers.

- Enhance the competence of academic leadership in the occupational area to enable them to guide effectively and to encourage their subordinates to develop their full potential.

- Install feedback mechanisms to monitor internal opinion and enable the enhancement of organisational culture.

- Publicly define the organisational values and keep the ethical code up to date.

- Encourage environmentally and socially responsible behaviour among all employees.

Indicators:

- Satisfaction of the academic and the administrative staff.

- Satisfaction from the administrative service.

- Satisfaction from the facilities and amenities.

- Up-to-date condition of the ethical code for the academic staff, the administration and students at the Naval Academy.

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

The realisation of the strategy for development of occupational area 9.2. *Military science* at Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy for the period from 2018 to 2023 and the attainment of the aforesaid strategic goals is a complicated and long-lasting process.

The leadership at the Academy is aware of the challenges at hand, has a clear vision of the future of the occupational area of *Military science*, is capable of taking the helm through the changes and enjoys the necessary support by its main and primary subunits and the entire academic staff engaged in training in the said occupational area. This is to stake a claim to guarantee success and to the commitment that through its flexible and dynamic structure Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy will build upon its high authority and will establish itself as a leading international, prestigious, and competitive educational institution in the occupational area of *Military science* in the preparation of specialists for the needs of the Navy.

This Strategy for the development of the occupational area of *Military science* at Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy for the period from 2018 to 2023 was discussed and approved at the following meetings:

Naval Tactics Department - Record No 3/09 Feb 2018.

Faculty of Navigation - Record No 144/21 Mar 2018.