

SOFIA  
UNIVERSITY



“ST. KLIMENT  
OHRIDSKI”  
EST. 1888

# SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2022 – 2023



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This is the third sustainability report of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in implementation of its commitments to the international UN Global Compact initiative, of which the University has been a member since 2016, referred to briefly as "the Report" throughout this document, in its print and electronic formats. The Report provides an overview of our performance, goals, achievements, quantitative data and non-financial information for the period from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023.

Sofia University entirely follows the guidelines of the international initiative UN Principles of Responsible Management Education and applies the reporting standards for sustainable development and communicating progress on the implementation of the UN Global Compact and the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The data published in the Report is based on publicly available information. The team who prepared the Report does not guarantee that the described activities cover the overall work of all members of the academic and non-academic staff of SU in the three areas of sustainable development.

The review of public sites was completed on 23.12.2023. The process of gathering information on good practices was completed on 28.02.2023.

The report has been published on the website of St. Kliment Ohridski" <https://www.uni-sofia.bg/>

With gratitude and acknowledgement to all colleagues who contributed to the collection of information related to the preparation of the Third Sustainability Report of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski (2022-2023).

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For Sustainable Development

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# WELCOME NOTE BY THE RECTOR

Dear readers,

I am pleased to present the third report of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". It reflects how the innovative approach to sustainability has a real impact on our internal academic community and external stakeholders from the public, private and civil sectors.

During the period we adopted several key institutional policies, including a Strategy for achieving the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development and a Work Plan to protect our environmental footprint, mitigating the effects of climate change, and increasing resource- and energy-efficiency. We updated the Programme for Transparent Governance, Prevention and Counteraction of Corruption. It is a part of our vision and strategy for development, organizational culture, scientific, educational and administrative activities and illustrate our continued support for the implementation of and compliance with the UN Global Compact principles in the four areas of human rights, labour practices, environmental protection and anti-corruption.

Our success is a product of the hard work and expertise of the academic staff, which gradually transforms the University into a national platform for debate on the country's sustainable development.



Prof. Dr. Georgi Valchev



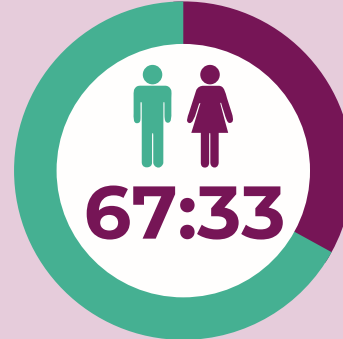


# HIGHLIGHTS 2022 – 2023



**21 075**

Total numbers of students



Male and female students ratio



**6,1**

Number of students per employee



**2913**

Total numbers of staff Lecturers



**7%**

International students

## ACHIEVEMENTS

**22**



Number of scientists who are among the top 2% best in the world for 2023 according to Stanford University Ranking

**272**  
PLACE



in the QS World University Ranking Europe 2023

**760**



Current Erasmus+ contracts with 357 partner Universities from 37 European countries

# CHRONOLOGY

1880

The Ministry of Education submits to the National Assembly a draft Fundamental Law on Schools in the Bulgarian Principality. It envisages "after the completion of the course of the secondary and classical high schools, a Bulgarian higher school (university) to be opened, which will encompass the legal, philosophical, natural, medical and technical sciences".

1887

The minister of education T. Ivanchev issues an ordinance for the opening of a pedagogical class at the First Men's High School in Sofia.

1.10.  
1888

The classes of the Higher Pedagogical Course begin. There are 43 students, men only. The adopted Provisional Regulations provide only for the functioning of the Department of History and Philology with three main specialisations: History, Slavic philology, and Philosophy with Pedagogy. The academic year 1888/1889 has two semesters and three groups of subjects – general, specialised, and auxiliary.

8.12.  
1888

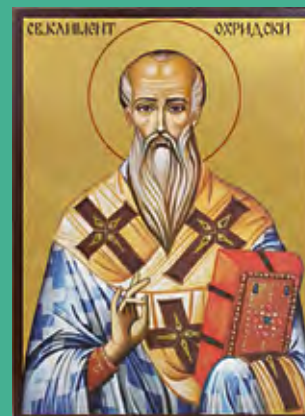
The Parliament decides on the transformation of the Higher pedagogical course into Higher education institution.

31.01.  
1889

The first professors of the Higher School were appointed, and they raised the question of establishing a library and supplying it with periodicals, as well as of drafting regulations for the Higher School. They called for academic autonomy in the management and organisation of the Higher School. Alexander Teodorov-Balan is the first elected Rector. He is a graduate of the Universities of Prague and Leipzig, Doctor of the University of Prague (1884), Professor of Linguistics, Dialectology and All-Slavic Ethnography.

1925

The University library "St. Kliment Ohridski" is the biggest and the first university science library in Bulgaria which receives a free copy of each edition.



Clement of Ohrid, a Bulgarian from the south-west, was the most prominent disciple of Cyril and Methodius, who arrived in Bulgaria in 886.

He was ordained the first bishop of Bulgarian-speaking southwestern Macedonia in 893, during the reign of Tsar Simeon. In seven years he trained 3500 students from all walks of life, prepared a large number of priests, deacons and teachers. He died at the age of 916. Panteleimon" in Ohrid.

Together with the scholars of the Preslav circle, the Ohrid school founded by Clement laid the foundations of the Old Bulgarian written culture, literary tradition and education, which soon became the standard for the whole Slavic civilization.

Canonized in the tenth century, Clement was added to the pantheon of Bulgarian saints along with Cyril and Methodius. The memory of St. Clement is celebrated by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church on 27 July and on 25 November – the day of St. Clement, Pope of Rome, whose relics were found and brought to Rome during the mission of the brothers Cyril and Methodius to the Khazars, in which their disciple Clement also participated.



# SOFIA UNIVERSITY PROFILE

## VISION

Sofia University strives to promote its role as an educational, scientific and cultural centre of European importance, to act as a leader in education, science and key development projects, to work with best practices in the development, management and use of science for the vital purposes of the society and the individuals.

Annually the educational programmes of Sofia University meet the European quality standards and gets closer to the leading world models.

The University continues to expand its key role in shaping and implementing projects, policies and strategies for the development of the country and the region.









Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" is the first Bulgarian university. It is the largest and most prestigious scientific research centre in the country and strives to promote its role as an educational, scientific and cultural centre of European importance.



Since the establishment of the University to the present day, its activities have been developing extensively, from having only 2 faculties in the first decades of the twentieth century to 2023, it has 16 active ones, in which more than 120 specialties train students in Bachelor's, Master's and PhD programmes for becoming specialists and researchers in the fields of medicine, physics, business and economic sciences, pedagogical profiles, language, law, environmental and others.

By 2023 SU is among the most prestigious universities as an example of quality and high profile education. According to Stanford University's 2023 ranking, 22 SU scholars are among the top 2% in the world. The ranking groups all researchers in 22 scientific fields and 176 subfields. Sofia University is the only Bulgarian university ranked in the new QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2024, announced on 5 December 2023. It ranks 711-720 out of 1403 ranked universities from Europe, Asia, America, Oceania and Africa and 294 out of 403 ranked European universities.

Alma Mater is ranked 272nd in the QS World University Rankings: Europe 2024 and is among the top 40% of ranked universities. The ranking was first announced in September 2023 and includes 688 universities from Europe.

The oldest and most prestigious Bulgarian university participates in the ranking of Times Higher Education (THE) of 2014 r.

In the Impact Rankings 2023 of Times Higher Education (THE), published on 01.06.2023, SU is ranked 601-800 out of 1591 universities in the world for the fifth consecutive year.

It retains its place in the Impact Rankings 2023. The rating assesses universities' performance in achieving the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development. Sofia University is ranked in eleven of the seventeen goals, significantly improving its ranking despite the increased number of participants.

The ranking of SU in the individual countries is as follows:

- ◆ 101-200 place water resource conservation, and justice and institutions;
- ◆ 201-300 place for sustainable cities and communities, climate change and biodiversity conservation;
- ◆ 301-400 place for gender equality and affordable and clean energy;
- ◆ 401-600 place for quality education, decent work and economic growth and partnership for sustainable development.



# STRUCTURE OF SU

The following units are present in the structure of Sofia University:

FACULTY OF BIOLOGY  
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY  
FACULTY OF GEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY  
FACULTY OF HISTORY  
FACULTY OF MEDICINE  
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION  
FACULTY OF JOURNALISM AND MASS  
COMMUNICATION  
FACULTY OF CLASSICAL AND MODERN PHILOLOGY  
FACULTY OF MATHEMATICS AND INFORMATICS  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL  
STUDIES AND THE ARTS  
FACULTY OF PEDAGOGY  
FACULTY OF SLAVIC STUDIES  
FACULTY OF CHEMISTRY AND PHARMACY  
FACULTY OF PHYSICS FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY  
FACULTY OF LAW  
INSTITUTE FOR COMPUTER SCIENCE, ARTIFICIAL  
INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (INSAIT)



The following independent units are also included in the structure of Sofia University:



Department for language education  
Department for Information and In-Service  
Training of Teachers  
Department of sport  
Museum of Sofia University  
Museum of Mineralogy, Petrology and Mineral  
Resources  
Museum of Paleontology and Historical Geology  
Scientific Research Centre  
Radio and Television „Alma Mater”  
Rehabilitation centers  
Theater Lab @Ima @Iter  
University library  
University Botanic Gardens  
University ICT center  
University Press  
National Centre for Polar Studies





## GOALS 2019 – 2023



In fulfilling its mission SU strives at:

- ▶ High quality educational, research, information and cultural activities.
- ▶ Meeting the quality criteria in line with the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy in all activities and units.
- ▶ Holding a leading position in higher education in Bulgaria and the region by providing an adequate response to educational needs.
- ▶ Targeted integration into the European scientific area and alignment with global standards of scientific activity.
- ▶ Strengthening participation in the formation and development of national and regional strategies and policies.



# VALUES. PARTNERSHIPS.

As a higher national educational, research, cultural and information centre with high international recognition, the University plays an active role in the drafting and implementation of policies of national, regional and international importance, such as sustainable development policies.

The University develops science and trains students in all its fields and nurtures highly educated, nationally responsible individuals. Contemporary trends in the development of society and the economy present SU with the responsibility of preparing and educating students who understand and apply the values of sustainable development in their future work.

The principles of the UN Global Compact are fully in accordance with the mission of Sofia University to serve as a centre for research and educational work of broad cultural and social significance.

Their knowledge finds application in:

- ◆ academic activities;
- ◆ courses in CSR/ESG;

- ◆ organisational practices guaranteeing equality and protection of the rights of teachers, staff and students;
- ◆ inclusion of civil society organisations, institutions and businesses as partners of SU;
- ◆ activities related to the sustainability of the University activities- energy efficiency, efficient management and conservation of resources, recycling practices, etc.

Through its organizational processes, SU promotes the dissemination of knowledge about the values of sustainable development among students, academia and staff. An example of this is the activities of the University Library, which is a deposit library for United Nations publications, and in 2021 it provided access to the latest United Nations digital platform (UN) <http://www.un-ilibrary.org>. UN iLibrary includes publications in the fields of international law, human rights, economic and social development, climate change, international peace and security, public health.

In the Code of Ethics of the SU, rules have been established. Permanent and specialized ethical committees have been established to ensure health, safety and ethical treatment in specific research activities such as human embryos, tissues and cells, animal or environmental research. In order to comply with these principles and rules, the University applies an Anti-Corruption Policy in the activities of all units. It is implemented by the Control Council, the Student Council and the University Ombudsman.

SU's commitment to the rights of employees and students is an ongoing priority. As an expression of this commitment, the University holds regular meetings with key partners and participates in the dialogue on subsidies and staff income in higher education institutions.

SU attracts media interest to the results of its educational and scientific activities and their benefit to society.

The University complies with:

- ◆ The professionalism principle, i.e. the excellent knowledge, smooth and high quality performance of the work by faculty, staff and associates.
- ◆ The principle of targeting actions towards stakeholders, clients and users of educational services and activities.
- ◆ Principle of continuous improvement and commitment to development and high quality.
- ◆ Principle of prevention, based on continuous monitoring, analysis, evaluation and prognosis, through preventive actions to avoid the occurrence of negative events in the activities and educational services offered.

Thus, it is an initiator and a permanent partner in the development and real implementation of state policy in the field of higher education and science.

It invests in building partnerships with business and establishing closer links with employers' organisations and personnel employing institutions to obtain information on student career prospects, for alumni connections, for public initiatives and for attracting the interest of the wider community .

For the development of its international activities, the International Relations Department is committed to completely renew the vision of SU and to work for the promotion of the Erasmus Charter for the period 2022-2027.



Currently under the Erasmus+ Programme there are nearly 760 active contracts with 391 partner universities from 33 European countries. The Faculty of Economics continues to be an intermediary organisation in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme. In line with the commitments set out in the Erasmus Charter and the EC requirements for digitalization in the higher education sector, and the European Student Card Initiative established by the EC, SU is the first Bulgarian university to join the EduGain global network for interfederated services.

- ▶ On 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 the European Commission has approved the funding of the extension of the Transform4Europe

University Alliance for another four years. The project will be funded under the Erasmus+ programme and will have a total value of €14.4 million. The alliance of European universities, of which the University of St. Kliment Ohridski is a part, aims to educate a new generation of young Europeans who will work together on different disciplines and will develop digital, intercultural and entrepreneurial skills. It brings together seven European universities from four regions of Europe. In the framework of Transform4Europe, proposals for co-located studies were developed. The first four international Masters programmes will start in the winter semester of the

academic year 2024/2025. New Masters and Bachelor programmes will follow in the upcoming phase.

- ▶ At the end of 2022 Sofia University as a research university received funding of BGN 44 million under the procedure "Development of a network of research universities in Bulgaria" within the National Recovery and Sustainability Plan. The project "Sofia University Marking Momentum for Innovation and Technological Transfer" (SUMMIT) is related to scientific and applied research.

## MEMBERSHIPS

The University continues its activities as a member of prestigious international university organizations such as the International Association of Universities (IAU), the European University Association (EUA), the Agency of Francophone Universities (AUF), the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA), the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN), the Balkan University Association (BUA), EUPRERA, etc.

We confirm our support for the UN Global Compact's Ten Principles and our participation in the activities of the Bulgarian Network. The following memberships are key in the field of sustainable development:





# RESPONSIBLE EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION

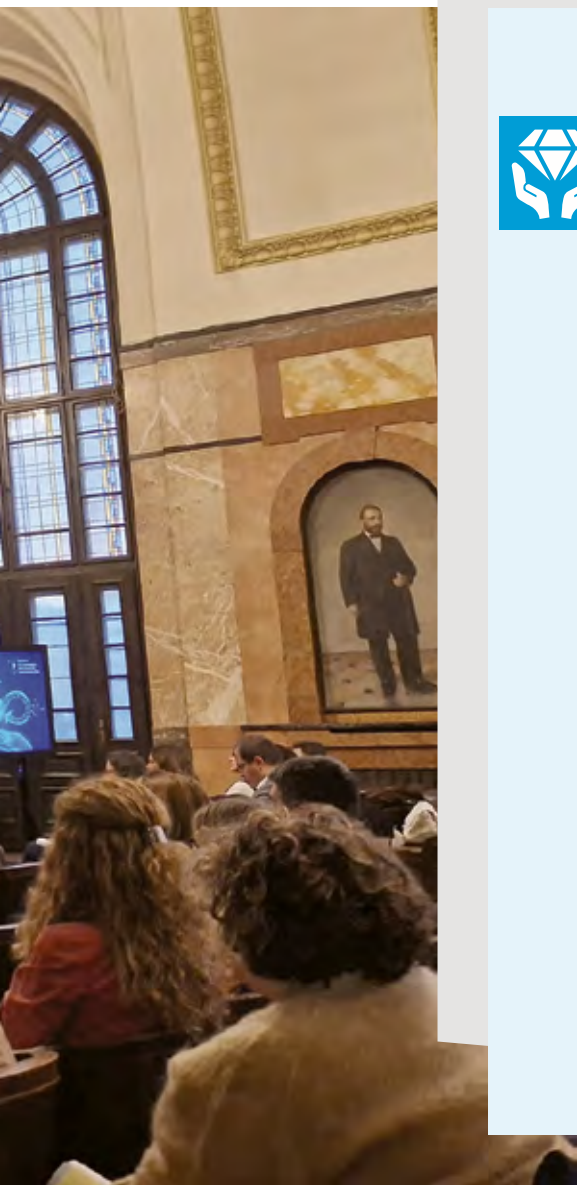
## GOAL



The University is the most renowned institution of higher education in Bulgaria, weaving both the Renaissance spirit of its founders and nurturing in its students a sense of belonging to a community with high ethical and moral foundations, as well as representing a vibrant, adaptive, progressive environment that is inseparably linked to the scientific, economic and social life of the country.

For over 135 years, SU has been providing quality education to students in various fields (basic, humanities, natural, mathematical, social and technical sciences), it develops scientific potential by creating conditions for independent research contributing to scientific progress; it develops socially responsible and active citizens; initiated and participates in educational and cultural events for citizens.





## VALUES



SU has proven to be a benchmark for a higher education institution that provides sustainable and inclusive education for the public benefit, with a commitment to in-depth research on contemporary scientific, technological or social topics.

The Sofia University employs most of the leading Bulgarian specialists in all fields of natural sciences and humanitarian sciences. Many of them are alumni of Alma Mater, who have started and successfully continue to develop their careers here, creating continuity and succession.

Students have the opportunity to gain in-depth academic knowledge from the research activities of their lecturers at the university, as these activities are transferred into the teaching process or become an integral part of the opening of new degree fields. The University has a highly qualified teaching team, contemporary facilities and technical equipment, financial and moral support for developing interest in science. The right to free freedom of expression and creative implementation of

new knowledge in the educational process is guaranteed. Both systematic thinking and teaching methods that are based on interdisciplinary learning and develop new knowledge, skills and attitudes are encouraged.

The University focuses on developing its partnerships with more than 80 local or international universities and scientific communities by means of its own policy in international projects of various types, including student and faculty mobility.

SU encourages scientific discovery while ensuring ethical standards, non-violation of others' human dignity or privacy, minimal impact on the environment, and adequate evaluation and reward of research work.



# POLICIES

The following key policies for the development of the University as a responsible educational and scientific institution are outlined in the Rector's Mandate Programme (2019 – 2023):

## Policy on attracting students

- ◆ Advanced curricula – timely establishes new degree fields and programs, increases the capacity of the existing ones.
- ◆ Promotion of the offered Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes among students and the expansion of admissions on the basis of state matriculation examination grades.
- ◆ Alternative methodologies for assessing Bulgarian and foreign applicants
- ◆ Attraction of foreign students – participation in online educational fairs to encourage the recruitment of foreign students to Bulgarian universities and to promote the advantages of Bulgaria as an educational destination worldwide
- ◆ Promotion of Bachelor and Master programmes in a foreign language in all educational degrees in order to attract a greater number of foreign students
- ◆ Developing joint Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes and joint degree programmes with prestigious foreign universities
- ◆ Establishment of e-learning distance learning programmes – 31 forms of e-learning, of which the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics; the Faculty of Economics; the Faculty of Classical and New Philology; the Faculty of Geology and Geography; the Faculty of Education and Arts science; the Faculty of Pedagogy; the Faculty of History and the Faculty of Philosophy.

### Number of students for the period 2019-2023 г.

Academic year	“Bachelor” degree and “Masters” degree undergraduate	„Masters“ degree postgraduate	Total	Foreign students	% foreign students
2019/2020 г.	16 701	4000	20 701	1231 + 225 (Erasmus+)	7,03 %
2020/2021 г.	17 362	4336	21 698	1446 + 128 (Erasmus+)	7,25 %
2021/2022 г.	16 897	4807	21 704	1407 + 168 (Erasmus+)	7,26 %
2022/2023 г.	16 598	4477	21 075	1303 + 196 (Erasmus+)	7,11 %



## Policy of ensuring high quality education and good career development

- ◆ Increasing the efficiency of career development activities for students and supporting their career guidance.
- ◆ Tracking the trends in the students' professional development in various professional fields and industries.
- ◆ Consolidation of overlapping programmes and disciplines and of units with similar functions.
- ◆ Developing the network of Sofia University alumni clubs.

## Research stimulation policy

- ◆ Inclusion of Sofia University's scientific publications in the global referencing and indexing system.
- ◆ Establishing centres of excellence and competence.
- ◆ Participation in EU research programmes.
- ◆ Development of the PhD degree, post-doctoral specialisation and continuing education.
- ◆ Provision of institutional mechanisms to stimulate research with public impact and international relevance and visibility.



# UNITS

## Career centers

Career development Department functions as a central unit for services and as a mediator between the different career centers in the University, the employers organizations and the students. The department activities fall in several main areas. The department:

- ◆ Supports the Faculties' career centers in developing their activities,
- ◆ Provides services for career development in the Faculties with no career development centers
- ◆ Provides services of a qualified career consultant in the Faculties where there is no such available;
- ◆ Supports the students with their improved performance on the labor market,
- ◆ Acts as central administrative unit and a contact center for career services in Sofia University.

During the period 2019-2023, the number of active career units per faculty is increasing. At the end of the period 13 faculty units work to support students for their successful professional development. The following faculties

are active with their career centres: FMI, FESA, FEBA, FoL, FoH, FGG, Faculty of Philosophy, Faculty of Physics, Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy, Faculty of Pedagogy, FJMC, FCMP.

In February 2023, the Career Center of the Faculty of Philosophy was established and successfully organized a two-day Career Days at the Faculty of Philosophy in June 2023.



## SU Ethics commission

This is a permanent consultative body, established with the adoption of the Code of Ethics of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. The Ethics Committee offers consultation and advice on ethical issues related to research; supports the understanding of ethical issues arising in the field of research by organizing educational and information initiatives; acts on signals for violation of the rules of research ethics, regulated in the Code of Ethics. With the adoption of the Code of Ethics, the academic community of Sofia University shows its will to ensure good scientific practices and readiness to adhere to the European scientific community standards. The Code of Ethics formulates basic ethical principles and rules for research and teaching.

## SU Academic Ombudsman

It is an institution which is called upon to resolve conflicts as an impartial arbiter and to provide confidential and informal support to students and faculty. As a mediator, the Ombudsman advocates for the fair resolution of disputes and upholds the rights of members of the academic community. As an advisor, he/she informs and strives to respond to individual inquiries when the individual concerned or affected does not know how to act in a particular situation. In this sense, the Academic Ombudsman can also be a catalyst of change, as by resolving internal conflicts, he/she contributes to a better work of the administration.

Cases on which the Ombudsman has taken a decision	2021-2022 number	2022-2023 number
1. Issues related to teaching and administrative staff	9	5
2. Reports and complaints regarding calls for non-academic staff positions	0	4
3. Questions from students and postgraduate students	5	6
4. Candidate Student Questions	3	3
5. Other cases	1	1



В основата на мисията на Софийския университет е развитието на науката и всестранното обучение на студентите във всички области, като главната цел е да се възпитават високообразовани, обществено отговорни личности, способни да водят българската нация към духовен подем и просперитет.

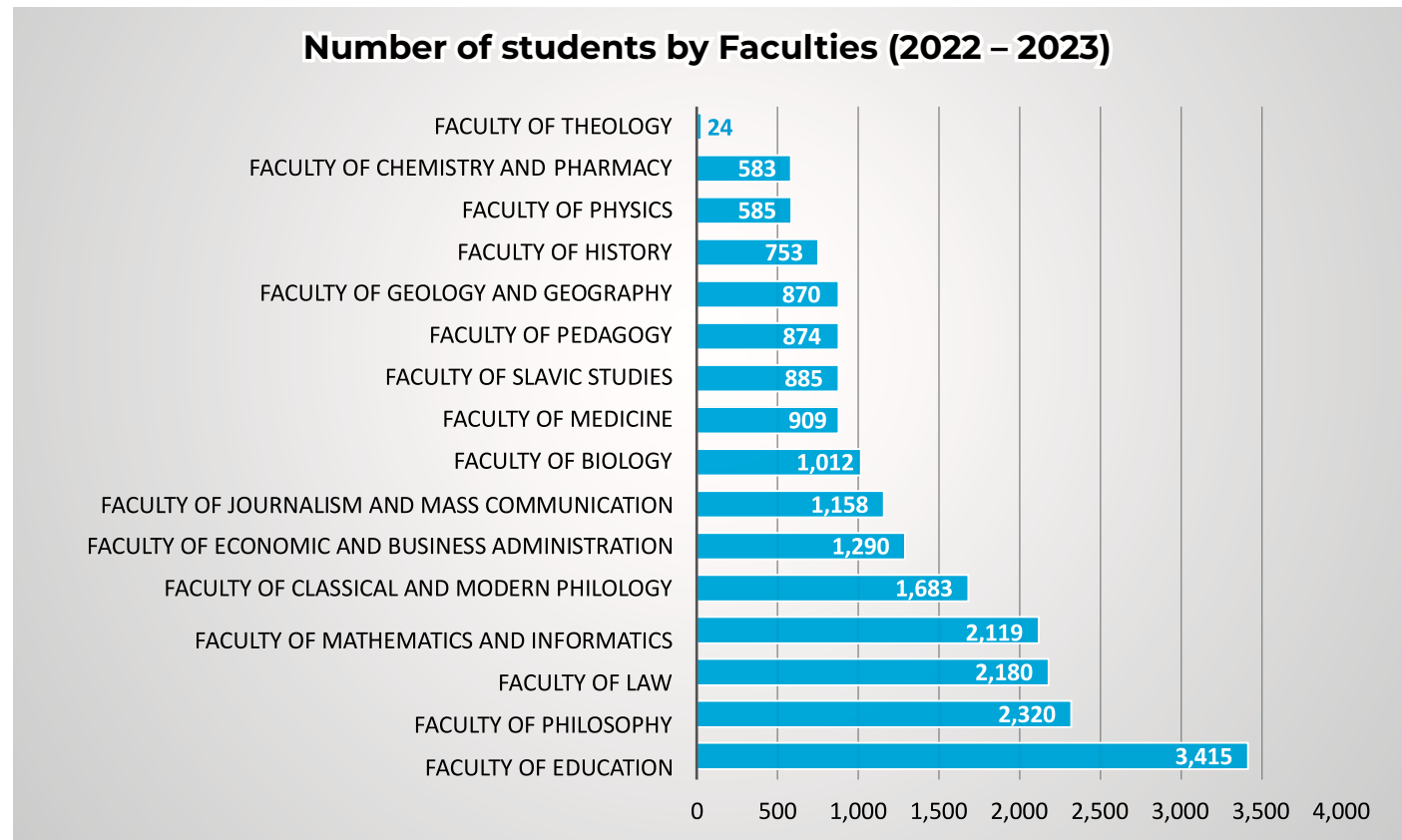
За да се изпълни тази изключително важна мисия, е необходимо да се гарантира действителното и пълноценно участие на студентите и докторантите във всички аспекти на университетския живот, като се признае, че те са партньори в образователния процес, носители на иновативни идеи и ценни сътрудници. Този ангажимент се простира до засилване на участието на студентите в процеса на вземане на решения, особено по въпроси, свързани с академичните дейности.

## STUDENTS

For the academic year 2022-2023, 21 075 students (1499, of which 7.1% are foreigners) are studying at SU. The total number of Bachelor degree students is 13 441. Master's degree students are 7634 and PhD students are 932, of whom 161 are foreigners. There is an increasing trend in the number of active foreign PhD students. One of the important rating indicators for national and international

evaluation of universities is the tuition of foreign students. Their relative share at Sofia University in relation to the total number of students has not fluctuated significantly in recent years, but the upward trend is visible.

Students are placed by faculty as follows:



# INFRASTRUCTURE

In the spirit of the good scientific practices of previous years, Sofia University continues the process of integrating and developing infrastructure projects related to the practical implementation of scientific knowledge.

In addition to the many laboratory spaces focused on applied sciences, the SU also offers a number of opportunities for project implementation, especially in Centres of excellence. This contributes to attracting foreign lecturers and researchers in various scientific fields.

Projects under the Science and Education for Smart Growth programme were also implemented in 2022, allowing for an increase in the building fund and the provision of scientific infrastructure and facilities.



**In April 2022, the Institute for Research in Computer Science (INSAIT) was inaugurated in the structure of Sofia University.**

**Established jointly with two of the world's leading technological universities, the ETH Zurich and the Polytechnic University of Lausanne (EPFL), INSAIT aims to establish itself as one of the world's leading research and education centres.**

The construction of the buildings of the GATE, Clean Technologies and UNITE Centres of Excellence and Competence was completed, as well the construction of "The Egg" and the maintenance work of the building in Gurko street was finalized within the Heritage BG project. A project for a "Mechatronics Centre" was implemented, in which a new technology laboratory was built.

During the reporting period, funding for four projects for "Modernization of Higher Education Institutions" under the Operational Programme "Science and Education for Smart Growth" was secured. As a result of the activities carried out, assets were acquired, mainly in information and communication technologies and software.



## METHODS

A major part of the teaching methodology is focused on improving and developing conventional forms, as well as providing students with an increasing range of alternative options.

Methods combining physical centres with modern interactive programmes are being created and continuously developed. A significant number of faculties offer different types of on-line learning opportunities comparable to the practices of leading European universities.

Surveys conducted among academic staff and students show high satisfaction results about learning in a virtual environment.

Webinars have been held by the Student Council to discuss the quality of the learning process. In addition to this, administered by the University Centre for Information and Communication Technologies, students are provided with the opportunity for online surveys and voting. The process is integrated with the SUSI system and builds on the Moodle e-learning system, which provides access to a significant volume of alternative and interactive learning materials. With this organisation in place, students use integrated systems, which significantly enhances their qualification at graduation.

Traditionally, the University, as the largest national scientific and educational centre, provides extensive opportunities for continuing education and lifelong learning that take into account and adapt to the rapidly changing conditions of the labour market in the country. This concept is becoming an integral part of the definition of successful career development.

In addition to continuously evolving teaching methods, Sofia University has developed

a quality management system for education, research and academic staff. The system is administered by the Quality Management Centre, which has established itself as a reliable partner of the faculties in implementing the quality system, in seeking feedback from students and in preparing for accreditation procedures.



## Courses in Coursera

Sofia University participates in the EURIE/ Coursera Eastern European Executive panel with the aim of improving educational opportunities for students, faculty and staff. Coursera (Coursera | Degrees, Certificates, & Free Online Courses) is an e-learning interactive platform for freely available online courses of study. Together with universities around the world, it offers courses in various fields of science – engineering and humanities, medicine, biology, social sciences, computer science, and more. This partnership gives every SU student, faculty and staff member access to online courses, in addition to the resources offered for training at the University.

## Hackathons

Participation in hackathons is becoming increasingly popular among young people. SU is involved in the organization and encourages student participation in such events aimed at the sustainable development of society and solving pressing social problems.

- ◆ For the third consecutive year, the Bulgarian Fintech Association and the Faculty of Economics, with the support of the FSC, the Ministry of Finance, Innovative Sofia and the European Commission organized the most successful fintech hackathon in Bulgaria.

- ◆ In June 2022, the Panda Labs "Future of Energy" hackathons on "Natural Solutions for a Sustainable Transition" and "Sustainable Energy Development in Coal Mining Regions" were successfully implemented.

Panda Labs Junior for a Just Transition is a joint project of WWF Bulgaria, Junior Achievement Bulgaria, WWF Adria-Serbia, Junior Achievement North Macedonia and Eco team Montenegro. Its main objective is to contribute to a fair transition and the timely development of knowledge and entrepreneurial capacity among youth in the coal mining regions of the four countries. The project promotes renewable energy, energy efficiency, circular economy and climate mitigation and adaptation solutions.

## Awards

SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" University, its lecturers and students receive recognition for their achievements in many fields of science.

- ◆ **At the end of 2022. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) presented the Annual corporate social responsibility awards for 2022 for the second time.** The prizes honour best practices in social management of private and public sector companies, public

**Twenty-two of our scientists are among the top 2% best scientists in the world for 2023 according to what is known as the Stanford ranking. The ranking groups all researchers in 22 scientific fields and 176 subfields. It is compiled on the basis of a complex analysis, which includes information on the number of citations, H-index, adjusted in co-authorship Hm-index, citations of articles at different positions of authorship and others.**

administration structures and academia that favour the development of employees, the environment and society.

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" ranked third in the category "Environment", which makes it the only academic organization awarded in the competition.

- ◆ **The Faculty of Economics hosted the national final of the World Cup in Entrepreneurship.** In a competitive race among eight finalists, the two Bulgarian companies were awarded that will compete for entry into the top 100 start-ups in the world – they participated the finals in March 2023 in Ryad, Saudi Arabia.





The Entrepreneurship World Cup is organized by the Global Entrepreneurship Network. The Entrepreneurship World Cup is organized by the Global Entrepreneurship Network. In 2022, Bulgaria is participating for the second time.

Young Inventor Ltd (Phase – Idea category) and Foodbox 2021 Ltd (Early Phase category) earned the right to continue. They will participate in the Global Accelerator Programme.

The winners of the competition represent two extremely important niches in Bulgaria with significant potential for growth – technological education and sustainable food consumption.

"Corporate social responsibility in Bulgaria is a reality and it has proved so by the long-standing sustainability of the business with a focus on society, human resources and ecology".

Nadia Klisurska,  
Deputy Minister, MLSP



◆ „For women in science“

**For women in science, the National Fellowships for Bulgaria** is a pioneering programme by L'Oreal and UNESCO to promote women in science who, through their work, contribute to overcoming the challenges of the future. Each year, the programme honours scientific excellence in the natural sciences and encourages talents from around the world. The programme aims to achieve gender equality in science.

There are two scholarship winners for 2022.

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nina Kaneva-Dobrevska, Senior Assistant Professor** at the Department of Inorganic Chemistry at the Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy, won with the project "Purification of water from pharmaceutical drugs". Her research focuses on heterogeneous photocatalysis, in particular the synthesis and characterization of ZnO semiconductor catalysts.

**Dr. Maya Zhekova – Senior Assistant Professor** at the Department of Quantum Electronics at the Faculty of Physics has won the competition with the project "Creation of quasi-non-diffracting

Gauss-Bessel beams with residual topological charge".

- ◆ **The Faculty of Law** is ranked first in Europe and third in the world in the **NICA International Law School Ranking** for 2022. The ranking compares Law schools around the world based on conducted competitions. Points are awarded depending on the number of teams that participated in the competition, their level and the round which they reached.

- ◆ **The Law Faculty** is ranked second in the world in the field of "International Arbitration" and sixth in "Private International Law". It is also ranked first in Mediation and Negotiation, European Union Law, International Humanitarian Law, Public International Law and International Human Rights Law.



# SPECIALISED DISCIPLINES IN SUSTAINABILITY

Education in the three fields of Sustainable development at Sofia University has a long tradition. Over the past few years, there has been diversity in the content, duration and format of the learning products. These include specialised programmes, academies, individual subjects, courses and extracurricular activities. The new courses and specializations focus on conservation and responsible management of the environment and resources, social responsibility, sustainable development, circular economy, and other through which we strive to achieve the Global Goals. Among the most active faculties in this direction are the Faculty of Economics, the Faculty of Biology and the Faculty of Philosophy.

## FACULTY OF BIOLOGY

### „Biomangement and sustainable development“

The bachelor's programme aims to prepare specialists with a view to integrating and developing the bioeconomy and circular economy in the context of sustainable development.

It addresses the challenges of integrating technology and biotechnology into environmental protection. Students gain knowledge and skills in the management of hydro- resources, waste as a resource, green and renewable energy, in natural and productive settings, and their rational use.

The programme is upgraded by the Masters Programme on "Bio-Business and Bio-Entrepreneurship, "Eco-management",

"Eco biotechnology". The Masters students acquire the skills and competences to apply entrepreneurial activities related to the creation of start-up and spin-off companies in ecological, biotechnological and a wide range of other bio-manufacturing, eco- and bio-tourism and other areas of bio-economics. In this area, the SU cooperates with long-term business partners, such as the Clean&Circle Competence Centre, Sofia Water JSC, Sofia Waste Treatment Plant, Sofia Municipality, etc., which actively participate in the educational process by providing important financial, technical and expert support.



## FACULTY OF CHEMISTRY AND PHARMACY

### „Eco Chemistry“

About 25 highly qualified specialists in the field of analytical environmental chemistry graduate annually from the Bachelor programme. It includes topics such as ecology, environmental protection, ecometrics, toxic chemistry, agrochemistry, hydrochemistry, atmospheric chemistry, geochemistry and green chemistry technologies.

The programme aims to respond to the needs of the tourism industry, which requires a healthy environmental assessment of production processes, while at the same time promoting industrial growth, recognising the potential for unavoidable anthropogenic pollution.

A key role here is played by specialists in the field of environmental chemistry, who organize networks for the evaluation and assessment of environmental sites, conduct analytical measurements of samples, and process ecometric data to classify and predict the quality of water, air, and soil and the working environment.



Additionally, they engage in the development and maintenance of the systems to control and clean contaminated environmental sites, introduce diagnostic and preventive measures for environmental care.

The programmes focus on the practical aspects, looking at the products in terms of chemistry, monitoring, analytical control and evaluation from an ecometric perspective.



## Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

### „Responsible and sustainable governance“

In the academic year 2023-2024, the Responsible and sustainable Governance Master's programme welcomed its third class of students. Over the period 2022-2023, a total of 39 sustainability professionals studied in the programme. The programme seeks to create an entirely new group of experts in the field of sustainability and corporate social responsibility, addressing their significance for Bulgarian politics, administration, industry and the civil sector.

The Responsible and Sustainable Governance Master's programme aims to fill this important new niche in the labour market and to play a leading role in academia, research and the business environment. Its launch is in accordance with the strategy of the Faculty of Economics to align the Master's programmes with practical applications, responding to the demand for highly qualified specialists.

The studied disciplines cover all important aspects of sustainability in a practical context, addressing topics such as business modelling, corporate compliance, natural and human capital management, investing and societal progress reporting. The main courses focus on sustainable leadership, social and environmental entrepreneurship and responsible finance. Practical applications are also emphasized, with courses such as corporate compliance, public-private partnerships, responsible communications, and CSR management systems and standards.

Partnership agreements have been signed with WikiRate and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria. The Master's programme is implemented with the active assistance and visits of leading expert guest speakers, including members of the Bulgarian Network of the UN Global Compact, Association of Sustainability Specialists, Bulgarian Stock Exchange.



# SPECIALIZED COURSES

The faculties are continuously adding new subjects and qualification courses and implementing them in new and appropriate forms of learning, striving to respond to the ever-increasing desire of students to learn in greater detail about aspects of corporate social responsibility and ESG.

The specialised courses in the different curricula are more than 230, diversifying and enriching the University's portfolio.

- ◆ **The Faculty of Biology** also offers to its students a variety of specialised courses in the context of CSR and, in particular, in the field of management, planning and environmental protection, such as: Environmental Impact Assessment, Global Environmental Impacts, Bioresources and their Conservation, Strategic Environmental Management and Planning and Sustainable Development, Current issues of Climate and Water Resources, Ecological Footprint, Modern Chemical Technologies and Emissions Management, Separation and Purification Processes, Sustainable Development and Ecology and many more. All described specialised courses are integrated into

the curricula of Bachelor's and Master's programmes.

- ◆ **In the Faculty of Law** in addition to the specialized subjects in the curricula, students also have the opportunity to participate in complementary forms of learning such as extracurricular activities – circles dealing with the topic of human rights: the Circle of International Public and Private, which addresses the topics of the interrelation between human rights and refugee law, the international legal protection of the mentally ill, the international legal protection of the health sector. (the interaction between international humanitarian law and the law of protection, human rights to respond to attacks on health and research institutions); Constitutional Law Circle – the relationship between human rights and people's sovereignty.

The topic of human rights is also strongly covered in the specialized courses offered in the Faculty of Philosophy such as Human Rights, Rights of Persons from Minority Groups, Social and Health Policies.

Other courses in the context of CSR are Corruption and Anti-Corruption, Regional and National Project Management, Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Public Services, Green Policy, Environmental Impact Assessment in Spatial Planning, Branding and Social Responsibility, Contemporary Debate on Social Justice, etc.

A detailed list of the courses offered by topic and faculty can be found in Appendix 4: List of Specialized Courses.



# SPECIALISED ACADEMIA

In addition to traditional academic programmes, the Center for Educational Services offers short-term, intensive specializations focused on practical aspects related to sustainable management and finance.

- ◆ **ESG Academy** is the first national certification program for sustainable management professionals training and covers topics related to the ESG approach in management, energy and climate policy, ESG reporting, adaptation and resilience to climate change, sustainable finance, etc.

For the period 2021-2023, five editions of the academy have been held in partnership with the Sustainability Specialists Association (SSA).

The aim of the programme is to build knowledge on sustainable and responsible governance, identify and manage non-financial risks and attract sustainable investment through the development of innovations in the social and low carbon economy.

During the reporting period, special editions of the ESG Academy were successfully completed in partnership with businesses, including – KBC Bulgaria; Yettel

Bulgaria; graduation of the international ESG Academy class of UniCredit Group employees.

- ◆ During the reporting period, the **ESG lab** initiative was established, under the Department of "Economics and management by industries" of the Faculty of Economics.

The lab creates and provides new educational materials for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as for postgraduate programs. For businesses, the ESG Lab is a partner helping their transition to a green and circular economy. For the public sector, it is a place where any policy can be pre-tested and evaluated, ensuring its positive impact.

- ◆ ESG Academy, ESG Lab, Faculty of Economics and 24 Hours Newspaper

all partner together to support responsible entrepreneurship. The project, implemented with the cooperation of the Sustainability Specialists Association, continues until September 2024 with the main aim to promote and strengthen responsible business practices in Bulgaria.

- ◆ During the reporting period, two editions of **the Women in the Changing World of Work Academy** were held in collaboration with Zonta International. The academy is a source of specific skills in the area of sustainability and facilitates a broader understanding of various corporate policies that are aimed at protecting women's rights.

By providing practical tools and knowledge, the academy aims to support

**In 2022, the ESG Lab organised the information on the carbon footprint of Sofia University, which for the first time in its 135-year history, is presented in a public report. The data in the report provides information on carbon emissions generated through: transport activities, electricity, heat, water, waste, etc.**

active participation in community and corporate life, promoting equality in the work environment. It builds a bridge between theoretical concepts and the real business context.

- ◆ In September in the town of Burgas, the team of the Faculty of Economics together with the team of the Burgas Branch of Sofia University, the British Embassy in Bulgaria and the Municipality of Burgas, officially opened the first edition of the summer school „**Marine Renewable Energy Academy**“.
- ◆ The Faculty of Economics held the 16th edition of the postgraduate programme "**Economics and Management of the Water and Sewerage Industry**". Within two semesters, participants will gain knowledge from professionals and university professors, covering organizational, economic, legal and managerial aspects of the water sector. In 2023 fifteen managers from different water and wastewater companies will join the training.



# SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY. PROJECTS. PARTNERSHIPS

**In the period 2021-2022, the University scientists have a total of 2 594 scientific publications, while in the previous two years the total number was 1 948. SU produces about 25-30% of the scientific results of all Bulgarian higher education institutions.**

contributes to the development of the scientific qualification of those who carry them out. Since 2021 an improved and updated appraisal system has been introduced to ensure a more rational and fairer distribution of labour, with appraisal checks helping to ensure the fair payment of remuneration and grants. The establishment of systems for the reporting of the scientific attestation and the allocation of funds are necessary and important indicators for the sustainable management of SU.

Through increased access to projects, research activities, competitions and programmes by students, scholars and faculty, the SU is adapting to the contemporary electronic and educational environment, with a particular focus on the rapid digitalisation of learning modalities.

The University's publishing activities are also part of the unit for improving research practice. University Press "St. Kliment Ohridski" has a printing house and is moving

## Methods

Sofia University is known for its extensive research activities in various fields such as natural sciences and technologies, humanities and social sciences. It is carried out through various methods – research, analysis, forecasting, development, technological, normative, implementation and other creative activities, which are systematically conducted in order to increase the quality and quantity of scientific knowledge, as well as to use it for new applications in various fields of science and practice. It is carried out through the development of theoretical and applied scientific models, products and services, while at the same time the performance of these activities





towards self-sustainability through efficient funds management, distribution and sales.

There are 36 specialised centres, 18 scientific laboratories, 2 hospitals, 3 museums and 2 observatories.

## Key projects

As a result of the R&D, numerous laboratories and centres have been established contributing to environmental protection.

## GATE Project

A joint initiative of SU, Chalmers University and Chalmers Industrial Technology, Sweden, GATE receives partial 7-year funding from the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 programme. This is also one of the first research institutes of Sofia University, established by the Council of Ministers in 2019.

The aim of GATE is to develop research capacity and innovation potential, and to form a new generation of young scientists capable of applying science for the benefit of society. The building of the GATE infrastructure will be completed in 2023 with the launch of the

Centre of Excellence in Big Data and Artificial Intelligence.

Research at GATE is focused in four areas:

- ◆ Cities of the future;
- ◆ Smart government;
- ◆ Smart industry;
- ◆ Digital healthcare.

Innovations at the Centre are developed in three state-of-the-art technology labs – for modelling processes in urban environments, for interdisciplinary collaboration with industry, and for virtual reality and big data visualisation.

Since 2022, GATE has been a test centre in the field of big data and artificial intelligence. As part of NATO's DIANA network (a network of administrative, test and analysis centres to help find solutions to critical transatlantic technology challenges, making collaboration between industry, start-ups and academia even stronger), it hosts innovators from across the Alliance to test their work for evaluation, validation and verification.

As the only centre of its kind in Eastern Europe, GATE will be the link to the network

of 55 data centres in Western Europe and will play a strategic role in expanding this network as well as disseminating best practices and innovative models.

- ◆ The Faculty of Economics is implementing a two-year SCHOLARNET project under the European Science Networks Programme. One of its main objectives is to strengthen the research capacity of the academic staff by developing a comprehensive research strategy with the support of leading researchers from European universities, as well as to promote SU in international communities.

The targeted efforts of the participants support the scientific exchange, the creation of a larger, stronger and more efficient research capacity in the field of economic and management sciences: sustainable innovation models in public services and increasing the competitiveness of SMEs, risk management in target markets, models for institutional convergence as a factor for the economic development of the new EU member states (institutional sustainability).



The University has an established tradition of carrying out a wide range of applied research related to industry and market needs

- ◆ The Faculty of Physics has a long-standing relationship with Kozloduy NPP in the form of joint research in radiation safety, student internships and NPP scholarships for outstanding students.
- ◆ The Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy conducts joint research in the field of chemical engineering with a number of companies, some of which global giants such as Unilever and Heineken.
- ◆ The Faculty of Biology maintains long-term contacts for research purposes with a number of companies in the field of biotechnology and ecology, e.g. with the Capital Waste Treatment Plant and Kleantech.
- ◆ The Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics maintains active contacts with the business community, and has signed cooperation agreements with dozens of companies, incl. SAP Labs Bulgaria, Vivacom, Cisco Systems Bulgaria, Hewlett-Packard Global Delivery Center Bulgaria, VMWare, DZI – General insurance, IBM Bulgaria and many others.



# RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYER



## AIM



Sofia University seeks to develop, enrich and expand its research and teaching community by creating opportunities for professional growth, promoting the well-being and attracting young talent, promoting its leadership mission in education policies, innovation, technology transfer and the development of entrepreneurial skills.



## VALUES



The University adopts as its core values: diversity, development and well-being of its community of academics, undergraduates, postgraduates, PhD graduate students, administrative and support staff. This active and continuously enriching community embodies a sense of belonging and spiritual commitment to the mission of creating, teaching and disseminating knowledge, respecting the traditions of European universities, freedom, and the individual person's dignity.

## POLICIES

The main policies aimed at ensuring responsible and sustainable practices that guarantee favourable working conditions are mentioned in the Mandate Programme of the Rector's Leadership of the University (2019 – 2023); Regulations for Ensuring Healthy and Safe Working Conditions and the Code of Ethics of the Academic Community of Sofia St. Kliment Ohridski".

The policies for the academic staff, their scientific and professional development provide:

- ◆ Investing in training and up-skilling of administrative staff, ensuring that their skills are up-to-date
- ◆ Introduction of differentiated remuneration for lecturers, researchers and employees, depending on their

responsibility, commitment and quality of their work, based on adequate attestation procedures.

- ◆ Partnering with faculty and staff unions as a bridge to address current issues and challenges.

Policies for the health, safety and welfare of teaching, research and administrative staff include:

- ◆ Opportunities for preventive medical examinations
- ◆ Adoption of measures for prevention of occupational accidents and diseases
- ◆ Provision of facilities for recreation and recovery.





By the end of 2023, the total number of employees is 4187, with a staff turnover rate of only 2% for the period 2022-2023.

Sofia University is an integrated academic community based on values such as democracy and openness, which builds a working environment that is supportive of diversity and tolerance.

The principle of gender equality is an integral part of the University's commitment as a responsible employer. For the period 2022-2023, the proportion of female employees in the total workforce is 58.7%.

Leading the way is the drive to enrich the community and attract young talents. The employment by age group for the reporting period showing an increasing proportion of employees under 30 at 263, and a balanced distribution for the 30-50 and 50+ age groups at 1 334 and 1 316 employees respectively.

In the area of finance, management improvements include job optimisation and maintaining a sustainable balance between habilitated and non-habilitated lecturers in the professional team.



## PRACTICES

The teaching staff as of 1.10.2023 is 1617 persons. The share of habilitated lecturers is increasing – 56% of all lecturers

### Collective agreement

The collective agreement which was signed in 2020, was updated in 2022. In this way, the SU demonstrates its responsibility towards the trade unions and respects their interests. According to SU's understanding, ensuring the collective and personal well-being of workers is the key to the university's social and cultural prosperity. A priority of the latest contract is to raise wages and provide funds for social activities.

In collaboration with the unions, the SU is organizing working groups to review and update job titles and job descriptions to be in line with the National Classification of Professions and Positions and other regulations. This has contributed to achieving several results:

Eliminating discrepancies in the duties of employees holding the same position in different units of the University; assigning responsibilities for activities that were not the responsibility of any position and limiting the payment of salaries for activities outside the job description.

### Remuneration

Over the last four years, the increase in basic wages has been between 91% and 124%.

The increase for non-teaching staff has averaged 10% and for some selected positions the increase has been 20%.

In 2023, an additional BGN 3,446,654, of which BGN 600,000 of own funds, has been provided to increase the salaries of academic staff from 01.08.2023.

If funds are available, additional remuneration will be paid to academic staff for overtime. Additional remuneration for night work and bonuses for higher qualifications was introduced.

Parents of more than one child are entitled to additional paid leave.

The provision of meal vouchers of BGN 120 per year is continued.

In the last three years, members of the academic staff whose scientific publications have been indexed and referenced in Web of Science & Scopus have been granted financial incentives.

Preparations are underway for a public procurement of additional health insurance for 400 people







## Safe and healthy working environment

The overall occupational health and safety activity at the University is carried out by the Occupational Health and Safety Sector.

Its functions include obtaining information on working conditions, proposing measures in case of violations, informing about violations and proposing changes.

The Sector advises the management, conducts annual training, participates in the identification of occupational hazards and investigates the causes of occupational accidents. It provides information dissemination and facilitates cooperation with the occupational health service. It provides personal protective equipment and work clothing.

It continues to carry out preventive medical examinations of teachers and staff. Periodic medical examinations of workers in ionising radiation environments are also carried out.

Over the past 4 years, eight workplace incidents involving University employees have been investigated and reported to the

NSI. All have been accepted as work accidents. In this connection, a programme has been drawn up and an emergency briefing has been provided to those working in units with injured employees. All necessary measures have been taken to prevent accidents to employees.

At the beginning of the calendar year 2023, first aid training has been organised at the request of FMI staff and teachers.

## Active living

SU actively supports the healthy lifestyles of its teachers and staff. Through the Department of Sport, the use of the available sports facilities and recreational areas is provided, in accordance with the approved schedule for the year, covering different types of sport.

Through the long-term contract for the use of Multisport cards provided to faculty, staff and their families, the opportunity is opened to access a diverse network of sports centres. This approach not only stimulates the physical activity of the staff, but also ensures a satisfactory way of organising leisure time in accordance with everyone's interests and preferences.

## Evaluation of teachers and employees

As part of the quality management system at Sofia University, criteria and procedures for the appraisal of administrative staff have been adopted.

In June 2023, a new set of criteria and procedures will be established for the management of the University. The internal audit was conducted by the University Centre for Quality Management to monitor the mechanisms in place and the organisation of the appraisal process for administrative staff in the central administration. The results of the audit are positive and show the tremendous workload and effort that goes into the successful day-to-day running of the University.

The application of the current appraisal system, based on self-assessment and evaluation by the line manager alone, has shown some weaknesses. The development of a new appraisal system for administrative staff is under consideration, which will provide for the appraisal of staff by a committee and take into account the views of stakeholders (the persons who received services by the individual employee).

The highest number of recommendations is for additional material incentives in case of high performance and sanctions in case of continuous low performance.

## Training and qualifications

From December 2019 to November 2023, over 1,467 teachers have been provided the opportunity to participate in over 60 different trainings, webinars and continuing education workshops.

- ◆ At the end of 2022, a four-day training was held for representatives from the administration of the Erasmus+ funded UniWells project. The training was aimed at creating conditions for attracting international students, PhD students, PhD postgrads and lecturers.
- ◆ In the framework of the Modern-A project and in 2022-2023, numerous long-term, short-term and specialized trainings for teachers continue to take place, in which about 500 participations in different courses and more than 200 trained teachers are reported.
- ◆ In connection with the increased frequency of malicious attacks on the Internet and in order to improve the information security of Sofia University in the months of March – April 2023, an initial mandatory online training in Cyber Security for 375 employees of the administration.
- ◆ In May 2023, a panel discussion on "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Higher Education" attracted a lot of interest and in September a training session was held within the Modern-A project: "Opportunities for the use of artificial intelligence tools for teaching and research", in which 24 lecturers took part.

# RESPONSIBLE OWNER



## AIM



The main priority of Sofia University is the renovation of the equipment and facilities and the development of the infrastructure for teaching, research, cultural and information activities. The funding of this activity is carried out through subsidies for capital expenditures and through projects under operational programmes. The achievement of this objective is linked to:

- ◆ Maintenance and renovation of the building fund – major and current repairs
- ◆ Property maintenance, administrative and business services and reducing operating costs
- ◆ Programme for the redevelopment of the University campuses and improvement of the inter-building spaces and landscape environment
- ◆ Upgrading of libraries and provision of books and digital resources providing an accessible university environment for people with special needs.





## POLICIES

The management of the property – state property, granted to Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" is carried out in accordance with the Law on State Property, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on State Property, the Law on Property and the Law on Obligations and Contracts. In addition, the SU has adopted Internal Rules for conducting tenders, signing contracts and subsequent control for granting leases of state-owned properties or parts of such properties managed by the SU, which aim at the good university management of the properties and the possibility of generating revenue.

The improvement of material facilities by donors through the renovation of halls, equipment and teaching materials (access and preparation), Internet platforms, software, etc. are an incentive for both the teachers and students and the administration.

## PROPERTY



The management and maintenance of 18 buildings with the status of immovable cultural heritage requires constant care and significant funding. Sofia University is also the owner or user of 10 student hostels and 3 canteens, of educational and scientific facilities and recreational centres, of properties donated by the state or private persons, etc.

# PRACTICES

## Technical facilities and equipment, property and economic activities

The total value of the investment in the improvement of the material and information facilities for the reporting period exceeded BGN 11 000 000 – from BGN 24 215 thousand with an increase to BGN 28 305 thousand.

The Social Services Division of the SU manages a total of 10 buildings with 17 individual entrances located within the residential area "Studentski grad – Sofia. There are more than 6300 beds in the dormitories, 3 student canteens, which on average provide food for about 3000 people daily, a restaurant in the Rector's Office, and several cafeterias in the Faculties' buildings.

In 2023 the Ministry of Education has approved up to 3 million leva for renovation and refurbishment of student hostels. The expected result of the renovation works is for the improvement of the social and living conditions of students and the provision of better access to higher education.

The programme for the renovation of the student hostels is part of the state budget law of the Republic of Bulgaria 2023. And in the

new academic year 2023-2024 the interest in student hostels is expected to be enormous.

The university library and the library of the Faculty of Pedagogy have been equipped with new shelving for 130 000 BGN.

The Faculty of Medicine has a new and fully-equipped simulation centre for training to the latest standards.

During the current reporting period, renovation works were carried out on the heating systems in the Rector's Office building. The heating systems in block 52, entrance A, were replaced.

The distribution stations in the buildings of the Faculty of Physics and the Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy were replaced.

In the last days of 2023, a new system was installed. The University of Sofia received funding of up to BGN 4 million under the National Recovery and Sustainability Plan for the modernisation of the educational infrastructure. The aim of the procedure is to improve the quality of the urban environment.

The aim of the procedure is to increase the quality of the urban environment for students, teachers and researchers and their motivation, as well as the attractiveness of the Bulgarian







higher education and research community. The funds will support the construction of 3 campuses, which will be done by renovating and upgrading adjacent grounds to an existing group of student residences. The construction works will include the building and restoration of public recreation areas such as green spaces, playgrounds, inter-building spaces, sports grounds with free access for students, faculty, academic and administrative staff, etc.

The University plans to develop, reconstruct and rehabilitate physical elements of the urban environment, the construction of bicycle lanes, public facilities, free parking for campus needs, the installation of energy-efficient lighting and security and crime-prevention systems. The estimated timeframe for the construction of the new buildings is 33 months, no later than 31 May 2026.



## Major investment

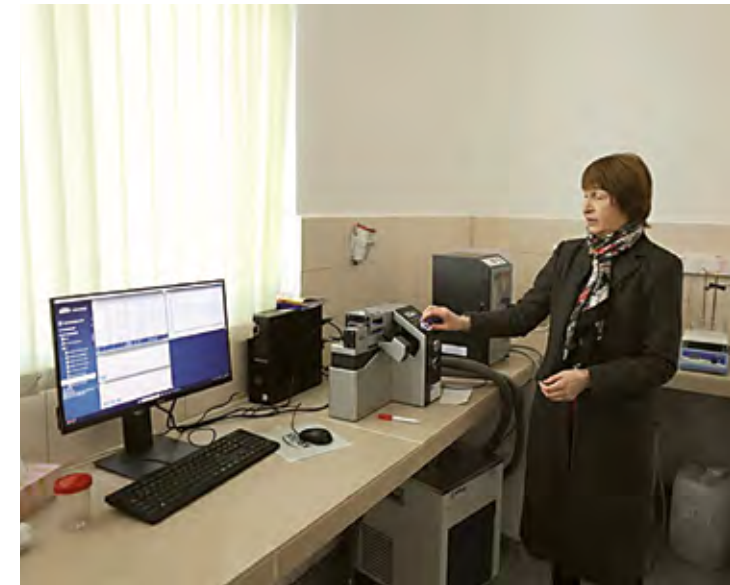
During the reporting period a number of improvements were made in line with the Investment Programme of Sofia University.

- ◆ A completely renovated **Laboratory for Space Research "Prof. Stefan Alexandrov"** at the Faculty of Physics" was launched. It includes high-tech equipment and provides competitive conditions for the creation of the next successful space missions.
- ◆ "St. Kliment Ohridski" University Library, a **Laboratory "Digitization of Documentary Heritage" (Digital Centre)** was opened. The largest university library in Bulgaria now has the opportunity to use a modern and reliable technology for digitalization of its unique library fund



and to offer digitization as a service to other organizations.

- ◆ The renovated **Chinese Studies Hall** at the Centre for Eastern Languages and Cultures of the Faculty of Classical and New Philologies was opened. The renovation and design decoration of the classroom was carried out under a joint project with the Chinese Cultural Center in Sofia, which donated academic tables and the complete decoration of the space in traditional Chinese style.
- ◆ **The research complex "Lozenets"** was launched. It unites the work of the scientists from the Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy and the Faculty of Physics. The Lozenets Campus is one of the three laboratory complexes of the Centre of Excellence in Mechatronics and Clean Technologies.
- ◆ The new building of the **Big Data for an Intelligent Society (GATE)** Institute was opened at the Lozenets campus. Representatives of Sofia University and strategic partners Chalmers University of Technology and Chalmers Industri-technik, Sweden, established the GATE Institute as the first Centre of Excellence in Big Data and Artificial Intelligence. So far, the institute has 49 researchers and experts, half of them women.



- ◆ A new building of the **Clean&Circle Centre for Competence** was inaugurated at the Lozenets Campus. It not only develops the infrastructure and scientific capabilities for innovation in the circular economy, but also creates an opportunity for young scientists to build the skills to work with modern instrumentation key to developing innovative solutions.
- ◆ The third project of the Centre of Excellence at the Lozenets Campus is of the **Universities for Science, Informatics and Technology in the e-Society (UNITE)** at the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics. Their new building has laboratories and conference rooms

equipped with the most innovative equipment and software.

Under the SUMMIT project, launched in 2023, laboratories were renovated and newly built in the Faculty of Biology, the Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy and the Faculty of Physics. Halls in the Faculty of Economics were also renovated.

- ◆ Since May, 2023 and up to date, the renovation works of the **oldest observatory in the country** at the Department of Astronomy, located in the Borisova Garden in Sofia, have continued. The facility was built during the reign of Tsar Ferdinand in 1897 and was the first scientific infrastructure in Bulgaria. Today it is an architectural monument. Although it is more than a century old, the observatory is still in use. It hosts regular classes with students, scientific research, and a weekly hobby club.



## Accessible environment

**Alma Alter Lab Theatre**, known for its high commitment to audiences and artists with special needs, provides the opportunity for blind people to experience the performances and explore the theatre spaces.

Through an audio-guide system, specially-trained interpreters provide a real-time audio-narration of what is happening on-stage, and tactile systems facilitate the blind's

navigation of the theatre spaces. Braille signage has also been installed in the main corridor spaces of the Rector's Office.

As of 2022, the Faculty of Biology building has a new elevator for people with disabilities. Investigations are currently underway into the possibility of replacing the lifts in most buildings in stages, starting with those in the student residences.





# RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

## TRANSPERANCY AND ACADEMIC ETHICS

The management of the SU strives to ensure that every management decision is consistent with the set objectives and core values, taking into account sustainability factors and serving the interests of stakeholders.

The ESG priorities for the period to 2027 are in direct alignment with SU's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Global Compact.

The Strategy for Achieving the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development (2022-2027), prepared and adopted by Sofia University, prioritizes the specific global goals that are essential for the University and for the countries concerned, and identifies the measures for their achievement. The University's governance bodies ensure the implementation of the sustainability strategy and standards, reflecting a culture of good governance, transparency and academic ethics.

## Ethical Conduct Policies

The established culture of compliance with legal requirements at Sofia University, backed by established values and ethical standards, is the foundation of excellence in education and research.

The process of risk management, embedded in the established **Risk Management Strategy**, is part of the overall management process of the University and aims to:

- ◆ Identifies and counteracts the risks significant to the SU, threatening the achievement of objectives or arising from them
- ◆ Establish preliminary information on possible methods to mitigate the negative impact and likelihood of occurrence of risks
- ◆ Allocate human resources according to the degree and significance of the various risks to work on them
- ◆ Modify and update the risk management policy based on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the process.

**The Code of Ethics** of the Academic Community of Sofia University affirms the idea that the mission of universities in the creation, teaching and dissemination of knowledge

is a major factor for the development and well-being of societies, through the search for truth and in accordance with the traditions of European cultural values, the basis of which is respect for the freedom and dignity of the human person.

The Code sets out the basic principles for research and teaching and specific rules for research and teaching, as well as procedures for resolving ethical conflicts that arise.

To address ethical issues, the University has established a standing Ethics Committee whose task is to provide advice and recommendations on ethical issues, as well as to investigate reports of violations or complaints concerning the principles of the Code

### Submission of alerts

Sofia University provides various channels for all interested parties to submit an alert, complaint or notification related to the Code of Ethics and any other internal regulations as well as applicable legislation.

The Academic Ombudsman of the Sofia University is an institution established in 2004 which, and as an impartial arbitrator, is called upon to resolve conflicts and provide confidential and informal support to students and lecturers.

In addition, the Student Council of Sofia University has maintained an anonymous signals system since 2020 ([sustudents.bg/signals](https://sustudents.bg/signals)). The system aims to provide students with a method of informing about problems or making suggestions without being tied to their personality. Hundreds of reports of





irregularities and problems have been received through the system and promptly addressed.

As of 04.05.2023, the Whistleblowers' Protection Act is in force, the purpose of which is to transpose EU Directive 2019/1937 and protect whistleblowers from retaliation. Sofia University is in the process of reviewing



internal policies and procedures for compliance with the legal provisions and making subsequent changes to them if necessary.

## Human rights

In accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Sofia University is committed to respecting and supporting the human rights of its employees, the communities in which it operates and its partners.

The following have been developed and implemented for the proper organization of the implementation of the provisions for the protection of personal data: the Instruction for the handling of registers and for the processing and storage of personal data, the Procedures for the protection of assets and information, the Instruction for the use of information systems, the Instruction for the security of information, the Procedures for access to assets and the protection of information.

## Fighting bribery and corruption

Defining corruption as "a serious threat to the fundamental principles and values of modern democratic society", the leadership of Sofia University defines the prevention of corrupt practices as a key indicator of

successful governance. This also determines the position of zero tolerance to bribery and corruption, which is promoted through a consistent management approach and outlined in the Transparent Governance, Prevention and Counteraction to Corruption Programme which was updated in 2023.

It has been approved in accordance with the objectives and strategic guidelines for ensuring high quality functioning of the SU. It is also related to the National Strategy for Prevention and Counteraction of Corruption in the Republic of Bulgaria (2021 – 2027) and the Civil Convention on Corruption.

# FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The necessary funds for the SU's performance are provided through a variety of sources, including government subsidies, student fees, financial support from donors and project activities.

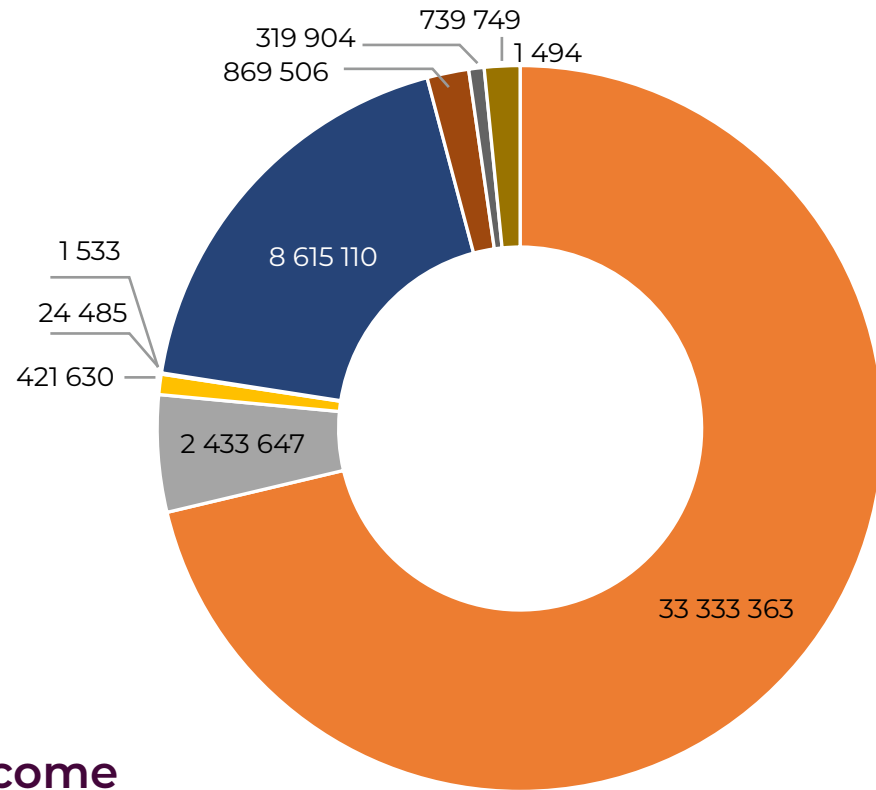
As a result of the ongoing reform of the higher education system in Bulgaria, aimed at improved funding of educational institutions with higher quality of education and research, the financial situation of Sofia University is improving with the annual increase of transfers from the state budget. For the last two years, these have increased steadily by around 5% year-on-year.





## HIGHLIGHTS:

- ◆ **BGN 45.4 Million** capital investments for the period 01.2022 – 09.2023.
- ◆ **BGN 44 Million** funding under the procedure "Development of a network of research universities in Bulgaria"
- ◆ **BGN 0.96 Million** funding under the programme "Young Scientists and Postdoctoral Scholars"
- ◆ **BGN 4.85 Million** additional funds for renovation of educational buildings
- ◆ **BGN 4 Million** private funding for INSAIT.



**Income**  
in thousands BGN

- 1 Revenue from administrative fines, penalties and interest
- 2 Net sales of services, goods and products
- 3 Rental income
- 4 Interest income
- 5 Other current income and exchange rate differences
- 6 Proceeds from insurance claims
- 7 European Union grants and donations
- 8 Other aid and donations from abroad
- 9 Other grants from international and other programmes
- 10 Domestic aid and donations



## Income

Overall, the University's revenue, including grants and donations, is up 14% in 2022 from 2021 and up 24% in 2023 on a month-to-month basis from 2022. On the revenue side, the highest relative share of revenue is from the sale of services, goods and products – 80% of total revenue for 2022, followed by the share of European Union programmes – 13% of total revenue. In 2023, these figures are 72% and 19% respectively.

The next largest share of the total, in relative terms, is the share of rental income, which has remained stable at 5% of the total amount in both periods considered. The University's leased asset revenues increase by 8.74% in 2022 compared to 2021 and in 2023 by 25.02% as of 2022, compared on a month-to-month basis.

In 2022, income from donations to the University is 24.21% higher than in 2021 and in 2023, it has increased by 88.15% compared to 2022 on a monthly basis. The largest proportion of donations is from the European Union, with the figures for 2022 and January to September 2023 amounting to BGN 6,286,434 and BGN 8,615,110 respectively.



## Expenses

A new Risk Management Strategy was adopted on 12.07.2023.

In 2022 and 2023, efforts were made to improve financial discipline, enhance accounting and upfront financial controls. Dedicated financial software and a single University-wide accounting system were introduced.

Rules, procedures and methodologies for financial management and control were approved by the Academic Council, governing financial and accounting activities and supporting financial management and control.

In 2022, energy prices increased, which impacted prices in all aspects of life, also impacted our profitability.

Despite the difficult environment and lower student numbers, we have been able to reduce our liabilities and restructure our remaining ones. The University does not have any tax liabilities established by a final act of a competent authority. During the period under review, the repayment plan for deferred payments for the Local taxes and fees to the Capital City was completed. Where possible,

the payables for the municipal waste tax have been reduced through direct arrangements.

The analysis of the expenditure shows that the highest amount is spent on salaries, allowances and social security, followed by maintenance, capital expenditure and scholarships. There were no outstanding debts to staff in the period under review, excluding retirement benefits for which deferral agreements have been signed. There are no outstanding scholarships, heating and water costs in the student residences.

## Transfers from the State budget

The largest share of the transfers is allocated to support for education, followed by funds for scholarships and students' social and living expenses and funds for capital expenditure.

The University generates its own revenues oriented towards the qualification of staff at the request of the business and socio-cultural areas. Applied science research related to industry and market needs is carried out.

Optimum utilisation of the scientific potential of the University is promoted by expanding consultancy activities.

Improvement of the leasing of facilities at the University and its subdivisions. Opportunities are sought to share and manage resources (property and equipment) with investors or for the needs of external users.

Mechanisms are being developed to involve private investment in improving the quality of education.

Volunteer community support from current and former members is invited and encouraged.

# IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTION

## AIM



The University works to build students' skills as future value creators in the public, civic and business sectors, while actively contributing to the sustainable development of society as a whole.

In the area of research, SU aims to address current research needs and to offer practical solutions that have a positive impact on both societal well-being and the environment.







# VALUES



SU actively embraces the values of global social responsibility in its academic activities, curricula and organizational practices by fulfilling its commitments and memberships in international networks such as the Principles of Responsible Education in Management and SDSN.

Recognizing the importance of its relationship with the external environment, the University takes into account both local and global factors, working towards the sustainable environmental development of society.

Researchers recognize their responsibility to society and the impact of their research. They strive to present their research and results accurately, ensuring that information is accessible to all people. This commitment aims to improve public understanding of science by bridging the gap between specialist knowledge and wider public understanding.

# PARTNERSHIP

SU's partnerships aim to raise the profile of the institution, support the co-development of publicly beneficial products and services, encourage scientific innovation and facilitate the practical application of these achievements. The University cooperates with all representatives of its external environment – business, state institutions and industry organisations, building lasting partnership relations respecting the rights of all stakeholders.

The implemented partnerships with companies and organizations representing different spheres of the economy offer students from all faculties the chance to observe the transition towards sustainable business and to actively participate in it, contributing as young representatives of responsible civil society. In the framework of sustainable development, the university graduates learn about the goals that businesses set for themselves on the way to a circular economy and social corporate responsibility and the obstacles they need to overcome for their achievement

# DIALOGUE

Sofia University actively seeks to attract media attention to the results of its educational and scientific activities, highlighting their societal benefits. In this pursuit, the University acts as a driving force and consistent contributor to the development and implementation of public policies related to higher education and science.

SU strives to build a lasting media image as a responsible educational institution inspiring young people to innovation, good governance and responsibility for a sustainable future.

The University supports and promotes educational, scientific and practical work related to the environmental aspect of sustainable development.

## To institutions

Sofia University is a partner in the National Scientific Programme "ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND RISK REDUCTION FROM ADVERSE PHENOMENA AND NATURAL DISASTERS" (2018-2023) and aims to provide fundamental and applied scientific research aimed at ensuring a sustainable, favorable and safer living environment for the population of Bulgaria.

Managing environmental impacts and combating climate change are an integral part of the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2030 and the SU Mandate Management Programme (2019-2023).

- ◆ The activities of the Faculty of Economics were presented at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference, which is taking place from 30 November to 12 December 2023 in Expo City, Dubai. For the first time, Bulgaria has its own programme and a separate pavilion, where the Presidency, the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Innovation and Growth have set the goal of giving a stage to the successful Bulgarian entrepreneurs, research and education centres that are creating innovative solutions applicable at regional, European and global levels.
- ◆ In November 2023 The Faculty of Economics was a partner of the information event on "Responsible Business Behaviour" organized by the Executive Agency for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (BSMEPA)

The role of the National Contact Point (NCP) on the promotion of Environmen-





tal, Social and Governance (ESG) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is direct and aims to make businesses aware of the guidelines and best practices and encourage compliance.

- ◆ The Legal Barometer continues to be published; 21 issues of the survey have been published since its launch. The Legal Barometer is a citizens' initiative to monitor, analyze and evaluate the state and development of the legal field in

Bulgaria. The project is implemented by the team, which includes lawyers, lecturers, PhD students and law students from St. Kliment Ohridski University.

### To business

- ◆ ESG Academy. In April 2022 Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and Yettel, UBB, UniCredit, ASU signed an agreement for strategic partnership and

for providing training in ESG Academy at the Faculty of Economics. The agreement will allow the parties to collaborate in the activities of the ESG Academy at the Faculty, which will also involve company employees. The Academy is the first national certification programme for training sustainable management specialists in Bulgaria.

- ◆ In July 2023 Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" hosted the international conference "Clean technologies for a sustainable environment and circular economy". The conference was part of the project "Clean Technologies for a Sustainable Environment – Water, Waste, Energy for a Circular Economy". The leading partner of the project was Sofia University with its five science faculties – Faculty of Biology, Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy, Faculty of Geology and Geography, Faculty of Physics and Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics.

The interaction between science and business was presented through the perspective of the Cleantech Bulgaria Foundation. Real examples from practice in the activities of the Centre's

researchers and associated partners Sofia Water, Sofia Municipality in the face of the Sofia Waste Treatment Plant, Energy Agency of Plovdiv and their international partners.

- ◆ On 13-15 December 2023, the Faculty of Economics held its annual international conference under the title "Sustainability, Social Economy and Digital Transformation". During the

opening ceremony of the conference the Bulgarian premiere of the film "World at Risk" was presented. It is produced by the FEB Fund and established with a donation from the Founding Dean of the Faculty of Economics – Prof. Dr. Georgi Tchobanov. The film has already had its world premiere at COP28 in Dubai. It will serve as the basis for the Kaleidoscope Visual Science Center,

the first large-scale project of the FEB Foundation built with a broad ecosystem of business partners of the Faculty of Economics. International cooperation and the academy-business relationship are in the DNA of the Faculty of Economics.

## To Nature

In January 2022 the "Plan of Sofia University for work on environmental protection and climate change mitigation linked to the achievement of high resource and energy efficiency" was published. The plan is in line with the institutional European values and standards and the principles of sustainable development, environmental institutional standards and ISO 14001 environmental management systems.

It lays the foundations for a gradual development of high standards, in line with the world's sustainability goals and standards. The Climate Plan is in line with the newly adopted integrated Sustainable Development Strategy, and is aligned with and includes realistic and achievable measures-actions to achieve progress towards achieving the 17 UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

The plan was prepared by an inter-university working group, under the direct leadership





of Prof. Eliza Stefanova, including: Faculty of Biology, Faculty of Physics, Faculty of Geology and Geography, Faculty of Economics.

Sofia University strives to mitigate its environmental impact by reducing the institution's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The GHG inventory is considered to be the first step towards developing an effective GHG management and offset strategy.

It is carried out within the framework of the Work Plan for Environmental Protection and Climate Change Mitigation, linked to the achievement of high resource and energy efficiency (2022-2024). The action covers measures 3.4 and 3.5 of point 1

"Increasing resource – and in particular energy – efficiency, following the principles of the circular economy and stimulating the introduction of low-carbon, resource-efficient measures and smart solutions" of Objective 1. "Circular and low-carbon economy".

## To society

- ◆ In April 2022, the Academy for Business and Child Rights took place. It was organized by Unicef Bulgaria and the Faculty of Economics at Sofia University. The third national capacity-building programme on Child Rights in Business

provided an overview of new developments and changes in EU legislation related to the impact of businesses on children. The focus was on social investment, ESG reporting and companies' contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Academy contained three modules – "Children's Rights and Business Principles", "The UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development and Business Contributions" and "Shared Value Partnerships". The programme was open to professionals in the fields of corporate social responsibility, human resources, health, welfare, education, law, finance, business, government and civil society.

- ◆ In the academic year 2022/2023, the PhD students from FJMC participated in the digital skills training project. "Innovative Education in Humanities and Social Sciences through Digital Transformation and Curriculum Modernization in Partnership with Foreign Universities from Greece, Poland and Romania". 33 PhD students from the Media and Communication Department of the FJMC participated in the training in the period 06.03.2023 – 01.06.2023.
- ◆ ESG Academy, ESG Lab, The Faculty of Economics and 24 Hours announced a





partnership in support of responsible entrepreneurship. The main goal is to promote and strengthen the practices of responsible entrepreneurship in Bulgaria. As part of the project, every Monday the newspaper "24 hours", as well as the website of the publication, will publish texts about ESG in a new section dedicated to the topic. With the assistance of the Faculty of Economics, the articles will explain the important role of ESG indicators, which businesses in Bulgaria must now take into account, both in a social and legislative sense. By partnering with "24 Hours" newspaper, the team of the Faculty of Economics believes that it is taking a step forward in its mission to introduce to and educate more people about sustainability and responsible entrepreneurship.



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