

Triagon Academy

Strategy 2026–2028

Triagon Academy



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1 Strategic Vision

1.1 Mission and Approach to Education

Triagon's mission is to create new educational pathways and qualification opportunities for non-traditional students, in particular through improved access to academic education, the recognition of professional experience and prior qualifications, tailor-made study programmes, and an innovative, part-time study format. This self-image is expressed in the guiding principle 'New Pathways, New Opportunities'. With the successful accreditation of university status, we are striving towards the vision of a 'University for Professionals'.

This mission is underpinned by a clear understanding of education: Triagon does not view academic education as a privilege reserved for a specific age group immediately after leaving school, but as a lifelong opportunity for people with professional experience, family commitments or interrupted educational backgrounds.

This understanding of education is embodied in guiding principles to which the Triagon community is expressly committed and by which it governs its day-to-day activities. These include:

- Our day-to-day work is guided by the individual educational goals of our participants.
- We are motivated by the tangible benefits we create for our students and partners.
- We treat participants, staff and partners as equals and as members of our 'Triagon family'.
- We focus on practical competence, informed action, reflective practice and personal responsibility.
- We think and act holistically and in an interdisciplinary manner.
- In everything we do, we strive for excellence.

These principles are not merely programmatic but structurally embedded: Triagon meets the requirements of a tertiary education institution in teaching, research and continuing professional development in accordance with the Bologna Process and European higher education law. In doing so, Triagon specifically complements the existing educational landscape by offering programmes for non-traditional students, rather than competing with traditional universities for the same target group.

1.2 Long-term vision

We view our ongoing development as a logical continuation of the course we have been pursuing since 2018. Re-accreditation in 2025, the expansion of doctoral programmes and the further formalisation of governance and quality structures provide the foundation for our recognition as a university. This step is an essential part of our strategy and is a particular priority for 2026.

In the long term, we aim to be a research-intensive, internationally networked university for working professionals: with a growing, visible research output, supported in part by our own institutional publication channel; with established international partnerships through the EOE university network and IUNworld; and with a range of degree programmes that is continuously adapted to the needs of students with professional experience.

The aim is to forge a reciprocal link between practice and academia: to introduce professionals to academia and thereby naturally feed academic knowledge back into practice. Following successful accreditation for university status, we are striving for this positioning: ‘Triagon – University for Professionals’.

The regional development strategy is based on a deliberate differentiation according to the regulatory acceptance of our ‘Online Face-to-Face’ study format. It is important to distinguish between this model – a supervised, synchronous online format – and pure distance learning: in markets where online study in this supervised form is recognised, Triagon can operate internationally and recruit students directly. This applies primarily to the European region, where we aim to expand beyond the GAS area within the Bologna Process framework. However, in markets where face-to-face components or blended-learning formats are expected or even required by regulation – which is often the case in Asia and other parts of the world – market expansion takes place through franchising partnerships with vetted local partners who deliver the face-to-face component on site, whilst Triagon is responsible for academic quality assurance. In both cases, growth is deliberately controlled and pursued in a quality-driven manner, rather than for growth’s sake.

1.3 The role of the university in the education market

We deliberately position ourselves not as competitors to traditional universities, but as a complementary offering for a target group that is structurally underserved within the established higher education system: adults with professional experience and academic ambition, whose average age is significantly higher than that of traditional students (currently 37 years at Triagon compared to around 26 years on average across Europe). The consistent recognition of prior professional qualifications, part-time study formats and a high level of individual support form the core of this positioning, which we intend to pursue even more consistently.

By seeking recognition as a university, we are also aiming to distinguish ourselves from the broader group of Maltese higher education institutions, whose reputation has recently been subject to frequent criticism, particularly within the GAS region. The planned positioning as a ‘University for Professionals’ builds on this and will shape our marketing communications once the accreditation process has been successfully completed.

2 Current situation and strategic context

This update does not rewrite the strategy, but rather builds upon a proven foundation. The key elements – mission, educational philosophy and positioning – are described in the Strategic Vision (Chapter 1) and remain unchanged. This chapter sets out what we are building upon, what characterises the current starting point, and what factors are driving the focus of this update.

2.1 Proven foundation and institutional integration

Triagon does not operate as an isolated institution, but is embedded within the EOE higher education network and works in close collaboration with IUNworld and ISARtec, service providers specialising

in private higher education institutions. This division of labour enables us to take responsibility for core academic tasks and quality assurance in-house, whilst at the same time drawing on network and service capacities, rather than having to build up every function ourselves.

Our strategy to date has proved successful in terms of the quality of teaching and administration. Triagon meets the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). This has been formally confirmed by three independent accreditations:

- re-accreditation by the MFHEA in 2025;
- the external quality audit by the EQAR-registered agency ACQUIN (2023); and
- two quality seals from ACQA for 'Teaching Excellence' and 'Service Excellence' (2024).

These endorsements form a solid foundation upon which the following development objectives are based.

2.2 Results of the environmental analysis (PESTEL and regional SWOT)

As part of the strategic planning process, a PESTEL analysis was carried out and consolidated into region-specific SWOT analyses for three market regions: the GAS area (Germany, Austria, Switzerland), the rest of Europe (EHEA outside the GAS) and the global market (Rest of the World). This separate analysis was deliberately chosen because the regions differ significantly in terms of market maturity and strategic objectives. The key findings can be summarised as follows:

- The core strength across all regions is the model itself: the open, RPL-based access for non-traditional students combined with the synchronous online face-to-face format, which is transferable primarily to Europe without significant changes. Our doctoral programmes are a valuable differentiating factor in this regard.
- The GAS region is a mature, well-understood market with established strengths; however, due to the uncertainty surrounding recognition caused by the ZAB and increasing competitive and price pressures, it must be actively defended rather than merely maintained.
- In the rest of Europe, the format and recognition framework could work in our favour. The strategic task here lies in establishing partnerships and, potentially, international marketing, starting from a relatively low baseline.
- The global market represents the growth path with the greatest potential: real long-term potential via the franchise-based market entry model, though this is dependent on the quality of local partners and involves increased due diligence and regulatory risks.
- Cross-regional weaknesses include the as yet limited brand presence and sales capacity outside the GAS region, as well as overall limited resources – factors that must be taken into account when prioritising measures.

A market analysis at institutional and programme level was also carried out specifically for the GAS region. Details of the SWOT analyses and the GAS market analysis are documented in the marketing strategy.

2.3 Key drivers for this strategy update

Three developments have been decisive in prompting this update to the strategy:

Firstly, of course, ongoing market developments, with two key areas of focus. On the one hand, the widespread availability of AI is fundamentally changing the requirements for teaching, assessment and student support. On the other hand, competitors, including public universities, are increasingly implementing liberal admission rules. The Maltese education system has, until now, offered genuine access advantages, particularly for our target group of non-traditional students. This advantage is dwindling.

Secondly, the trend in student intake. Following the Covid-induced boom in online education, a decline was both expected and understandable. It has since become apparent, however, that intake has not only fallen following the boom but continues to stagnate (see Marketing Strategy, Section 2.1).

Thirdly, and of strategic importance: the judgement on our legal action against the German ENIC-NARIC authority, ZAB, at the end of January 2026. Whilst ongoing market changes and even a period of stagnation do not automatically alter our strategic objectives or their relative importance, this judgement has fundamentally changed the starting point for our strategy (see Marketing Strategy, 1.4 and 1.5) and necessitates a swift review of the strategy. The German-speaking markets remain indispensable for the time being, but our future lies in internationalisation, extending beyond Europe as well.

2.4 Focus of this strategic adjustment

This results in a new prioritisation of our objectives, particularly in the following areas:

- Internationalisation: We must accelerate our international expansion in student recruitment and research networking.
- Qualitative differentiation through greater visibility of our research activities and through recognition as a university.

These priorities shape the selection and prioritisation of the following strategic development objectives.

3 Strategic development objectives (3–5 years)

The following five strategic development objectives set out the direction in which we will be moving over the next three years:

- Optimising teaching and assessment systems to reflect changing circumstances.
- Further strengthen research and raise its profile.
- Driving forward internationalisation.
- Optimise administration through digitalisation and AI.
- Achieve recognition as a university.

For each objective, potential KPIs are proposed against which progress towards the objective can be measured. These KPIs are verified as part of the implementation planning process and, where appropriate, supplemented by further operational performance indicators.

3.1 Optimising teaching and assessment to meet changing requirements

We will continue to consistently implement the RPL philosophy of the EHEA, with key milestones already in 2027. These include 'bridging courses' that enable prospective students to acquire missing skills in order to gain admission to their chosen degree programmes. Existing degree programmes will undergo an internal review and, where necessary, be revised as part of a re-accreditation process and supplemented by new programmes. Examination formats, assessment criteria and examination processes must be adapted to the widespread use of AI by students – with greater emphasis on formats in which personal competence is immediately apparent. Particular attention is being paid to equipping practitioners with the necessary methodological skills so that even students without a traditional academic background can produce academically sound work.

Possible KPIs:

- Proportion of students admitted via bridging courses, e.g. 2027 = 20 per cent, 2028 = 30 per cent.
- Success rates of these students compared to students with 'traditional' admission based on prior academic qualifications (e.g. Student Success Rate; see Appendix).
- Proportion of degree programmes or modules with an updated assessment framework. Target figures: 2027 = 50 per cent, 2028 = 100 per cent.

3.2 Establishing research as a visible, internationally networked core activity

By 2027, research is to be significantly more visible as an independent institutional activity than has been the case to date. This includes the formal establishment of research clusters, each with its own coordination structure; a reliable and quality-assured publication pathway; a CPD programme to ensure and further develop the quality of supervision, particularly in the context of AI-supported research; and an annual research conference as a visible forum. Links to international research networks, thematically relevant cooperation platforms and European funding programmes will be systematically expanded.

Possible KPIs:

- First joint working paper in each cluster by June 2027.
- First peer-reviewed publication in each cluster by the end of 2027.
- Number of publications or working papers per cluster: at least 2 (from 2028).
- Proportion of international research outputs amongst the qualified research outputs newly published in the reporting year: e.g. 2027 = 30 per cent, 2028 = 40 per cent; the absolute figure should also be stated. Research outputs are considered international if at least two authors with institutional or professional affiliations in different countries have collaborated on them, or if the output stems from an international research project – for example, due to an international subject matter, international project partners, cross-border data collection or implementation.

3.3 Driving forward internationalisation

Internationalisation is being accelerated both through the recruitment of students and by establishing further international research collaborations. For regions where the established online-face-to-face model is not widely accepted, is insufficient from a regulatory perspective, or is impracticable, a quality-assured solution based on franchising is being developed and tested. Effective quality assurance of the delivery of Triagon study programmes by the educational partners is crucial in this regard.

The international research dimension is developed through the research clusters (see 3.2), joint research activities and international research outputs. International collaboration should not be measured solely by the number of formal partnerships, but by joint publications, working papers, research projects, co-authorship and cross-border research formats.

Possible KPIs:

- Number of audited franchise partners: 2027 = 6, 2028 = 10.
- Proportion of students from international markets (new intake): 2027 = 20 per cent, 2028 = 40 per cent.
- Proportion of international research output as a share of total output: 2027 = 30 per cent, 2028 = 40 per cent.

3.4 Improving the quality and efficiency of administration through digitalisation and AI

With key milestones in 2026 and 2027, we will drive forward the digitalisation of administration and teaching. The aim is to enable Triagon to grow without a commensurate increase in administrative and support costs.

Possible KPIs:

- Number of students (enrolment) per FTE in administration: baseline 2026 = 175; 2027 = 190, 2028 = 200.
- Student satisfaction with administration according to the student survey and evaluation (on a scale of 1.0–5.0): baseline values up to 2026 = 1.6; 2027 onwards = max. 1.8 (established target value).

For both KPIs, we consider only the areas of Student Services, the Examination Office and Teaching Support to form part of Triagon's administration. The service areas of IUNworld (Library) and ISARtec (IT Services) are taken into account in the evaluations and student survey, but they manage their processes and resources independently. To ensure service quality, they receive feedback from the evaluations and student survey.

3.5 Achieving recognition as a university

Formal recognition as a university remains our strategic goal for 2027. It is both an academic milestone – given the already high proportion of PhD students – and a sign of confidence in the market, particularly in the GAS region, where the recognition of Maltese qualifications has recently been viewed critically.

KPI:

- By 2027, Triagon will be accredited as a university.

4 Strategic Areas of Action

This chapter translates the strategic development goals into concrete areas of action. For each area, it first briefly describes the established baseline (status quo) on which further development is based, and then sets out the strategic measures with which we will drive these areas of action forward over the period 2026–2028.

The strategy does not replace an operational implementation plan: individual instruments, responsibilities, budgets and detailed timetables are set out in the implementation plan and the business plan, and are only addressed here where necessary for an understanding of the strategic direction.

4.1 Teaching and Programme Portfolio

Current situation. The 'Online Face-to-Face' teaching model and the programme portfolio have proven their worth as the foundation of our business model. The pedagogical model is already well suited to non-traditional students:

- The 'Online Face-to-Face' format, which combines self-study on the learning platform with interactive online lectures and tutorials and is organised in a block format where one module is completed before the next begins, focuses students' attention, enables continuous progress monitoring and is compatible with work and family life – the key requirement of the target group.
- For non-traditional students, informal qualifications are increasingly an important basis for admission. These are verified without exception through interviews or technical discussions. These interviews are largely standardised.
- Individual coaching provided by Student Services, personalised study plans and the recognition of prior professional qualifications are integral parts of the model.

- The accredited portfolio covers all three MQF levels: from Bachelor's programmes in Business Management, Sport and Exercise Science and Creative Media, through Master's programmes such as the M.Sc. in Project Studies, to doctoral programmes (Ph.D., DBA and DPsych). The increased focus on Master's and doctoral levels is already being implemented.

This foundation remains unchanged. The following measures are intended to bring about further improvement:

4.1.1 Measures for further development

1. **Further strengthen our positioning amongst 'non-traditional students' and further develop admissions:** Consistent implementation of the EHEA's RPL philosophy through bridging courses – in particular, a preparatory semester as a bridge to admission to Master's programmes for applicants whose prior qualifications are not yet entirely sufficient. Similarly, the option of qualifying for a PhD programme through successful completion of the DBA modules or comparable modules on research methods at doctoral level. Admissions interviews to verify informal qualifications are already well standardised, but will be optimised so that they can be conducted not only by the respective School Director, but also by qualified and appropriately trained administrative staff or by selected lecturers and tutors. This is an important prerequisite for international growth. All degree programmes are subject to an internal review, with particular attention paid to whether additional methodology modules are required when admitting applicants with professional qualifications but without an academic bachelor's degree. Whilst the bachelor's programmes are already strongly focused on professional and research methods, it may be necessary for master's programmes to incorporate additional methodology modules or extend existing ones for students without the relevant background. The central aim remains to equip practitioners with methodological skills, both in practice-oriented methods and in academic research.
2. **Positioning inter-faculty programmes more clearly:** The inter-faculty degree programmes – in particular the M.Sc. Project Studies and the Ph.D. – are particularly important for the doctoral candidate pipeline and the breadth of the programme portfolio, and will be positioned more specifically. The 2026 market study shows that the M.Sc. Project Studies has no direct competitors, particularly in the GAS market: it is entirely geared towards students' individual projects, whereby the chosen project must align with the subject area of the entry qualification. A simple approach to clearer positioning is to 'conceptualise' these programmes on a faculty-by-faculty basis and specifically target faculty-specific audiences – for example, the M.Sc. Project Studies for creative or conceptual projects and the Ph.D. with a focus on sports science. In this way, abstract, cross-faculty programmes become more tangible for specific target groups.
3. **Activating accredited programmes for internationalisation:** Selected accredited programmes are specifically activated for internationalisation. Some of the existing degree programmes may be better positioned in new markets than in the GAS region, which has been the largest market to date. In the GAS region, regulations – some of which are very restrictive and politically influenced – limit the use of certain professional titles. Internationally, graduates of our programmes sometimes have more opportunities in such cases, a factor which is taken into account when selecting the

programmes to be promoted and the target markets. This approach is relevant, for example, to the M.Sc. in Engineering and the M.Sc. in Psychology.

4. **Establishing new forms of assessment for the age of AI:** Assessment methods will be adapted to the widespread use of AI.
 - Firstly, the focus is shifting to personal competence: this must be given greater prominence in presentations and oral examinations, so that the presentation of a final thesis becomes more of a 'defence' of the work.
 - Secondly, for final theses, the entire process of their creation will be made transparent and assessed; the written thesis can no longer be the decisive criterion.
 - Thirdly, formative feedback will be ensured through the planned lecturers' portal: the system will only accept marks entered by lecturers if formative feedback on the student's performance is also provided at the same time. In this way, the portal 'enforces' formative feedback and ensures that every student receives formative feedback in every module.
5. **Optimising e-learning:** We will continue to develop e-learning in collaboration with the IUNworld 'Innovative Teaching' team. This includes, amongst other things, interactive module books, self-assessment tests for students, the use of AI as a learning partner, and the integration of module evaluation directly into the respective module.
6. **Updating student evaluation:** Revising the evaluation tool based on SEEQ and the MFHEA standards. Initial success in improving the evaluation response rate has already been achieved. To improve the response rates even further, we will examine whether module evaluation can be made compulsory. The new study contract (to be implemented from autumn 2026) already enshrines the general obligation to complete module evaluations. It remains to be clarified how consistently this rule will be enforced.
7. **Further developing entry requirements and the admissions process:** Reviewing and refining the admissions process based on informal qualifications in accordance with MFHEA guidelines. Admission on this basis is granted exclusively following verification, usually through an interview or a technical discussion – a complex form of admission. The entire process, from advising prospective students through to formal admission and enrolment, will therefore be optimised. Consideration should also be given to adapting the criteria in line with the competitive landscape. Both the 2026 market study and examples from the German Chambers of Industry and Commerce's (IHK) continuing professional development programmes show that increasingly shorter periods of professional experience are sufficient for admission to a Master's programme. An adjustment in consultation with the MFHEA should be considered in this regard.

4.2 Research

Status quo. Research has been firmly established at Triagon for years: every professor devotes a significant proportion of their working hours to research and publication; the academic team has been specifically assembled to be research-active and scientifically networked; and research findings feed directly back into teaching. However, the real strength of this field lies less in individual projects than

in the breadth of doctoral work already completed: Over several rounds of oral examinations, we have awarded a substantial number of doctoral degrees. The thematic breadth has increased significantly and lends itself to the formation of research clusters. Research is therefore now firmly established at Triagon. However, its visibility has so far been rather limited. The following measures are intended to give this existing body of work a formal structure and significantly improve its international visibility.

4.2.1 Measures for further development

1. **Increasing the visibility of existing research:** Existing research output will be systematically highlighted, rather than left implicit. In concrete terms, this means bringing together the doctoral theses, high-calibre final-year dissertations and academic publications produced by academic staff over the years in a central, publicly accessible location – for example, in a consolidated institutional research and publications directory organised according to the four research clusters. Such a structured external presentation is essential to ensure that collaboration partners, prospective PhD candidates and peer review panels can even perceive the research output of the Triagon community as a whole.
2. **Establishing a publication channel:** Triagon is establishing a reliable, quality-assured publication pathway for research findings from the research clusters, as well as for particularly suitable work by graduates. To this end, an institutional publication channel is being established and supplemented through collaborations with suitable academic publication and networking partners. The publication pathway is intended, in particular, to support the development of high-quality final theses into citable articles, the publication of working papers, and the transition to external, peer-reviewed publications. Editorial quality assurance, transparent peer-review processes and the long-term discoverability of the articles are mandatory requirements. This creates a predictable publication pathway for the results of the research clusters, whilst at the same time facilitating the transition from a final thesis to an independent academic publication.
3. **Actively involving graduates:** Targeting PhD graduates and Master's graduates with exceptionally good theses to develop papers, supported by supplementary modules such as 'Writing a Paper'. The aim is, on the one hand, to enhance the visibility of research and, on the other, to provide targeted support for academic talent on their journey from practitioner to researcher.
4. **Formally establishing research clusters:** Mandatory formation of research clusters, each with a coordinator. Based on a systematic analysis of seven viva voce sessions (April 2023 to April 2026, totalling 66 PhD graduates), our research strategy identifies four coherent and complementary clusters:
 - Digital Transformation, AI & Data-Driven Innovation.
 - Leadership, Organisational Behaviour & the Future of Work.
 - Finance, Strategy & Corporate Governance.
 - Sustainability, Healthcare & Societal Wellbeing.

Each cluster is large enough to be viable as a research unit, sufficiently independent to give Triagon a distinct profile, and complementary enough that cross-cluster collaboration is a natural next step.

The clusters do not require substantial resources or budgets. At their core, they are designed as communities of practice that bring together researchers around shared research questions and create a recognisable point of contact for external collaboration partners.

5. CPD Programme for Supervision (Continuing Professional Development): We are establishing a mandatory CPD programme for supervisors and other academic staff involved in supervising research work. The aim is to ensure consistent, academically rigorous and development-oriented supervision of Master's and PhD students, particularly within an international and increasingly AI-supported research environment. The programme is primarily intended to strengthen the following skills among supervisors:

- refining research questions and research designs at an early stage;
- reliably assessing academic quality and originality;
- supporting researchers constructively and effectively over extended periods of development;
- providing transparent and development-oriented feedback;
- ensuring research integrity and the responsible use of AI in the research process; and
- identifying and further developing research work with publication potential.

A key focus is on research that is internationally relevant. Supervisors support students in transforming local professional or societal issues into scientifically sound and internationally relevant research projects, incorporating international perspectives and access to data, and identifying suitable co-authors, research partners and publication channels. The CPD programme is delivered through a biannual hybrid workshop model. Participation is compulsory for all supervisors working in doctoral programmes. The workshops combine synchronous online formats with targeted face-to-face sessions, address specific supervision and research cases, and serve to jointly develop binding supervision standards. Content, participation and key outcomes are documented and linked to the formalisation of doctoral programmes, the research clusters and the institutional publication process.

6. Formalisation of doctoral programmes: The further formalisation of doctoral programmes is a separate project for next year. The issue of recognition, given the MFHEA's continued lack of EQAR registration, requires that our graduates be able to demonstrate beyond doubt – even to the most stringent critics – that the academic doctoral procedures are conducted efficiently and transparently, in particular through consistent, comprehensive documentation of all stages of development within the doctoral programmes, from admission to the publication of the doctoral thesis.

4.3 Internationalisation

Current situation. As an institution offering online teaching in both English and German, we are not geographically constrained in the same way as a campus-based university. With the shift to an online face-to-face format—initially driven by the pandemic and subsequently retained by design—student recruitment has been decoupled from proximity to physical locations. This makes substantial growth in new markets operationally realistic, without the capital expenditure associated with new campus

locations. On this basis, internationalisation is a standalone strategic priority with two dimensions: (1) the recruitment and diversification of the international student body, and (2) the development of international research networks. Initial international partnerships have already been established, whilst further markets are still at an early, exploratory stage.

4.3.1 Measures for further development

1. **Establishing the Internationalisation Team at IUNworld:** Setting up a dedicated unit for the operational implementation of internationalisation. The main tasks of the 'Internationalisation' team include the assessment of potential target markets and the identification and approach of suitable partners. The aim is to enable Triagon to focus on academic quality assurance and academic administration in cooperation projects initiated by IUNworld.
2. **Establish franchising:** Tapping into international markets via audited local partners, with our own quality assurance requirements, particularly where face-to-face teaching is preferred. To this end, the regulatory framework must first be clarified in detail. The aim is to gain initial experience of the requirements and service capacity of potential partners through pilot projects and to coordinate these with the MFHEA. The processes for the initial audits and ongoing quality assurance will be standardised and subjected to an IQA (Internal Quality Assurance) process.
3. **Clarify options for international B2C marketing:** In collaboration with the marketing team at IUNworld, we must assess whether and how we can implement our own B2C marketing on a larger international scale. Whilst this option is not the highest priority within the context of internationalisation, it will nevertheless be examined. It is relevant only for markets in which the 'Online Face-to-Face' model can be implemented.
4. **Expanding international research networking:** We are expanding our research through existing university and research networks, as well as through new, thematically appropriate partnerships. The four research clusters serve as clearly identifiable points of contact for external researchers, universities, alumni and industry partners. Within the EOE network, opportunities are being developed for joint research workshops, methodological formats, co-authorship, cross-national case studies and joint publications. Existing contacts, including those with Ghana, are being assessed and expanded as potential avenues for project-based collaborations.

In addition, suitable publication, networking and research partners are involved to support the further development of final-year dissertations into academic papers, international co-authorship and quality-assured peer-review processes. The aim is to achieve robust joint research activities and international research output, not merely formal partnerships.
5. **Reviewing and utilising research platforms:** We will review and utilise suitable international research platforms to systematically initiate partnerships, research projects and funding applications. Platforms such as Crowdhelix can, in particular, support the early identification of relevant calls for proposals, the visibility of our own research priorities, and the search for partners for European collaborative projects.

To this end, the research clusters will develop and refine concise thematic and expertise profiles. Triagon will initially participate in projects to which the university can make a recognisable con-

tribution, particularly in the areas of part-time and digital higher education, the recognition of professional competences, AI-supported teaching and research processes, leadership and the future of work, as well as practice-oriented research.

The Research Support Officer, a new post to be established (see 4.6.1), will be responsible for the operational use of suitable platforms. This includes maintaining institutional and cluster-specific profiles, monitoring relevant calls for proposals, identifying suitable partners and consortia, and coordinating initial contact with cluster coordinators and researchers. The scientific prioritisation and substantive design of potential projects are carried out by the research clusters and the academic management.

Initial priority is given to establishing robust international contacts and participating in suitable consortia. The coordination of larger funded projects will only be pursued once the necessary experience, partnerships and resources have been established.

6. **Erasmus+:** Triagon makes targeted use of its existing Erasmus+ access to develop long-term international higher education and research collaborations. The initial focus is on smaller, organisationally feasible partnerships through which higher education institutions develop joint teaching and research formats, digital resources, supervision models and sustainable networks. The key areas of focus are in fields where Triagon has a distinct profile: part-time and digital higher education, the recognition of professional competences, AI-supported teaching and research processes, the quality of research supervision, and the integration of practice and academia.

The online-face-to-face model is utilised as an operational strength in this context. Virtual workshops, shared methodological approaches, international case studies and hybrid collaboration enable the resource-efficient development of joint research and teaching. Erasmus+ thus initially serves to establish robust partnerships and shared working practices; these can subsequently give rise to more extensive research and funding projects.

4.4 Digitalisation

Current situation. For us, digitalisation forms the basis of our entire business model. The online-face-to-face format, the learning platform, the online library and the increasing digitalisation of administration are well established and are being further developed in collaboration with ISARtec IT and IUNworld. This division of labour must enable our administrative resources to grow at a slower rate than the number of students. On this basis, the measures aim to further digitise administration, teaching and student support, and to adapt the systems to the growing number and international distribution of students.

4.4.1 Measures for further development

1. **Optimising e-learning and utilising AI:** Further development of e-learning in collaboration with IUNworld Innovative Teaching through the targeted use of AI (see 4.1.5).
2. **Further digitising administration:** The digitisation of administrative processes must be driven forward. The most important projects currently planned for 2026 and 2027 concern UIS and the associated portals:

- Full integration of all international students into UIS (application, admission and enrolment).
 - Use of the UIS document portal for the direct upload of application documents.
 - Student portal for downloading the enrolment certificate, the digital student ID card, information on the course of study and the transcript of marks.
 - Management of marks, including the automated generation of transcripts.
 - Lecturers' portal for entering marks or uploading mark lists.
3. **Implementing online enrolment for international students:** End-to-end online enrolment and application, including for international students, replacing the manual contract creation that is still required in some cases. Implementation is targeted for as early as 2026.
- Linked to this: a comprehensive update of study contracts. The cornerstones of this are the requirements of the MFHEA and Maltese law, as well as the GDPR, particularly with regard to clear regulations on the recording of lectures. Furthermore, students' obligations regarding the academic quality of their work will be further specified, taking into account the update to the 'AI Policy'.
4. **AI for Everyone (ISARtec):** This project, which provides AI support for administrative and teaching staff, aims to make us less reliant on external AI apps and to provide a controlled, quality-assured environment for the use of AI. The AI operates on the basis of the MFHEA regulations and Triagon's own regulations, whilst also taking specific higher education legislation into account. Where this is not conclusively defined in Malta, Triagon adheres to strict standards, such as the examination regulations in Germany.
5. **Early warning system for active student support:** Our aim is to use automated early warning signals to identify students whose academic progress is at risk, so that we can provide them with proactive support before they are at risk of dropping out. The system is designed to continuously analyse available data on academic progress – such as missed logins to the learning platform, exams not taken or failed, or a decline in activity – and to trigger an alert to Student Services when predefined thresholds are reached. It is crucial that the system does not replace student support but rather guides it: it must ensure that the right person actively reaches out to the student at the right time, rather than waiting for the student to make contact. In this way, labour-intensive individual support is targeted precisely where it has the greatest impact on academic success.
6. **Implementation of HubSpot as a marketing and sales tool:** The aim is to replace UIS-CRM with a more powerful system featuring a modern user interface. HubSpot will optimise the entire marketing and sales pipeline. For us, simplifying the admissions processes is the primary objective. In this context, the process – or the interface – between the Student Advisory Service and the Admissions Office will be optimised.

4.5 Recognition as a university

Current situation. We are building on an already well-developed institutional framework: we have a university-level governance structure, an established quality management system, and an accredited programme portfolio including EQF Level 8, with currently just under 200 doctoral students (>25% of

all students). In preparation for university accreditation, we must further formalise individual structures and document established practices in a verifiable manner, i.e. update existing documents.

4.5.1 Measures for further development

1. **Gap analysis against the MFHEA Accreditation Manual:** A systematic comparison of existing practices, structures and documents with the criteria set out in the MFHEA Accreditation Manual for institutional (university) status. The result is an overview showing which criteria are already fully met and documented, where documentation simply needs to be refined, and where new regulations actually need to be established.
2. **Updating documents and regulations:** In addition to regular updates, it is necessary to assess which documents can be systematically consolidated and, where appropriate, linked to one another. This is also likely to affect a number of regulations, in particular:
 - AI Policy; and
 - Assessment Regulations,

where the ongoing clarifications made by the Examination Board must be incorporated and, as far as possible, the planned changes to examination formats should also be anticipated. Other relevant documents will be reviewed for consistency with current practice and updated at the same time.

3. **Preparing the SAR and application documents:** Consolidating the supporting evidence into a coherent SAR and the associated application documents. The aim is to carry out a thorough final review of the consistency of the documents, involving the relevant governance bodies, so that we can achieve the 'University 2027' objective in a procedurally sound manner.

4.6 Organisational Development and Human Resources

Current situation. We also follow the principle of continuity in the further development of the organisation: structures and human resources do not grow or change radically, but rather in stages and in line with student numbers, based on utilising network capacity rather than establishing every function within our own team. The governance structure meets the requirements of a university, comprising a Board of Trustees, a Senate with the participation of academic staff and students, a President, an Executive Dean, a Director of Administration and a Scientific Advisory Board. Additional bodies have been established, particularly in the areas of quality assurance and research. Staff development through regular performance appraisals and further training for new staff, as well as access to the EOE network's professional development programmes, is well established. The measures in this area of action are primarily intended to further expand academic roles, utilise the potential of alumni more consistently than before as a resource, and target the network's valuable support specifically towards the new strategic tasks.

4.6.1 Measures for further development

1. **Establishing new academic roles:** creating the roles of Academic Quality Officer (AQO), Research Support Officer and Research Cluster Coordinator.

- The Academic Quality Officer is responsible for ensuring compliance with academic quality standards across all programmes and for ensuring alignment with MFHEA requirements.
 - The Research Support Officer provides organisational support to researchers and PhD students, ranging from assistance with publications and managing the publication pipeline to preparing funding applications.
 - The Research Cluster Coordinators are the key new roles within the research organisation: each research cluster is to be led by a coordinator from the Triagon Community, supported where necessary by a Deputy Coordinator drawn from the group of recent PhD graduates. The Coordinators are responsible for their cluster's meetings, engaging with alumni, the cluster's website, the first joint working paper and, as the project progresses, initial external partnerships and funding applications. They are thus the operational drivers of the research clusters.
2. **Alumni programme:** Our aim is to involve alumni, for example as tutors, in drafting review reports, as second examiners at Bachelor's and Master's level, or in similar roles in the areas of teaching and administration.
 3. **Establishing new units at IUNworld and clarifying interfaces:** Of central importance is the establishment and strengthening of specialised units for internationalisation and e-learning. Developments in these areas are relevant to our own HR plan. It is therefore important to clarify the interfaces and ensure an appropriate allocation of resources so that collaboration is efficient (avoiding duplication of work), whilst also consistently exploiting the potential of internationalisation.

These strategic measures and projects will be verified in the implementation plan and, where appropriate, supplemented with further KPIs.

5 Governance and Quality Development

5.1 Participation and Change Management

The ruling on the lawsuit against the German ZAB at the end of January 2026 necessitated a rapid update to the existing strategy. Unlike a routine review, this was triggered by a specific external event that required swift and collectively supported action. The process was therefore conducted primarily between February and June 2026, mainly with the internal bodies and key roles – that is, with those responsible for the implementation and, ultimately, the success of the strategy: the management team, the Senate (including student and academic representatives), the Quality Assurance Officer and the QA Board, the Board of Trustees, and the management teams of IUNworld and ISARtec as strategic service partners.

From the next steps onwards – the verification of implementation plans and the elaboration of conceptual details – further stakeholders, including external ones, should be involved, so that the overall process aligns with our approach to a standard strategy review and takes into account the feedback of those who support the individual measures, without losing the pace now required in the first phase. The further involvement of the bodies will follow their respective roles in the strategy process:

- The President is responsible for the strategic direction and continues to involve the Board of Trustees in particular.
- The Senate brings together the academic perspective and the administrative and resource-related perspective. The Executive Dean and the Director of Administration contribute their respective areas of expertise here, and these stakeholder groups remain involved through the representatives of academic staff and students.
- The Quality Assurance Officer and the QA Board ensure alignment with the quality management system.
- The management teams at IUNworld and ISARtec ensure that the plans are feasible for the service partners.

This ensures that strategic decisions are not taken by a single body, but are prepared, supported and accounted for across the relevant roles. The following points should also be taken into account as part of the change management process:

- The urgency of the change should be clear following the ZAB ruling, particularly with regard to internationalisation. However, this must also be recognised accordingly at IUNworld. This requires continued close coordination with the management of IUNworld.
- Accordingly, an adjustment of priorities, resources and performance indicators should be examined not only at Triagon, but also at IUNworld and ISARtec, so that Triagon receives effective support within the framework of the EOE priorities as well.
- The entire change process for the development and implementation of strategies and key change projects should be reviewed and optimised for Triagon's medium-term development (see planning for 'Dialog 2023').

5.2 Quality management and continuous improvement

Quality assurance follows Triagon's established QA system. Regular evaluation cycles – student feedback, module evaluations, staff performance appraisals and programme reviews – lead to action plans for improvement, involving teaching staff, students and external partners. Quality assurance is thus part of day-to-day work rather than a final check. This strategy is subject to the same improvement cycle, including periodic review.

5.2.1 Further development of the quality management system

- Alignment with the updated MFHEA regulations for online providers: The quality management system has been adapted to the revised regulations for online providers; phased implementation is already underway.
- Quality assurance in franchising: The system has been expanded to include the specific requirements of franchising. For collaboration with local partners in international markets, specific quality assurance requirements have been defined, notably the auditing of partners prior to commencing collaboration, ongoing monitoring of the quality of teaching and examinations, and continuous quality assurance to ensure that teaching delivered via partners meets the same standards as our own.

6 Appendix: Key performance indicators and measures

The overview of performance indicators includes not only the KPIs mentioned here for the strategic development objectives – the framework for the implementation of which is to be verified and, where necessary, further specified – but also the established indicators for continuous quality assurance.

The action plan summarises the key projects and milestones for implementing this strategy. It should be regarded as a 'living' document that is continually adapted to further developments. Optional, supplementary KPIs (shown in grey) are proposed here, which have not yet been agreed upon. These metrics are not additional strategic KPIs, but may serve internal project monitoring at the operational level.