## Glossary of terms and of key concepts used in AVA3 Quality Assurance



Updated 4th November 2022

List of terms	Definitions Programme 1
Accountability	Accountable for the use and management of entrusted resources within the scope of responsibilities assigned, as well as for the results achieved.
Accreditation	The process by which a 'third party' formally recognises that an organisation possesses the competence and means to perform certain tasks.
Initial accreditation	The authorization granted by the Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR) to establish and activate university branches and study programmes.
Periodic Accreditation	Verification, at least every five years for universities and at least every three years for study programmes, of the persistence of the initial accreditation requirements and the possession of further requirements of quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the activities carried out consistently with Quality Assurance (QA) indicators.
Other Institutional Activities	Other institutional activities are defined as institutional activities that flank and support institutional missions.
Learning Environment	Context(s) in which learning takes place in the form of knowledge sharing, skills acquisition, exchange of experience and dialogue on best/good practice.
Disciplinary areas	Set of culturally and professionally related scientific-disciplinary fields, defined by Ministerial Decrees.
Evaluation domain	Evaluation domains of universities and study programmes defined by Ministerial Decree of evaluation, declined in the ANVUR Guidelines in Points of Attention and Aspects to be Considered.
SWOT analysis	Analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses of an organisation and of the Opportunities and Treaths arising from the internal conditions and reference context.
Situational learning	A learning mode that involves the student in real practice situations in which he/she will have to assimilate notions in relation to the action he/she is performing.
Geographical area	Indicates one of the four macro-territorial geographical (northwest, northeast, center, south and islands) breakdowns for which benchmark values are calculated for the indicators contained in the Annual Monitoring Form (Scheda di Monitoraggio Annuale = SMA).
Learning areas	Groupings of training activities, each with a specific function within the training course.
Quality Assurance (QA)	Set of processes and activities designed to give confidence that quality requirements will be met.
Training activities	Set of activities that contribute to the definition of the study programme.
Professional Training Activities	The Professional Training Activities are the set of clinical and laboratory experiences that students carry out during their internship under the direct supervision of a tutor.
Audit/Audition	Audit is a systematic, independent and documented evaluation process carried out by an evaluation team independent of the activities to be evaluated and aimed at examining and assessing the activities of an organization and its performance against established standards.

List of terms	Definitions
Self -assessment	Self-assessment that a person or a group (a university, a department, a study programme, a PhD programme, the group responsible for a project) carries out on its own behalf, on the basis of certain parameters, in order to improve its decision-making and management methods, with a view to improving the quality of its activities.
Corrective Action	Action to eliminate the cause of a detected non-conformity or other undesirable situation to prevent its recurrence.
Improvement Action	Activity aimed at increasing the ability to meet the requirements of a process, product, service or activity.
Benchmarking	The process of measuring and comparing an organisation's processes and results against those of other organisations considered as benchmarks in order to obtain information useful to the organisation in taking action to improve its performance.
Organisational well-being	Quality of the relationship between people and the work context. As such, it goes beyond the organisation's commitment to the elimination of risks and it extends to consider the promotion and maintenance of an adequate degree of physical and psychological well-being and constructively nurturing the social coexistence of those who work there.
Good practice	A practice, method or approach that achieves good results or otherwise exceeds current performance and can be replicated, adapted to the context.
Service Charter	A document in which each service provider makes a series of commitments to its users concerning its services, the way in which these services are provided, quality standards and informs the user of the envisaged protection arrangements.
PDCA	Four-stage cycle to achieve continuous improvement as described by Deming: - Plan (planning); - Do (execution); - Check (control); - Act (action, stabilisation and correction).
Steering Committee / Stakeholder Consultation	A body composed of representatives from the worlds of work, culture and research, which may be set up as a stable representant ion of the stakeholders of one or more study programmes.
Evaluation Experts Panel Commissione di Esperti per la Valutazione =CEV)	Panel appointed by ANVUR for Periodic Accreditation.
Joint Teaching Staff-Student Committee (Commissione Paritetica Docenti-Studenti = CPDS)	Commission constituted at departmental level, at the level of aggregates of homogeneous study programmes, or possibly at the level of a connecting structure, composed equally of professors and students.
Regional Coordination Committee (Comitato regionale di coordinamento= CO.RE.CO)	Coordination Committee consisting of the Rectors of Universities with registered offices in the same region.  The Rectors of the Telematic Universities participate in the deliberations of the Regional Coordination Committee limited to the examination of proposals of predominantly distance learning study programmes.

List of terms	Definitions Property of the Control
Condition	Binding clause concerning the resolution of serious or numerous problems detected by the CEV, which the CEV considers must be overcome within a defined time frame.
Consent	Agreement on elements under discussion.
Analytical accounting	The technical-economic methodology used for the measurement, recognition, allocation and analysis of costs and revenues.
Context of reference	Situation in which the University operates together with potential interactions and synergies with stakeholders for its missions.
Quality Control	Coordinated activities to guide and keep under control an organisation with regard to quality aimed in particular at satisfying the requirements for quality in terms of verifying the conformity of a product/service or a process and to control, govern, regulate a process.
Management Control (or directional)	An organisational mechanism aimed at guiding management towards the achievement of the objectives established during planning by detecting, through the measurement of specific indicators, the deviation between planned objectives and achieved results and informing the responsible bodies of such deviations, so that they can decide and implement the appropriate corrective actions.
Bachelor Degree	A study programme (first cycle degree), which provides for the acquisition by enrolled students of 180 University Educational Credits (CFU), normally lasting three years, constituting the first level of university studies.
Master Degree	A study programme (second cycle degree), involving the acquisition by enrolled students of 120 University Educational Credits (CFU), normally lasting two years, which constitutes the second level of university studies.
Single-Cycle Degree Course	A study programme (second cycle degree), which requires enrolled students to acquire 300 (or 360) University Educational Credits (CFU), normally lasting five years (or six years), which does not require the prior award of a Bachelor's degree.
Professionally oriented degree course	A study programme, normally of three years' duration, characterised by educational objectives directly related to the needs of the labour market.
Study Programme	Cycle of studies at the end of which a degree is obtained.
Conventional Study Programme	Study programme delivered entirely face-to-face, i.e. involving - for activities other than practical and laboratory activities - a limited amount of didactic activity delivered telematically, not exceeding one-tenth of the total.
Mixed Mode Study Programme	A study programme that envisages - for activities other than practical and laboratory activities - the delivery by telematic means of a significant proportion of the training activities, in any case not exceeding two-thirds.
Predominantly distance learning study programme	Study programme delivered predominantly at distance, more than two-thirds of training activities.

List of terms	<i>Definitions</i>
Fully distance study programme	In this type of study programme, all training activities are conducted in telematic mode (distance learning); the conduct of in-person examinations and discussion of final examinations remains unaffected.
Health Area Study programmes	This refers to single-cycle degree study programmes in Medicine and Surgery (LM-41), Dentistry and Dental Prosthetics (LM-46), Veterinary Medicine (LM-42) and first- and second-level study programmes in the health professions.
Quality Culture	A shared, accepted and integrated set of quality principles and models found in the organizational cultures and management systems of institutions.
Curriculum	Set(s) of university and extra-university educational activities specified in the educational regulations of the degree.
<b>Dublin Descriptors</b>	The Dublin Descriptors are general statements of typical learning outcomes achieved by students after successful completion of a degree.
Didactics delivered	Set of all study programmes delivered in the academic year in question, complete with the relevant teaching coverage and the type and number of hours of assisted teaching to be delivered.
Didactic delivery	Delivered Didactics (Didattica erogativa=DE) refers to all those didactic actions that can be assimilated to frontal classroom teaching, focused on the presentation-illustration of contents by the lecturer.
Interactive teaching	Interactive teaching (Didattica Integrativa=DI) refers to all teaching interventions supplementary to didactic activities delivered and addressed by the lecturer/tutor to the whole class (or a subgroup thereof), to short interventions by trainees, structured e-activities (individual or collaborative), typical forms of formative evaluation, with the character of questionnaires or in itinere tests.
Planned education	Set of subjects, related ECTS and scientific-disciplinary fields for the entire study programme of the reference cohort.
Department	The academic structure of the University who is responsible for promoting and organising research activities, third mission/social impact and teaching activities, including the planning and coverage of teaching (including the proposal for the activation or abolition of study programmes) and the management of common services in one or more coordinated research areas.
Diploma Supplement	Informative report providing additional information to the bachelor/master degree, aimed at improving the international transparency of degrees by describing the curriculum of studies followed. The certificate, which conforms to a European model developed following the initiative of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO - CEPES, is issued in a bilingual (Italian-English) version.
Professors	Staff carrying out teaching activities within a study programme.
Reference professor	The reference professors are identified by the teaching structures among those who actively contribute to the teaching of the programme and are indicated annually in the SUA-CdS; they are counted for the verification of the teaching requirements of the study programmes, in accordance with the regulations in force.

List of terms	Definitions Programme Technique 1
PhD	Postgraduate academic degree, corresponding to the third cycle of university education.
ECTS European Credit Transfer System	A European Community project set up within the Erasmus Programme 1988-1995 aimed at creating transparent and useful curricula for the academic recognition of students who have studied abroad.
Effectiveness	Degree of realization of planned activities and achievement of expected results.
Efficiency	Ratio between the results achieved and the resources used to achieve them.
Requirement	Set of expectations and needs that a Stakeholders has for a product or service.
Coordinators expert	Experts whose task is to assist the President at all stages of the procedure, ensuring clear and effective communication, adherence to working deadlines and consistency with the ANVUR Guidelines.
Disciplinary experts	Expert evaluators who are in charge of evaluating the disciplinary aspects of the assigned study programme(s) and Department(s) and participating in the evaluation activities of the panel of experts.
System experts	Expert evaluators whose task is to evaluate institutional aspects and to coordinate the work of the sub panels of experts to which each of them is assigned.
Experts in economic and financial sustainability	Expert evaluators whose task is to assess, at the institution level, aspects concerning the preparation and quality management of budget and planning/management documents with implications for economic/financial sustainability.
Student experts	Expert evaluators who have the task of assessing, at the level of the institution, study programmes and Department, the aspects that directly concern students and, in particular, the study programme's communication strategies, especially as far as clarity and effectiveness are concerned.
Telematics experts	Expert evaluators who have the task of assessing, at the level of institutions, study programmes and Departments, aspects concerning the specific features of distance learning and the technical aspects of the technological platforms used.
E- tivity	Motivating activity with clear objectives, based on interaction between learners through written textual communication, designed and conducted by a tutor as e-moderator.
	E-activities are exercises designed for the web, a way of organizing online learning in an active and participative way.
Evidence	Information that supports a statement or action. It is essential in the formulation of a judgement or conclusion.
Specialist figures	Tenured or contract teaching entrusted to figures with specific professionalism and expertise employed mainly in characterising training, internship and laboratory activities.

List of terms	Definitions
Flexibility of the study offer	Possibility of accrediting new study programmes that use, in the disciplinary fields relating to basic and characterising activities, additional scientific-disciplinary compared to those provided for in the tables attached to the Decrees of the classes of degree and master's degree in compliance with the educational objectives of the relevant class and according to a perimeter defined by the rules.
Follow up	Action following the self-assessment process and internal changes, which aims to measure the results achieved against the objectives set.
State funding fund (Fondo per il Finanziamento Ordinario =FFO)	Established in the MUR budget, it is the state fund allocated to universities to cover the operating expenses and institutional activities of universities.
Personnel Management	Managing, developing and utilising the knowledge and full potential of employees to support the organization's policies and strategies and to plan the work and effective operation of processes.
Quality Management	Coordinated activities aimed at guiding and controlling an organization with regard to quality.
Indicator	An absolute value or a ratio, expressed in the form of a number aimed at facilitating the representation of a phenomenon relating to the management of a university organisation and deserving of attention by internal stakeholders (Government System, management) or external stakeholders (citizens, associations, other bodies, etc.).
Infrastructure	Means, equipment and services necessary for the functioning of an organisation.
Integrated teaching	Teaching whose lessons are divided into several modules that are coherent with each other and which involves passing a single examination covering the contents of the syllabuses of all the modules that make it up (the teaching may be taught by several teachers but it is advisable to identify a teacher responsible for the integrated teaching, without prejudice to the collegial assessment of profit).
Learning Management System (LMS)	Application platform (or set of programmes) enabling the delivery of study programmes in e-learning mode, overseeing the distribution of online study programmes, student enrolment, tracking of online learning activities and verification of knowledge.
Education Manager	A technical administrative staff unit generally present at the level of the Schools/Department, which supports the Coordinator of the Schools/Faculty Dean, the Didactic Area Councils (where present), the Coordinators of the study programmes, in the management of the design, establishment and activation of the study programmes and in quality assurance activities.
Process mapping	Representation of the organisational system as a set of logically interrelated processes that are constantly evolving as a function of the reference context, the organisational set-up and strategic orientations aimed at pursuing institutional objectives.
Continuous improvement	Recurring activity aimed at increasing the ability to meet requirements and achieve results.

List of terms	Definitions
Mission	The purpose of the existence of a university organization (teaching, research and third mission/social impact) as defined by the reference legislation and consequently declined by the Governance System.
Monitoring	The determination of the status of a system, project, process, service or activity.
	A collegial body in charge of verifying and assessing - consistently with the guidelines established at international level, the legal guidelines and the criteria defined by ANVUR - the quality and effectiveness of the University's teaching offerings, research activities, the proper management of facilities and personnel, impartiality and good administrative performance.
Additional learning requirements (Obblighi Formativi Aggiuntivi=OFA)	Training debt which, pursuant to Article 6 of Ministerial Decree 270/2004, is awarded to students who are not adequately prepared on the basis of the initial assessment test. This debt must be fulfilled within the first year of the programme.
Objective	An objective is defined as a result to be achieved.
Learning objectives	Learning outcomes, declined according to the Dublin Descriptors, competing for the achievement of the cultural and professional profile, detailed in the learning outcomes expected and achieved through the development of a training path.
Governing Bodies	The Governing Bodies are those defined in Law 240/2010, in the Statute, in the General Regulations of the University and/or in other resolutions of the University, which define the University's Governance System.
Orientation	Activity undertaken to enable the individual to become self-aware and to progress, through his studies and profession, in relation to the changing demands of life, with the dual aim of contributing to the progress of society and achieving the full development of the human person.
Outcome	It indicates the change that a public action has achieved with respect to the situation-problem addressed; in particular, it identifies the change achieved on the direct beneficiaries of the interventions.
Output	Immediate results of a process.
Evaluation Experts Group (PEV)	Panel appointed by ANVUR for Initial Accreditation evaluation activities.
Training course	Organised system of training activities aimed to the achievement of training objectives.
Teaching and research staff	See 'professors' and 'researcher'.

List of terms	Definitions Programme 1
Technical-administrative staff	All non-professor staff working in any capacity (permanent, fixed-term, contract, etc.) within the processes, services and activities managed by the University and determining their results in terms of quality and performance.
Achievement plans	Recruitment plan, drawn up and approved by the competent bodies of the University, aimed at achieving the teaching requirements, to support those study programmes that do not meet the minimum teaching requirements, established by the regulations in force.
Strategic planning	A process oriented towards reflecting on the organisation's vision, missions and most important critical success factors with reference to medium/long-term objectives related to the organisation's development.
Quality Plan	Document that for a specific project, product, process or contract specifies which procedures and associated resources are to be used and by whom and when.
Public Administration Integrated Activity and Organization Plan (PIAO)	The PIAO (Integrated Activity and Organization Plan) is a single planning and governance document that brings together the acts of planning administrative activities with regard to performance, transparency, prevention of corruption, organization of remote work, staff requirements and staff training strategies.
University Strategic Plan	General planning document that defines the university's vision, mission and general strategic directions, as well as the objectives and actions related to QA.
University Three-Year Plan	Three-year planning document consistent with the general guidelines defined by decree of the MUR.
Policy	Coherent set of objectives and general guidelines (ways of achieving them) of a university organization, established by the governance system also in view of specific needs of stakeholders.
Quality Policy	Objectives and general guidelines of an organisation related to quality formally expressed by the governance system.
Stakeholder	The term <i>stakeholders</i> or <i>interested parties</i> refers to individuals and other entities (associations, bodies, companies, public administration, etc.) who add value to an organisation, who have some interest in it, who may have influence on the organization, who may be influenced by it, who may believe they are influenced by a decision or activity of the organisation, or who are directly affected by the organization's activities.
Praiseworthy practice	Practice that is put forward by the CEV as an example deserving attention and that can be considered as good practice and can be replicated by adapting it to the reference context.
University Quality Committee (Presidio della Qualità di Ateneo= PQA)	Structure that oversees the conduct of QA procedures at University level, in the study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments, on the basis of the guidelines formulated by the Governance System.
Performance	The result achieved by an individual, group, organization, process or activity.

List of terms	Definitions
Procedure	Acts codified for the purpose of carrying out an activity or process.
Proceeding	Pre-arranged sequence of actions and decisions, aimed at the concrete connection of a plurality of actors and formalized to give public evidence to these activities.
Process	Set of related or interacting activities that transform inputs into outputs and outcomes, adding value to the organisation where possible.
Key process	The key process is a strategic process to realize the corporate 'mission'.
Training profile	The training profile (cultural and professional) represents the figure to be obtained at the end of the training cycle.
Quality	In general, the degree to which a set of intrinsic characteristics of a product or service meets requirements.
Recommendation	Report on the need to solve minor problems detected by the CEV.
Self -assessment report	Descriptive report of the results of the self-assessment that includes an organisation's strengths and areas for improvement.
Teaching regulations of the study programme	A document that regulates educational activities of the study programme and which defines the following: a) the names and teaching objectives of the study programmes, with an indication of the relevant classes to which they belong; b) the general framework of the educational activities to be included in the curricula; c) the credits assigned to each educational activity and to each field, referring to one or more scientific-disciplinary sectors, in compliance with the declarations of the classes; d) the characteristics of the final examination for degree award.
Accreditation report	Report produced collectively by the CEV at the end of the Periodic Accreditation visit.
Teaching requirements	Requirements concerning the number and qualification of the overall teaching staff needed to activate a study programme. The requirements are defined by Ministerial Decrees.
Quality Assurance Requirements	Requirements that demonstrate the presence of an organisation's quality assurance system.
Researcher	Researchers include all research staff in service under the actual regulations (permanent researchers, Fixed-term researchers, research fellows, etc.).
Review	Determining the state of a system, process, product, service or activity
Cyclical Review Report	The cyclical review report analyses the entire educational project as it relates to the entire programme of a cohort of students.
	This report is drawn up according to the model prepared by ANVUR, containing an in-depth self-assessment of the performance of the study programmes, based on the relevant QA requirements (D.CDS), with a precise indication of the problems and proposed solutions to be implemented in the next cycle.

List of terms	Definitions
Review of the Quality Assurance	Determination of the status of the Quality Assurance System to assess its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness in the implementation of the University's Quality Policy and related processes and activities and in the achievement of established objectives.
Review of the Governance System	Determination of the status of the Government to assess its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness in the implementation of the University's policies and strategies and in the achievement of established objectives.
Expected Learning Outcomes	Set of knowledges, skills and competences (cultural, disciplinary and methodological) defined in the planning of the study programme, which the student must possess at the end of studies.
Teaching Schedule	The Teaching Schedule, drawn up by the teacher responsible for the teaching, meets both orientation purposes and supports students in the choice of teaching of the study programmes. It also supports the communication of information useful for attending the programme itself.
Annual Monitoring Form (Scheda di Monitoraggio Annuale=SMA)	A tool that enables study programmes to carry out annual self -assessment activities on the basis of a concise critical commentary on student career indicators and other quantitative monitoring indicators made available by ANVUR on the ava.miur platform.
Annual study programme form (Scheda Unica Annuale dei Corsi di Studio =SUA- CdS)	Document used for the design, implementation, management, self -assessment and redesign of the study programmes.
	A document that collects, at Department and University level, information and data on scientific objectives, the organisation of research activities and their results, the quality policies pursued in relation to research and third mission/social impact activities and critical reflections (review).
Overcoming Criticality Check Form	Form prepared by ANVUR and filled in by the NdV to verify the passing of the recommendations and conditions set by the CEV on the Universities and on the study programmes/PhD programmes/Departments visited.
Decentralised Branches/Premises	A decentralised location is where teaching or research facilities are located in a municipality different from the municipality in which the university's registered office is located.
Employment opportunities	Positions in which graduates are expected to find employment.

List of terms	<i>Definitions</i>
Single sign on	An access control system that allows a user to perform a single authentication valid for several software systems or computer resources to which he is enabled.
Quality Insurance System	Part of the Quality Management System focused on meeting quality requirements.
Internal Control System	Monitoring and evaluation system that reports to the governing and management bodies on the progress of activities with respect to the defined objectives and with respect to the evolution of the problems to be addressed.
Management System	Management system: a system (organisational structure, processes and procedures) for establishing objectives and policies and for achieving established goals.
Quality Management System	The way in which an organisation (whether a producer of goods or a provider of services) defines, manages and controls its resources and activities in order to identify and meet the needs and expectations of customers, providing them with a good or service that meets requirements set as well as striving to continuously improve its performance and thus its ability to satisfy the customer.
Governance	Governance refers to the set of Governing Bodies defined in Law 240/2010 (Rector, Academic Senate, Governing Board), Board of Auditors, Evaluation Board, Director General), as well as other bodies, however named, that may be identified by the University in its Statute, in the General Regulations of the University and/or in other resolutions of the University.
Standard	Statement of an expected level of requirements and conditions against which quality is assessed or it has to be achieved by higher education institutions and their programmes so that they are accredited or certified.
Standardization	Procedure by which the characteristics of a set of processes and activities, systems, components and materials are fixed in such a way that they are compatible with each other.
Strategy	Plan to achieve a long-term, overarching goal (strategic objective).
Connecting Structure	Structure, however it is called (Department, School,), with functions of coordination and rationalization of teaching activities, including the proposal for the activation or suppression of study programmes, and the management of common services.
Organisational Structure	Orderly allocation of responsibilities, hierarchical/functional relations and relationships between the structure's staff and between its functions.
Syllabus	Detailed syllabus of each of the subjects taught in the study programme, in which the professors sets out the objectives and content of the programme, specifying in detail the topics and teaching materials and describing the assessment methods.
Target	Objective, expressed in quantitative terms, that a university organisation aims to achieve.
Types of training activities (TAF)	Disciplinary fields of educational activities indispensable for achieving the qualifying educational objectives of each Degree Class code (Art. 10, Ministerial Decree 270/2004).

List of terms	Definitions
Practical and evaluative traineeship for access to the State Qualifying Examination (TPVES)	The practical-assessment training (tirocinio pratico-valutativo =TPVES) is valid for the purpose of qualifying to practise as a medical-surgeon and must be completed in the fifth and sixth year of the study programme.  Certification of attendance and assessment of the practical-assessment training periods is carried out under the direct responsibility and by the university professor or medical manager in charge of the facility attended by the trainee, and by the General Practitioner, who shall issue, each for the part falling within their respective competences, formal certification of attendance, together with assessment of the results of the skills demonstrated, and in the event of a positive outcome, a judgement of suitability.
Tutor	A professional figure who is employed in support for training activities or orientation.
Tutoring	Tutoring is a set of activities aimed at guiding and assisting students throughout their studies and making them active participants in the educational process, removing obstacles to successful course attendance and improving the effectiveness of the University's teaching offer.
Evaluation	Judgment on the value of an intervention, an organisation or the work of an individual on the basis of explicit criteria.
Periodic assessment	It means the assessment aimed at measuring, the efficiency, the economic-financial sustainability of the activities and the results achieved by individual universities in the field of teaching, research in accordance with the standards and the Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and taking into account the objectives of the Ministry's three-year planning, on the basis of the indicators set out in Annex E of Ministerial Decree 1154/2021.
Vision	How the organization intends to be in the future, what it wants to do and where it wants to go.