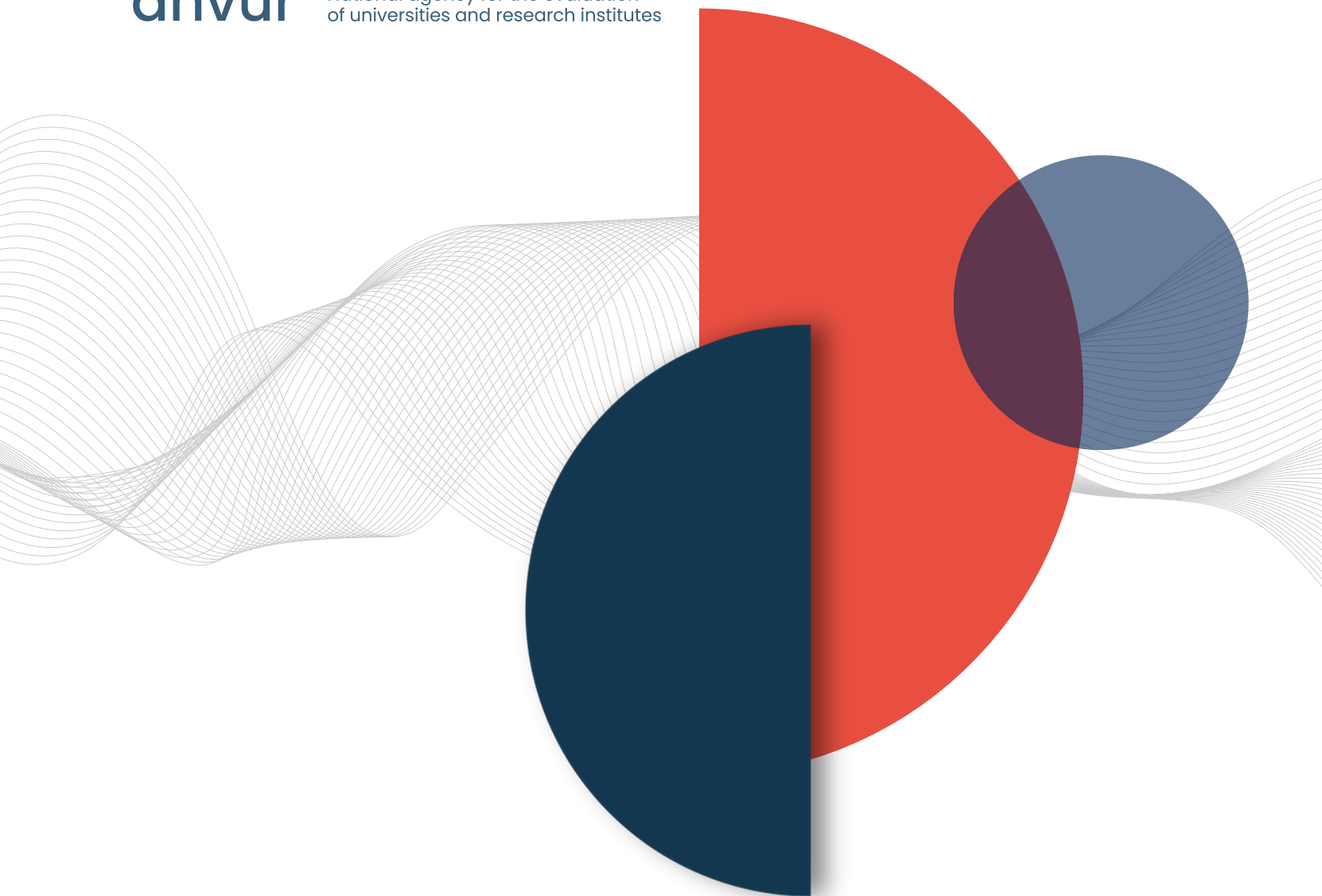




National agency for the evaluation
of universities and research institutes



ITALIAN NATIONAL AGENCY FOR THE EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH

Assessment, analysis, and monitoring are vital tools for promoting and enhancing the Italian higher education and research system, both nationally and internationally, benefiting students, scholars, and the broader community.

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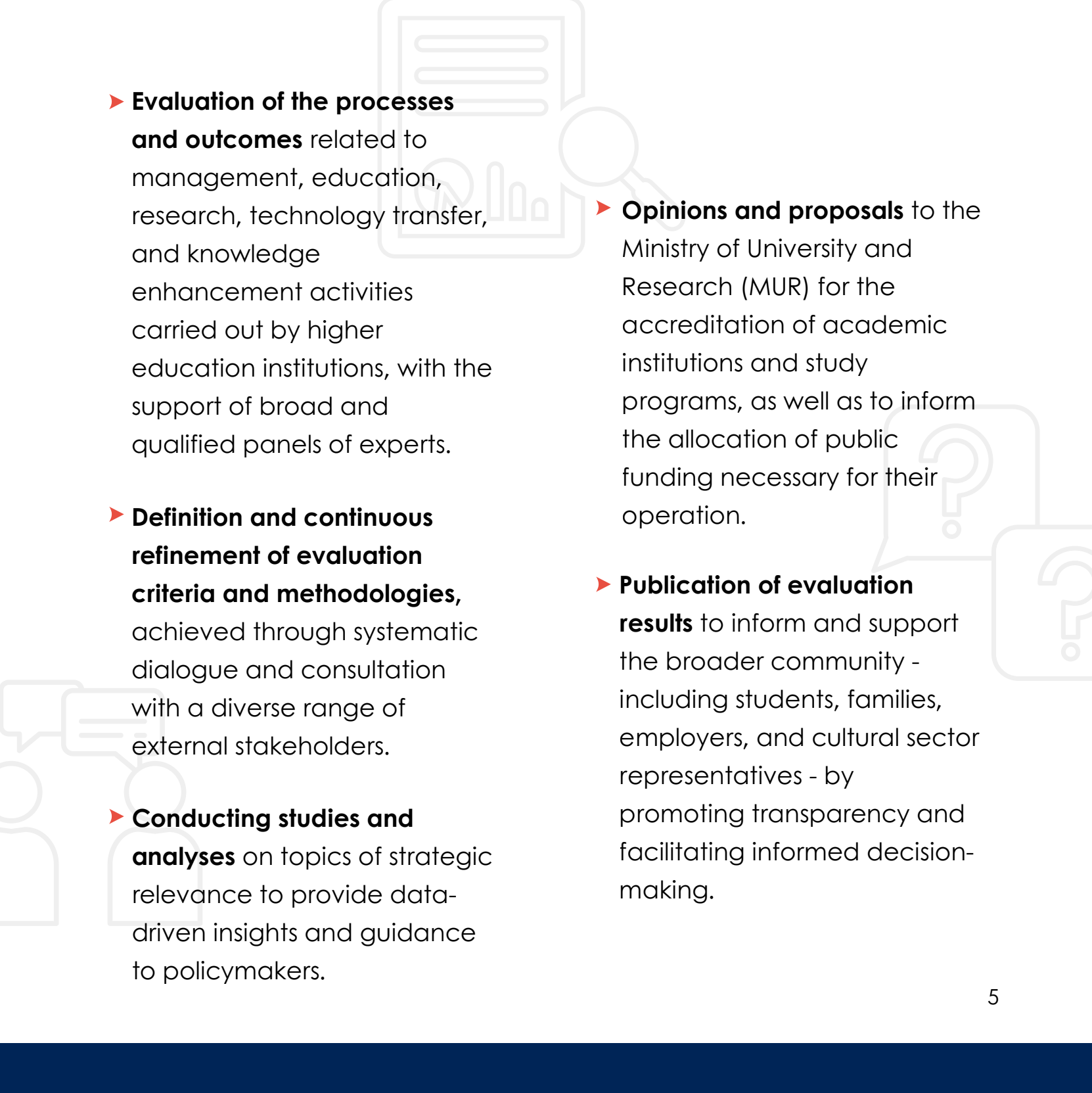
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MISSION AND STRUCTURE OF THE AGENCY

Established in 2006 and operational since 2011, ANVUR is the national agency responsible for ensuring and promoting the quality assurance of educational and research activities of universities, higher education institutions in the arts, music, and dance sectors (AFAM), and research Institutes receiving public funding.

Through the continuous development and updating of effective methods and tools aligned with European and international standards, **ANVUR ensures the quality of higher education and research activities** carried out by Italian higher education institutions, supporting, and assisting them in their internal processes of self-assessment and continuous improvement. By basing its evaluations on the **principles of independence, transparency, and fairness**, ANVUR contributes to the growth of the Italian higher education and research system and supports the creation and development of international collaboration networks.

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- ▶ **Evaluation of the processes and outcomes** related to management, education, research, technology transfer, and knowledge enhancement activities carried out by higher education institutions, with the support of broad and qualified panels of experts.
 - ▶ **Definition and continuous refinement of evaluation criteria and methodologies**, achieved through systematic dialogue and consultation with a diverse range of external stakeholders.
 - ▶ **Conducting studies and analyses** on topics of strategic relevance to provide data-driven insights and guidance to policymakers.

- ▶ **Opinions and proposals** to the Ministry of University and Research (MUR) for the accreditation of academic institutions and study programs, as well as to inform the allocation of public funding necessary for their operation.
- ▶ **Publication of evaluation results** to inform and support the broader community - including students, families, employers, and cultural sector representatives - by promoting transparency and facilitating informed decision-making.

The activities of the Agency are ensured by a structured organisational framework, composed of:

- ▶ the **Governing Board**, consisting of up to seven full-time members with high qualifications and recognised experience in higher education and research, drawn from diverse disciplinary and professional backgrounds. The Board defines the Agency's strategies, plans its activities, sets the criteria, and approves the evaluation reports. The Board elects the President from among its members;
- ▶ the **President** holds the legal representation of the Agency and ensures the coordination and coherence of its strategies and activities;
- ▶ the **Director**, who is responsible for coordinating the Agency's offices and organising its operation to implement the strategic guidelines defined by the Governing Board;
- ▶ the **Heads** of the three organisational areas: Higher education institutions evaluation area, Research evaluation area, and Administrative and accounting area;
- ▶ a **staff** of 57 officials (evaluators and administrative personnel) with advanced training and specific professional skills;

- ▶ an **Advisory Board**, comprising representatives of major national and international bodies active in higher education and research, responsible for providing opinions and proposals on the activities of the Governing Board and the Agency;
- ▶ in addition to the Governing Board and the President, the Agency includes the **Board of Auditors** among its governing bodies. Appointed by the Minister of Universities and Research, the Board oversees the Agency's administrative and accounting activities, ensuring transparency and proper management of resources.

Over 1,200 evaluators for universities

Over 300 evaluators for AFAM institutions

More than 120 student experts

A network of about 10,000 experts and external reviewers for research evaluation



In carrying out its duties, ANVUR relies on the collaboration of Italian and international experts of various types (faculty members, technical staff, students, professionals), selected based on criteria of competence and experience. These specially trained experts conduct their evaluations primarily through peer review, supplemented, where appropriate, by the use of indicators.

SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH A ROBUST AND INNOVATIVE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The quality of the Italian university system is ensured by a comprehensive quality assurance model introduced in 2012 and subsequently updated to enhance its effectiveness and full compliance with European standards and Guidelines (ESG). This system, known by the acronym **AVA (Self-Assessment, Periodic Evaluation, Accreditation)**, is based on a balanced combination of internal self-assessment by institutions and mandatory external evaluation activities conducted by ANVUR, which cover both the institutions and their **study programmes and doctoral programmes**. Just over a decade since its introduction, the AVA system has contributed — also through the training of experts involved in quality assurance activities — to the development of a “culture of quality” in Italian universities, with positive impacts on process management and the outcomes of teaching and research.

The Italian university system consists of **100 institutions**, with over two-thirds being public universities. Among the private institutions there are 11 recognised online universities, which have been experiencing significant growth in recent years. Italian universities are **distributed across the country** ensuring a uniform national presence. However, they exhibit considerable variation in terms of faculty size, student populations — totaling over two million students — and the range of academic programmes offered. 8

100 University institutions

69 public institutions

including
3 polytechnics and
9 schools of
advanced study

5,180 study programmes

Approximately 1,050 PhDs programmes

31 private institutions

including
11 online universities

Over 60,000 faculty members

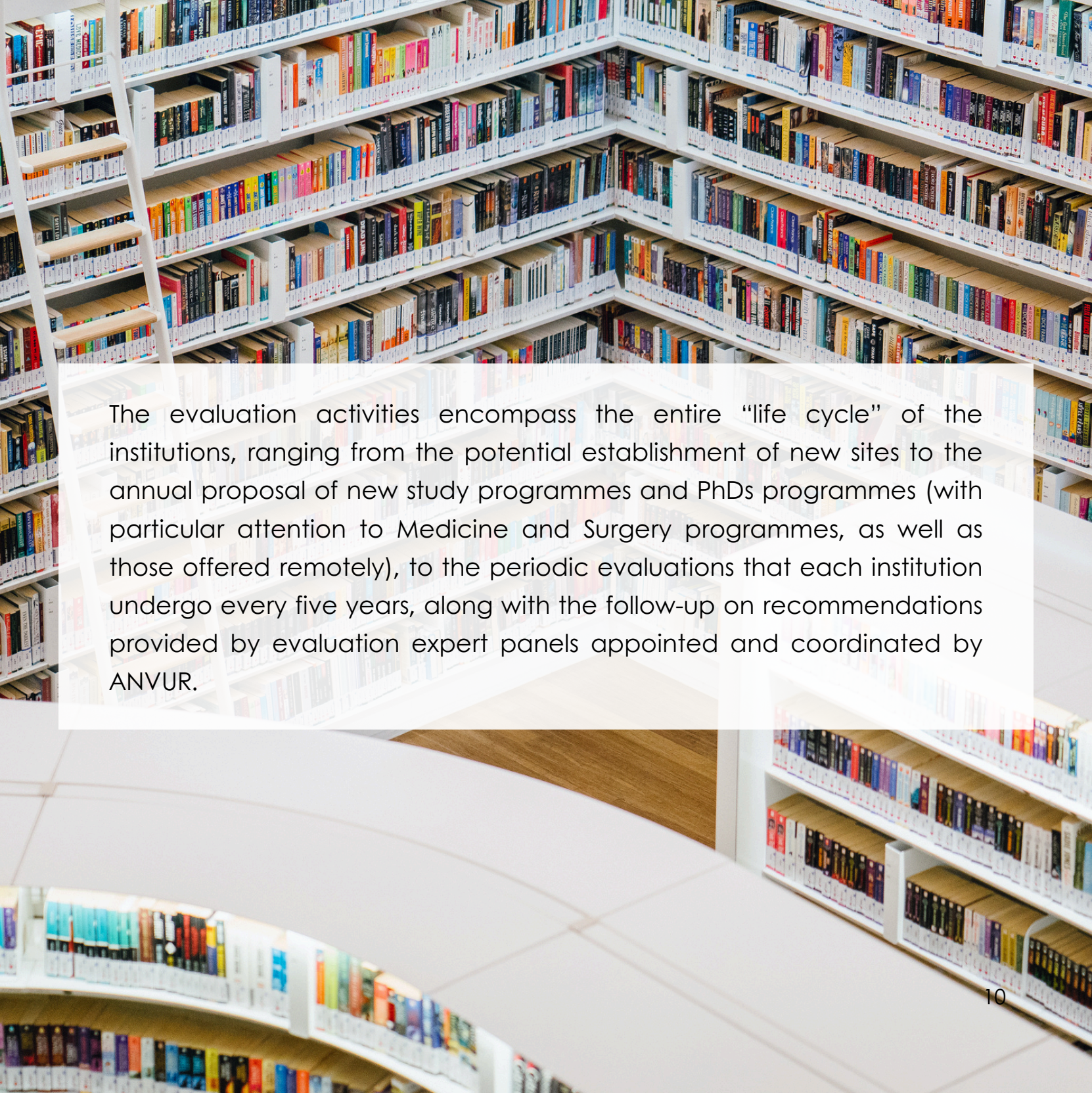
Over 2 million enrolled students

*University
system*



**BETWEEN 2019/20 AND 2023/24,
ANVUR HAS EVALUATED**

- ▶ 10 proposals for new universities
- ▶ more than 930 new study programmes
- ▶ almost 5,500 PhDs programmes
- ▶ 41 universities (periodic accreditation)



The evaluation activities encompass the entire “life cycle” of the institutions, ranging from the potential establishment of new sites to the annual proposal of new study programmes and PhDs programmes (with particular attention to Medicine and Surgery programmes, as well as those offered remotely), to the periodic evaluations that each institution undergo every five years, along with the follow-up on recommendations provided by evaluation expert panels appointed and coordinated by ANVUR.

ART, MUSIC, DANCE, DESIGN: A UNIQUE HERITAGE TO PROMOTE AND DEVELOP

A distinctive feature that sets Italy apart from other European countries is the presence of **a higher education system entirely dedicated to the arts, music, dance, and design (AFAM)**, extending up to the PhD level. AFAM institutions aim to provide high-level education that combines theory with intensive practice, enabling students to fully develop their creative and technical skills while also guiding them towards scientific and artistic research if they have such a vocation. Not surprisingly, AFAM institutions attract **a significant number of international students**, who are much more numerous than those enrolled in Italian universities.

While awaiting the definition of an evaluation model for the AFAM sector similar to that applied to the university system, ANVUR is actively engaged in developing and applying standards and processes aimed at supporting the growth of these institutions and their efforts to promote, enhance, and preserve Italy's extraordinary **artistic and cultural heritage**, also through the use of innovative methods.

The background of the slide features an abstract, cubist-style illustration. It depicts several stylized figures or structures in dark, angular forms. Some elements are colored in bright blue, red, and yellow, contrasting with the dark brown and black tones. The overall composition is layered and geometric, with sharp lines and flat colors.

The AFAM system comprises approximately 160 institutions, including academies of fine arts, music conservatories, dance institutes, and other specialised institutes in restoration, graphic arts, and design. These institutions, both public and private, vary widely in type, size, and student enrollement, totaling around 80,000 students. They confer degrees equivalent to those awarded by universities.

ANVUR is tasked with evaluating and monitoring the quality of these institutions. This includes assessing facilities, educational offerings, faculty qualifications, equipment availability, and the financial sustainability of their activities. Accreditation procedures are particularly focused on private institutions, but efforts are underway to extend these processes across the entire AFAM system.

Quality assurance aims to support the growth of AFAM institutions and their role in preserving and promoting Italy's rich artistic and cultural heritage.

Around 160 public and private institutions

5,140 academic diploma programmes

Over 8,500 faculty members

Almost 83,000 enrolled students

academies of art,
dance and
theater,
conservatories,
and design
institutes



**BETWEEN 2019/20 AND 2023/24,
ANVUR HAS EVALUATED**

- 108 new private institutions
- over 500 new academic diploma programmes
- 63 institutions (periodic accreditation)

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENT: DRIVING SOCIETAL GROWTH THROUGH QUALITY AND INNOVATION

Through the generation of new knowledge and innovation, research contributes not only to **scientific and technological progress** but also to the improvement of quality of life and Italy's competitiveness on the international stage. Additionally, research directly enhances the **quality and updating of teaching content**, ensuring that the education provided critically reflects the latest developments in knowledge.

Therefore, research evaluation is an essential component of ANVUR's work. Through its activities, ANVUR helps ensure the quality of results obtained in various fields of knowledge, promotes the achievement of ever-higher standards, and effectively guides the allocation of public resources to support both the overall development of the system and the recognition of quality.



Every five years, ANVUR conducts the **VQR — Evaluation of Research Quality**, aimed at assessing the research outcomes and the economic, social, and cultural impact of public and private universities, research institutes supervised by the Ministry of University and Research, and institutions that voluntarily apply for evaluation. The VQR uses the **peer review method**, potentially supported by bibliometric indicators, with evaluations carried out by groups of experts organised by disciplinary areas. These experts are tasked with providing informed judgments on a selection of **articles, books, and other contributions** submitted by individual researchers (with specific attention to the scientific production of PhD graduates from Italian universities).

Case studies related to **knowledge enhancement**, particularly focusing on themes such as academic entrepreneurship to public engagement and activities related to the UN Agenda 2030, are also evaluated. The current VQR (2020-2024) experimentally includes the assessment of research infrastructures and competitively funded international projects. The goal of the VQR is to deliver an updated snapshot of the state of Italian research across various scientific fields, provide data necessary for **the allocation of a significant portion of funding for the Italian university system**, and offer institutions valuable insights to guide their research and knowledge enhancement strategies.

ANVUR is also responsible for providing the Ministry of University and Research with the indicators used to define the minimum scientific productivity standards for candidates applying for National Scientific Qualification (ASN), as well as evaluating the requirements of professors proposing themselves as commissioners. For this purpose, ANVUR manages and updates, with the support of a group of experts, the lists of **“scientific” and “class A” journals** in social sciences and humanities.

The figures of the VQR 2020–2024

- **100 universities, 13 public research institutes, 19 voluntary institutions**
- **77,703 accredited researchers**
- **198,602 research outputs submitted**
- **858 Knowledge enhancement case studies submitted**
- **12 Research Infrastructures submitted**
- **728 evaluation experts, organised into 17 panels***
- **Thousands of external reviewers**

QUALITY BEYOND BORDERS: ANVUR IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

At the European and global levels, the higher education and research system is undergoing rapid and significant transformations. One of the most notable phenomena is the growing push towards **internationalisation**, evidenced by the emergence of structured forms of cooperation, such as **European University Alliances** — participated in by over a third of Italian universities — and the increase in **student mobility**, both physical and virtual. Other significant developments include the broader adoption of digital tools for teaching and assessment and the trend towards personalising educational offerings through short-term educational modules (**micro-credentials**) that can also be used for professional development or retraining, in a perspective of lifelong learning.

ANVUR is actively involved in the international discourse on higher education and research evaluation. It collaborates with evaluation agencies from other European and non-European countries, participates in coalitions and working groups, and engages in projects funded through competitive international calls. These efforts aim to support and enhance the **international openness of institutions** while simultaneously safeguarding and promoting the quality of Italian higher education in the global arena.

Over the years, internationalisation has become an increasingly important objective for the Agency, which has significantly strengthened its presence and visibility on the global stage. Notably, ANVUR is a full member of the **European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)** since 2019, and is listed in the **European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)** as of March 2025, affirming its compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Additionally, ANVUR is accredited by the **World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)**, in recognition of its role in the quality assurance of the medical education. The Agency is also involved in numerous cooperation agreements with agencies from other countries, fostering international collaboration and of exchange and the best practices.



As a reflection of this strategy, ANVUR has a representative on the ENQA Board and has been invited to participate in the governing bodies of the French agency (HCÉRES) and the Holy See (AVEPRO). The expansion of the international network has provided numerous opportunities for **experience and personnel exchange**, as well as the development of **shared projects**.

On the research front, ANVUR has gained prominent positions in the international debate. Notably, the Agency's participation in the **Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)** initiative stands as evidence of this. CoARA aims to reform research assessment practices, promoting a more equitable and transparent system that recognizes and rewards a wide range of contributions and scientific results, rejecting the automatic application of metrics based solely on publications and citations. In a complementary direction, the **AGORRA project — A Global Observatory of Responsible Research Assessment** aims to collect and analyse data to improve research evaluation.





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