The rationale behind ANVUR on-site visits for periodic accreditation
Combined Institutional + Programme accreditation

For a medium size institution (50÷100 Programmes) the Visiting Committee has the typical size and composition:

- 5 system experts (one of them administrative, one of them Committee Chairperson)
- 4 subject-specific Teams, each composed of 2 subject-specific experts and one system expert as Team-Chair
- 2 students
- 2 ANVUR representatives
Phases of the accreditation - 1

Three phases:

3 months before on-site visit

The Institution communicates its choice of Programmes to be assessed: 5% of total Programmes

The Agency chooses another 5% of Programmes (10% in total to assess)

Committee experts are selected and communicated; accepted by the Institution.

All required documents are made available by the institution and «frozen».

1 - Desk review

Duration: 1 month

2 months before on-site visit (start)

Experts:

• read all documents and prepare a pre-visit assessment report

• prepare a list of additional materials needed for the preparation of the visit
Phases of the accreditation - 2

Three phases:

1 month before on-site visit

System experts meet at the Agency offices. They:
- examine the **pre-visit assessment reports** (1 institutional, and one for each Programme)
- discuss the visit final details
- agree on the **visit calendar** and groups to be interviewed

2 weeks before on-site visit

The institution communicates the names and roles of interviewees for each identified group

**Experts prepare questions to groups**

2 - On-site visit

Duration: 1 week

**Time 0 (start)**

Details in next slide

3 - Writing the final report ...etc.

With appropriate customary timings, intermediate versions are exchanged (Agency – Institution)
Combined Institutional + Programme accreditation

5 days*:

**Monday:**

- arrival at noon
- brief presentation meeting with the Rector
- introductory Committee meeting with:
  - alignment of sub-team criteria
  - final formulation of questions to be asked to each interview group

* Some freedom is allowed; this is an example from one of the first visits.
On-site visit duration and organisation - 2

Combined Institutional + Programme accreditation

5 days:

Tuesday (4) Wednesday (4) Thursday (1)

- Programme assessment: subject-specific Teams examine in parallel one Programme per-day (interviews, infrastructure visit, meeting with students)

Thursday*

- Institutional assessment: system experts examine the Quality Assurance system and interview its various constituencies (teaching & research QA).

* The “institutional day” may be placed by other Committees in day 1
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5 days:

Friday (morning)

- Final Committee meeting with:
  - Review of main findings
  - Division of tasks between Committee members
  - Agreement on intermediate deadlines

- Meeting with Institution authorities: the chairman gives an overview of provisional conclusions of the committee to the representatives of the higher education institution, i.e., some strengths and improvement areas for each assessment area.
Purpose of **Institutional assessment**
(system experts)

It is mainly an audit where the experts assess whether the institution’s internal quality management meets a number of standards.

There is an ideal assumption behind this: a system that meets the standards is assumed to provide sufficient confidence that the quality of teaching and learning activities will be satisfactory.

However: can we **trust** this to be true?

**Cross checking:** an added value to the assessment!
...then, the purpose of Programme assessment (system & subject specific experts)

It tries to answer the following question: how does system quality connect with educational quality?

In the words of Jon Haakstad*:

_The idea must be ... to understand and analyse formal and observed learning results, ..., seeking reasons for problems/weaknesses and modifications that will improve student learning._

*Quality audit: Fit for what purpose? A discussion paper; presented at the 9th European Quality Assurance Forum 13 – 15 November 2014, University of Barcelona, Spain
Quality information must come from the Programmes themselves.

*Far from removing institutional responsibility for directing and managing this field, it would still make quality assurance more directly connected with the (teaching and learning) activities.*

In conclusion: this combination of control - enhancement - dialogue is the main feature of the on-site visits, seems to be a winning factor, i.e., be an effective tool in assessing whether (or not) the educational provision - as delivered and experienced - has a satisfactory quality.
Warning

ANVUR periodic accreditation examines research aspects together with educational aspects.
For the sake of brevity the research part has not been treated.

Thank you!