

ANVUR Code of Ethics

(approved by the Governing Board of Directors at the 15 October 2014 meeting)

INTRODUCTION

ANVUR is an independent public agency aimed at the scientific, impartial and rigorous evaluation of the quality of universities and research institutes. The Agency's primary objective is to promote through evaluation an improvement of the research and higher education system. To this aim, decisions are based on accurate, robust and transparent data, so to encourage and enhance excellence, raise the system average quality, increase meritocracy, rationalise the use of available human and financial resources, and foster the internationalisation process.

Art. 1

Application

1. This code establishes ethical principles and rules:
 - a) for the Agency Governing Board's and employees (hereafter named "Agency members"). This includes out-of-role, leading or secondment positions.
 - b) for scholars who are external contractors of the Agency (hereafter named "external experts").
2. This is without prejudice to the rules of conduct established by Presidential Decree no. 76/2010 and Law no. 215/2004 "on the resolution of conflicts of interest" (to the extent applicable)

Art. 2

General principles

1. The Agency members and, with regard to any work activities related to the Agency, external experts must comply with high moral standards. In fulfilling the tasks and duties they are appointed to, they shall comply with the principles of loyalty, independence, impartiality, equality of opportunity in respect to gender diversity, professionalism, confidentiality, transparency and integrity.
2. They shall ensure that relationships with colleagues are inspired by principles of loyal collaboration, avoiding acts and conduct characterised by rivalry and conflict. They shall conform their activities to the criteria of fairness, cost-effectiveness, efficiency and effectiveness. They shall not pursue personal interests and avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Being aware of the public nature of their functions, they shall promote the Agency reputation and trust in its activity.

Art. 3

Independence, impartiality, professionalism, confidentiality and transparency

1. Aware of ANVUR's independence, required by the Government and Parliament and enacted by Presidential Decree 76/2010 and Law 240/2010, Agency members and external experts shall take decisions by rejecting any undue pressure, avoiding creating or benefiting privileged situations. The members of the Governing Board shall ensure maximum independence in evaluating teaching and research, in their relationship with the Internal Evaluation Units, in assessing the allocation of public resources to Universities and Research Institutes and in the formulation of advices and criteria for the Minister.
2. Agency members and external experts shall act impartially, avoiding any favourable or unequal treatment, including gender-based discrimination. To this end, they shall not maintain relations with interested parties that could compromise their judgement independence and impartiality. They shall not make commitments, nor make promises that may affect, or give the impression of affecting, the fulfilment of official duties.
3. The Agency members and external experts will operate with rigour and professionalism. They will respect professional confidentiality and access only the files they are authorised to, using them according to their office duties and allowing access to those entitled, under rules and regulations. They shall not release information regarding decisions to be taken and provisions relating to activities in progress before they have been officially decided by the Governing Board and formally communicated. They maintain the strictest confidentiality on all Agency activities that the Governing Board's members decide not to make public, nor use the information obtained during their office activity to achieve profits or private interests.
4. The Governing Board makes use of qualified external experts, establishing and making the selection criteria public, based on the full disclosure principle.
5. The *curriculum vitae* of the Governing Board's members and external experts, as well as the Agency's main decisions and opinions are published in Italian and English on the website www.anvur.org.

Art. 4

Integrity, gifts and gratuities

1. Agency members and external experts shall not use their office to pursue private goals or obtain personal benefits while carrying out their activities other than the institutional ones required by rules and regulations.
2. They shall not accept gifts, gratuities or other benefits from subjects assessed by the Agency or which are about to request assessment, during travel, seminars or conferences, nor for the performance of external assignments. Gifts of a modest value and the reimbursement of documented travel and subsistence expenses are allowed, provided these are paid also to other guests.

Gifts of higher value received by those subjects are to be returned to the sender or donated to the Agency which is required to include them in its inventory.

3. The members of the Governing Board will not provide gifts, gratuities or benefits to those who periodically evaluate the Agency work, under Presidential Decree no. 76/2010.

Art. 5

Participation in conferences and seminars, publications, external assignments

1. In matters within ANVUR's competence, Agency members shall attend conferences and seminars, and publish articles in newspapers or scientific journals only when participation or publication takes place in the Agency's interest. These activities must be reported to the President. In matters falling outside the Agency's competence, participation in conferences and seminars, and the publication of articles in newspapers or journals by the Agency members are unrestricted. Any scientific publication is unrestricted, with due regard to freedom of expression of each person.
2. Study, publication and dissemination of the research by external experts is unrestricted as long as the Agency's name is not improperly used. This is without prejudice to its institutional interests, confidentiality of its information and functions. Prior notice must be given to the President, if the study, publication and dissemination of the research concerns matters falling within the Agency's competence.
3. Without prejudice to the constraints imposed by Art. 8 of Presidential Decree no. 76/2010, the members of the Governing Board may take external assignments, provided they do not have a negative impact on the performance of their institutional duties nor cause damage to the Agency reputation and are additional or marginal compared to their full-time Agency work.
4. For carrying out external tasks, the members of the Governing Board must be authorised according to the procedures defined in the Agency's Operating Rules.

Art. 6

Relations with the media

1. The President is responsible for media relations on ANVUR's behalf. In maintaining any relations with the press or other media, Agency members and external experts shall comply with the Agency's guidelines, avoiding jeopardising the Agency's image and the confidentiality of information and its activities.

Art. 7

Conflicts of interest

1. While carrying out work activities, Agency members and external experts shall avoid any situation that may give rise to conflicts of interest, even if only apparent. They shall refrain from taking or contributing to take decisions and from carrying out actions that may directly or indirectly involve their own interests, as well as of those of their spouse, cohabitants and relatives within the fourth degree. They shall refrain from any other situation implying serious reasons of convenience.
2. Potential conflict of interest situations will be brought to the Board's attention, under paragraph 2 of Art. 8.

Art. 8

Obligations to comply with the Code of Ethics and the Supervisory Board

1. The Agency members shall respect the code of ethics by explicit declaration when taking office or within seven days of the entry into force of its amendments; when initially applied, within two days of the code's entry into force. Upon receiving the assignment, external experts undertake to respect the code of ethics and the other clauses contained in their appointment contract.
2. A violation of the code of ethics, whoever reports it, is verified by a Supervisory Board consisting of at least two members of the Governing Board, one being the President, in joint consultation with the person concerned. This Board is responsible for the authentic interpretation of the code of ethics and for monitoring its compliance. Resolutions of the Supervisory Board are promptly reported to the members of the Governing Board and are transcribed in the minutes of the Agency. Without prejudice to any disciplinary responsibility.
3. The Supervisory Board members remain in office for two years and the office is not renewable except that of the President.

Art. 9

Entry into force

1. The code of ethics enters into force the day after its publication on the Agency's website and is reviewed on the President's initiative, normally on a yearly basis, for updating purposes based on experience, new regulations or suggestions.