

PERIODIC ACCREDITATION
OF UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR STUDY PROGRAMMES

GUIDELINES FOR THE UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Approved by ANVUR Governing Board's Resolution no. 26 of 13 February 2023

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Introduction

The *Guidelines for the design of the quality assurance system in universities* were adopted for the first time at the construction of the AVA system (Self-assessment – periodic assessment - accreditation) launched in 2013, which led, in 2014, to the adoption of AVA 1 model by the ANVUR Governing Board. More than two years after its inception, ANVUR, in close cooperation with CRUI, has begun a first reflection on the experience accumulated so far, aimed at recognising the strengths of the AVA system, filling in gaps and possible weaknesses, to modify or eliminate its less effective and productive aspects, also using new instruments. The 2017 revision of the AVA system, with the AVA 2 model, had the main goal of achieving a substantial simplification and a lightening of the system, at the same time pursuing adherence to the European Standard and Guidelines (ESG 2015) and the achievement of its core goals.

In this constantly evolving context, at the end of the first cycle (2021), also according to [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#) and with ENQA recommendations for the accreditation of the Agency, the ANVUR Governing Board, in cooperation with the main stakeholders (Ministry, CUN, CRUI, CODAU, CNSU, CONVUI and CONPAQ), has proposed a revision of the requirements, in compliance with European standards and with the continuous improvement of Quality Assurance systems in universities and in the perspective of a systemic reorganisation and simplification of AVA 2 requirements.

The AVA 3 model has maintained a structure articulated in points of attention, grouping them by evaluation domains, has better clarified points of attention themselves and relative Aspects to be considered, accompanying them with reading notes and proposing a new formulation without question points, to underline that these should be read as good practices for the implementation of the Quality Assurance system (QA system), even before being used by the Evaluation Expert Panels (CEV) as part of the evaluation process aimed at Periodic Accreditation (AP).

The requirements revision passed through several consultation rounds, either through continuous meetings with key stakeholder organisations (2020-2022) and through a public consultation (June 2022). The many proposals and recommendations received have been carefully analysed and accepted in the first version of the requirements (September 2022) and of the *Guidelines for the Quality Assurance system in universities* (October 2022). The requirements approved by the ANVUR Governing Board on 8 September 2022 were tested in three pilot visits between November 2022 and January 2023, in universities of different sizes, different local distribution and type of study offer (in presence or full or partial distance teaching and learning). Following this trial, the model was revised, and the present Guidelines were updated.

Furthermore, since ANVUR has initiated the accreditation procedure at the *World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)*, on the base of the experience gained in the activities of Initial Accreditation of new health area study programmes, which own specific protocols and compulsory on-site visits, a specific protocol has been drawn up for single cycle master degree programmes in Medicine and Surgery, taking also into account the WFME *Guidelines* and the suggestions of the permanent Conference of study programmes board Presidents of masters in Medicine and Surgery.

These *Guidelines* refer to the updated AVA 3 model, which provides the requirements for the construction of the QA system in universities and intends to offer operational guidance in important areas for the full achievement of the quality of teaching, research, third mission/social impact and other institutional and management activities carried out in the universities.

1. AVA SYSTEM

The AVA system (Self-assessment – periodic assessment - accreditation) aims to improve the quality of teaching, research, third mission/social impact and other institutional and management activities carried out in the universities, through the application of a Quality Assurance (QA) model based on internal procedures for the design, management, self-assessment, and improvement of educational and scientific activities and on a clear and transparent external verification.

The verification results in a judgment of Accreditation, the outcome of a process through which for a University and its Study programmes is recognized the possession (Initial Accreditation) or the permanence (Periodic Accreditation) of the Quality Requirements for its institutional functions.

The AVA system has therefore been developed to achieve three main goals:

- the assurance, by the Ministry and through the evaluation activity of the ANVUR, that the HEIs operating in Italy uniformly provide an adequate quality service to their stakeholders and to the society as a whole.
- the exercise by universities of a responsible and reliable autonomy in the use of public resources and in collective and individual behaviour relating to training and research activities.
- the improvement of the training and research activities quality.

The new AVA 3 model is part of the updating of the self-assessment, periodic assessment and accreditation system launched in 2013 with [the Ministerial Decree No. 47 of 30 January 2013](#), amended by [Ministerial Decree No. 987 of 12 December 2016](#), in transposition of the indications formulated by the Ministers of the European Higher Education Area and ESG 2015, and then by [Ministerial Decree No. 6 of 7 January 2019](#), finally replaced by [Ministerial Decree No. 1154 of 14 October 2021](#), whose effects started with the academic year 2022/2023.

Regarding to the regulatory framework of AVA system, please refer to the [Regulatory references](#) section on the Agency's website.

In the light of the extensive and complex experience gained with the first cycle of Periodic Accreditation and the contents of [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#) as well as following the most recent consultations with the main stakeholders of the Agency and taking into account the pilot visits carried out at three universities, these Guidelines have been made definitive, providing operational guidance as an instrument to accompany universities during their continuous improvement process.

In order to promote the adoption of a common lexicon, with particular reference to Quality Assurance processes, a *Glossary* has been prepared (*see* the web page ["Guidelines and Support Tools"](#)), which, respecting the organisational autonomy of the Universities, proposes a systematization of the main definitions currently adopted in the University system.

1.1 - University Self-assessment

According to [Legislative Decree No. 19/2012](#), self-assessment and internal evaluation are institutional activities that must follow methodologies, criteria and indicators developed by universities in harmony with those defined by ANVUR.

The University Quality Committees (Presidio della Qualità di Ateneo = PQA) are called to support universities structures in the construction of the Quality Assurance system and in the self-assessment processes, to monitor its effectiveness by implementing, where necessary, improvement actions and ensuring the correct flow of information between the structures responsible for QA.

The University Evaluation Boards (Nucleo di Valutazione = NdV) are responsible for assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of the QA system, for monitoring the systematic and widespread application in the relevant areas of the qualitative and quantitative criteria and indicators established by ANVUR for evaluation, and to verify the adequacy of the self-assessment process of study programmes and Departments.

The Joint Teaching Staff-Student Committees (Commissioni Paritetiche Docenti Studenti = CPDS) monitor the study offer and the teaching quality as well as student service activities carried out by professors, by technical and administrative staff and by structures and services in general; CPDS are also responsible for identifying indicators for the evaluation of the results and for formulating proposals on the activation or suppression of study programmes.

[Legislative Decree No. 19/2012](#) demands to University Evaluation Boards and to Joint Teaching Staff-Student Committees to draft an annual report to be sent to ANVUR and to Ministry by University Evaluation Boards, and to the University Evaluation Boards and to the Academic Senate by the Joint Teaching Staff-Student Committees. These reports are also made available in the ministerial platform of the study offer *avamiur.it*.

The Study programme, through the drafting of a Cyclical Review Report (Rapporto di Riesame Ciclico = RRC), carries out a self-assessment of the status of Quality Requirements, identifies and analyses the most relevant problems and challenges and proposes solutions to be implemented in the next cycle.

With regard to PhD programmes, the self-assessment and internal evaluation activities currently refer to methodologies, criteria and indicators consistent with the [Guidelines for the accreditation of PhD programmes 2019-2020 - XXXV cycle](#), referred to the recent [Ministerial Decree 14 December 2021, No. 226 "Regulation on procedures for the accreditation of PhD institutions and programmes and criteria for the establishment of PhD programmes by accredited bodies"](#), intervened to reorder the matter.

1.2 - Periodic Assessment

The [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#) specifies that periodic assessment is intended to measure efficiency, economic and financial sustainability of activities and results achieved by Universities in teaching, research and third mission/social impact, in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the

European Higher Education Area (ESG), and taking into account the objectives of the Ministry's Triennial Programming.

The universities periodic assessment results are evaluated by ANVUR on the base of the indicators listed in Annex E of the Decree (indicators of periodic assessment of universities and study programmes) and are used for the purposes of the Periodic Accreditation of Universities and their Study programmes. In line with the general Guidelines of the Triennial Programming (currently [Ministerial Decree No. 289/2021](#)), the indicators chosen by each university according to the Triennial Programming objectives are also used.

As defined by [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#), each Point of Attention of the new model will have to be accompanied by quantitative indicators both of general university system and of each University.

1.3 - Universities and Study programmes accreditation

According to [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#), the accreditation is granted by the Ministry to Universities, to their branches and to the Study programmes:

Initial Accreditation means the authorization to establish and activate universities and study programmes, following the verification of possession of teaching requirements, of teaching and research qualification requirements, of structural, organisational, economic - financial sustainability requirements, referred to in annexes A, B and D of the Decree.

The Periodic Accreditation of universities and study programmes means the verification, at least every five years for the universities and at least every three years for the study programmes, of the persistence of the requirements (...), of the possession of additional quality, efficiency and effectiveness requirements of the activities carried out in relation to the Quality Assurance indicators referred to in Annexes C (A. Strategy planning and organisation, B. Resource management, C. Quality Assurance, D. Quality of teaching and student services, E. Quality of research and third mission/social impact) and E (Periodic assessment indicators of universities and study programmes).

ANVUR has therefore the task of establishing criteria and verification methods and of defining the indicators for the Initial and Periodic Accreditation of Universities and Study programmes which, communicated to the Ministry, are adopted by Ministerial Decree. Indicators are consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)¹ and take into account the general Guidelines of the Ministry's Triennial Programming. ANVUR is also responsible for monitoring and verifying the indicators for the purposes of the Periodic Accreditation of Universities and Study programmes.

The ANVUR has defined an operational model for the Initial Accreditation of Study programmes by publishing, each year so far, specific [Guidelines for designing new study programmes](#). ANVUR relies on the advice of Experts Panel (called PEV for the Initial Accreditation and CEV for the Periodic Accreditation), with

¹ <http://www.ehea.info/page-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance>.

the task of proposing an accreditation judgment based on a thorough examination of the teaching project, which must comply with the specific Quality requirements defined by ANVUR itself.

The model of Periodic Accreditation of Universities proposed by ANVUR provides, in addition to desk analysis, an institutional on-site visit by the CEV, aimed at detecting the level of correspondence between the procedures developed by the University and the Quality Assurance requirements. The CEV on-site visit also includes an in-depth examination of a selection of Study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments of the University and the verification of the effectiveness of the AQ system implemented by the actors of the AQ system.

The AVA 3 model, therefore, introduces PhD into the system, according to [Ministerial Decree No. 226/2021](#) which expressly requires "a quality assurance system for the design and the management of PhD teaching, compliant with the standards for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), according to ANVUR indications".

1.4 - European Standard and Guidelines (ESG)

In 2015, the European QA model for higher education, the first 2005 version of which inspired the Italian scheme, was redefined resulting in the publication of the new European Guidelines (*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 - ESG 2015*), which carries on a student-centered approach, centered on learning processes too, with particular reference to the complementarity between research and teaching, to the promotion of flexibility of teaching paths, to the development of teaching skills and to the testing of innovative teaching methods and tools:

(...) "Higher education aims to achieve multiple objectives: to prepare students for active citizenship and their future career (e.g., contributing to their employability); support their personal development; create a broad base of advanced knowledge; stimulating research and innovation.

The concept of quality is not easily defined but is essentially the product of the interaction between professors, students, and the institutional learning context. In practice, quality assurance ensures a learning environment in which the content of the study programmes, learning opportunities and teaching facilities are fit for purpose." (...)

(...) "The various stakeholders, having different priorities, can look at the quality of higher education with different eyes. The term "stakeholder" refers to all actors operating within an institution, students and professors first and foremost, as well as external stakeholders, such as employers and external partners of an institution." (...) [ESG 2015].

To be noticed that, according to law, students are members of the university main bodies: Academic Senate, Governing Board, University Evaluation Board, Faculties or similar structures, Department (through the Joint Teaching Staff-Student Committee). This express legislative provision, in force since 2010, guarantees the participation of students in all main decision-making processes. AVA 3 model advocates student representativeness at all levels, including University Quality Committees. In fact, since 2020, ANVUR has included the figure of the Student Expert in the Evaluation Expert Panel (CEV) for the evaluation

of the proposals of new non-state Universities and since 2021 ANVUR has included the figure of the Student Expert also in the Panels Expert Group (PEV) for the evaluation of the proposals of new Study programmes (Initial Accreditation), with the task of verifying the adequacy of services offered to students, also in terms of incoming and outgoing guidance and tutoring, and the Study programmes QA system.

1.5 - First Periodic Accreditation cycle

AVA system has been operational since 2013. The first experimental Periodic Accreditation visits have been carried out in 2014 and the first round was concluded in 2021.

The first cycle involved 91 universities, 26 of which were evaluated with reference to the AVA 1 model. A President and a Coordinator have been appointed for each CEV. ANVUR supported the Panel with the presence of a contact person from the ANVUR staff.

2. AVA 3 MODEL MAIN INNOVATIONS

In response to a need for greater stakeholder involvement represented at European level by ENQA and EQAR, and in compliance with Ministerial Decree No. 289/2021 and with Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021, ANVUR promoted and set up an institutional working with representatives of Ministry, CUN, CRUI, CODAU, CNSU, CONVUI and CONPAQ, for the definition of the new AVA 3 model of Periodic Accreditation of universities and study programmes.

The draft of the new Requirements has also been validated through a series of fruitful targeted meetings with representatives of the main stakeholders (Ministry, CUN, CRUI, CODAU, CNSU, CONVUI, CONPAQ) and with a group of team leaders, coordinators, student evaluators involved in the Evaluation Experts Panels (CEV) with a significant experience of evaluating Universities and Study programmes with AVA 1 and AVA 2 models.

A public consultation on Requirements was also launched on June 2022 and the many observations, proposals and recommendations received were analysed with the utmost attention by the AVA Unit and the ANVUR Governing Board and were accepted in the first versions of the Requirements and of the *Guidelines for the implementation of the Quality Assurance system in the universities*.

The Requirements approved by the ANVUR Governing Board on 8 September 2022 were tested in three pilot visits carried out between November 2022 and January 2023, in universities of different sizes, different local distribution and type of study offer (in presence or full or partial distance teaching and learning). Following this trial, the model was definitively approved on 13 February, with Resolution No. 26/2023.

2.1 - Evolution of requirements and quality indicators

As a first activity, ANVUR carried out a reorganisation and revision of the Requirements, Points of attention (PdA) and Aspects to be Considered (AdC) and an overall rethinking of their articulation, in order to achieve a more streamlined and compact structure, with an overview of learning cycle chain (from the Bachelor Degree to the PhD).

The Points of Attention and the Aspects to be Considered have also been clarified with reading notes for all the Requirements and proposing a new formulation without question points, to underline that these should be read as good practice to be implemented in the university's QA system, even before being used by Panels.

New AVA 3 requirements, aligned with the evaluation domains set out in [Annex C of Ministerial Decree N. 1154/2021](#), has been revised from the previous version of the model (AVA 2). Innovation can be summarised as follows:

- *University quality requirements* have been revised paying more attention to:
 - comprehensive vision of the quality of teaching, research, third mission/social impact and other institutional and management activities.
 - attention to context, stakeholders and specificities of the university.
 - systemic integration of policies, strategies and strategic and operational objectives.
 - architecture of the university's governance system and QA system.
 - monitoring of policies, strategies, processes and results.
 - review of the university's governance system and QA system, to ensure continuous alignment with the university's policies and strategies.
 - human, economic-financial, structural, infrastructural, and informative resources in a logic of planning and management aligned to strategic planning.
- *quality requirements of teaching, research and the third mission/social impact at university level* have been revised, ensuring greater consistency with the requirements of study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments, paying also more attention to:
 - planning and management of the university's study offer.
 - management and monitoring of strategic planning of the Departments, with reference to teaching, research and third mission/social impact.
- *quality requirements of teaching for the study programmes* have been revised in a logic of greater integration of the study programmes design requirements.
- *quality requirements for PhD programmes* have been defined, according to [Ministerial Decree no. 226/2021](#), in line with the requirements of ENQA during the first ANVUR Periodic Accreditation visit.

In line with the *general Guidelines of the Triennial Programming* (currently [Ministerial Decree no. 289/2021](#)), are also integrated into the AVA 3 model indicators chosen by each University with reference to the Triennial Programming objectives.

Fig. 1 – AVA 3 Model Structure



2.2 - Judgment formulation

[Ministerial Decree no. 1154/2021](#), Annex C, requires that «qualitative assessment, declined in strengths and areas of improvement, and divided into assessment classes (Fully Satisfactory; Satisfactory; Partially satisfactory; Unsatisfactory)» is supported, «for each point of attention [...] by quantitative indicators of the system and the university, in order to evaluate both the processes and the results».

The qualitative assessment passes from a numerical scale from 1 to 10 (with AVA 2) to assessment classes (4 classes: fully satisfactory; satisfactory; conditional; unsatisfactory). A quantitative assessment is added, aimed at evaluating University activities results at different levels (University, Departments, Study programmes and PhD programmes).

Therefore, ANVUR identified an assessment process that takes into account both qualitative aspects (which will be evaluated by the Panels during accreditation activities) and quantitative aspects, most of which will be detected by ANVUR through indicators at different levels (University, Departments, Study programmes, PhD programmes). Other indicators, chosen by the Universities as part of the Triennial programming, will include an internal survey by the university itself, a validation by the University Evaluation Board and a subsequent ANVUR assessment.

Indicators for Periodic Accreditation are listed in [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#), Annex E, according to the Triennial Planning Guidelines (currently, [Ministerial Decree No. 289/2021](#)), integrated by those defined in the AVA 3 model. Indicators chosen by each University with reference to the objectives of the Triennial programming are also used.

Evaluations carried out qualitatively and quantitatively will then be summarised in a unique assessment for each Point of Attention.

The Periodic Accreditation of the University entails the Periodic Accreditation of all its Study programmes and eventual decentralised branch (apart from those negatively evaluated, which are suppressed). In the case of a study offer that includes plans to meet the teaching requirements for more than a quarter of the study programmes, there is “Conditional accreditation” for the university.

2.2.1 - POINTS OF ATTENTION

Points of Attention judgement is graded as follows:

- **Fully Satisfactory.** The activities carried out regarding the Aspects to be Considered of the Point of Attention guarantee good or excellent results and can be reported to other universities. In case of very good results, the Panel reports a “Good practice”.
- **Satisfactory.** The activities carried out regarding the Aspects to be Considered of the Point of Attention guarantee the absence of relevant criticalities, or their overcoming in adequate times, not exceeding one year from the on-site visit. This judgement may be associated with the presence of criticalities if these have already been detected by the QA system and for which have been put in place activities to overcome them. No reports are required.
- **Partially Satisfactory.** The activities carried out regarding the Aspects to be Considered of the Point of Attention do not have sufficiently clear logical foundation, their modalities of realisation are not yet fully defined, the activities are implemented in a non-systematic way and present some or do not guarantee from the occurrence of criticalities. The Point of Attention is approved with reservations. The Panel expresses a "Recommendation" (mandatory) or a "Condition" (optional), depending on the systematicity of the activities and the relevance of the criticalities.
- **Unsatisfactory.** The activities related to the Aspects to be Considered of the Point of Attention are not developed or, if present, have no logical foundation, the methods of realisation are not yet defined, the activities are implemented in an unstructured manner and present relevant issues. The point of attention is not approved. The Panel expresses a "Condition".

The Panel shall formulate a summary text motivating the reporting of a “good practice”, the “Recommendation” or the “Condition”, as set out in the *Evaluation Form*.

No summary evaluation is assigned to the evaluation domains.

2.2.2 - STUDY PROGRAMMES JUDGMENT FORMATION

Each Study programme under assessment during the visit receives a proposal for "accreditation" or "non-accreditation" that considers both the quality assurance processes and the results, according to the provisions of Annexes C and E, and that is articulated in assessment classes as follows:

Class	Outcome	Metric
A	<i>Fully Satisfactory accreditation</i>	At least 75% of the study programme points of attention with "Fully satisfactory" assessment.
B	<i>Satisfactory accreditation</i>	At least 50% of the study programme points of attention with "Satisfactory" or "Fully satisfactory" assessment.
C	<i>Conditional accreditation</i>	Between 25% and 50% of the study programme points of attention with "Satisfactory" or "Fully satisfactory" assessment and no more than 50% with "Unsatisfactory" assessment.
D	<i>Non-accreditation</i>	At least 50% of the study programme points of attention with "Unsatisfactory" assessment.

In any case, University receives an *Evaluation Form* for each Study programme, with assessment classes and strengths and improvement areas associated to each Point of Attention, integrated with eventual motivated "Good Practice", "Recommendation" or "Condition".

2.2.3 - UNIVERSITY JUDGMENT FORMATION

The University receives a proposal for accreditation or non-accreditation that considers both the quality assurance processes and the results, as required by Annexes C and E, and that is articulated in assessment classes as follows:

Class	Outcome	Metric
A	<i>Fully Satisfactory accreditation</i>	Periodic Accreditation for 5 years, with intermediate verification of the study programmes at the end of third year. At least 75% of the university points of attention with "Fully Satisfactory" assessment.
B	<i>Satisfactory accreditation</i>	Periodic Accreditation for 5 years, with intermediate verification of the university and the study programmes at the end of third year. At least 50% of the university points of attention with "Satisfactory" or "Fully Satisfactory" assessment.
C	<i>Conditional accreditation</i>	Periodic accreditation for 1 or 2 years. Between 25% and 50% of the university points of attention with "Satisfactory" or "Fully Satisfactory" assessment and no more than 50% with "Unsatisfactory" assessment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the criticalities have been overcome by the deadline set at the time of the assessment, the accreditation is extended for further 4 or 3 years. • If the criticalities have not been overcome by the deadline set at the time of the assessment, it entails, in relation to the seriousness of the criticalities, the further confirmation of the conditional judgment or the university suppression. • The "Conditional accreditation" may not last more than 4 years, under penalty of the proposal of the university suppression.
D	<i>Non-accreditation</i>	Where at least 50% of the university points of attention with "Unsatisfactory" assessment.

3. Quality Assurance requirements for Universities, Study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments

3.1 - University Quality Assurance requirements

AVA 3 model, according to [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#), presents five evaluation domains, starting from the strategies, planning and organisation of governance system and Quality Assurance system (Domain A), and then focusing on the resource management (Domain B), in the sense of human resources (teaching, research, technical and administrative staff), financial resources, structural resources (structures as well as equipment and technologies), infrastructural resources and information and knowledge management resources. Domain C focuses on the Quality Assurance processes at the University level. Last two domains are focusing on planning and management of planning and management processes of teaching and services for students (Domain D) and quality of research and third mission/social impact processes at the university level (Domain E).

Each domain has its own Points of Attention (PdA) and Aspects to be Considered (AdC).

Domain A – Strategy, Planning and Organisation – assesses the capacity of the University to define, formalise and achieve, through policies, strategies, strategic and operational objectives, its own vision (clear, consistent, articulated, and public) of teaching, research, third mission/social impact and institutional and management activities quality. Implementation of policies, strategies and strategic and operational objectives must be ensured through a governance system and a Quality Assurance (QA) system equipped with a planning and monitoring system, as well as clear and transparent procedures for the critical review of its functioning, involving the various components of the university, taking also into account the self-assessment processes and external assessment received. The active involvement of all internal and external stakeholders is an important aspect, with particular attention to the students, who need to be given an active and participatory role, at all levels, in the decision-making processes of the governing bodies.

Domain A is articulated into five points of attention:

Code	Point of Attention	AdC No.
A.1	Quality of teaching, research, third mission/social impact and quality of institutional and management activities within the University's policies and strategies	4
A.2	Organisation of the University governance system and Quality Assurance system	5
A.3	Monitoring system of policies, strategies, processes, and results	2
A.4	Review of the University Quality Assurance system and governance system	4
A.5	Role of the students	1

Domain B – Resource Management – assesses the capacity of the University to manage tangible and intangible resources supporting policies, strategies, and related implementation plans. University must have an adequate system of planning, recruitment, qualification, and development of human resources, both in relation to teaching staff and to technical and administrative staff. University must demonstrate the full economic and financial sustainability of the activities carried out and must have a planning and management system of financial resources able to maintain over time the full sustainability. University

must also have an adequate planning and management system for facilities, equipment, technologies, data, information and knowledge for teaching, research, third mission and services activities.

Domain B is articulated into five sub-domains. Each sub-domain has one or more point of attention.

Sub-domain	Sub-domain description	Code	Point of Attention	AdC No.
B.1	Human resources	B.1.1	Recruitment, qualification and management of teaching and research staff	6
		B.1.2	Recruitment, qualification and management of technical and administrative staff	6
		B.1.3	Human resources and services supporting administration, teaching, research and third mission/social impact	3
B.2	Financial resources	B.2.1	Financial resources: planning and management	4
B.3	Structures	B.3.1	Building structures and infrastructures: planning and management	4
		B.3.2	Adequacy of building structures and infrastructure for teaching, research and third mission/social impact activities	1
B.4	Equipment and Technologies	B.4.1	Equipment and technology: planning and management	1
		B.4.2	Adequacy of equipment and technology	1
		B.4.3	Support facilities and services for (full or partial) distance teaching	6
B.5	Management of Information and Knowledge Management	B.5.1	Management of information and knowledge	3

Domain C – Quality Assurance – assess Quality Assurance processes, and in particular the capacity of the University to equip itself with a system of self-assessment for Study programmes and Departments, through a monitoring system and the review of processes and results of teaching, research and third mission. The QA system must include monitoring of its effectiveness, involving all the bodies and functions concerned, at different levels of responsibility, and consider the recommendations expressed by the University Evaluation Board, which is in charge, within its institutional duties, of the evaluation of the QA system and of teaching, research and third mission processes.

Domain C is structured into three points of attention:

Code	Point of Attention	AdC No.
C.1	Self-assessment, external assessment and review of Study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments with the support of the University Quality Committee	4
C.2	Monitoring system of the University Quality Assurance system	2
C.3	Evaluation of the Quality Assurance system and processes of teaching, research and third mission/social impact by the University Evaluation Board	3

Domain D - Quality of teaching and services for students – assesses the capacity of the University to have a clear overall vision of the programming and articulation of the study offer, also in relation to the national and international context. Important aspects concern: (i) design and updating of study programmes, taking into account the development needs expressed by the society and the context, also in relation to

the internationalisation objectives and the different type of study offer (in presence or full or partial distance teaching and learning), (ii) the development of a study offer consistent with the teaching staff and with the logistical, infrastructural, didactic and research resources, (iii) the attention of the study programmes to the students, through the planning and implementation of effective input, ongoing and outgoing guidance activities, of clear and transparent modalities for admission to the study programmes, of career management and tutoring. The management system of resources and services supporting teaching and students is also evaluated.

Domain D is articulated in three points of attention:

Code	Point of Attention	AdC No.
D.1	Planning of the study offer	3
D.2	Design and update of student-focused Study programmes and PhDs	5
D.3	Admission and students' career	8

Domain E – Quality of research and third mission/social impact – assesses the capacity of the University to have a clear overview of the ways in which Departments (or similar structures) define their own strategies, with reference to research and third mission/social impact, in line with the university's strategic guidelines. It also assesses the University overview of Department planning, monitoring and evaluating processes systems, results achieved and improvement actions. The definition and publicity of the criteria for the use of resources at departmental level are also assessed, as well as their consistency with Department's strategic plans and university's guidelines. Resources management system supporting research and the third mission is also analyzed.

Domain E is structured into three points of attention:

Code	Point of Attention	AdC No.
E.1	Definition of Departments strategies	3
E.2	Evaluation of the results achieved by Departments and PhD programmes and of improvement actions	3
E.3	Definition and publicity of resource distribution criteria	2

3.2 - Study programmes Quality Assurance requirements

AVA 3 model, taking into account [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#), presents four assessment sub-domains at the level of Study programme, structured starting from design activities (sub-domain 1) and followed by delivery activities (sub-domain 2), by resources management (sub-domain 3) and, finally, by the review and improvement of the study programme (sub-domain 4). Each sub-domain has its own Points of Attention (PdA) and Aspects to be Considered (AdC).

Sub-Domain Code	Sub-Domain	Code	Point of Attention	AdC No.
D.CDS.1	Quality Assurance in study programme design	D.CDS.1.1	Study programme design and stakeholder consultation	2
		D.CDS.1.2	Definition of programme character, teaching objectives and output profiles	2
		D.CDS.1.3	Study offer and educational pathways	5
		D.CDS.1.4	Courses syllabi and learning assessment methods	3
		D.CDS.1.5	Programme courses planning and organisation	2
D.CDS.2	Quality Assurance in study programme delivery	D.CDS.2.1	Orientation and tutoring	3
		D.CDS.2.2	Initial required knowledges and knowledge gap recovery	4
		D.CDS.2.3	Teaching methods and flexibility	4
		D.CDS.2.4	Internationalisation of teaching activities	2
		D.CDS.2.5	Planning and monitoring of learning assessments	1
		D.CDS.2.6	Endowment and qualification of teaching staff and tutors	2
D.CDS.3	Resource management in the study Programme	D.CDS.3.1	Endowment and qualification of teaching staff and tutors	5
		D.CDS.3.2	Human resources, facilities and support services	5
D.CDS.4	Review and improvement of the study programme	D.CDS.4.1	Contribution of professors, students and stakeholders to the review and improvement of the study programme	5
		D.CDS.4.2	Review of the design and teaching methods of the study programme	6

3.3 - PhD programmes Quality Assurance requirements

AVA 3 model, taking into account [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#), presents three Points of Attention at the level of the PhD programme, structured starting from design activities (D.PHD.1) and followed by the planning and organisation of training and research activities (D.PHD.2) and, finally, by monitoring and improvement of activities (D.PHD.3). Each Point of attention owns its Aspects to be considered.

Code	Point of Attention	AdC No.
D.PHD.1	Design of the PhD programme	6
D.PHD.2	Planning and organization of teaching and research activities for PhD students	7
D.PHD.3	Monitoring and improvement of activities	3

3.4 - Departments Quality Assurance requirements

AVA 3 model, taking into account [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#), presents four Points of Attention at Department level, structured starting from definition of strategies (E.DIP.1) and followed by implementation, monitoring and review of activities (E.DIP.2), by definition of resource allocation criteria (E.DIP.3) and, finally, by identification of human resources, facilities and services (E.DIP.4). Each Point of Attention owns its Aspects to be considered.

Code	Point of attention	AdC No.
E.DIP.1	Definition of strategies for teaching, research and third mission/social impact	4
E.DIP.2	Implementation, monitoring and review of research, teaching and third mission/social impact activities	5
E.DIP.3	Definition of resource allocation criteria	4
E.DIP.4	Human resources, facilities and support services for teaching, research and third mission/social impact	6

4. QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS IN THE MONITORING OF UNIVERSITIES AND STUDY PROGRAMMES

Every year, ANVUR delivers to universities, by the month of July, a University Indicators Annual Form and an analytical sheet for each Study programme operating during the academic year. The Forms, updated quarterly in the months of October, January, April, present a set of quantitative indicators including those of Annex E of [Ministerial Decree No. 987/2016](#) and subsequently Annex E of [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#). In order to reduce the statistical burden on universities, ANVUR uses existing information in several databases. Moreover, in order to limit the number of indicators as much as possible, some of them include those used for the Triennial Programming. The dissemination of these indicators aims to encourage, in Universities and Study programmes, a reflection on the degree of achievement of their objectives, as well as being a useful tool for monitoring and self-assessment activities.

Through centralised data processing and its dissemination modalities, ANVUR encourages a methodologically correct use of quantitative indicators with the aim of preventing possible distortions related to their use. Data release take place on the [Portal for the universities and study programme Quality \(avamiur.it\)](#) every year by the 15th of July, inside the academic year Annual Forms for Study Programmes (SUA-Cds). To facilitate the most correct and up-to-date use of data, indicators are updated quarterly.

Universities monitoring activities use quantitative indicators for which ANVUR provides processed data. Indicators are based on teaching staff size and on the five dimensions of the students' careers: regularity, teaching activities results, internationalization, satisfaction, and employability. Each indicator is calculated annually with reference to three academic years (or cohorts enrolled), making possible an immediate identification of internal trends. For each indicator, benchmarks are provided referring to the same kind of study programmes in the University, in the geographical area in which the Study programme insists and in Italy.

Universities are called to carry out yearly a critical reflection on the trend of the quantitative indicators provided by ANVUR, according to their characteristics and objectives (also paying attention to any significant deviations from national or macro-regional averages), with the aim to recognize any critical aspects of its functions, highlighting the results in a brief comment on the Annual Monitoring Forms of study programmes (Schede di Monitoraggio Annuale = SMA) on the [Portal for the universities and study programme Quality \(avamiur.it\)](#). The deadline is the 31st of December of each year; therefore, Universities can choose whether to refer to data updated at the 30th of June, or to data updated at the 30th of September (platform release takes place within 15 days, during following month). Each Study programme recognises, among proposed indicators, the most significant ones in relation to its own character and specific objectives. Each Study programme will be able to independently compare and be compared with the Study programmes of the same Degree Class code, type (Bachelor degree, Master Degree, Single cycle Master

degree programme) and geographical area, in order to detect both its potential and cases of strong deviation from national or macro-regional averages related to the homogeneous class, and to arrive, through other elements of analysis, at the recognition of criticalities. Universities may, however, choose to deepen the indicators they consider most appropriate for their effective review, with the aim of continuous improvement.

In addition to the SMA, ANVUR provides universities with another tool for monitoring and self-assessment activities: the ANVUR Dashboard, which allows them to produce *ad-hoc* reports and dashboards. The Dashboard, whose update follows the timing of the SMA, brings together all the information contained in the Annual Monitoring Forms of the study programmes and contains indicators since academic year 2013-2014, thus allowing longer time series analysis. Moreover, thanks to the Dashboard, each University can identify specific benchmarks.

Yet, [Guidelines for the University Evaluation Boards](#) identify a minimum set of indicators selected, among the SMA indicators, for the analysis of the Study programmes, as well as a series of points of attention for the assessment of the University performance cycle management system functioning.

5. MAIN ACTORS OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION

To achieve policies and strategies consistent with its objectives, the University defines roles, tasks, competences, authorities, and responsibilities of its organisational structures responsible for QA and adopt organisational models that enable it to perform its functions effectively.

To ensure activities quality, University makes use of the University Quality Presidium (PQA), which oversees QA procedures in liaison with the QA responsible structures of PhDs, Departments, Faculty/Schools/coordination structures, Study programmes, through a system of communication between the different actors - first among which the Joint Teaching Staff-Student Committee (CPDS) and the University Evaluation Board (NdV) - and the academic bodies responsible for teaching, research, third mission/social impact and other institutional and management activities.

To support strategic planning, operational management and quality assurance processes, the University has one or more integrated information systems for sharing data, information, and knowledges.

The University ensures the monitoring of policies, strategies, processes, and results. The functioning of the QA system is regularly updated, thanks to the analysis of the information collected at different levels by the structures responsible for QA and the contribution of professors, technical and administrative staff, and students. To monitor the effective implementation of their policies and strategies, the governing bodies take into account the results of the review and implement the improvement actions.

Quality Assurance requires specific adaptations for different contexts (local, national, international); therefore, AVA system does not provide stringent organisational requirements, but requires effective and transparent processes involving the main actors of internal QA and evaluation (governance system, student representatives, PQA, NdV and CPDS) and the University structures (study programmes, PhDs and Departments).

5.1 - The governance system

The Universities diversify their governance systems according to their mission, their study programmes and the national one, and the ways of collaboration to accommodate a greater internationalization of studies and respond to current challenges, such as digital learning and new forms of teaching. In this context, quality assurance plays a crucial role, because it supports governance systems as they respond to these changes and at the same time ensures that students' qualifications and educational experience remain at the heart of institutional missions.

“Governance system” means the set of governing bodies defined in the Law No. 240/2010 (Rector, Academic Senate, Governing Board, Auditors Board, Evaluation Board, Director) and other bodies indicated in the Statute, in the General Regulations of the university and other University resolutions. The governance system may, therefore, be broader than the system of academic bodies provided for in the Law No. 240/2010 and in the Statute.

The governance and management system performances must be consistent with the mission, the vision, the strategic and operational planning, the available resources, the needs and the expectations of the most significant stakeholders.

The governance system is responsible for preparing and updating at least the following documentation:

- University Statute and Regulations.
- University planning documents (e.g., Strategic Plan; Triennial Plan; Performance plan; Integrated Activity and Organization Plan - PIAO, etc.).
- Monitoring system design and management documents.
- Review documents of the governance system and the Quality Assurance system.
- University documents concerning teaching staff (recruitment and qualification) and management of financial resources, facilities, equipment/technologies, information, and knowledge.
- University guidelines for study offer design and management.

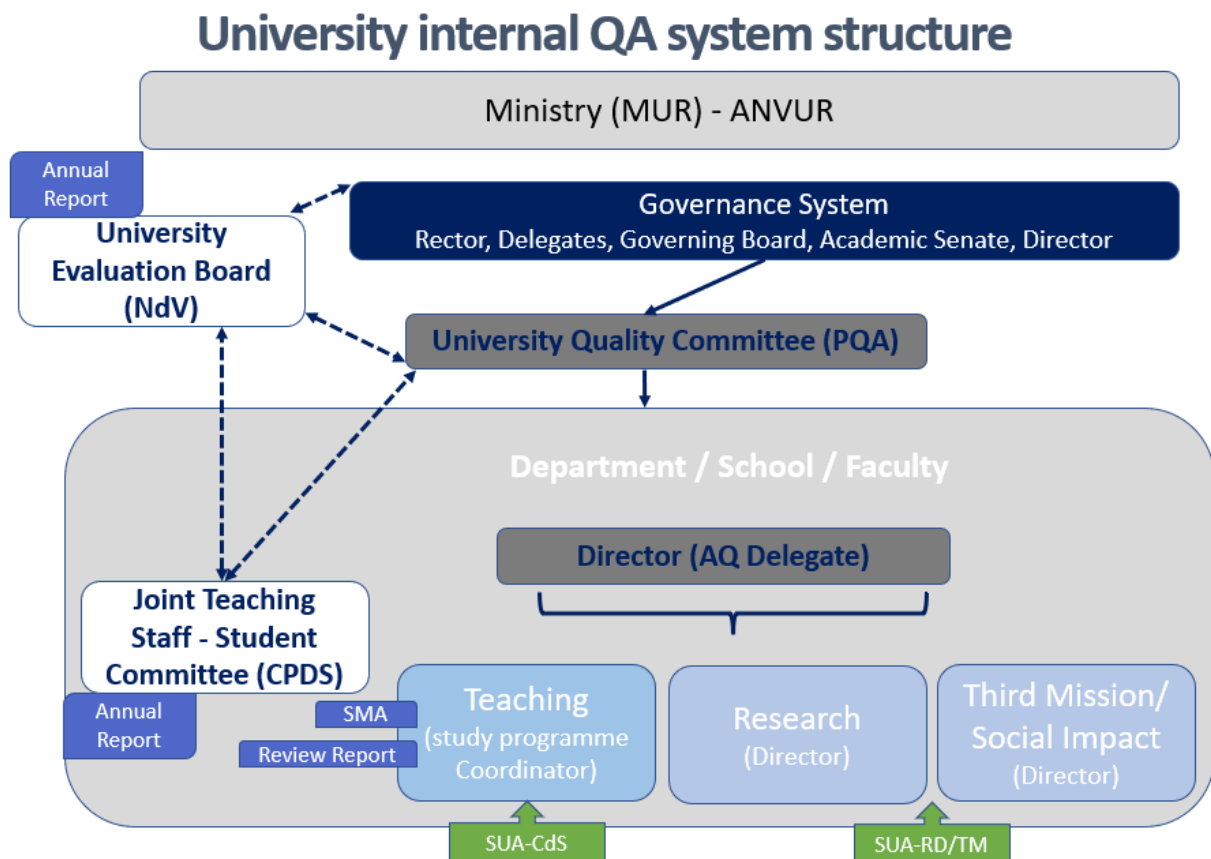


Fig. 2 - University internal QA system structure

5.2 - University Quality Committee

With AVA 3 model, ANVUR aims to overcome the limits of a governance system distinct from that of Quality Assurance. For this reason, the structures responsible for QA, such as the University Quality Committee (PQA), take on an important role.

AVA 2 model had already confirmed that the presence of PQA in each University is a requirement for accreditation, strengthening its role and therefore its authority. Each University is free to determine its composition and functioning.

PQA is called upon to activate any useful initiative to promote the quality culture within a unique process of QA, concerning aspects related to teaching, research and third mission/social impact. It supports the University's structures in the construction of QA processes and related procedures, it supervises and monitors the implementation of QA procedures, proposes common tools for QA, training activities in QA and supports QA activities of Study programmes, PhDs and Departments.

PQA is responsible for preparing guidelines and documentation to support the processes of self-assessment, evaluation, study programmes, PhDs, and Departments review. It supports the University in the monitoring of QA processes and in the review of the governance system and the QA system.

With reference to teaching activities, PQA organizes the collection and verification of the continuous updating of the information contained in the SUA-CdS of each Study programme and monitors the findings of the opinions of students, undergraduates, and graduates. It verifies the review activities and ensures the correct flow of information to and from the NdV and the CPDS and collects data for monitoring indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, taking care of the dissemination of the results.

Regarding research activities and third mission/social impact, PQA monitors and supervises the smooth conduct of research QA procedures and ensures the correct flow of information to and from the NdV.

The PQA has the task of spreading and promoting the quality culture, organizes and carries out training activities in support of study programmes, PhDs, Departments, Faculties/Schools, and any other structures operating in the AQ system. It also monitors the implementation of the measures taken for the implementation of the Recommendations and/or Conditions formulated by the Panels and by ANVUR in general during Initial and Periodic Accreditation processes.

Overall, while the NdV is responsible for the evaluation activities, in terms of results achieved and implemented actions, the PQA organises and coordinates monitoring activities and data collection prior to the actual evaluation.

The PQA role in the University Quality Assurance processes is represented in Figure 3.



Fig. 3 - PQA's role in Quality Assurance

PQA shall be responsible for preparing/updating at least the following documentation:

- Annual Report on the state of the QA system and related activities.
- Guidelines (e.g. for the Quality Assurance, for the self-assessment of study programmes, PhDs, Departments, for the Department strategic planning, for the compilation of the Quality Section of the SUA-Cds Form and the Annual form for Department Research and Third Mission (SUA-RD/TM); for proposals for new study programmes; for the compilation of the Annual Monitoring Form; for the activities of the Joint Teaching Staff-Student Committee; for the management and the processing of the answers to the Questionnaire on Student Opinions; for the compilation of the Teaching Form; for the consultation of stakeholders by the study programmes; for the cyclical review reports; for the orientation in entrance, in itinere and in outgoing of the study programmes, etc.).
- Self-assessment on the fulfilment of the university requirements in preparation for the Periodic Accreditation.

5.3 – University Evaluation Board

The University Evaluation Board (NdV) is a collegial body of the university that is responsible for verifying the quality and effectiveness of the study offer, research and third mission/social impact activities and the correct use of public resources. NdV also assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of the Administration and the respective services. While the University Quality Committee (PQA) implements the monitoring and verification actions of the Quality Assurance processes, NdV verifies the general methodology and evaluates the overall QA of the university.

The [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#), while introducing relevant novelties for the Initial and Periodic Accreditation of Universities and Study programmes, did not substantially change tasks and roles of the University Evaluation Board.

In general, it has the task of systematically assessing the effectiveness of the QA system, detecting any problems, also taking into account the results of the monitoring activities on the effectiveness of the QA system transmitted by PQA. It also supports the university in reviewing the governance system and the QA system.

The NdV shall conduct in-depth analyses of the university's strategic and operational planning and assess the system adopted with reference to institutional and management missions and activities. It has the task of assessing, also by means of hearings, the overall status of the QA system and the way in which the university and the bodies in charge of QA keep under control the Study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments performance. These evaluations must be systematically forwarded to the University Quality Committee and the QA system for review.

The role of the NdV in the articulation of the University's internal evaluation processes is depicted in figure 4.

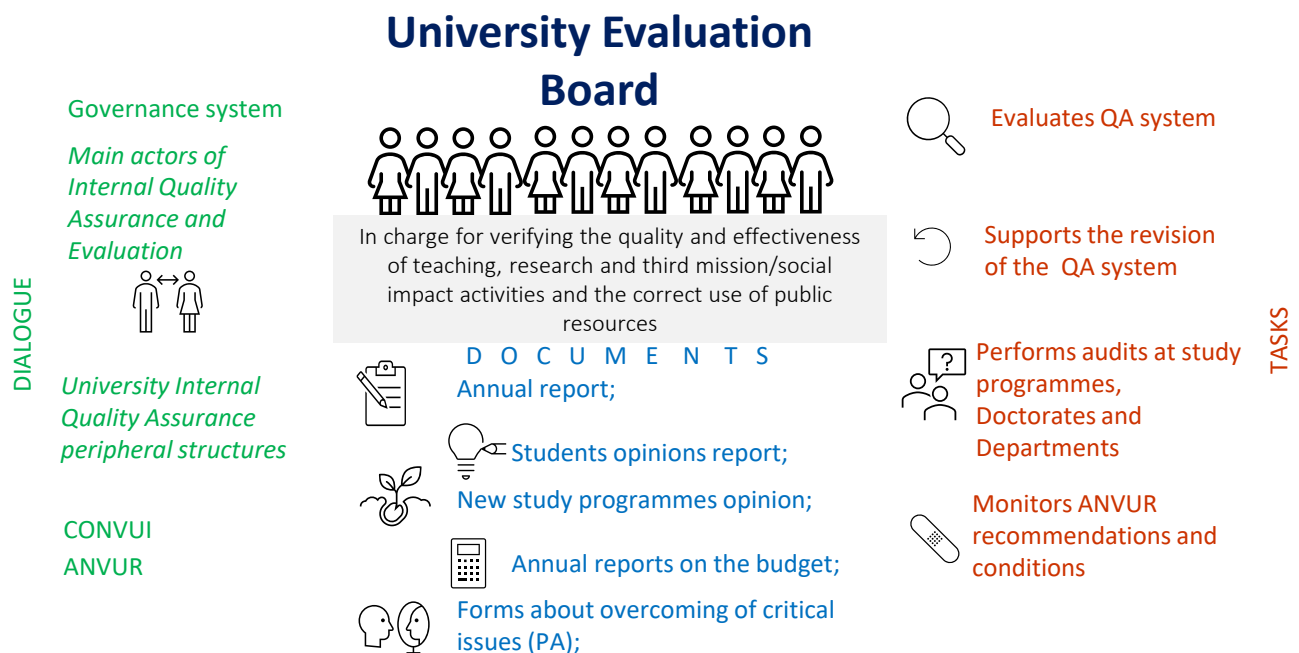


Fig. 4 – The role of the NdV in the QA system

The University Evaluation Board is responsible for preparing/updating at least the following documents:

- Annual report.
- Students' Opinion Report.
- Documents evaluating the range of Study programmes, with particular reference to the proposed establishment of new Study programmes.
- Annual reports to the budget.
- Monitoring the management of the performance cycle.
- Report to ANVUR on the overcoming of any recommendations and conditions formulated by ANVUR after former Periodic Accreditation.
- Report on study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments with major criticalities, considering the internal evaluation activities over the last five years.

5.3.1 – Follow-up of the Periodic Accreditation procedures

All operating study programmes at universities that have obtained Periodic Accreditation are submitted to ANVUR assessment at least every three years (Art. 5 of [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#)).

In the event of a positive outcome of the ANVUR assessment, the duration of the study programmes Periodic Accreditation is automatically extended until the end of the duration of the Periodic Accreditation of the whole institution. In the event of any criticalities found, or upon notification by the Ministry, ANVUR asks for an in-depth evaluation of the study programme (Art. 3 of [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#)):

- in the event of a positive outcome, the duration of accreditation is automatically extended until the end of the institution's accreditation.
- in the event of a negative outcome, accreditation is withdrawn and the study programme is suppressed by Ministerial Decree.

NdV is required to assess the improvement actions implemented in order to overcome the recommendations and conditions set by the Evaluation Experts Panel (CEV) (Art. 5 of [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#)) with reference to the requirements of the institution, study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments visited.

To this end, there are Overcoming Criticality Check Forms to check the overcoming of criticalities, where, for each point of attention reported by the CEV with a recommendation or condition, the NdV is asked to verify the actions undertaken by the University/PhD programme/Department in order to overcome them, supplying the relevant documentary sources. Therefore, a Overcoming Criticality Check Form for the University and one for each study programme, PhD programme and Department visited that have received at least one recommendation or condition, regardless of the overall assessment, is produced.

In the event that the University has received a CONDITIONED judgement, the University, Study programmes, PhD programmes and Department Overcoming Criticality Check Form must be uploaded by 31st May of the last year for which the Ministry has granted accreditation to the University (1, 2 years)², in order to allow ANVUR to analyse, and possibly organise a new on-site visit:

- if the recommendations and conditions should turn out to be overcome, or there is the guarantee that the recommendations will be soon overcome, ANVUR will propose to the Ministry the extension of the accreditation period for a further 4 or 3 years, changing the judgement for the institution from CONDITIONED to SATISFACTORY.
- if the recommendations and conditions are not overcome, ANVUR will propose to the Ministry, depending on the severity of these conditions, the further confirmation of the conditional judgement, or the deletion of the institution.

In any case, the “Conditioned accreditation” may not last for more than 4 years, or the University will be proposed for suppression.

In the event that the University has received a FULLY SATISFACTORY or SATISFACTORY rating, the University and/or Department and/or study programme Overcoming Criticality Check Form with

² **Example:** if the Ministerial Decree on the Periodic Accreditation of the University and its Study programmes establishes 2021/2022 as the last a.y. for accreditation, the check form must be uploaded by 31 May 2022.

recommendations and/or conditions must be uploaded by the NdV by 31st May of the third year for which the Ministry has granted accreditation³:

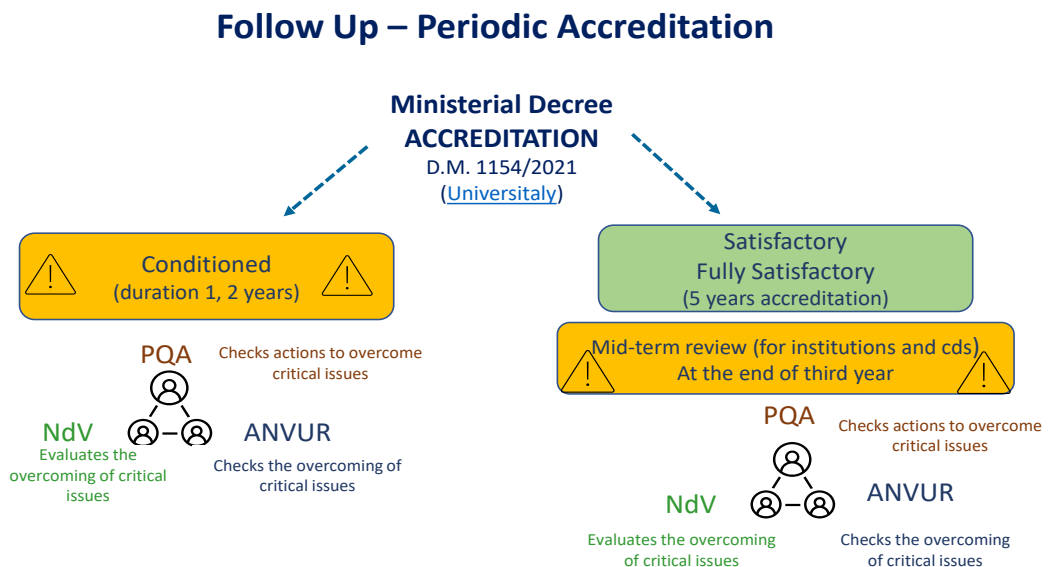
- should the recommendations and conditions prove to be exceeded, or there is some guarantee that the recommendations will be exceeded in the near future, ANVUR will propose to the Ministry the extension of the period of accreditation of the study programmes to cover the maximum five years foreseen by the regulations in force for the University.
- if the recommendations and the conditions are not overcome, ANVUR will arrange for a new visit (to institution, study programmes, PhD programmes, Department) within the following academic year, aimed exclusively at verifying the persistent criticalities.

Figure 5 below shows the management scheme of the Follow Up of Periodic Accreditation visits for the resolution of critical issues related to recommendations/conditions in line with [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#).

For the management of the transitional phase is defined:

- For the follow up of the first cycle (AVA2), universities may continue to use the AVA2 model's Criticality Overcoming Check Form while already paying attention to the AVA3 model's Requirements.
- For the follow up of cycle II (AVA3) ANVUR will make available Criticality Overcoming Check Form aligned to the new model.

Fig. 5 – Management scheme of follow up procedure after periodic accreditation visits



³ **Example:** If the Ministerial Decree on the Periodic Accreditation of the University and its Study programmes establishes 2021/2022 as the last a.y. for accreditation, the Cards for Courses of Study with recommendations and/or conditions must be uploaded by 31 May 2022.

5.4 – Joint Teaching Staff-Student Committee

Article 2(2)(g) of the Law No. 240/2010 sets the establishment of the Joint Teaching Staff -Students Committees (CPDS):

"A joint teaching staff-student committees is established in each Department, or in each of the structures referred to in points c) or e) (the Schools or other educational coordination structures), without any additional cost to the public finance, which is responsible for monitoring the range and quality of teaching and the service provided to students by professors and researchers; for identifying indicators for evaluating the results of teaching; for formulating opinions on the activation and discontinuation of study programmes."

Legislative Decree No. 19/2012 dedicates Article 13 to CPDS, precisely outlining their main functions:

"... they draw up an annual report that contains proposals to the University Evaluation Board in the direction of improving the quality and effectiveness of the teaching structures, also in relation to the results obtained in learning, in relation to employment prospects and personal and professional development, as well as to the needs of the economic and productive system. The elaboration of the proposals is carried out after monitoring the competence indicators [referred to in Article 12, paragraph 4] and also on the basis of surveys or interviews with students, preceded by an extensive dissemination activity of the university's quality policies, so as to make students informed and aware of the quality system adopted by the university. The report of the joint teaching staff-student committees is forwarded each year to the University Evaluation Board and to the Academic Senate by 31 December".

The CPDS are the first and most immediate level of self-assessment: they incorporate direct experience of the Study programmes performance. In order to be able to effectively contribute to the study offer improvement, it is desirable that the universities adopt regulatory and organisational solutions aimed at favouring the presence in the CPDS of an adequate representation of the study programmes, with particular reference to the students' representatives.

The CPDS operates at Department/Faculty/School/coordination structure level, with the greatest possible representation of students from the study programmes, and may organise themselves into sub-committees, where there are no students for each study programme; the CPDS must work to directly receive the requests of the students of the various programmes, through hearings or other forms of collective activities or by identifying a student contact person to interact with the CPDS.

As part of their activities to monitor the range of the study offer and the quality of teaching and student service activities, the CPDS have the task of making proposals to the NdV to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching facilities, disseminating the university's quality policies to students and monitoring the indicators that measure the degree of achievement of teaching objectives at the level of individual facilities. CPDS draw up an annual report on the basis of the SUA-CdS, students' opinion surveys and other institutionally available sources. CPDS assess whether the study programme project takes into account the needs of the economic and productive system in terms of employment perspectives and

personal and professional development; whether the expected learning outcomes are effective in relation to the reference functions and competences; whether the teaching activities of the lecturers, teaching materials and aids, laboratories, classrooms, equipment are effective in achieving the learning objectives; whether the examination methods allow the results obtained to be correctly ascertained in relation to the expected learning outcomes; whether the annual review referred to in the Annual Monitoring Form (SMA) results in effective corrective actions on the study programmes; whether the student opinion surveys are effectively managed, analysed and used; whether the university effectively makes quantitative and qualitative information on each study programme available to the public, within the scope of its transparency obligations and in order to allow broad consultation of interested parties.

The CPDS Report, based on elements of independent analysis (and not only on the study programme Cyclical Review Reports), must be received by 31 December each year by the NdV, the PQA and the study programme Boards, which receive it and take action to draw up proposals for improvement (in collaboration with the CPDS or other student representatives). The relevant aspects of this process must be highlighted both in the reports of the NdV and in the Cyclical Review Report (RRC)".

6. PERIPHERAL STRUCTURES OF THE UNIVERSITY INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

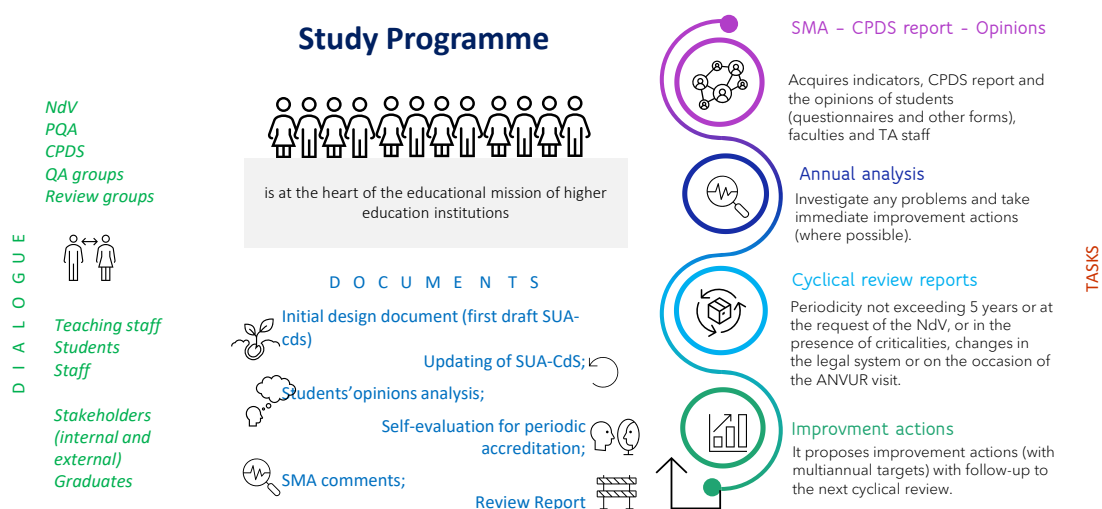
In its full autonomy, in accordance with its statutory aims and its development potential, the university, through its QA organizational model, realizes its vision of the quality of teaching, research and third mission/social impact, ensuring that planning, monitoring, self-assessment and review processes are activated in all its study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments. The university ensures that these processes are structured in such a way as to allow the prompt detection of problems, their adequate investigation and the formulation of possible solutions, paying attention to the substantive aspects of Quality Assurance and minimising the formal requirements for study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments.

6.1 – Study programmes

Study programmes are at the heart of the educational mission of Higher Education Institutions. They are designed through one or more outgoing profiles, defined through the identification of their scientific, cultural and/or professional characteristics and, consistently, of the training paths leading to the acquisition of the specific associated knowledge and skills. The design of the study programme (and the study offer review, also after improvement actions) must involve the main (internal and external) stakeholders, appropriate to the character and objectives of the study programme. The external stakeholders include all the actors and organisations and institutions potentially interested in the cultural and professional profile of the graduates designed by the study programmes (organisations representing the production of goods and services, the professions and/or - if considered appropriate to the project - scientific societies, research centres, academic and cultural institutions of national or international relevance, etc.). Where functional to the proposed project, interested parties may be represented by a Steering Committee composed of representatives from the world of work and scientific and technological research.

The orientation (entrance level and *in itinere*) and tutoring activities must foster students' awareness of their critical choices; a broad, trans- and multi-disciplinary study offer with flexible teaching methodologies and pathways makes it possible to ensure the prerequisites for student autonomy. The study programme must provide for professors, tutors and specialised figures adequate in number and qualification to support the teaching requirements; at the same time, it must provide for the participation of teaching staff in training initiatives, in scientific and methodological updating of their teaching skills supporting quality and innovation.

The study programme's QA cycle is summarized in Figure 6.



also with a view to the continuation of studies in subsequent cycles, ensuring interchange with the world of research and the job's world.

The Study programme is responsible for drafting the Annual Monitoring Form and the Cyclical Review Report. The Annual Monitoring Form includes a concise critical commentary on the quantitative indicators calculated by ANVUR on student careers, attractiveness and internationalisation, graduate employability, quantity and qualification of teaching staff, graduate satisfaction.

The Cyclical Review Report is prepared at intervals of no more than five years, and in any case whenever a substantial change to the teaching system and regulations becomes necessary, as a reference document for the redesigning of the Study programme; it contains an in-depth self-assessment of the overall performance of the Study programme, on the basis of all useful elements of analysis. In the Report, the Study programme not only identifies and analyses the most relevant problems and challenges, but also proposes solutions to be implemented in the next cycle. In particular, the document is articulated as a self-assessment on the status of the relevant quality Requirements and - compared to the Annual Monitoring Form - has a more flexible format and is generally more extensive and detailed. An updated Cyclical Review Report is requested on the occasion of the Periodic Accreditation.

In order to guarantee a level of flexibility consistent with the organisational autonomy of each university, the delivery to ANVUR of the Annual Monitoring Form shall take place within the month of December. The Cyclical Review Reports do not have a fixed deadline in terms of month of submission.

Study programmes are responsible for preparing/updating at least the following documentation:

- Initial study programme design document and first draft of the SUA-CdS.
- SUA-CdS (annual update).
- analysis of the results of the student opinion surveys.
- self-assessment document for Periodic Accreditation (if selected for on-site visit).
- Annual Monitoring Form (annual update).
- Cyclical Review Report, to be completed no more frequently than every five years and however in one of the following cases:
 - at the request of the NdV.
 - in case of severe criticalities.
 - when there are substantial changes in the study programme organisation.
 - at the time of Periodic Accreditation (if older than two years or not updated to the changes of the study programme).

6.2 – PhD programmes

AVA 3 model introduces PhD programmes into the QA system.

The [Ministerial Decree No. 226/2021](#) redefined the procedures for the accreditation of PhD programmes. The accreditation system consists of the initial authorisation to activate PhD programmes and the accreditation of the locations where they are held, as well as the periodic verification of the permanence of the requirements for such purposes.

The requirements, defined by ANVUR for the Periodic Accreditation of PhD programmes, comply with the indications of the ESG and fulfil what is defined in art. 4, c. 1, l. g of [Ministerial Decree No. 226/2021](#).

The PhD Programme Board is in charge of the design and implementation of the PhD programme; it defines the clear and articulated vision of the research training pathway for PhD students, taking into account the training objectives (specific and transversal) and the available resources.

The educational activities must be consistent with the programme objectives and exit profiles and must differ from the first cycles teaching activities. Specific attention must be paid to interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity. The Board must pursue mobility and internationalisation objectives, also increasing the percentage of doctoral students spending periods abroad.

The PhD programme must provide for a planning and organisation of the training and research activities for the growth of the doctoral candidates, also by increasing the percentage of doctoral candidates who spend periods of the training pathway in public or private institutions, different from the seat of the PhD programme. The doctoral candidates must feel themselves as members of the scientific community, for this reason the PhD programme must stimulate the exchange of ideas among the doctoral candidates also through their participation in congresses and/or workshops and/or training schools.

Financial and structural resources and possible external tutors of national/international standing are to be made available in order to create the preconditions for the PhD student's autonomy in carrying out research activities.

The PhD programme has a system for monitoring processes and results relating to research, teaching and third mission activities and for listening to doctoral students, also by surveying and analysing their opinions.

The PhD programme avails itself of the Guidelines and documentation supporting the processes of self-assessment, external assessment and review prepared by PQA and takes part in the training activities organised by the university and/or PQA. NdV verifies, also by audits, the overall state of the PhD programmes' quality assurance and monitors the progress of research training.

PhD programmes are responsible for preparing/updating at least the following documentation:

- document concerning the initial draft of PhD programme design.
- self-assessment document for Periodic Accreditation (if selected for the on-site visit).
- analysis of the results of the PhD student opinion surveys⁴.
- analysis of the results of ANVUR indicators.

6.3 – Departments (or other research structures)

The Law No. 240/2010 has given Departments full responsibility for both teaching and research activities and for the third mission. For this reason, the accreditation of universities, in addition to the QA of study programmes (for which the Departments are primarily responsible, drawing up and approving their curricula and didactic regulations, and arranging for the coverage of educational activities), also provides for the QA of the research and third mission/social impact activities of the Departments. The Departments, endowed with their own regulations by the Department Council (Consiglio di Dipartimento=CdD) according to a model scheme approved by the governing bodies of the university, draw up the three-year research activity plan and coherently plan the activities to be carried out, propose the didactic system and the related modifications of the study programmes as well as the activation of PhD programmes. They have organisational and administrative autonomy and define the use of the allocated financial resources, subject to consistency with the general criteria set out in the university documents.

The Department, for the implementation of its teaching, research, innovation and social development policies and strategies, can make collaboration agreements, the results of which it constantly monitors, with economic, social and cultural actors, public or private, of the local, national and international context.

In order to implement, monitor and review its activities, the Department will have to equip itself with a governance system and a functional organisation to implement its strategy on the quality of teaching, research and third mission/social impact, also by defining a planning of the work carried out by the technical-administrative staff, accompanied by responsibilities and objectives, consistent with the strategic planning and whose effectiveness is periodically verified. This governance system shall be consistent with the indications and guidelines drawn up by PQA.

⁴ ANVUR will make available to universities a model of the Doctoral Students' Opinion Questionnaire.

The Department clearly and publicly defines the criteria for the distribution of resources and has adequate teaching, research and technical and administrative staff resources for the implementation of its strategic plan and institutional and management activities, as well as adequate facilities, equipment and resources to support teaching, research, third mission/social impact and PhD programmes (if any).

A non-negligible element concerns the Department's ability to promote, support and monitor the participation of its staff (lecturer, tutor, researcher, administrative staff) in training and upgrading initiatives.

As for PhD programmes, the Department uses the Guidelines and documents supporting the processes of self-assessment, external assessment and review prepared by PQA and participates in training activities organised by the university and/or PQA. The University Evaluation Board verifies, also by audits, the overall state of the Department's quality assurance and monitors the progress of research training.

Departments are responsible for preparing/updating at least the following documentation:

- Annual form for Department Research and Third Mission (SUA-RD/TM) or other three-year strategic planning document of the Department, updated annually.
- self-assessment document for Periodic Accreditation (if selected for on-site visit).
- Analysis of the results of the annual research and third mission/social impact monitoring, of the National Scientific Qualification (Abilitazione scientifica nazionale = ASN), of the recruitment and of the ANVUR indicators.

7. PERIODIC ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The Periodic Accreditation of the institutions has a maximum duration of five years and is granted by the Ministry, upon proposal of ANVUR, following the verification of the permanence of the requirements for the Initial Accreditation and the fulfilment of the quality requirements as per Annex C of the [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#), on the basis of the outcome of the on-site visits carried out by Evaluation Experts Panels (CEV). Pursuant to Article 3 of [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#) the verification must also take into account the following elements:

- a) analysis of data from the annual report of the NdV and the results of the monitoring and quality control activities of the university.
- b) evaluation of the information contained in the Annual Form for Study Programmes (SUA-CdS), also with respect to the Review Reports (Rapporti di Riesame=RdR), and the evaluation of the information contained in the Annual form for Department Research and Third Mission (SUA-RD/TM).
- c) indicators envisaged for the periodic assessment referred to in Article 6 of [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#) and results achieved in relation to the objectives of the three-year planning pursuant to Article 1-ter of Law Decree No. 7 of 31 January 2005, converted by [Law 31 March 2005, No. 43](#).

The Periodic Accreditation of the University entails the accreditation of all its study programmes and of any eventual decentralised branches, with the exception of those evaluated negatively, which are suppressed.

The duration of the Periodic Accreditation of the University may be reduced in relation to the criticalities revealed in the Periodic Review of study programmes during the mid-term review at the end of the third year.

In the case of a study programme that provide for Plans for Meeting the teaching requirements referred to in Article 4, paragraph 3, of [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#), for more than a quarter of the study programmes, the judgement for the University is "conditional accreditation".

ANVUR prepares a plan of on-site visits for Periodic Accreditation. In the selection of the universities , ANVUR considers the deadlines of their Periodic Accreditation and of any elements that might discourage the visit, such as a recent change in the governance system (e.g. Rectors expiring or newly elected or changes in the non-state universities structure) or major system reorganisations. The universities may request, for one time only, by a letter from the Rector addressed to the ANVUR President, to postpone the visit, which in any case will be carried out no later than the following year. The visits will assess the university as a whole and a selection of some of its Study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments. The overall assessment will take into account both the assessment of the University evaluation domains and those of the selected study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments.

7.1 – Selection of Study programmes, PhD study programmes and Departments

The selection of the Study programmes, of the PhD study programmes and of the Departments to be evaluated is carried out by ANVUR in such a way as to obtain the highest possible representativeness from the point of view of the disciplinary areas present within the university, of the type of programmes (Bachelor degrees, Masters degrees, Single cycle master degrees; Conventional/Mixed/Full or partial distance teaching and learning), of the possible presence of decentralised branches, of the performance measured by the indicators on students' careers (for study programmes) and by the last Research Quality Assessment (Valutazione della Qualità della Ricerca = VQR), for Departments. It will also take into account the outcome of previous Periodic Accreditation visits, the follow-up activities carried out to overcome recommendations and/or conditions, the outcome of the ANVUR assessment for the extension of the accreditation of study programmes at the end of the third year since the accreditation Ministerial Decree.

As a general rule, re-evaluations of study programmes/Departments already subject to previous assessment will be avoided, in order to favour the rotation of evaluations and widen the spectrum of study programmes/Departments evaluated for each university; re-evaluations will be possible in the case of study programmes/Departments already assessed that should highlight particularly critical situations highlighted by the University Evaluation Board or by ANVUR.

Departments are generally selected by ANVUR among those for which there is at least one Study programme under assessment. If the university is not organised into Departments, equivalent structures with responsibility for the management of research and third mission/social impact activities will be considered.

PhD study programmes are normally identified among those belonging to the selected Departments.

The selected study programmes, PhDs programmes and Departments are communicated to the university at least five months before the on-site visit.

The number of study programmes, PhD study programmes and Departments visited will vary according to the number of study programmes ongoing in the academic year preceding the one in which the visit takes place, according to the following scheme:

Number of ongoing study programmes	Number of study programmes visited	Number of PhD programmes visited	Number of Departments visited
Less than 4	All	1	1
4 to 39	4	2	2
40 to 69	6	2	2
70 to 99	9	3	3
100 to 149	12	4	4
More than 149	15	5	5

7.2 – Evaluation Expert Panel composition

For each on-site visit, ANVUR appoints an Evaluation Expert Panel (CEV), identifying its members among those who are enrolled in the Register of Evaluation Experts (AVA) ([Albo degli Esperti della Valutazione \(AVA\)](#)) and according to general and specific measures of the Three-Year Plan for the Prevention of Corruption and Transparency ([Piano Triennale di Prevenzione della Corruzione e della Trasparenza](#)) available on the institutional website of the Agency. Each CEV is composed by a President, a Coordinator, System Experts, an Expert for the evaluation of Economic and Financial Sustainability, Disciplinary Experts, and Student Experts, and also Telematic Experts in the case of telematic universities or universities with full or partial distance teaching and learning study programmes under assessment. Before the start of the process, CEV composition is notified to the University, which has the opportunity to report the presence of potential conflicts of interest or causes of incompatibility, and to request the replacement of one or more of its members. The replacement shall be decided by ANVUR on the basis of factual reasons and relevant verifications and shall be promptly communicated to the university.

Based on the number of Study programmes under assessment, CEV organises itself into sub-panels called “SubCEV”. As a rule, the number of SubCEVs coincides with the number of study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments under assessment.

CEV composition model

SubCEV A	SubCEV B	SubCEV C
<u>Study programmes:</u> Study programme 1 Study programme 2 Study programme 3	<u>Study programmes:</u> Study programme 4 Study programme 5 Study programme 6	<u>Study programmes:</u> Study programme 7 Study programme 8 Study programme 9
<u>PhD programme:</u> PhD 1	<u>PhD programme:</u> PhD 2	<u>PhD programme:</u> PhD 3
<u>Department:</u> Department 1	<u>Department:</u> Department 2	<u>Department:</u> Department 3
System Expert head of SubCEV: Expert System 1	System Expert Head of SubCEV: Expert System 2	System Expert Head of SubCEV: Expert System 3

Disciplinary Experts: Disciplinary Expert 1 Disciplinary Expert 2 Disciplinary Expert 3	Disciplinary Experts: Disciplinary Expert 4 Disciplinary Expert 5 Disciplinary Expert 6	Disciplinary Experts: Disciplinary Expert 7 Disciplinary Expert 8 Disciplinary Expert 9
(if any) Telematic Expert	(if any) Telematic Expert	(if any) Telematic Expert
Student Expert: Student Expert 1	Student Expert: Student Expert 2	Student Expert: Student Expert 3
CEV President, CEV Coordinator and Expert for the Evaluation of Economic and Financial Sustainability take part in the visit of Study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments.		

Roles of the evaluation experts within the CEV are defined as follows.

The CEV President:

- a) ensures the positive running of all evaluation processes and their conformity with the ANVUR model.
- b) defines the drafting of the CEV Report, with the support of the Coordinator.
- c) formulates proposals for revision, correction and integration of the Experts' Evaluation Forms.
- d) coordinates meetings with the representatives of the institutions during the on-site visit.
- e) takes part in the visits of Study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments.
- f) presents, at the conclusion of the on-site visit and in a summarised manner, the main strengths and improvement areas.

The President is selected from the AVA Register of Experts - System Expert Profile, on the basis of his previous experience in the field of accreditation and evaluation.

The CEV Coordinator:

- a) assists the President during all stages of the accreditation procedure, ensuring, in particular, clear and effective communication within the CEV and adherence to the scheduled working times.
- b) verifies that the entire accreditation process is conducted according to these Guidelines and as established by the CEV in the Visit Programme.
- c) ensures that the final assessments made by the Panel are consistent, homogeneous and supported by clearly identified evidence.

The Coordinator is identified in the AVA Register of Experts - Coordinator Expert Profile.

The System Experts, coordinated by the President:

- a) ensure the evaluation of the University evaluation domains in cooperation with the Expert for the Evaluation of Economic and Financial Sustainability and the Student Experts.
- b) participate in the on-site visit and all scheduled meetings with representatives of the governance system.
- c) coordinate the work of the SubCEV and participate in the visits of Study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments assigned to SubCEV.

- d) Evaluate PhD programmes and Departments alongside the Disciplinary Expert.
- e) formulate proposals for the revision, correction and integration of the Disciplinary, Telematic and Student Expert Evaluation Forms.
- f) contribute in providing the CEV President with a summary of the main strengths and areas for improvement that emerged during their evaluations.

The System Experts are generally equal in number to the number of SubCEVs. They are identified in the AVA Register of Experts - System Expert Profile.

The Expert for the Evaluation of Economic and Financial Sustainability, one for each CEV:

- a) provides assessments of University aspects of financial resource planning and management.
- b) participates in the on-site visit, meeting with representatives of the governance system.
- c) collaborates, according to the President's instructions, with the System Experts for the evaluation of the Points of attention of the evaluation domain B.
- d) helps to provide the CEV President with a summary of the main strengths and areas for improvement that emerged during its evaluations.

The Expert for the Evaluation of Economic and Financial Sustainability is appointed in each CEV, identified within the AVA Register of Experts - Profile Expert for the Evaluation of Economic and Financial Sustainability.

The Disciplinary Experts:

- a) are chosen in a variable number depending on the number and disciplinary variety of Study programmes and PhD programmes (the scientific and disciplinary affiliation of the Expert must be foreseen among the characterising, basic or related and integrative sectors - in order of preference - of the study programme under assessment).
- b) evaluate, in cooperation with the System Expert coordinating their SubCEVs, one or more of the selected study programmes and/or PhD programmes and possibly one of the selected Departments.
- c) participate in the visits of the study programmes, PhDs programme and Department assigned to their SubCEVs and contribute in providing the President of the CEV with a summary of the main strengths and areas for improvement that emerged during their evaluations. In any case, the Disciplinary Experts are called upon to collaborate overall in the evaluation activities of the CEV.

They are identified in the AVA Register of Experts - Disciplinary Expert Profile.

The Student Experts:

- a) are chosen in numbers corresponding to the sub-ECVs and are responsible for assessing, at the level of both university and study programmes, aspects that directly affect students.
- b) participate in the on-site visit and all scheduled meetings with representatives of the governance system.

- c) take part in the visits of the study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments assigned to their SubCEVs.
- d) contribute in providing the CEV President with a summary of the main strengths and areas for improvement that emerged during their evaluations.

They are identified in the AVA Register of Experts - Student Expert Profile.

The Telematic Experts:

- a) are included in the CEVs if the evaluating university is a telematic university or a full or partial distance teaching and learning Study programme in a conventional university.
- b) ensure the evaluation, at the University and study programme level, of aspects concerning both the specific characteristics of distance teaching and learning and the technical aspects of the technological platforms in use.
- c) participate in the on-site visit, if the university is telematic.

They are identified in the AVA Register of Experts - Telematics Expert Profile.

The CEV members, in accordance with the provisions of the [Code of Ethics](#) and the general and specific measures contained in the Three-Year Plan for the Prevention of Corruption and Transparency ([Piano Triennale di Prevenzione della Corruzione e della Trasparenza](#) available on the Agency's institutional website), act with rigour and professionalism, respect official secrecy before, during and after the on-site visit; they do not release information on decisions to be taken and measures relating to ongoing proceedings before they have been officially decided and undertake to maintain the utmost confidentiality on everything that comes to their knowledge in the context of their mandate. According to Article 5 of the [Rules and Regulations for the formation of the Rolls of Expert Evaluators of the AFAM sector and of the university sector \(Disciplinare per la formazione degli Albi degli Esperti valutatori del settore AFAM e del settore Università](#) – approved by ANVUR Governing Board resolution n. 113/2022), experts holding the office of Rector in any Italian university or are members of the Academic Senate or of the Governing Board cannot be selected as CEV members. Furthermore, experts who have been NdV or PQA members of the university under accreditation during the last five years, who have been in service or have had teaching or research contracts, or collaboration or consultancy appointments, or who have relatives up to the second degree or relatives-in-law in service at the university under accreditation cannot be included in the CEV. In the case of Student Experts, they may not be or have been enrolled in the university to be accredited. No direct communication between the members of the university and the members of the CEV, other than that provided for in the Visit Programme, is permitted.

7.3 – Process stages

The Accreditation process consists of the following main steps:

- desk analysis.
- on-site visits (at a distance, for Study programmes and PhD programmes, and on-site at the University's headquarters and Departments).

- CEV Report.
- ANVUR Report.

In scheduling the different phases of the visit (Table 1), ANVUR will take into account the non-working periods, both with regard to the closure of the university facilities and the activities of the CEV.

Table 1 – Process stages

Phase	When	Who	Description	Mode
1. Communication of the start of the evaluation process	At least 5 months before the visit	ANVUR	ANVUR announces the selection of the study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments and the week of the visit.	Certified Mail
2. CEV and sub-CEVs communication	16-12 weeks before the visit	ANVUR	ANVUR announces the members of the CEV and SubCEVs	Certified Mail
3. Self-assessment	Within 8 weeks before the visit	University	The university and the selected study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments for the visit prepare, for each point of attention, a complete self-assessment with key documentary supporting sources, describing how they implement their Quality Assurance systems.	ANVUR's ACCREDITATIONS platform
4. Desk analysis	8 weeks before the visit, to be completed at least one week before the visit	CEV	CEV analyses the self-assessment, defines both the aspects to be analysed during the visit and the Visit Programme. CEV conducts distance visits of the selected study programmes and PhD programmes.	ANVUR's ACCREDITATIONS platform
5. on-site visit	Duration: between 3 and 5 days	CEV	CEV conducts the on-site visit meetings and inspections at the facilities and infrastructures of the study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments.	On-site
6. Preliminary Evaluation Forms	60 days after visit	CEV	CEV sends to ANVUR the Preliminary Evaluation Forms of the University, Study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments, which are integrated by ANVUR in the part concerning the evaluation of the Indicators.	ANVUR's ACCREDITATIONS platform
7. Preliminary Evaluation Forms submission	Within 30 days by Preliminary Evaluation Form reception	ANVUR	ANVUR sends to the university all Preliminary eEvaluation Forms.	ANVUR's ACCREDITATIONS platform
	+30 days	University	The University shall formulate any counter-arguments.	ANVUR's

Phase	When	Who	Description	Mode
8. University eventual counter-arguments				
9. Final Evaluation Forms	+30 days from counter-arguments reception	CEV	CEV supplements the Preliminary Evaluation Forms with its own Responses to Counterclaims and prepares the Final Evaluation Forms.	ANVUR's ACCREDITATIONS platform
10. Final ANVUR proposal	+30 days after Final Evaluation Form reception	ANVUR	The ANVUR Governing Board decides on the Accreditation/Non-accreditation proposal, formulating the final ANVUR Opinion. ANVUR's Final proposal, together with the Final Report drawn up by ANVUR, is submitted to the Ministry and the university.	Certified Mail
11. Possible review procedure	Within 10 days of final ANVUR proposal reception	Ministry, University	Both the Ministry and the university, within 10 days by the reception of the final proposal, may request a review for specific reasons.	ANVUR's ACCREDITATIONS platform
12. Ministerial Decree		Ministry	In the event of a positive assessment, the study programmes are automatically accredited until the next Periodic Accreditation. In the event of a negative assessment, the Ministry adopts an accreditation withdrawal Decree.	Ministerial Decree
13. Publication of results	After the Ministerial Decree	ANVUR	ANVUR publishes the University and study programmes/Departmental Evaluation Forms and its Final Report.	Institutional website

7.3.1 – DESK ANALYSIS

Within 10 weeks from the beginning of the on-site visit, the university must prepare on the dedicated platform (to which the members of the CEV will access through ANVUR), the self-assessment developed according to an articulation consistent with the Points of Attention and the related Aspects to be Considered of the AVA 3 Requirements (for the University and for the Study programmes, the PhD programmes and the Departments under assessment). The self-assessment must also take into account the results of the first cycle of Periodic Accreditation, the evolution of the QA system over time, the results achieved and must refer to the relevant documentary sources that provide adequate evidence of what has been stated.

The desk analysis normally begins 8 weeks before the on-site visit, is carried out remotely and aims to preliminarily understand and assess the founding elements of the QA system, as designed and implemented by the university, through a careful examination of the available documentation and the university's website.

All the documents required for the CEV analysis must already be available and used within the university QA system when the desk review is started. Therefore, no use may be made of documents prepared after the start of the desk analysis.

During the remote examination, CEV may request additional documentation. If documents reveal serious deficiencies or problems that cannot be overcome in the short term, CEV may propose to ANVUR to postpone the visit for the Accreditation of the university.

During the on-site visit, no further documents may be submitted to the CEVs, unless expressly requested by the CEV itself.

During the desk review, the President, with the help of the Coordinator, prepares a draft Visit Programme, relating both to the remote visit of the Study programmes and the PhD programmes, and to the institutional on-site visit. The Visit Programme contains details of all the meetings to be held, specifying the appropriate figures to meet.

The Visit Programme is shared with the university in time to organise the meetings and convene the involved persons. Subsequently, the university completes the Visit Programme with the names of the persons who will take part in the meetings. The Visit Programme resulting from these interactions is an official document, an integral part of the CEV Report.

According to the Visit Programme, the CEV Experts, each for the part of their competence and under the supervision of the Coordinator, prepare the Visit Diaries - one for the University and one for each Study programme, PhD programme and Department under assessment.

At least one week before the start of the on-site visit and, in any case, after the distance visit of the Study programmes and PhD programmes, a CEV meeting is held to close the desk analysis and to share the first findings after the distance visit of the study programmes and PhD programmes.

7.3.2 – ON-SITE VISIT

The purpose of the on-site visit is to allow the experts and the various components characterizing university life to compare notes, to gather information, perceptions and points of view on the areas under assessment. This comparison is useful for the CEV to seek confirmation and gather evidence with respect to what the university states in the documents provided. It is a moment aimed at identifying real organisational and management problems. Members of the Governing Board and/or ANVUR personnel may participate in the on-site visit as observers.

The on-site visit takes place in two distinct moments. The visit to the study programmes and to the PhD programmes, with reference to everything that does not concern the structures, takes place remotely, in telematic mode, on a platform prepared by ANVUR, on the basis of a Visit Programme defined by the CEV and shared with the university - which may require modifications that must be approved by the CEV - at least one month before the visit. In the case of study programmes in Medicine and Surgery, the visit is conducted entirely on-site.

The visit to University, Departments and all the facilities of Study programmes and PhD programmes selected for the visit takes place on-site, on the days agreed upon by ANVUR and the university before the

start of the desk analysis, on the basis of a Visit Programme defined by the CEV and shared with the university - which may require modifications to be approved by the CEV - at the same time as the Visit Programme for Study programmes and PhD programmes.

The on-site visit also makes it possible both to directly observe the facilities hosting teaching activities of Study programmes and PhD programmes selected for the visit (spaces, laboratories, classrooms, libraries, support services, outdoor spaces, tools and technologies available, etc.) and to investigate specific research issues emerged during the distance visit to Study programmes and PhD programmes.

On each day of the on-site visit (both remote and in-person), once the evaluation activities are over, the CEV devotes adequate time to internal discussion and alignment of the evaluations.

The on-site visit is attended by the President and the Coordinator of the CEV, the System Experts, the Expert for the Evaluation of Economic and Financial Sustainability, the Student Experts and, where foreseen, the Telematic Experts. The Disciplinary Experts participate remotely in the on-site visit; they participate in presence only if necessary depending on the outcome of the distance visit of Study programmes and PhD programmes.

Distance Visits to Study programmes and PhD programmes

The remote visit to Study programmes and PhD programmes covers the relevant areas of assessment (D.CDS and D.PHD). Below is an example of a Visit Programme to a study programme and a PhD programme.

Visit Programme model for study programmes (indicative and non-binding)

Meetings
Meeting with the study programme Coordinator and the Review Group.
Meeting with the Technical and administrative staff involved in the management of teaching and support services for teaching and services aimed at fostering the employability of graduates of the study programme.
Talks with students.
Meeting with the Joint Teaching staff-Students Committee.
Meeting with the stakeholders mentioned in the SUA-CdS and with graduates of the study programme. For the study programmes in the health area, the Health Director or a Head of the relevant health facility should be convened.
Meeting with professors and tutors from the study programmes.
Eventual closing meeting with the study programme Coordinator and the Review Group.

Visit Programme model for PhD Courses (indicative and non-binding)

Meetings
Meeting with the PhD Coordinator.
Meeting with the PhD Programme Board and internal and external PhD tutors.
Meeting with technical and administrative support staff, where present.
Talks with PhD students.

Meeting with stakeholders, if any, and with PhD doctors.
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Eventual closing meeting with the Doctoral Co-ordinator and the Academic Board.

Meetings with the representatives of Study programmes and PhD programmes are attended, on behalf of the CEV, separately and in parallel, by the members of each SubCEV. The President and the Coordinator take part in rotation, according to a schedule approved by the President.

The distance visits of the Study programmes and PhDs programmes normally take place no later than two weeks before the start of the on-site visit. As a rule, at least half a day is dedicated to meetings with each study programme and includes the meeting with the students. During the same day, meetings with the PhD Programmes belonging to the same Department, or equivalent structure to which the study programme visited on that date belongs, shall be scheduled, if foreseen.

Interviews with students and PhD students should also be defined on the basis of the lecture calendar. The universities must prepare an excel file containing the lectures scheduled on the visit days of all the study programmes/PhD programmes under assessment, taking care to indicate the name of the study programme/PhD programme, the year of the course (I, II, III, IV, V, VI year) and the estimated number of attending students and other information requested by the CEV, useful for the definition of the meeting. In order to guarantee the remote visit, the university is asked to share or set up virtual connections via the university platform so that the SubCEV can virtually access and meet the students and PhD students. If there are no lectures during the visit period, the university will be asked to invite the students and PhD students enrolled in the study programme/PhD programme to take part in a dedicated slot.

Visits to study programmes and PhD programmes usually last between one and three days. Below is an example of a plan for visiting study programmes and PhD programmes for a university in which nine Study programmes are visited. The SubCEV visiting a PhD programmes envisages, within the same day, one or more meetings aimed at verifying the PhD programme evaluation domain (D.PHD). During the same day, meetings with more than one PhD programme may also be held by different SubCEVs (the following scheme is only indicative and not binding).

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
SubCEV A – Study programme 1, <i>PhD programme 1</i> SubCEV B - Study programme 2 SubCEV C - Study programme 3	SubCEV A - Study programme 4 SubCEV B - Study programme 5, <i>PhD programme 2</i> SubCEV C - Study programme 6	SubCEV A - Study programme 7 SubCEV B - Study programme 8 SubCEV C - Study programme 9, <i>PhD programme 3</i>

On-site visit

The first phase of the on-site visit is dedicated to meetings between the CEV delegation⁵ and representatives of the university governance, PQA and NdV, students and administrative service managers, with the aim of deepening the A, B, C, D and E evaluation domains. This phase lasts between one and two days, depending upon the size and the organisational and contextual characteristics of the university. As a rule, a second evaluation day is scheduled for universities with more than 100 active study programmes.

The second phase of the on-site visit is dedicated to meetings between the CEV delegation⁶ and the representatives of the Departments (E.DIP evaluation domain) and to the visit of the facilities. This phase normally lasts between one and two days, depending on the number of Departments and the size of the facilities. CEV President and/or Coordinator take part in all meetings.

The tables below show the Visit Programme models for the institutional meetings (different for universities with up to 99 Study programmes and 100 and more Study programmes). At the end of the on-site visit, a meeting is scheduled with the Rector and a delegation from the university for a summary presentation by the President of the CEV of the main strengths and improvement areas emerged during the evaluation.

Visit Programme model for universities with up to 99 Study programmes (indicative and non-binding)

Visiting days	Meetings
Day I	CEV presentation to the Rector and Director General.
Day I	Meeting on the Strategic Plan and university policies (Rector, Director General, delegates and representatives of the Academic Senate and Governing Board, including external members).
Day I	Meeting on the management of resources under B evaluation domain (financial and personnel, facilities and infrastructures, information and knowledge). In this area, in the telematic universities and in the universities that have full or mainly distance teaching and learning programmes, a meeting with the delegates for distance teaching and learning and with the persons in charge of the technological platforms is to be planned.
Day I	Meeting on the implementation of the university policies for teaching quality (Vice-Chancellors and delegates/equivalent figures for teaching (including the PhD), any other institutional figures and teaching managers/Directors).
Day I	Meeting on the implementation of the university policies for the quality of research and third mission/social impact (Vice-Chancellors and delegates/equivalent figures, any other institutional figures and managers/research and third mission/social impact managers). Depending on the desk analysis and the size of the university, CEV may schedule separate meetings for research and third mission/social impact.
Day I	Meeting with student representatives in the university bodies.
Day I	Meeting on student services (delegates for orientation, placement, internationalisation, PhD, managers and technical and administrative staff).
Day I	Meeting on the internal Quality Assurance system (PQA, managers and technical and administrative staff).

⁵ Discipline Experts can participate remotely.

⁶ Ibid.

Day I	Meeting on the university internal evaluation system (NdV, managers and technical and administrative staff).
Day II	Meeting with the visiting Department Directors.
Day II	Visits to the facilities and infrastructures of the departments + university facilities.
Last day	Concluding meeting with the Rector and academic bodies in which the CEV summarises the main elements that emerged during the on-site visit.

Visit Programme model for universities with 100 or more Study programmes (indicative and non-binding)

Visiting days	Meetings
Day I	CEV presentation to the Rector and Director General.
Day I	Meeting on the Strategic Plan and university Policies (Magnifico Rettore, Director General, Delegates and Representatives of the Academic Senate and Board of Directors, including external members).
Day I	Meeting on the management of resources under B evaluation domain (financial and personnel, facilities and infrastructures, information and knowledge). In this area, in the telematic universities and in the universities that have full or mainly distance teaching and learning programmes, a meeting with the delegates for distance teaching and learning and with the persons in charge of the technological platforms is to be planned.
Day I	Meeting on the implementation of the university policies for teaching quality (Vice-Chancellors and delegates/equivalent figures for teaching (including the PhD), any other institutional figures and teaching managers/Directors).
Day I	Meeting on the implementation of the university policies for the quality of research and third mission/social impact (Vice-Chancellors and delegates/equivalent figures, any other institutional figures and managers/research and third mission/social impact managers). Depending on the desk analysis and the size of the university, CEV may schedule separate meetings for research and third mission/social impact.
Day I	Meeting with student representatives in the university bodies.
Day II	Meeting on student services (delegates for orientation, placement, internationalisation, PhD, managers and technical and administrative staff).
Day II	Meeting on the internal Quality Assurance system (PQA, managers and technical and administrative staff).
Day II	Meeting on the university internal evaluation system (NdV, managers and technical and administrative staff).
Day II/III	Meeting with the visiting Department Directors.
Day III	Visits to the facilities and infrastructures of the departments + university facilities.
Last day	Concluding meeting with the Rector and academic bodies in which the CEV summarises the main elements that emerged during the on-site visit.

Visit Programme model for Departments (indicative and non-binding)

Meetings
Meeting with the Director and the Deputy Director (if appointed) of the Department
Meeting with a representative of the Department Council (including technical and administrative staff representatives and student representatives)
Meeting with the Department's PhD Coordinators
Meeting with Quality Assurance managers and a representation of the Department Commissions (teaching, research, third mission/social impact, human resources, etc.)
Closing meeting with the Director and the Deputy Director (if appointed) of the Department

For the visit to the facilities (classrooms, study rooms, laboratories, libraries, university campuses, etc.) the university must prepare short videos for the CEV for remote analysis on study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments.

7.3.3 – CEV REPORT

The CEV Report is composed by the Evaluation Forms filled out by the CEV with reference to the University and to the study programmes, PhD programmes and Departments; the Report contains an analysis based on the evidence of the strengths and improvement areas emerged during the desk analysis and the on-site visit, regarding each point of attention.

The Report - which, at this stage, takes the form of a Preliminary Report - is the responsibility of the President of the CEV; it is approved collectively by the CEV and is made available to ANVUR within 60 days since the end of the on-site visit.

Within 30 days from its delivery, the Preliminary Report, once examined by ANVUR, is sent to the university, which has 30 days to present its eventual counter-arguments. The Counter-arguments must contain references to factual elements aimed at replying to what is reported in the Evaluation Forms and with reference to the university documentation submitted for the desk analysis and/or to the findings of the on-site visit. After considering the university's counter-arguments, if any, the CEV shall, within 30 days, supplement the Evaluation Forms with its own responses to the counter-arguments, and if necessary amend the Final Report with collegial approval. The Final Evaluation Forms will be made public on the institutional website of the ANVUR.

7.3.4 – ANVUR PERIODIC ACCREDITATION REPORT

ANVUR, within 30 days from the reception of the CEV Final Report, draws up a Periodic Accreditation Report, in which it expresses its judgement on the Periodic Accreditation of the university, according to the provisions of [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#):

LEVEL	ACCREDITATION	VALIDITY
A	Fully Satisfactory	Five-year with mid-term review of study programmes at the end of the third year.
B	Satisfactory	Five-year with mid-term review of study programmes at the end of the third year.
C	Conditioned	Term established at the time of the assessment, not exceeding four years.
D	Unsatisfactory	University suppression.

In the ANVUR Report, study programmes will receive a positive or negative assessment. In the case of a negative assessment, ANVUR will propose to the Ministry a proposal to revoke the Accreditation ([Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#)), i.e. no further cohorts of that Study programme will be activated (thus allowing enrolled students to complete their studies), without prejudice to the possibility of re-submitting it for a new activation after a thorough review of the educational project.

The ANVUR Report, accompanied by the proposal and the Accreditation Judgement, is transmitted by ANVUR to the Ministry. The Accreditation is granted by Ministerial Decree. ANVUR publishes the CEV Final Report and its Periodical Accreditation Report on its institutional website.