

PERIODIC ACCREDITATION
OF UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR STUDY PROGRAMMES

GUIDELINES FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF
THE UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Approved by Governing Board Resolution no. 3 of 12 January 2023

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Introduction

To complete the publication of the "Guidelines for the Quality Assurance System in Universities", ANVUR publishes the "Guidelines for the self-assessment and external evaluation of the Quality Assurance System in Universities" with the aim of providing indications operational for the self-assessment and external evaluation processes of the Quality Assurance Systems that the Universities are implementing in implementation of the requirements contained in the AVA 3 Model.

These Guidelines aim to offer Universities and Evaluation Expert Panels (CEV) a unified and structured vision of the construction and improvement process of the Quality Assurance System. The commitment to ensure support and assistance to the Universities is based on the AVA System (Self-assessment, periodic assessment and accreditation) and on the PDCA Cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Act).

The publication of these Guidelines completes the framework of Guidelines and the support tools published on the web page (<https://www.anvur.it/attivita/ava/accreditamento-periodico/modello-ava3/strumenti-di-supporto/>). ANVUR provides this information for all "actors" of the Quality Assurance System to support the implementation of the second cycle of Periodic Accreditation of Universities and their Study Programmes. These tools are designed as a "toolbox" that can be gradually enriched with new instruments, also depending on the progress of the evaluation experiences with the AVA 3 Model.

To support Universities and Experts in Self-assessment and external evaluation processes and to align and calibrate the process and resulting evaluation metrics, ANVUR has developed evaluation schemes and matrices to encourage precision in the process of assigning the assessment classes.

1 - Self-assessment of Universities

For each of the Point of Attention of the Periodic Accreditation Model the universities, the Study programmes, the Medicine and Surgery study programmes (LM-41), the PhD programmes and the Departments/Faculties undergoing the accreditation process draft a self-assessment with documentary support.

Self-assessment is a unique opportunity to summarize all the "organisational knowledge" of the University in a unique document, which can be used profitably both internally and externally.

Self-assessment can be used as:

- ✓ a reference for the daily work of managers at all levels, as it constitutes, in practice, the "Management Manual" of the University's Quality Assurance processes;
- ✓ a communication tool to and from the professors and administrative staff for the description of Quality Assurance processes;
- ✓ a means of information and training for newly recruited professors and administrative staff and for staff changing sectors or activities;
- ✓ a vehicle for promotion and communication with other stakeholders.

The preparation of the Self-Assessment is therefore a fundamental step for the Periodic Accreditation process, as it allows to have more elements also for external, in-depth and analytical evaluation by the CEV and the drafting of a more "objective" evaluation report, more in line with the reality of the University and with greater added value.

The drafting of the Self-assessment represents a moment of organisational reflection, given that it allows to identify both the good practice to be disseminated within the University, and the main areas of weakness from which to define and initiate improvement.

An in-depth Self-assessment, which fully reflects the potential of the University in terms of approaches¹, processes and results, also allows to:

- support the desk analysis phase by the CEV, avoiding the risk of limited analyses that which would be more difficult to integrate and/or modify during the on-site visit;
- produce an evaluation report with greater added value. During the visit the experts may deepen the holistic and strategic aspects of the University avoiding spending time analysing unclear aspects of self-assessment or identifying and evaluating approaches and results which are not in the self-assessment.

The preparation of the Self-assessment and the participation of the University staff in the Periodic Accreditation activities are complex and delicate processes. The full support of the University at all levels is required. Communication to staff during the self-assessment phase and at the end of the assessment by the CEV plays an important role.

¹ The term "approach" means the method, the mental attitude and the perspective with which the study of an organisational problem and the consequent definition of related processes and activities is addressed. The approach therefore refers to what the University/Department/Study Program/PhD plan and the reasons behind the choices.

Before starting the self-assessment activities, all staff should be informed that the University will address the evaluation for Periodic Accreditation, highlighting the objectives and modalities of participation in the process of self-assessment and external evaluation by ANVUR and emphasizing that everyone could be involved in the various phases of the process. Particular attention should be paid to the choice of self-assessment approaches, adapted if necessary to the type of organisation of the University, in order to ensure to self-assessment completeness, homogeneity and consistency.

Throughout the evaluation process, staff should be periodically updated on the progress of the evaluation and the results.

1.1 - How to manage writing an "effective" Self-assessment

There are different ways to write an "effective" Self-assessment, according to the size and organisational characteristics of the University. Two different approaches could be:

- the "Point of Attention Referents" method;
- the "Integrated Group" method.

These two methods take into account the possibility of drafting the Self-assessment section of the Evaluation Forms prepared by ANVUR on the CINECA Periodic Accreditation Platform, and also the preparation of a unitary self-assessment document, usable by the University for internal purposes to its organisation.

"Point of Attention Referents" method

- ✓ for each Points of Attention and/or for Points of Attention groups, a Contact person is appointed with specific competence and general knowledge of the administration;
- ✓ a working group in charge of the Points of Attention, coordinated by a delegate of the Rector (usually the Prorector/Quality Delegate, if present, or the Coordinator of the PQA) is thus established;
- ✓ the group defines the Self-assessment structure and develops a working plan;
- ✓ the contact person is responsible for drafting the Points of Attention, also the help of selected colleagues;
- ✓ the Self-assessment prepared by the Contact are progressively revised before the final development and homogenization for inclusion in the Evaluation Forms on the CINECA platform dedicated to Periodic Accreditation in order to integrate the whole, if necessary, into a unique document, where this is of interest to the University;
- ✓ the Self-assessment of each Point of Attention and any completed document resulting from the integration of the Self-assessments developed for each Point of Attention are finally reviewed and approved by the University governance.

Advantages

- targeted use of the greater knowledge and skills of the individual references on the various aspects of management of the University;

- direct participation of "managers" at all levels of the University;
- Governance involvement;
- obtaining a Self-assessment that is the expression of the entire University.

Disadvantages

- the Self-assessments related to each Point of Attention and any complete document resulting from the integration of the self-assessments developed for each Point of Attention could be not homogeneous both in terms of content and form (this problem can be overcome by entrusting several Attention Points to one person or by entrusting a single person with the task of homogenizing the results of the Self-assessment).

The "Integrated Group" method

- ✓ a small working group (usually 4 or 5 people) of high-profile figures (Rector's delegates, area managers) is set up, coordinated by a representative of Governance with diversified skills/experience and in-depth knowledge of the University (generally the Prorector/Quality Delegate if present or the PQA Coordinator);
- ✓ the group defines the Self-Assessment structure and develops a work plan (with this method the most appropriate reference work unit is that of the Evaluation domain; all the Points of Attention of each domain are assigned to each member of the Group);
- ✓ the coordinator entrusts the members of the group with the task of collecting useful information and providing the preliminary drafting of the Self-assessment at the level of an individual Point of Attention, also with the support of working groups);
- ✓ the Coordinator assembles the various parts, harmonizing them and ensuring consistency and uniformity of language;
- ✓ the content of the Self-assessment of the various Points of Attention is subsequently reviewed by the group in dedicated meetings;
- ✓ the Self-assessment of each Point of Attention and any complete document resulting from the integration of the self-assessments developed for each Point of Attention are finally reviewed and approved by the University governance.

Advantages

- the involvement of the University governance through direct participation or approval of the plan, communication to staff and systematic review of results.

Disadvantages

- given the involvement of a smaller number of people, the Self-assessment could be less detailed and in-depth than that generated using the method of the Points of Attention.

1.2 Self-assessment of the Points of Attention

The self-assessment of the Points of Attention must be developed by exhaustively describing the processes and activities undertaken by the University with reference to the individual Aspects to be Considered of the Point of Attention under examination. The description shall:

- ✓ be supported by adequate references (including hypertext) both to documents included in key documents and/or support, and to dedicated pages on the University's website;
- ✓ assess the coherence and integration of the approaches adopted;
- ✓ highlight the implementation of the approaches adopted and the dissemination in the relevant areas with regard to the Aspects to be Considered concerned;
- ✓ provide information on how long the approach has been adopted by the University;
- ✓ highlight the monitoring method used to assess the effectiveness of the approach taken and any improvement taken over time.

The self-assessment must essentially describe what, how, why and how much is "done" by the University to implement the provisions of the Point of Attention under consideration.

It is necessary that those who value or read understand not only:

- ✓ **"what"** what the University is doing;

but also and above all:

- ✓ **"how"** how the approach has been developed;
- ✓ **"why"** the reasons that led the University to choose that approach;
- ✓ **"how much"** the extent and manner in which the approach is disseminated in relevant areas.

In fact, the evaluator does not judge whether the approach adopted is "right" in absolute terms, but is required to assess whether and to what extent it is appropriate for the University, consistent with its policies, strategies and within the context in which the University operates.

The Self-assessment must show how the approaches adopted are effectively and systematically implemented and disseminated in the University in significant and appropriate areas, with reference to an adequate articulation in the structure of the University:

- **horizontally**: in all locations, sectors, functions, areas/working groups;
- **vertically**: at all levels (from management to operational staff where appropriate);
- **in all processes and services**: to which they are applicable.

Finally, the Self-Assessment must clarify **whether and how** approaches are monitored, in order to assess their effectiveness and, if necessary, to introduce appropriate improvement initiatives.

The purpose of monitoring is to assess the effectiveness of the approaches and to highlight the strengths, the areas to be improved and to define the priorities for improvement actions.

The Self-assessment must also highlight how much and how the University analyses and uses the results of the monitoring and the information acquired to identify, plan and implement the improvement actions.

In this context it is useful to "tell the story" of the approaches, that is, not only to describe what is being done in the present, but also to present the evolution of the approach over time, in order to highlight what it is consolidated over time and is the result of subsequent refinements and improvements. If the University has foreseen future developments of the current approach, it would be appropriate to describe the reasons for the changes made, the way in which it intends to implement them and the expected results.

To better understand the adequacy and effectiveness of the approaches adopted, it is always appropriate to illustrate **examples of things done and/or results achieved**.

The rationale behind the requirements of AVA 3 is the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Logic, which aims to encourage the University to:

- **define its objectives**, the **results** it wants to achieve, as an integral part of the formulation of its policies and strategies (Plan);
- **plan and develop an integrated set of approaches** designed to achieve the objectives set by defining structured and integrated **processes** for implementing policies and strategies (Plan);
- **implement systematically and integrated approaches and related processes** (Do);
- **monitoring planning and implementation** (Check);
- **promote improvement activities** resulting from the analysis of monitoring results to make approaches and processes more effective (Act).

The scheme adopted by ANVUR and the CEV for the evaluation of Points of Attention consists of a set of **elements** that refer to the PDCA Logic. Each **element** contains a series of **attributes** as shown in **Table 1**.

When preparing the Self-assessment, it is appropriate that, in the description of the processes and activities related to the Aspects to be Considered of the Point of Attention under consideration, should be brought out the salient elements of planning, effective implementation, of monitoring and improvement.

In the Self-assessment for the purposes of describing the processes and activities related to the Aspects to be Considered of the different Points of Attention, the preparation of new procedures is not required but you can refer to the documentation already prepared by the University for the management of its assets if deemed appropriate.

Table 1 - Scheme for the assessment of Points of Attention

Elements to be assessed	Attributes to be assessed
<p>PLANNING This element refers to what the University/Department/Study Program/PhD propose to do and the reasons behind the choices</p>	<p>The approach shall be consistent when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it has a clear rationale; - it is focused on the present and future needs of the University/Department/Study Program/PhD; - it is developed through clearly defined processes
	<p>The approach shall be integrated when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there are links with the strategies; - it is linked with other approaches where appropriate
<p>IMPLEMENTATION This element refers to whether and how the University/Department/Study Program/PhD implement and disseminate the approach in the appropriate areas</p>	<p>The approach shall be implemented when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is made in the relevant areas with reference to the Aspects to be Considered of the Attention of Point.
	<p>The approach is systematic when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is developed in a structured manner and with the ability to adapt to changes in context if necessary
<p>MONITORING & IMPROVEMENT This element refers to what the University/Department/Study Program/PhD do to monitor, check and improve both the approach and its implementation and dissemination</p>	<p>The approach shall be monitored when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there are measurements with appropriate methods to assess their effectiveness
	<p>The approach is improved when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the monitoring results are used to identify, plan and implement improvements
<p>COVERAGE OF THE REQUIREMENTS This element refers to the degree of coverage of the Aspects to be Considered contained in the Point of Attention under assessment</p>	<p>Coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of Aspects to be Consider developed compared to Aspects to be Considered contained in Attention of Point.

Table 2 **shows**, for the purposes of the University Self-assessment, a scheme containing some qualitative indications for a Self-assessment of the placement range of the Point of Attention.

Table 2 - Scheme of qualitative self-assessment of Points of Attention

PLANNING	IMPLEMENTATION	MONITORING & IMPROVEMENT	Range
<p>No or little evidence of adequate approaches and prevention systems</p> <p>Non-integrated approach in normal activities</p>	<p>Not applied or applied to not more than a quarter of the potential, considering all significant areas and activities regarding the Aspects to be Considered</p>	<p>Not monitored</p>	D
<p>Partial evidence of appropriate approaches and of prevention-based systems</p> <p>Partial integration of the approach into normal activities and planning</p>	<p>Applied to about half of the potential, considering all significant areas and activities regarding Aspects to be Considered</p>	<p>Not regularly monitored, with little indication for improvement</p>	C
<p>Evidence of adequate and systematic approaches and prevention-based systems</p> <p>Integration of the approach into normal activities and planning</p>	<p>Applied to about three quarters of the potential, considering all significant areas and activities with regard to the Aspects to be Considered</p>	<p>Subjected to regular monitoring with evidence of refinement and improvement of operational effectiveness</p>	B
<p>Clear evidence of appropriate approaches and prevention-based systems</p> <p>Complete integration into normal work procedures and planning</p>	<p>Applied to all potential in all significant areas and activities regarding Aspects to be Considered</p>	<p>Subject to systematic monitoring with clear evidence of refinement and improvement of operational effectiveness through periodic reviews</p>	A

1.3 - Self-assessment of results

The scheme to be adopted by ANVUR and the CEV for the assessment of the Results is shown in **Table 3**; the scheme consists of a set of **elements** and **attributes**. **Results** and **Coverage** are the elements to be assessed; each **element** contains a set of **attributes**. The same scheme can be appropriately adopted by the University in the Self-assessment of its results.

When defining the evaluation ranges, it is necessary to consider the elements and attributes with reference to the set of results intercepted by the Point of Attention or by the set of Points of Attention under consideration.

Table 3 - Scheme for the evaluation of results

Elements to be assessed	Attributes to be assessed
<p>RESULTS</p> <p>This element refers to what the University/Department/Study Program/PhD achieves in terms of results.</p> <p>The results must show positive trends and/or good performance maintained over time.</p> <p>Objectives should be defined with particular reference to expected results for key processes and activities; must be appropriate to the context and resources and must be achieved or exceeded.</p> <p>Key performance should be compared with that of other Universities/Departments/Study Program/PhD and they should be positive.</p> <p>Identifying and understanding the relationships between key outcomes and the key process/activity approaches that generate them ensures that positive performance can be maintained over time.</p>	<p>Trend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The trend is positive and/or - Performance is consistently good level
	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The defined objectives are achieved - Objectives are defined correctly (neither low nor too challenging)
	<p>Comparisons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive comparisons within the University and/or - The results support a good comparison with other Universities of the same type and/or belonging to the same territorial area - The results support the comparison with other Universities at national level
	<p>Case-Effect Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are causal relationships between the approaches adopted and the results achieved or the results achieved are the direct consequence of the activities developed
<p>COVERAGE</p> <p>This element refers to the degree of coverage of the relevant areas</p>	<p>Degree of coverage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The results are relative to the areas of relevance

In **Table 4**, for the purposes of the University Self-assessment, there is a diagram containing some qualitative indications for a self-assessment of the placement range of the Point of Attention.

Table 4 - Scheme of qualitative self-assessment of results

RESULTS	COVERAGE	Range
<p>None/Few results show a positive trend and/or satisfactory performance</p> <p>None/ Few comparisons with the objectives set are positive</p> <p>None/Few positive comparisons with other Universities</p>	<p>The results relate to a few significant areas and activities</p>	D
<p>Some results show a positive trend and/or good performance sustainable over time</p> <p>Some comparisons with targets are positive</p> <p>Some positive comparisons with other Universities</p> <p>Some results are due to the approach</p>	<p>The results relate to some significant areas and activities (about 40%)</p>	C
<p>Many results show a positive trend and significant performance, sustainable over time</p> <p>Many comparisons with the targets set are positive</p> <p>Many positive comparisons with other Universities</p> <p>Many results are due to the approach</p>	<p>The results relate to many significant areas and activities (about 60%)</p>	B
<p>Most of the results show a very positive trend and significant performance sustainable over time</p> <p>Most comparisons with targets are positive</p> <p>Most comparisons with other Universities are positive</p> <p>Most of the results are due to the approach</p>	<p>The results relate to most significant areas and activities (about 80%)</p>	A

2. THE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The external assessment process within Periodic Accreditation is divided into the following main phases:

- documentary analysis;
- visit (at a distance for Study and PhD Programmes and on site for the Universities and Departments);
- drafting of the CEV Report;
- definition of the ANVUR Report.

In the planning of the different phases of the visit, ANVUR will take into account non-working periods, both as regards the closure of the University facilities and as regards the activities of the CEV.

The visit is in two parts. First remote consultation to the study and PhD programmes, with reference to everything that does not concern the structures, this is through a platform set up by ANVUR, on the basis of a program defined by the CEV and shared with the University. It may require amendments that must be approved by the CEV - at least one month before its completion. For Medicine and Surgery study programmes, on-site visit only applies.

The visit to the University, the Departments and all the structures of the study and PhD programmes is carried out *on site*, on the days agreed by ANVUR and the University before the start of the desk analysis, on the basis of a program defined by the CEV and shared with the University. They may require amendments to be approved by the CEV - together with the program of visits of study and PhD programmes.

The on-site visit also allows to directly observe the structures that host the teaching activities of the study and PhD programmes (spaces, laboratories, classrooms, libraries, support services, external spaces, tools and technologies available, etc.), and to deepen specific research issues that emerged during the remote visit to study and PhD programmes.

2.1 - Desk Analysis

The general indications relating to the conduct of the desk analysis are provided in the Guidelines for the Quality Assurance System in the Universities ([Guidelines and support tools - ANVUR - National Evaluation Agency of the University and Research System](#)).

The Guidelines provide specific guidance for CEV evaluation activities.

ANVUR, considering the competences of the Experts, assigns to each System Expert the responsibility of a sub-CEV and to each Disciplinary Expert the preliminary investigation of a study programme; the "disciplinary expert plays the role of "first editor", flanked by another disciplinary expert ("second editor") and by a student expert.

The President and the Coordinator organise the work of the CEV and allocate the tasks among the different components of the CEV by assigning the System Experts the evaluation of the Points of Attention of the University. During the document analysis, the experts draw up on the platform *the Evaluation Forms*,

progress documents that will form an integral part of the *CEV Draft Report* and then of the *CEV Final Report*. The *Evaluation Forms* will be made definitive and visible to the University only after approval by the CEV in their final version.

Each System Expert, coordinator of a sub-CEV, supervises the work related to the evaluation of the Study and PhD Programmes and Departments assigned to it. The evaluation is collegial and the sub-CEV share within themselves all the observations on the Study and PhD Programmes and Departments. It reports the results to all members of the CEV, including the President and Coordinator.

The members of the CEV analyse the information sources made available by the University and write down in the *Evaluation Forms* any elements they deem necessary to deepen during the visit, discuss with other experts and highlight for the purposes of the CEV Report. A provisional indication of the evaluation range assigned to each Point of Attention is given in the *Evaluation Forms*; the attribution of the Evaluation class is made definitive at the time of the approval of the *CEV Draft Report* and can be modified following any Counter-arguments of the University.

The Student Experts participate fully in all the evaluation activities, with particular reference to the aspects of their competence. As for the Study Programmes, they carry out in particular the evaluation of the following Points of Attention: D.CDS.2.1 – Guidance and tutoring; D.CDS.3.2 – Human resources, facilities and support services; D.CDS.4.1 – Contribution of professors, students and stakeholders to the review and improvement of the study program. .

Each Disciplinary Expert with the function of “first editor” receives the 3 Points of Attention from the Student Expert and integrates them into the Evaluation Form.

During the desk analysis, in collaboration with ANVUR, the President, the Coordinator and the System Experts may convene several meetings with the members of the CEV or sub-CEV; if deemed appropriate in the context of such meetings, the CEV may request clarification from the University and any additions to the documentation.

During the documentary examination, the President, with the help of the Coordinator, prepares a draft of the *Visit Program*, relating both to the remote visit to the Study and PhD Programmes, and to the on-site visit at the University. The *Visit Program* contains the details of all the meetings that are planned, specifying the figures that it is considered appropriate to meet.

The *Visit Program* is made available to the University through a dedicated platform, in time to allow the organisation of meetings and to summon the parties involved based on requests made by the CEV. The University compiles the *Visit Program* with the names of the people who will take part in the meetings. The *Visit Program* resulting from these interactions is an official document, an integral part of the CEV Report.

Based on the *Visit Program*, the Expert members of the CEV, according to their competences and under supervision of the Coordinator, prepare the *Visit Diaries* - one for the University and one for each study and PhD programmes and Department.

At least one week before the start of the visit and in any case after the remote visit to the study and PhD programmes, the CEV meets for the closure of the documentary analysis and to share the first findings.

2.1.1 - DESK ANALYSIS: INDICATIONS FOR THE CEV

The University Self-assessment is evaluated by each component of the CEV on the basis of the assignment of Points of Attention of competence.

Assessment should be based on the following general principles:

- without prejudice;
- trust what is reported in the self-assessment;
- refrain from comparisons with other Universities;
- rely only on the self-assessment and the attached documents;
- remember the AVA 3 Requirements and the Guidelines;
- assess each Point of Attention independently, without being influenced by positive/negative assessments of other Points of Attention, unless they are closely related;
- evaluate approaches regardless of results;
- apply the benefit of the doubt, to be solved in terms of verification during the visit;
- avoid "merit judgments";
- avoid offering solutions to the identified problems, but limiting itself to highlighting any potential causes of the problems.

Desk Analysis must be developed:

- using, as a reference grid, the Aspects to be Consider contained in the Point of Attention under consideration;
- avoiding copying-pasting operations when referring to self-assessment and documents submitted by the University (where necessary it is possible to quote individual sentences deemed significant in quotation marks);
- referring to the self-assessment and/or the documents submitted by the University with reference explicitly to the pages of interest for the evaluation of the Aspects to be Considered in evaluation;
- referring to what emerged during the meetings and on-the-spot inspections carried out during the on-site visit, also with the support of multimedia material made available to the University;
- examining the approach used by the University to develop processes and activities related to the Aspects to be Consider contained in each Point of Attention;
- highlighting, where possible and explicitly, evidence of the validity of the approach taken (coherence and integration), the level of implementation (dissemination and systemization), the presence of monitoring activities and improvement initiatives, in order to support with evidence the compilation of the Assessment Matrices referred to in the following paragraphs;
- identifying and describing in a concise and articulated way the strengths, areas to be improved and any points to be deepened during the on-site visit (giving each strength and area of improvement a degree of importance in terms of influence that is attributed to the overall assessment of the Point of Attention);
- assigning the evaluation class with exclusive reference to AVA 3 Requirements and evaluation criteria.

For each Point of Attention, the CEV may issue any alert:

- Fully satisfactory: CEV may report (optional) good practice;
- Satisfactory: no signal required;
- Partially satisfactory: the CEV expresses a "Recommendation" (mandatory) or a "Condition" (optional) depending on the level of structuring and the systematic nature of the activities examined and the relevance of the findings;
- Unsatisfactory: the CEV must formulate a Condition (mandatory) and may report a Recommendation (optional).

2.2 - Assessment of the Points of Attention

Assesment of the Approach

The approach refers to what the University/Department/Study programmes/PhD programmes plan and the motivations behind the choices. The assessment should take into account:

- ✓ clarity of the rationale;
- ✓ existence of well-defined and developed processes;
- ✓ adequacy and correctness of the methods, tools and techniques used to develop the reference processes and activities of the Aspects to be Consider;
- ✓ attention to the needs of internal and/or external stakeholders;
- ✓ effective linkage/support to policies and strategies;
- ✓ linking and/or integrating with other appropriate approaches.

Evaluation of the Implementation

The implementation of the approach refers to whether and how the University/Department/Study programmes/PhD programmes do and disseminate the approach in the reference areas.

The assessment should take into account:

- ✓ the dissemination and implementation of the approach in all potentially relevant areas, with reference to the Aspects to be Considered of the Attention of Point:
 - vertically through all important levels;
 - horizontally in all relevant areas and activities;
 - in all relevant services/processes/activities;
- ✓ the systematic implementation of the approach, enabling it to fully express its potential and effectiveness;
- ✓ the demonstration of the achievement of all planned benefits;
- ✓ the measurability of the spread of the approach.

Monitoring and Improvement

Monitoring and Improvement refer to the measures taken by the University/Department/Study programmes/PhD programmes to check and optimize both the approach and its implementation and dissemination.

The assessment should take into account:

- ✓ the presence of surveys with appropriate means to assess the effectiveness of the approach;
- ✓ the use of monitoring results to identify, plan and implement improvements.

The evaluation of the Points of Attention is supported by the use of the Points of Attention Assessment Matrix shown in Table 5, based on the logical flow of the PDCA Cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act), consistent with the scheme suggested for the self-assessment.

Each element is divided into attributes to be evaluated separately on the basis of what is reported in the Self-assessment and in the key and supporting documents.

The matrix allows to:

- assign an evaluation for each attribute;
- average the attribute assessments of each element;
- carry out an average of the element assessments to assign the overall assessment of the approach.

Table 5 - Matrix for the evaluation of Points of Attention

Elements to be assessed	Attributes to be assessed	D Unsatisfactory	C Partially Satisfactory	B Satisfactory	A Fully Satisfactory
PLANNING This element refers to what the University/Department/CdS/PhD propose to do and the reasons behind the choices	The approach shall be consistent when it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has a clear rationale - is focused on the present and future needs of the University/Department/CdS/PhD - is developed through clearly defined processes 	Not able to prove No Evidence	Reduced ability to demonstrate Some Evidence	Ability to demonstrate Evidence	Complete ability to demonstrate Clear Evidence
	The approach shall be integrated when it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - links with the strategies - is linked with other approaches where appropriate 	Not able to prove No Evidence	Reduced ability to demonstrate Some Evidence	Ability to demonstrate Evidence	Complete ability to demonstrate Clear Evidence
Total Planning					
IMPLEMENTATION This element refers to whether and how the University/Department/CdS/PhD implement and disseminate the approach in the appropriate areas	The approach shall be implemented when it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is made in the relevant areas with reference to the Aspects to be Considered of the Point of Attention 	Not able to prove No Evidence	Reduced ability to demonstrate Some Evidence	Ability to demonstrate Evidence	Complete ability to demonstrate Clear Evidence
	The approach is systematic when it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is developed in a structured manner and with the ability to adapt to changes in context if necessary 	Not able to prove No Evidence	Reduced ability to demonstrate Some Evidence	Ability to demonstrate Evidence	Complete ability to demonstrate Clear Evidence
Total Implementation					
MONITORING & IMPROVEMENT This element refers to what the University/Department/CdS/PhD do to monitor, monitor and improve both the approach and its implementation and dissemination	The approach shall be monitored when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there are measurements with appropriate methods to assess their effectiveness 	Not able to prove No Evidence	Reduced ability to demonstrate Some Evidence	Ability to demonstrate Evidence	Complete ability to demonstrate Clear Evidence
	The approach is improved when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring results are used to identify, plan and implement improvements 	Not able to prove No Evidence	Reduced ability to demonstrate Some Evidence	Ability to demonstrate Evidence	Complete ability to demonstrate Clear Evidence
Total Monitoring & Improvement					
TOTAL APPROACH					
COVERAGE OF THE REQUIREMENTS This element refers to the degree of coverage of the Aspects to be Considered contained in the Point of Attention under assessment	Coverage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of Aspects to be Considered developed University/Department/CdS/PhD compared to the Aspects to be Considered contained in the Point of Attention under examination 	Applied to about a quarter of all Aspects to be Considered 25%	Applied to about half of all Aspects to be Considered 50%	Applied to about three quarters of all Aspects to be Considered 75%	Applied to all Aspects to be Considered 100%

2.3 - Evaluation of the results

The results refer to what the University achieves through the development of approaches related to processes and activities identified by the different Evaluation Areas and related Points of Attention.

Evaluation of the Results:

- ✓ is developed by examining the results achieved by the University with reference to the indicators associated with the different Points of Attention;
- ✓ is supported by the use of an assessment matrix;
- ✓ each element of the matrix is divided into attributes to be evaluated separately on the basis of the results that ANVUR has made available to the CEV and any further results provided by the University in the Self-assessment and in the key and supporting documents.

The indicators to be used for evaluation in AVA 3 are those defined:

- ✓ in Ministerial Decree 1154/2021 and in Model AVA 3;
- ✓ independently from the University in the three-year programming in addition to those defined by the Ministerial Decree 1154/2021 and in the AVA Model 3 to be associated from time to time to the relevant Points of Attention.

The results assessed in AVA 3 may be:

- quantitative;
- qualitative.

The definition of indicators and evaluation metrics takes into account the inherent differences between these two categories.

The evaluation of qualitative results, without prejudice to the need for it to take place on the basis of a 4-level scale as for the evaluation of the Points of Attention, does not allow an *a priori* definition of a unique evaluation metric. It is therefore necessary to define, for each qualitative indicator, a specific scale from D to A, based on articulated and graduated judgments to describe in an appropriate manner the different levels of judgment.

The assessment of quantitative results shall be based on:

- ✓ positive trends and/or good performance maintained over time;
- ✓ definition of objectives, with particular reference to expected results for key processes and activities (the evaluation of the objectives will be carried out only for the indicators for which the University has independently set itself objectives such as, for example, in the three-year programming);
- ✓ objectives appropriate to the context and resources to be achieved or exceeded;
- ✓ comparison of key performance with other University/Department/Study programmes/PhD programmes;
- ✓ identification and understanding of the relationships between the key outcomes and the key process/activity approaches that generate them, in order to ensure that positive performance can be maintained over time.

The evaluation of the results:

- ✓ is developed by examining the results achieved by the University with reference to the indicators associated with the different Points of Attention;
- ✓ is supported by the use of an assessment matrix;
- ✓ each element of the matrix is divided into attributes to be evaluated separately on the basis of the results that ANVUR has made available to the CEV and any further results provided by the University in the Self-assessment and in the key and supporting documents.

The results evaluation matrix in **Table 6** allows to assign an evaluation for each attribute of the Results element and to carry out an average of the evaluations.

Table 6 - Matrix for evaluation of results

Elements to be assessed	Attributes to be assessed	D Unsatisfactory	C Partially Satisfactory	B Satisfactory	A Fully Satisfactory
<p>RESULTS This element refers to what the University/Department/cds/PhD achieves in terms of results.</p> <p>The results must show positive trends and/or good performance maintained over time.</p> <p>Objectives should be defined with particular reference to expected results for key processes and activities; must be appropriate to the context and resources and must be achieved or exceeded.</p> <p>Key performance needs to be compared with other Universities/Departments/cds/PhD and comparisons need to be positive.</p> <p>Identifying and understanding the relationships between key outcomes and the key process/activity approaches that generate them ensures that positive performance can be maintained over time.</p>	<p>Trend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The trend is positive and/or - Performance is consistently good level 	No results or sporadic results, without unsatisfactory trends and/or performance	Some positive developments or satisfactory performance in the last 3 years	Several positive developments or good performance in the last 3 years	Many positive developments or excellent performance in the last 3 years
	<i>Total Trend</i>	Range (0-25)	Range (25 to 50)	Range (50-75)	Range (75-100)
	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The defined objectives are achieved - Objectives are defined correctly (neither low nor too challenging) 	No goals or sporadic goals not achieved	Some achievements and appropriate	Various objectives achieved and appropriate	Many goals achieved and appropriate
	<i>Total Objectives</i>	Range (0-25)	Range (25 to 50)	Range (50-75)	Range (75-100)
	<p>Comparisons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive comparisons within the University - The results support the comparison with other Universities belonging to the same territorial area - The results support the comparison with other Universities at national level 	No comparison or unfavourable comparisons with inappropriate chosen organisations	Some comparisons favouring organisations chosen in an altogether appropriate way	Several comparisons favouring organisations chosen in an appropriate overall way	Many comparisons favouring organisations chosen in an altogether appropriate way
	<i>Total Comparisons</i>	Range (0-25)	Range (25 to 50)	Range (50-75)	Range (75-100)
	<p>Cause-Effect Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are causal relationships between the approaches adopted and the results achieved or the results achieved are the direct consequence of the activities developed 	No obvious cause-and-effect relationships or sporadic	Cause and effect recognizable by some results	Cause and effect recognizable by different results	Cause and effect recognizable by many results
	<i>Total Cause-Effect</i>	Range (0-25)	Range (25 to 50)	Range (50-75)	Range (75-100)
Total Results					

2.4 - Points of Attention evaluation based on the results

The Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021, in Annex C, provides that the «qualitative assessment, declined in strengths and areas of improvement, and divided into evaluation bands (Fully satisfactory; Satisfactory; Partially satisfactory; Unsatisfactory)» be 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 evaluation, already used with the AVA 2 model, is modified, in addition to the specificity of the Points of Attention, also in the assessment scale, which goes from numerical (1-10 with AVA 2) to evaluation classes (4 gradients). In addition, there is a need for a quantitative evaluation aimed at evaluating the results of the University's activities at different levels (University/Department/Study programmes/PhD programmes).

It was therefore necessary to identify an evaluation structure that would take into account both the qualitative aspects (which will be evaluated by the CEV) and the quantitative ones, detected through indicators at the University/Department/Study programmes/PhD programmes evaluated by ANVUR, in collaboration with the CEV.

With this methodology, to bring the value of each indicator back to the same four evaluation classes identified in DM 1154/2021: A (Fully Satisfactory), B (Satisfactory), C (Partially Satisfactory) and D (Not Satisfactory) would then be necessary.

The qualitative-quantitative evaluation of the indicators is summarized in "Classes" using the Matrix of Evaluation of Results in Table 6 and compared with the qualitative evaluations of the CEV for each of the Points of Attention.

The evaluations made qualitatively and quantitatively for the individual Points of Attention will then be summarized, for each of them, in a unique evaluation.

The operation of synthesis between the quantitative appraisals of the pointers and those qualitative of the Points of Attention will be carried out by ANVUR and brought back to qualitative characters (the four classes of final appraisal as set up by the Ministerial Decree) and will be managed by reducing an attribute space. Since both qualitative and quantitative evaluations have 4 classes (A, B, C and D), the attribute space is configurable as a 16-cell table (Table 7), where the main diagonal (in green) contains cases of agreement of judgment, above the diagonal (in blue) there are cases where the qualitative assessment is better than the quantitative one, below (in orange) can be found cases where the quantitative assessment is better than the qualitative assessment.²

² Attribute space is defined as the logical space constructed by synthesis of two or more dimensions (attributes) and resulting from the combination of categories (classes or modes) in which the semantic extension of each single dimension is divided.

Table 7 - Example of attribute space

		Quantitative assessments (<i>indicators</i>)			
		A <i>Fully Satisfactory</i>	B <i>Satisfactory</i>	C <i>Partially Satisfactory</i>	D <i>Unsatisfactory</i>
Qualitative assessment (CEV)	A <i>Fully Satisfactory</i>				
	B <i>Satisfactory</i>				
	C <i>Partially Satisfactory</i>				
	D <i>Unsatisfactory</i>				

The approach adopted for the integration of assessments, as shown in Table 8, follows the criterion according to which qualitative evaluation is always more important than quantitative assessment.

For this reason, if, for example, a Point of Attention receives from the CEV an A rating (*Fully Satisfactory*), the final Point of Attention score cannot be reduced by more than one gradient (A to B) from the quantitative indicator. Therefore, with an A from the CEV, even if the quantitative analyses have given a *Partially Satisfactory* or *Not Satisfactory* result (C or D), the final score of the Point of Attention cannot be lower than B.

If the CEV's qualitative assessment is B (*Satisfactory*), the quantitative indicator A (*Fully Satisfactory*) may improve the final score in A. Therefore, if the quantitative indicator is D, the CEV will make a B (*Satisfactory*), the final score of the Attention of Point will be converted into C (*Partially Satisfactory*).

If the qualitative evaluation by the CEV is C (*Partially Satisfactory*), the final evaluation will be confirmed by evaluations of indicators C or D but can be improved to B (*Satisfactory*) if the aspects related to the results have shown results A (*Fully Satisfactory*) or B (*Satisfactory*).

Finally, an evaluation by the CEV of the Point of Attention as D (*Unsatisfactory*) may become C (*Partially Satisfactory*) if the results of the quantitative indicator led to evaluations A (*Fully Satisfactory*) or B (*Satisfactory*).

Table 8 - Assessment of Points of Attention based on results

		Quantity			
		A	B	C	D
Quality	A	A	A	B	B
	B	A	B	B	C
	C	B	B	C	C
	D	C	C	D	D

3. EVALUATION OF INDICATORS AND RESULTS

The collection of data necessary for the evaluation of the results will be carried out in a structured manner according to the type of data:

- ✓ the collection of data relating to indicators referring to institutional databases (ANS, SMA, PRO3, etc.) will be carried out by ANVUR with the support of CINECA and the authorisation of MUR to access the necessary data;
- ✓ the collection of data relating to indicators freely chosen by the University (for example within PRO3) with reference to internal results will be collected by the University and validated by the University Evaluation Board;
- ✓ the collection of data relating to indicators freely chosen by the University (for example in the framework of PRO3) with reference to health area results for Medicine and Surgery study programmes, if they result from assessments carried out by third parties (Ministry of Health, AGENAS, Health Facilities) will be used directly by ANVUR; if collected by the University, they must be validated by the University Evaluation Board.

The evaluation of the indicators and their results will be the responsibility of ANVUR, according to the following scheme:

- ✓ the assessment of the quantitative results will be carried out by the UO/AVA;
- ✓ the evaluation of the qualitative results will be carried out by the UO/AVA with the support of the CEV (President, Coordinator and Expert in Economic and Financial Sustainability) referring to the findings of the documentary evaluation and the on-site visit.

On the institutional page [\(Guidelines and support tools - ANVUR - National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research System\)](#) can be found:

- the table with the indicators identified for each of the Points of Attention about University, study programmes and PhD programmes and Departments visited;
- the table that, for the qualitative indicators only, illustrates the scale of evaluation from D to A, prepared on the basis of articulated and graduated judgments to describe in an appropriate way the different levels of judgment.