



# ANVUR'S ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME 2024-2026



# **ANVUR'S ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME 2024 - 2026**

**(Approved at the meeting of the Governing Board on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023)**

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## FOREWORD

This document, drawn up in accordance with art. 2, paragraph 2 of DPR 76/2010, outlines, and illustrates the **Agency's strategic guidelines and objectives** for the coming year 2024 and the following years 2025 and 2026.

The strategic guidelines contained in the *Activities Programme* are the result of a constant and gradual monitoring and updating of the Programmes approved in previous years, with more or less significant interventions where the conditions of the external or internal context of the Agency have required revisions of strategic priorities. It should be stressed that for the purposes of their definition, the Agency has carried out a preliminary self-assessment of the state of implementation of the 2023-2025, also taking into account the changes in the regulatory and institutional reference framework within which ANVUR's activities are situated. A central element for the definition of the Programme is the considerations formulated by the Minister of Universities and Research, Senator (Professor) Anna Maria Bernini on the occasion of the approval <sup>1</sup> of the 2023-Programme2025 of the Agency and, pending the act of address of the year 2024, the reminder that the same Minister made at the address of the year 2023.

The continuity of the Agency's strategic action is also confirmed by the structure of the Programme, which is developed according to the same model adopted in previous years and is divided into the following strategic areas of reference: **INTERNATIONALISATION, EVALUATION OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH ON EVALUATION, EVALUATION OF AFAM UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTIONS, FURTHER ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONAL IMPORTANCE, AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION**. A novelty of the *2024-2026 Programme* is the attention that the Agency has given to the issue of gender equality in relation to the areas of evaluation and organisation. This is an aspect that the Agency intends to consider with appropriate interpretations in relation to the reference context, also in line with the actions identified in the three-year [Gender Equality Plan and positive actions](#) (*Gender Equality Plan – GEP*) approved in 2023, which contains the objectives and actions that ANVUR intends to take to operationally decline the policy of inclusion and equal opportunities also in the field of evaluation. This attention may concern, as an example only, the composition of the evaluation committees but also the analysis of possible biases in the evaluation results. It should also be noted that, regarding the integration of strategic guidelines and objectives and the operational management of activities, This Programme is in all respects the frame of reference within which the Integrated Plan of Activities and Organisation (PIAO) 2024-2026 will be placed, to be adopted by the Agency by January 2024.

Referring to the paragraphs dedicated to each strategic area, the detailed illustration of the activities planned for the next three years, is shown in the following **Figure 1 the outline of the priorities defined by the Governong Board**, highlighted in different colours in relation to the time period foreseen for the implementation of the specific actions for the 2024-2026 period.

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<sup>1</sup> Note of the Ministry of May the 11th, 2023

FIGURE 1: Strategic priorities for three years period 2023-2026

LEGEND (activities referred to the periods): 2024; 2024 – 2025; 2024-2026; 2025-2026

## INTERNATIONALIZATION

- WFME evaluation, EQAR registration and ENQA *membership* confirmation
- Organization/Participation to interesting events in the frame of Italian G7 Presidency
- Apply European Approach to AQ of join programmes
- Participation in the activities of Italian Universities involved in European Alliances
- Agreements and collaborations with foreign Agencies for projects and activities of staff mobility, incoming and outcoming
- Participation in working groups on topics central to the international debate (es. microcredentials, ESG update, ecc.)

## RESEARCH EVALUATION AND RESEARCH ON EVALUATION

- Departments of excellence 2018 – 2022: Impact and effectiveness evaluation
- New regulations for journals classification
- Proposals of criteria for PRIn ex-post evaluation
- Survey of research and thir mission universities activities (SUA RD-TM)
- VQR 2020-2024
- Partecipation to CoARA Boost and CoARA working groups
- Partecipation to AgoRRA project
- PhD programmes evaluation (+ Guidelines and launch of AFAM doctorates)

## UNIVERSITIES EVALUATION

- Guidelines for the survey of students' opinions
- Periodic Accreditation of training programmes for secondary schools teachers
- Periodic Accreditation of Universities and initial accreditation of new study programmes also according to MUR indications based on PRO 3 2024-2026
- Contribution to the evaluation of the Specialization Schools of medical area, Schools of Psychotherapy, Schools for language mediators
- TEST on COmpetencies (TECO)
- Criteria for the initial and periodic accreditation of Schools of Advanced Studies with special regulations, internal Advanced Schools and Colleges of Merit

## EVALUATION OF AFAM INSTITUTIONS

- International working group concerning AFAM research and definition of criteria for the evaluation of research activity and artistic production
- Guidelines for students' opinions survey
- Periodic accreditation visits to state and non state AFAM institutions
- Consolidation of the AFAM Independent Evaluation Units Network
- VQR in the AFAM secotr
- Accreditamento periodico dei percorsi di formazione iniziale dei docenti delle Scuole secondarie

## OTHER INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Focus of 2023 Report presentation concerning the situation of HE system and research
- Three years programme of University system
- Report on disability (Università and AFAM)
- international register of italian and foreign experts for the evaluation of research/exploitation of knowledge and university teaching and AFAM
- Dashboard indicators evaluation university
- Monitoring of the PIAO Università and EPR
- Report on the state of the university and research system - year 2025

## INTERNAL ORGANISATION

- Consolidation of the new organizational structure
- New communication plan
- New Agency website
- IT security
- Agreement for the management of databases
- Staff recruitment plan concluded
- Advanced training paths for the staff
- New headquarters of the Agency

As it emerges from this brief introduction, drafting of the Agency's activities Programme, far from being a fulfillment required by law, represents a fundamental moment to confirm or update the programming and planning of strategic objectives. This is an opportunity to:

- communicate externally the mission of the Agency and its declination in the different areas of evaluation.
- empower the Agency towards the Ministry of Universities and Research, the evaluated Institutions, and all stakeholders.
- develop within the organization a continuous focus and connection between activity plan and performance plan.

A brief consideration can finally be dedicated to the positioning of ANVUR in the international scenario of quality assurance in higher education and research. The European context seems to be characterized by a high level of heterogeneity, with countries in which regional or local agencies operate - also in competition - and others, such as Italy, which have only one national agency. In some countries, such as France, the national evaluation body is an authority with full legal, functional, and organisational autonomy: the hope is that ANVUR will also be able to move towards this model in the future.

## INTERNATIONALIZATION

DPR 76/2010 assigns to ANVUR the task of collaborating with scientific bodies and agencies operating at international level in the field of quality assurance, requiring the Agency to consolidate and develop its presence in the international context. The numerous actions and steps taken in recent years to enhance the role and international visibility of the Agency see in the year 2024 and in the following two years the period in which it will be essential to achieve objectives of strategic importance for ANVUR and for the system of higher education and research. The strategic priority that the current Board of Directors has sought to give, since its establishment, the international dimension is confirmed by the election of Prof. Menico Rizzi on the CoARA Steering Board in 2022 in the election of Prof.ssa Marilena Maniaci on the ENQA Board in 2023: two important results, which place ANVUR and Italy in an important position in the debate on the evaluation of higher education and research at European and non-European level.

The year 2023 was characterized by the management by ANVUR of two fundamental external evaluation procedures, which have reached a different stage of implementation, both of which have the highest strategic importance for the Agency; **WFME**<sup>2</sup> assessment and evaluation by **ENQA**<sup>3</sup> and **EQAR**<sup>4</sup>.

The **WFME** evaluation began in early 2023 with the preparation of the application and culminated in May with the visit of the Panel of International Experts which after analysing the Agency's evaluation criteria and

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<sup>2</sup> The World Federation for Medical Education (<https://wfme.org/>) is an international organization founded in 1972 by the World Medical Association (WMA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Federation of Associations of Medical Students (IFMSA), the Junior Doctors Network (JDN) and the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), which aims to improve the quality of medical education worldwide; in 2020 published the third updated edition of Basic Medical Education quality improvement standards (cf. the "WFME BME Standards 2020" web page).

<sup>3</sup> European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. ANVUR, following a positive evaluation, has been a member of ENQA since June 2019. The evaluation has a five-year duration and must therefore be confirmed by the year 2024.

<sup>4</sup> The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education. ANVUR was not registered in 2020 and will therefore undergo a new evaluation in 2024.

procedures in the field of health<sup>5</sup>, observed and monitored the entire Agency's periodic evaluation procedure for the Humanitas University; the evaluation process ended in December, when the Panel participated as an observer in the meeting of the Board of Directors that approved the final evaluation report of the university. At the time of adoption of this Strategy Guidance Document, the Agency is awaiting the outcome of the evaluation. It is worth recalling that the desired positive outcome of the evaluation is a fundamental result for Italy. This is the necessary requirement to allow graduates in Medicine in our country to continue their professional path and training in specialty schools in the USA. Now, among the main European countries, the following Agencies have obtained WFME accreditation: ANECA and AQU (Spain), AHPGS (for Austria and Germany), NVAO (Holland), MCI (Ireland), MAB (Hungary). The agencies of Portugal, Greece, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland are being evaluated.

As regards the **Agency's European accreditation**, 2023 also saw the preparation of the visit of the international experts appointed by **ENQA**, scheduled for January 2024. Five years after being admitted as a member of ENQA, this is the second evaluation by ANVUR aimed at verifying the degree of compliance of the Agency's national assessment framework and procedures with the 2015 ESG<sup>6</sup>. The preparation for the visit was particularly demanding. The greatest commitment has been the preparation of the *Self-Assessment Report*<sup>7</sup>, which is the basic document for the ENQA visit and which took into account the news from the previous visit, including the revision of the PhD Regulation, the adoption of the AVA 3 model and the Guidelines for the evaluation and definition of an experimental model of periodic accreditation of higher education institutions in the arts and music, applied on a voluntary basis to a first nucleus of institutions. It should be stressed that the outcome of the evaluation of ENQA will also be crucial to allow the Agency to be included in the **EQAR** register<sup>8</sup>, with the aim of obtaining an award not reached in 2019. EQAR, in fact, will use as a basis for the formulation of the judgment the results of the report prepared by ENQA. The confirmation of ANVUR in ENQA and the registration in EQAR represent - for the Agency and for Italy - two fundamental strategic objectives in the context of the internationalization policies of the higher education system. The conformity of the national evaluation system with ESG is, in fact, a prerequisite for allowing the full participation of Italian institutions in the ongoing debate on the internationalisation of higher education and its evaluation approaches.

In this perspective, the actions that the Agency intends to develop support the participation of Italian universities in the **European University Alliances**<sup>9</sup> and more generally, in support of the design and implementation of study programmes carried out jointly with universities in other countries, through the implementation in our country of the model of the "**European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes**" with any updates required. At European level, a policy of strongly supporting transnational training models is clearly emerging, which require the development of tools for ensuring the quality of learning, based on criteria of transparency and mutual trust, also with a view to encouraging the mobility of students, teachers, and technical and administrative staff. Among the issues under discussion is the possibility of obtaining in the future a **European qualification**, which still encounters various political, regulatory, bureaucratic and evaluative barriers at the level of individual countries. From this point of view - and without

<sup>5</sup> It should be recalled that at the beginning of the year 2023 the Agency adopted specific Guidelines and criteria for the evaluation of courses of study in Medicine and Surgery, with the aim of defining a model in which the training of the student qualifies with even greater attention to the clinical and care part, according to internationally recognized standards.

<sup>6</sup> ESG 2015 (<https://www.engaq.eu/wp-content/uploads/filebase/esg/ESG%20in%20Italian.pdf>) are the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) which provide the framework for internal and external quality assurance of institutions and courses of study. The current version of the ESG was adopted at the European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference in 2015 and is the reference used by ENQA and EQAR to assess the compliance of national evaluation procedures with international criteria.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.anvur.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Self-Assessment-Report-2023-15.11.2023.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education.

<sup>9</sup> Italy is in fourth place, after Spain, Germany and France, for numerous universities involved in the Alliances, which are currently 37, equal to more than a third of the entire Italian university system.



losing sight of the quality of the training offered - will be essential the work of regulatory adjustment in the head of the Ministry of Universities and Research and the consequent update of the evaluation models by the Agency. In view of this objective, ANVUR is actively collaborating with the Ministry, as an associated partner, in three of the projects funded through Erasmus+ funds to test the possibility of a European “label” to joint programmes that meet certain design and quality verification requirements (EdAffiche, edlab and SMARTT).

During the year 2024, **Italy** will have the **presidency of the G7** countries: it is therefore expected that various initiatives will also be planned at ministerial level, also about the activities that fall within the competence of the Agency. ANVUR participated in the 2023 International Symposium on Research Evaluation held in Tokyo during the Presidency of Japan and will also participate in the next meeting of the G7 Working Group on Research Evaluation, to be held in 2024. During the Italian Presidency, the Agency will be happy to participate and, depending on the resources available, also organize further events on the issues of quality training, evaluation of teaching and research.

ANVUR also aims to further consolidate the **network of relations with agencies from other European and non-European countries** and to participate in the **international debate** on quality assurance in higher education. We will therefore work to implement the existing agreements<sup>10</sup> - which were extended in the year 2023 to the Spanish agency ANECA, to that of Armenia ANQA, to the Hungarian agency MAB and to that of Greece HAHE - and to conclude further ones, with Agencies active in areas of common interest. It should also be noted that during 2023 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the **European Students' Union (ESU)**, aimed at involving European students in the evaluation activities carried out by the Agency. Also in 2023, **staff mobility** activities continued, both incoming and outgoing. ANVUR hosted representatives of the Hungarian and Armenian Agencies for a few days and some Agency officials had the opportunity to be guests of foreign agencies. In particular, the participation of ANVUR representatives (together with MUR staff) in training and professional experiences at the Flemish and Dutch Agency NVAO and at the Romanian Agency ARACIS, within the project “Implementation and innovation in QA through peer learning” (IMINQA), through which the activities of the **BFUG Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance** are financed, which ANVUR also actively contributes through its involvement in **working groups on Alliances and Micro-credentials**. The year 2023 also saw the participation of Agency officials in a training event on the theme “Assessing Joint Programmes”, organized by the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) and held in Cologne at the German Agency AQAS. An ANVUR official has also been recently appointed to the Quality Assurance Board of one of the European Alliances with Italian participation and similar availability could be offered in the future, compatible with the workloads of staff, to other Alliances that may request it. During the three-year period 2024-2026, also thanks to the establishment of an Organizational Unit dedicated to Internationalization, the direct involvement of ANVUR in **projects financed by the European Commission** will be strengthened; the reference is to the ERASMUS project “REMOTE. Assessing and evaluating remote learning practices in STEM” (presented in partnership with other Agencies and Universities of Spain, Portugal and Italy and funded for the 2023-2025 three-year period) and the work in progress for the re-nomination of the “VALUE” project in collaboration with CRUI and a group of agencies and universities from South American countries, dedicated to the transfer of knowledge and skills related to activities and evaluation processes related to the third mission (the project, which had already been nominated last year, was not evaluated due to formal problems of eligibility of the lead).

For further information on the international activities carried out by ANVUR, please refer to the dedicated section of the website.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.anvur.it/attivita/internazionalizzazione/accordi-internazionali/>

## RESEARCH EVALUATION AND RESEARCH ON EVALUATION

From the point of view of relevance and impact on the university and research system, the next three years will be marked by numerous activities that will involve the Agency at national and international level.

The first of these activities has already been launched during 2023 with the approval of the **VQR 2020-2024** call, which, in line with the MUR Guidelines (DM 998/2023), provides several innovations for the next cycle of evaluation of the quality of research institutions. In addition, following the Agency's accession to **the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)** in October 2022, an international process of comparisons was launched, activities and projects committing the Agency to establishing a coherent framework for the review of research evaluation modalities at national level<sup>11</sup>.

As for the VQR 2020-2024, there are many new elements. Among these, it should be noted that the range of research products considered for evaluation has been widened, in line with international good practice which recommends recognising the diversity of contributions to research. In addition to the evaluation of research products, it was also planned to continue and further develop the evaluation of third mission activities (now called knowledge enhancement activities) **greatly expanding the themes and the related fields of action in which the institutions can present their case studies**. In addition, VQR 2020-2024 will also carry out the evaluation of international projects, awarded on the basis of an international competitive selection through peer review; of these projects the entity will be assessed according to the financial and area characteristics of the project.

In addition, the VQR 2020-2024 will assess the research infrastructure (in this case at experimental level for public research bodies), the openness to use by the scientific community and other users and with priority of access according to the quality of the proposals. For the evaluation, the methodology of peer review will be used, informed, where appropriate, by the use of citation indicators, which in any case cannot replace an accurate assessment of the product's merit. The VQR 2020-2024 will engage the Agency for the next three years, including the following main milestones: the year 2024 will see the appointment and organization of the activities of the expert evaluation groups (the disciplinary EGVs and the two EGVs for the exploitation of knowledge and for infrastructure) and the assistants supporting the VQR, the definition of the modalities for the evaluation of products by EGVs, the provision of a compulsory training phase in order to encourage full and complete application of the evaluation rules and the development of platforms for the provision and evaluation of products, projects, infrastructures and case studies on the exploitation of knowledge; in the year 2025 the activity of conferral and evaluation will be concentrated; finally, in the year 2026 the publication and presentation of all the results are planned. It should be noted that in the context of the VQR 2020-2024, particular attention will also be paid to ensuring gender representation in the training of EGVs.

The Agency's involvement in the field of evaluation research will result in other important initiatives that will be developed internationally over the three-year period 2024-2026. Within the framework of the activities promoted by CoARA, the Agency will be involved in the **CoARA Boost**<sup>12</sup> project, funded by the European Commission under the Horizon programme, whose main purpose is to contribute - in terms of operational support and resources - to the implementation of a systemic reform of research evaluation following the CoARA principles and agenda. At national level, ANVUR will be involved in the participation in the Italian

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<sup>11</sup> A total of 583 international institutions participates in CoARA, including 59 Italian institutions. CoARA's founding principles are contained in the document "The Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment" to stimulate a comparison between countries on research evaluation methodologies, which must have as their main objective the enhancement of quality through peer review and the responsible use of quantitative indicators.

<sup>12</sup> ANVUR is one of the 9 partners associated with the project and the recipient of a specific grant, together with the European Science Foundation (coordinator), Science Europe, Marie Curie Alumni Association, Young European Research Universities Network, Centre National De La Recherche Scientifique - CNRS, Magyar Kutatási Halozat Titkarsága - Hun-Res Secretariat, All European Academies, The Careers Research and Advisory Centre Limited.

**National Chapter**<sup>13</sup> on the subject of **reforms progress** in the field of **research evaluation**. The Agency is also expected to participate in four international working groups on **research careers**, **multilingualism**, the improvement of **evaluation practices for research projects** and the evaluation of research in **Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)**. In addition to these activities, ANVUR joined an additional international working group within the **AgoRRA Observatory** in 2023<sup>14</sup>. The partners of AgoRRA intend in particular to promote the analytical recognition of changes in the national research evaluation systems since 2012. The objectives of the project include the establishment of an observatory for the creation of a taxonomy useful for comparing national evaluation systems and their evolution over time, with particular attention to changes in objectives and criteria. The mapping of each country's experiences will allow the sharing of successes and challenges useful to foster mutual learning and common progress.

The above outline is a very comprehensive framework of issues on which the Agency intends to participate in the ongoing debate at international level. It will be essential for the initiatives described to be translated into **subsequent actions at national level as well**. The first of the topics on which the Agency intends to start a discussion with the Ministry is certainly that of the careers of university teachers, with a specific reflection on the topicality of the **national scientific certification procedures (ASN)** while the 2023-2025 three-year round is underway.

Closely connected with the ASN is also the updating of the Regulation and the procedures used to date by the Agency for the **classification of journals** in non-bibliometric areas. The work of substantial reworking and updating of the Regulation, carried out with the support of a specially designated working group, ended in December 2023 and the review will take effect from the 2024 classification requests. Among the main innovations are: the streamlining of the structure of the Working Groups and the extension of the use of external auditors with specific competences; the distinction between transversal and disciplinary requirements for evaluation; the unification of procedures for the application of Italian and foreign magazines; the submission of applications on a continuous basis, without providing specific "windows"; the greater emphasis on the importance of transparency and ethical rules; with particular reference to predatory magazines; the possibility of using open peer review methods, properly regulated.

Regarding **PhD programmes**, once the application of the **new evaluation and accreditation criteria** defined by DM 226/2021 and the Guidelines of DM 301/2022 has been consolidated, the Agency's commitment will be directed in two directions. About **university doctorates**, the intention is twofold: in 2024, start to avail of opinions from external experts for the initial accreditation of new research doctorates, in full compliance with European standards (ESG); in 2025 carry out a first monitoring of the doctorates financed by the PNRR. The planned commitment about **doctorates of the AFAM Institutions** is different, for which the Ministry of Universities and Research is close to adopting the specific Regulation for the initial and periodic accreditation of study programmes. ANVUR will therefore have to propose the Guidelines and indicators for the evaluation of the programmes and carry out the evaluation itself. This is a new and certainly challenging path for AFAM institutions, which will require particular attention to arrive at evaluation methods that, in addition to being compliant with ESG, ensure the adequate qualification of doctoral programmes, within a system that is still affected by the failure to issue the Ministerial Regulation for the evaluation and accreditation of AFAM institutions.

In compliance with the request of the Minister during the approval of the 2023-Programme2025 of the ANVUR, it is the intention of the Agency to proceed in the year 2024 to the **evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency** of the Departments of Excellence programme with reference to the five-year 2018-2022 concluded;

<sup>13</sup> National Chapter is coordinated by the University of Bologna and the CNR

<sup>14</sup> A global observatory of responsible research assessment, coordinated by the Research-on-Research Institute (RoRI).

at the same time, the definition of the **ex-post evaluation criteria of the PRIN** will be shared with the MUR, in order to ensure the best analysis of the results deriving from the project activities financed, including in terms of impact, an integrated and broader approach that takes into account all the indicators of social, economic, environmental and/or cultural impact of research on end users. For both activities it is planned, among other things, to start a research collaboration with the MUR and with researchers of the Bank of Italy.

An activity that has not yet been started by the Agency, but which needs to proceed, also following the adoption of the DM 1154/2021, is the reactivation of the **Departments' Single Annual Report on Research and Third Mission/Social Impact (SUA RD/TM)** within an information collection structure that certainly needs to be renewed and that must include the **results of all research, third mission and knowledge transfer activities**.

## UNIVERSITIES EVALUATION

The year 2023, with the start of the periodic accreditation visits of universities according to the **new periodic evaluation model** (so-called **AVA 3**), was full of activities for the Agency. A lot of attention has been dedicated to the training of the experts involved in the evaluation committees, to the presentation of the new model to the universities with numerous meetings at local level, to the realization of thematic meetings (PhD and evaluation of resources) in collaboration with the Coordination of Evaluation Units (CONVUI) and Quality Presidia (CONPAQ) the preparation of guidelines and tools to support the self-assessment of universities and evaluation by CEVs and, above all, the organization and management of the first 10 visits. In the three-year period 2024-2026, a total of 67 periodic accreditation visits are planned with a very tight schedule that in January 2024 may undergo minor changes, also considering some requests made by universities. It should be remembered that with the new AVA 3 model the evaluation structure has become much wider than in the past; particular attention should be drawn to the evaluation of all resources (human, financial, economic, structures, equipment, technologies, information, and knowledge), doctoral programmes, educational and welfare organisation of programmes in Medicine and Surgery and, not least, the use of result indicators that complement the qualitative evaluation of processes. It is precisely on the set of indicators that the Agency is launching a reflection aimed at adding some of them, also to consider any adjustments to what will be foreseen in the three-year programming of the MUR for the period 2024-2026. The objective is to ensure that the indicators used are objectively verifiable and sufficiently representative of the points of attention assessed.

With reference to the **initial accreditation of the newly established study programmes**, the Agency has already updated the Guidelines for the quality design of the programmes for a.a. 2024/25. However, the proposals of the new educational offer of the universities for the a.a. 2024/2025 are likely to be very different from previous years. It should be considered that the universities are working to consider the changes to DM 270/2004 provided for by **DM 96/2023**, aimed at making the study programmes more flexible, with an impact on changes in the teaching regulations of the university and on the structure of the degree classes, as regards the basic and characterizing activities. The fear is that the ongoing changes may slow down the initial evaluation procedures, which should be finalised by ministerial legislation by June. In the meantime, periodic evaluation and monitoring of study programmes that have been accredited in previous years will also continue, in the presence of plans to meet the teaching requirements or with recommendations/conditions.

As part of the evaluation of the educational offer, the objective of ANVUR is to be able, at full speed, to collect in a coordinated form **students' opinion**. The first step that will be taken in the year 2024 will be the adoption

of Guidelines for universities for the collection of opinions, which will also include the proposal of common questions useful to compare the situation of the different study programmes at national level.

At the beginning of the year 2024 will be completed the comparison started in 2023 with the High Schools with a special order in order to arrive at the proposal of a new structure of criteria and parameters for the initial and periodic accreditation of **Schools of Advanced Studies** and the **Schools internal to the University** and the **Colleges of Merit** constituted by the Universities, to be submitted to the Ministry. The objective is to start the periodic accreditation of High Schools with special regulations and the initial accreditation of University Schools and Colleges during the 2025-2026 biennium. At the beginning of 2024, at the request of the MUR, the Agency will also be engaged in the evaluation of the first three-year experimental activity of the Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa (CASD) as a School promoted by the Ministry of Defence and subject to the direction and coordination of the Ministry of University and Research. During the year 2025 the Agency will be called upon to evaluate the initial accreditation of the **Southern High School of Naples**, established by the MUR, after the opinion of ANVUR, in January 2022.

Also on the subject of evaluation and accreditation and following the adoption of the DPCM 4 August 2023<sup>15</sup>, ANVUR is involved in the initial and periodic evaluation of programmes organized by universities for **teacher training**. In December 2023, about 1,150 programmes have already been evaluated, which will be activated from January 2024. This activity will continue in the coming years and will be accompanied by a phase of periodic monitoring and evaluation of the courses, also in order to allow the due quality checks that the country has undertaken to conduct under the objective of the PNRR reform of the methods of recruitment of secondary school teachers.

ANVUR's attention to the quality of training also concerns the **Schools of Psychotherapy** and the **Schools for Language Mediators**. At the moment, the Agency is called upon by the MUR to express an assessment of the possession of purely formal requirements<sup>16</sup>, concerning aspects completely unrelated to the Agency's competences and the quality of the training paths. Regarding the Schools for Language Mediators, which, following ministerial recognition, issue qualifications equivalent to the degrees of the class "Sciences of Language Mediation", ANVUR was involved in the year 2022 at a ministerial working table, with the aim of arriving at a new Decree governing the methods and criteria appropriate to a qualitative assessment. The time that has elapsed since the establishment of the working group and the delay in achieving the objectives for which it was set up do not currently allow the Agency's activities to be characterised in qualitative terms.

Among the strategic objectives of the Agency, it is also considered important to highlight the continuity of the work carried out by ANVUR within the Observatory of **Schools of Specialization in Health Care** and the Observatory for the **Degree Programmes of Health Professions**. In both Observatories ANVUR is actively involved with the participation of a member of the Board of Directors, which allows it to have a broad vision of the training chain in the health sector. Consistently with the Agency proactive role, the hope is to be able to actively participate in the proposal of **Guidelines** for the evaluation of **Specialization Schools**, with the specificities that the Ministry of Universities and Research and the Ministry of Health consider priority in this educational-professional field. With regard to training in the health professions and the degree programme in Medicine, also taking into account the increase in the number of programmes and the number of students enrolled during the last years, it is also of interest to the Agency to test a **questionnaire** to be submitted to students to assess the quality of the **internship activities**.

<sup>15</sup> Definition of the undergraduate and academic initial training of first and second grade secondary school teachers, to respect the objectives of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

<sup>16</sup> As e.g., the adequacy of the spaces, the presence of regular rental contracts, etc.



During the 2024-2025 biennium, in relation to the addresses of the MUR and compatible with the financial and organizational resources available, it is the Agency's intention to extend the administration of **skills tests (TECO)**<sup>17</sup> transversal and disciplinary acquired during the training course. The Agency intends to make use of the test results also in order to integrate the teaching indicators that are used for the periodic accreditation of study programmes. The TECO tests also allow you to assess whether students enrolled in different universities on programmes in the same subject areas possess standard skills and knowledge of the same level. The results obtained by the TECO, duly related to the data relating to the students' careers and employment outcomes, can therefore represent an effective model of evaluation and self-assessment of teaching (the latter also accompanied by the opinions of students), allowing inter- and intra-university comparisons, also in order to monitor the contribution of the educational path to the improvement of students' skills. The hope, at full capacity, is to link the **INVALSI** tests on the skills of the last years of high school with the **TECO** tests of the first year of university, also in order to evaluate and analyze the incoming guidance policies of universities.

## HIGHER EDUCATION IN ART, MUSIC AND DANCE (AFAM)

Continuing the process of defining an overall quality assurance system started in recent years, the three-year period 2024-2026 represents the time horizon within which the Agency hopes to make operational all the **accreditation and evaluation procedures of the AFAM system**, in full consistency with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015). However, this objective requires the adoption of all the ministerial regulations implementing Law 508/1999, in particular the Regulation on the programming and evaluation of the AFAM system. However, the actions implemented during the three-year period 2021-2023 have not yet made it possible to fully align the evaluation procedures of the AFAM system with those of universities. To the intense activity of collaboration with the Ministry that - especially in the biennium 2021-2022 - adopted some important circulars for the initial and periodic evaluation of non-state institutions and for the initial accreditation of study programmes of state institutions, followed a 2023 year not aligned to expectations.

The central theme continues to be the **absence of the Ministerial Regulation** defining an organic way the **initial and periodic evaluation of the entire AFAM system**. In this context, **ANVUR** has committed itself to **start testing** the standards and criteria for **periodic evaluation** also of the State AFAM institutions, thanks to the collaboration of the institutions that voluntarily joined this path.

After adopting a specific experimental evaluation protocol - submitted to a wide public consultation - three State AFAM Institutions (Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma, Conservatorio di Benevento, Conservatorio di Trieste) were evaluated, with results that both the Agency and the institutions themselves have considered extremely positive. It is hoped that 2024 will be the year in which the regulatory framework will also be finally adequate; in the meantime, it is the Agency's intention to continue with the experimental evaluation launched, involving five other State institutions, calling for a widening of the availability already initially expressed by the institutions.

In the three-year period 2024-2026, the activities of the **AFAM Evaluation Boards**, launched in 2021, will continue and has consolidated with at least 3 annual meetings between ANVUR and representatives of the Boards. The idea is to further qualify the content of the meetings, adding to the discussion and dialogue initiated in recent years even more specific formative moments, in which to explain to the Evaluation Units methodologies and evaluation approaches that can allow the Institutions to improve the processes of

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<sup>17</sup> For the TECO-T will continue the consolidation activities of the already tested tests and updating of the tests of Literacy, Numeracy, Problem Solving and Civics. For the detection of disciplinary skills (TECO-D), there will be an activity of support of ANVUR working groups to produce/update the tests of the fields of Health Professions, Medicine, Pedagogy, Psychology, Philosophy, Classics, Modern Literature, Law and Veterinary Medicine.

organization of teaching and research, also at the impulse of the internal evaluation bodies. In addition to this development of the Network, ANVUR also wishes to initiate a series of meetings with representatives of the institutions, to accompany and support them in the most appropriate and effective elaboration of training projects that are annually submitted to ANVUR evaluations.

This function of support and support for the dissemination of the culture of quality cannot, however, be separated from the development of appropriate IT platforms to manage comprehensively, smooth and timely administrative and evaluation procedures involving the institutions, the MUR, the CNAN and ANVUR. In this regard, it is hoped that in 2024 the MUR, with the full availability and support of ANVUR, can finally design and implement a new and **efficient IT system** for the management and evaluation of the AFAM training offer.

One area in which the comparison with the AFAM Institutions and the **Network of AFAM Evaluation Boards** will be particularly important is the definition of a national format for the collection of the **opinions of AFAM students**, that in the course of the year 2024 it should be one of the cornerstones on which to launch the internal self-assessment of the institutions and the most complete and in-depth analysis of the Nuclei in the context of the annual reports.

As indicated in the section on research evaluation, during the year 2024 it is expected that the AFAM Institutions system will also be equipped with its own Regulations defining the modalities of accreditation of AFAM doctoral programmes and the criteria for the establishment of courses; Consequently, ANVUR will have the delicate task of specifying within the relevant Guidelines - with reference to the different types of AFAM Institutions - the selection criteria of the institutions admitted to propose doctoral programmes and the methods of verifying the requirements of constituents of colleges. On the subject of research in the AFAM Institutions, a ministerial working group was launched in the year 2023, in which ANVUR is also involved, and in which the launch of a **research evaluation exercise (VQR) of the AFAM institutions** was started. The relevance of the topic and the experience gained in recent years by ANVUR in the university sector and research institutions allow the Agency to suggest particular attention and prudence in initiating an exercise similar to VQR in the absence of a clear and shared definition of the product categories of artistic and musical research and the design of a platform capable of collecting all the products of the institutions. In this context, and with the aim of contributing to the **definition of appropriate criteria for the evaluation of artistic research and production activities**, ANVUR intends to set up its own working group, which is also complemented by international experts, and to carry out an international review of good practice.

Also, the AFAM system, following the adoption of the DPCM 4 August 2023<sup>18</sup>, has the possibility to activate programmes for **teacher training**. In December 2023, some 350 have already been evaluated, and will be activated from January 2024. This activity will continue in the coming years and will be accompanied by a phase of periodic monitoring and evaluation of programmes as planned for universities.

All the activities in program will be accompanied and supported, as in the past, by the dialogue and the constant confrontation with the main institutional actors and organisms of representation of the field AFAM (Ministry of Universities and Research, CNAM, Conferences of Presidents and Directors of AFAM Institutions, Conferences and Student Councils of AFAM Institutions, etc.). In particular, a working group composed of representatives of ANVUR and CNAM was launched at the end of 2023, aimed at developing a shared reflection on the theme of artistic research.

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<sup>18</sup> Definition of the undergraduate and academic initial training of first and second grade secondary school teachers, to respect the objectives of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

## SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONAL RELEVANCE

This paragraph contains the institutional activities provided for by current legislation with regard to specific areas and objectives, together with activities that over the last few years are being complemented by the institutional tasks of the Agency.

Following the presentation in 2023 of the *Report on the State of the University System and Research*, the **focus** of the Report will be presented during the year 2024, with the aim of examining in greater detail certain topics of particular interest to the system, organising specific events for presentation and discussion. Among the main focus being developed should be mentioned: gender analysis, policies for students, the TECO project, medical area training, telematic universities, the internationalization of training and research, international funding and direct calls, the third mission, the classification of magazines. The goal is to provide the country - and in particular to political decision-makers at national and local level - **data, elements, reflections and stimuli** to improve existing strategies and processes or identify **new actions and tools for the development of the Country** through higher education and research. In 2025, the **fifth Biennial Report on the state of the higher education and research system** will be presented. It should be noted that with the approval of the GEP 2023-2025, the Agency undertook to include the **gender dimension** analysis in all the Reports drawn up in the various evaluation activities.

The presentation of the data of the Report and the activity started by ANVUR with AVA 3 represented two important moments for the realization of a **dashboard of indicators** aimed at measuring **efficiency, effectiveness, performance and sustainability** of universities and study programmes. This activity was carried out during the year 2023 with the collaboration of CINECA and in 2024 the public version of the platform will be presented at the MUR, CRUI, CODAU and all universities. In addition to providing everyone with transparent information already available in the ministerial and Agency databases, The aim is also to stimulate at all levels culture and attention to data as a complementary dimension to assess the effectiveness and quality of the actions undertaken.

Directly related to the PNRR is the goal of ANVUR to complete, by the year 2025, the construction of an international **database of Italian and foreign experts**<sup>19</sup>, to be used both internally and made available to the entire university system, high artistic and musical education and research. After the first comparisons started in 2023, the design and construction of the database - structured in the form of a constantly powered repository in which to collect the profiles of all the experts available to participate in the different areas of assessment of competence of the Agency - will have as a priority to the year 2024 the collection of all expert profiles of the research evaluation to be used also for the purpose of the VQR 2020-2024 and the classification of journals. The aim is to create, also through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and/or Machine Learning techniques, a database that will quickly identify the most appropriate and qualified evaluators for each area and specific activities.

Following the reconstitution – which took place in the year 2023 – of the **ANVUR working group on disability and the SLD**, extended to the artistic, musical and dance fields, in the year 2024 will be completed the second survey on the topic at the level of the university system and the first for the AFAM institutions. The goal is to reach by the end of the year the presentation of the results of the two surveys, involving the MUR, the institutions and their delegates. From the year 2025, the aim is to structure a collaboration between ANVUR and MUR, which are institutionally responsible for policies to support disabled students. After a year of suspension of work, ANVUR, together with CRUI, will resume its participation in the work of the Parliamentary

<sup>19</sup> Article 5, paragraph 3 of DPR 76/2010 provides that “omits. The Agency also takes care of the creation and continuous updating of a database of evaluation experts, Italian and foreign, omissis”.



Commission of Inquiry into the **mafia phenomenon** and other **criminal associations** during 2024. A special agreement will be signed for joint study activities, recognition of teaching and research activities in the Italian university system on the phenomenon of mafias and impact assessment.

In recent years, the national legislator has introduced important innovations on the issues of strategic programming, staff programming, performance assessment, anti-corruption and transparency: since 2023 all public administrations have drawn up the Integrated Plan of Activities and Organisation (**PIAO**).

Considering that pursuant to Legislative Decree 150/2009 and Legislative Decree 218/2016, ANVUR has specific competence with regard to the evaluation systems of universities and research institutes, During the year 2023 the Agency proceeded - with the collaboration of the Evaluation Units - to a structured survey and a first **monitoring of the PIAO** of universities. Even taking into account the results of this recognition and the importance of the PIAO in the AVA 3 valuation model, it will be important to organize moments of discussion and discussion with the universities and with the Evaluation Units to highlight the best experiences and address the main critical issues encountered in these years in the implementation of this new tool. With specific reference to the EPRs it will be necessary to start from the work started in the year 2020 with the establishment of the table with the **Department of the Public Administration**, together with the **ConPER (Council of Presidents of Research Institutions)** and with the participation of CO.DI.G.E.R. (**Permanent Conference of the General Directors of the Italian Public Research Institutions**), aimed at implementing the sector rules, **reorganizing the processes of evaluation** of the organizational and individual performance of the Institutions, in the light of the introduction of the PIAO.

The year 2024 will also be the start of a new cycle of **three-year programming of the university system**. While waiting for the Ministry to issue guidelines for the 2024-2026 three-year programming, the programs implemented by the universities with reference to the 2021-2023 three-year period are being concluded. The Agency's involvement will be twofold, on the one hand having to verify ex post the results achieved by the universities with reference to the past three years, and on the other participating in the ex-ante evaluation of the projects that will be presented for the 2024-2026 period.

## INTERNAL ORGANISATION

Before describing the main strategic objectives of the Agency in relation to the internal organisation, it is necessary to highlight that a large part of the actions planned in the previous paragraphs **can only be achieved provided that the staff resources available to ANVUR are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate** for the many activities to be carried out. Compared to the increases in the organic budget that have taken place over the last three years, the Agency continues to record a negative balance between closures and recruitment; This situation leads to a conspicuously undersized structure compared to the assigned tasks, also in comparison with agencies operating in other countries. Thanks to the recent increase of 15 units of officials<sup>20</sup>, ordered by Decree-Law 44/2023, the current organic endowment of law of ANVUR is 57 units of staff, plus 3 managers. However, it should be noted that, even after the competitions and the 5 recruitments carried out during the last year, the actual budget of the Agency at the end of 2023 amounted to a total of 39 staff (including 1 temporary staff). In addition, given that 7 staff are on leave or seconded to other administrations, the actual staff in service is only 32 (25 fewer than the 57 planned). During the two-year period 2024-2025, the priority should be **to complete the Agency's staff plan** with the recruitment of 20 staff. However, it should be noted that this possibility is closely linked to the elimination of the unexpected cut of about 430 thousand

<sup>20</sup> art. 1, paragraph 2 of Decree-Law n. 44/2023 - Table A, Annex 1, converted with amendments by Law n. 74/2023, provided for the increase of the organic endowment of n. 15 units of staff belonging to the Area of Officials, of which n. 10 units for evaluation functions, statistics and informatics and n. 5 units for administrative, legal and accounting functions.

euros to the ANVUR operating fund, contained in the initial draft of the Budget Law for the year 2024. Another important moment for the organization will be the **selection of the Director General** of the Agency, given that the appointment of the current Director will expire in May 2024.

Despite the current reduced number of staff, the **reorganisation of the offices** was completed in 2023, with the appointment of the heads of the new organisational units that will take office in February 2024, after the visit of ENQA. It is worth remembering that the organizational reorganization, with the reduction of organizational units from 12 to 10, was not particularly revolutionary, but aimed at creating the best conditions to govern more efficiently the processes and functions attributed to the Agency.

The organisation of all the Agency's activities has been the subject of a major investment in terms of **IT infrastructure** during the 2021-2023 period, which has led to the full transfer of documents to the cloud. The **agile working model**, which provides ample flexibility for staff, has therefore been established and will be supplemented by the possibility of activating **3 home telework positions** during 2024; Over the next three years, the objective will be to further develop the flexible organization of work, together with the increase in staff, giving equal opportunities to all employees. The attention to the **organizational well-being** of the staff, also witnessed by the appreciation of agile work, will continue to be a strategic priority for the Agency. In 2024 it is planned to establish "solidarity holidays", that is, the possibility of giving – free of charge – the days of vacation to a colleague who needs it for situations of need. During the two-year period 2024-2025 the objective will also be to achieve the activation of a supplementary health policy for all staff and to expand the scope of agreements and services for employees <sup>21</sup>.

Among the organizational development interventions complementary to the reorganization of the offices and the working methods, it is planned to give continuity to the various tools of staff **enhancement**. Having completed the three rounds of horizontal economic progressions (PEO) in the last three years, At the beginning of 2024, the new staff classification<sup>22</sup> system for **professional families** and profiles will be defined and will be continued throughout the year with the major investment in **staff training** that was launched during 2023. Particular attention will be paid to consolidating English courses, to which will be added **personalized training** courses (teamwork, problem solving, IT, language skills, administrative and legal skills) to create the conditions for the improvement of work performance and for the individual growth of all those working within the Agency. As part of raising awareness on issues of **equal opportunities and gender**, the organization of training courses or initiatives for all staff will continue, also with the active collaboration of ANVUR CUG. A new action that will be developed during the 2024-2025 period, together with the return of some units of staff currently on leave, concerns the adoption of specific measures to facilitate their gradual reintegration. Finally, some improvement of the internal evaluation system (SMVP), aimed in particular at strengthening the concept of **institutional and organizational performance**, will be carried out at the same time as the approval of the PIAO.

At the level of trade union relations, the priority will be the definition of the **supplementary contract** of ANVUR and the continuity of procedures for **internal career progressions**, both vertically between areas and horizontally within the areas, according to criteria that must comply with the principles laid down by the CCNL.

The drive to computerise the Agency's activities has developed with the accession of ANVUR to the **National Strategic Pole**<sup>23</sup>, in which additional services for network security and **management applications** have been

<sup>21</sup> Examples: parental support for staff with pre-school children/children, purchase of schoolbooks and school expenses, summer camps or summer camps during school closures, crèches close to work, medical facilities to carry out preventive medical screening, sports facilities for physical well-being (gyms, swimming pools etc.), parking spaces near the work site

<sup>22</sup> See art. 18 of the CCNL of the section Central Functions triennium 2019-2021

<sup>23</sup> The Polo Strategico Nazionale S.p.A. is the cloud infrastructure for the Italian Public Administration born within the PNRR actions, which aims to secure critical and strategic data, systems, and applications of Administrations. The goal of the National Strategic Pole is to bring 75% of Italian administrations to migrate to cloud services by 2026.

acquired; this choice provides for a steady increase in investments over the next three years, especially to ensure maximum security and management of data and evaluation activities carried out by the Agency. In the same direction, it is planned to redefine the **current agreement between ANVUR and CINECA** in the year 2024, as an in-house entity of the Agency that deals with the design and management of evaluation platforms and databases used; the definition of the possible new agreement will be preceded by a specific market investigation, in order to identify possible alternative solutions and to define the reference economic and qualitative benchmarks.

With regard to **communication**, the aim is to have the first integrated communication plan of ANVUR in the year 2024. In October 2023, the new press office service was entrusted with the task of proposing to the Board of Directors a new structure of events, tools and methods to enhance and communicate the activities of the Agency - starting from this Programme - was entrusted. The plan will also include the **redesign of the website** in Italian and English, with the aim of making it operational from the second half of 2024.

Finally, particular attention should be paid to the identification of the **new headquarters** of the Agency. After the move from Piazzale Kennedy to Via Ippolito Nievo in 2014, the stay in the current location will end in 2026. The ANVUR has already activated some months ago looking, in collaboration with the MUR, a destination not far from the current location. However, also in order to evaluate possible different locations, the Agency is also autonomously engaged in the search for an alternative destination to move offices already in early 2026.



[www.anvur.it](http://www.anvur.it)