



# ANVUR'S ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME 2023-2025



# **ANVUR'S ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME 2023 - 2025**

**(Approved at the meeting of the Governing Board on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022)**

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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 2023 and the following years 2024 and 2025.

The strategic guidelines contained in the Activities Programme were first illustrated to the Agency's Advisory Committee and then duly developed to be submitted to the Minister of Universities and Research for approval. It should be noted that, in order to settle them, the Agency carried out a preliminary self-assessment of the state of implementation of the 2022-2024 Programme. Moreover, in consideration of the changes in the regulatory and institutional framework within which ANVUR's activities are placed, the Agency has updated the Programme with regard to the next three-year period 2023-2025. Central to the definition of the Programme were the priorities indicated by the Minister of University and Research, Senator (prof.) Anna Maria Bernini, which have been presented on November 22, 2022 at the Parliament hearing. Priority was given to the issues of evaluation and monitoring of processes and results with a view to improving the quality of the higher education and research system in the international context. By taking into account the competences assigned by the relevant legislation as well as the missions and objectives of both the PNRR and the EU Next Generation, the Agency has then carefully identified programmes, actions, and measures through which it can contribute to the achievement of the Country's objectives in the field of higher education.

The structure of the Programme is arranged according to the same model adopted for the previous year (with regard to the three-year period 2022-2024) and is divided into the following strategic areas: **INTERNATIONALIZATION, UNIVERSITIES EVALUATION, RESEARCH EVALUATION AND RESEARCH ON EVALUATION, EVALUATION OF AFAM INSTITUTIONS, FURTHER ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONAL RELEVANCE**, and, finally, **INTERNAL ORGANISATION**. It should also be noted that this Programme provides the framework for the Integrated Plan of Activities and Organisation (PIAO), that the Agency is required to adopt by January 2023, as regards the integration of strategic guidelines and objectives and the operational management of activities.

The activities planned for the next three years are detailed in the sections devoted to each strategic area. The following **Figure 1** outlines the **priorities settled by the Governing Board**, highlighted in different colours according to the time in which specific actions are expected to take place for the 2023-2025 period.

**FIGURE 1: Strategic priorities for 2023-2025**

LEGEND

2023-2024: activities to be carried out in 2023-2024

2023-2025: activities that will take place regularly throughout the three-year period 2023-2025

2024-2025: activities scheduled to start during 2024-2025

#### INTERNATIONALIZATION

- EQAR/ENQA Assessment and WFME Accreditation
- Consultation with MUR and CRUI on the European approach to QA
- Participation in the activities of Italian Universities involved in European Alliances
- International 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 (e.g. European approach to QA, Micro-credentials, ESG, etc.)

#### RESEARCH EVALUATION AND RESEARCH ON EVALUATION

- Revision of the regulation for the classification of journals
- Proposal of updated threshold values for the National Scientific Habilitation
- VQR 2015-2019: International audit
- Active participation in the international debate on Reforming Research Assessment
- Criteria for the evaluation of the results of the ASI research programmes and ex-post evaluation of PRIN
- Survey of research and third mission activities of Universities (SUA RD-TM) and national and international benchmarking on impact indicators
- Evaluation of PhD programmes and programmes funded under the PNRR
- Launch of VQR 2020-2024

#### UNIVERSITIES EVALUATION

- Second round of periodic accreditation of universities and initial accreditation of new programmes
- Guidelines for the survey of students' opinions
- Criteria for the initial and periodic accreditation of Schools of Advanced Studies with special regulations, Higher Schools and Colleges
- Contribution to the evaluation of the Specialization Schools of medical area, Schools of Psychotherapy, Schools for language mediators
- Test on skills (TECO)
- INTEGRATED SYSTEM (MUR, ISTAT, INPS, ALMALAUREA) for the analysis of the employment opportunities of graduates and PhD students

#### EVALUATION OF AFAM INSTITUTIONS

- Pilot on-site visits for periodic accreditation of state AFAM Institutions and periodic assessment consolidation of non-state AFAM Institutions
- Consolidation of the AFAM Independent Evaluation Units Network
- International Working Group on Research in AFAM Institutions and definition of criteria for the evaluation of research and artistic production activities
- Guidelines for the survey of students' opinions
- Evaluation of PhD programmes

#### OTHER INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Presentation of the Biennial report with follow-up seminars/focus meetings
- PIAO University and EPR Monitoring and related Guidelines
- Creation of an International Register of Italian and foreign experts for all the Agency's evaluation activities
- Biennial report on the Universities and Research System - year 2025
- National dynamic monitoring dashboard of the main Universities' indicators (teaching, research, sustainability)
- Report on disability in Universities and AFAM Institutions

#### INTERNAL ORGANISATION

- Personnel increase and adjustment of personnel remuneration to that of MUR
- PIAO as an integrated tool for organisation and management
- Offices reorganization and new regulation on appointments and graduation of the responsibility allowance
- Supplementary contract and career advancements
- New Agency website and external communication plan
- New headquarters of the Agency

As it emerges from this brief introduction, drafting the Agency's activities Programme, far from being a mere fulfilment of legal requirements, represents a fundamental occasion to adjust and rethink the programming and planning of strategic objectives. In line with what has already been done in 2021-2022, and with a view to steady improvement, this is an opportunity to:

- communicate externally the Agency's mission and its branching out 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.

## INTERNATIONALIZATION

In keeping with the path started in 2022, the internationalization strategy planned for the next three years sets several institutional objectives. 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, by requiring the Agency to strengthen and develop its presence in the international context.

As regards **the Agency's international accreditation**, it is worthwhile to build on the important progress made in 2021-2022. Following the successful **ENQA**<sup>1</sup> mid-term evaluation in September 2021, the Agency's work plan has been redefined during the year 2022. Regarding the option of undergoing a focused review during 2022 for inclusion in the **EQAR**<sup>2</sup> register (centred only on standards against which the Agency had not obtained a positive evaluation) and then applying for ENQA membership renewal in 2024, the Agency's final decision is to merge both assessments at the beginning of the year 2024. A single visit by experts appointed by ENQA will therefore take place and the result will also be used for the purposes of admission to EQAR. This choice was determined by several factors: the extension of the term of office of the Governing Board's members<sup>3</sup>; the need to undertake the external evaluation after the conclusion of the first round of on-site visits for Universities' evaluation and periodic accreditation carried out according to the AVA 3 model; the implementation of the Phd programmes evaluation according to the new regulations introduced by DM 226/2021 and the need to complete the first round of pilot periodic on-site visits for the evaluation of AFAM State Institutions. Therefore, the demanding preparatory work for the evaluation procedure therefore continued in 2022. This entailed the Agency's participation in all the major events organised at international level by ENQA and the constant interaction with the ENQA and EQAR contact persons, so as to submit the application for evaluation by January 2023 and to prepare the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) by October 2023, prior to the visit of the experts designated by ENQA. In the meantime, the necessary actions have been implemented to correct the weaknesses highlighted in particular by EQAR following the 2020 evaluation, in order to make the Agency's evaluation procedures fully compliant with ESG 2015<sup>4</sup>. It should be emphasised

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<sup>1</sup> The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. As a result of a positive evaluation, ANVUR has been a member of ENQA since June 2019. The evaluation is valid for five years and must therefore be confirmed by 2024.

<sup>2</sup> The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education. In 2020 ANVUR did not achieve inclusion in the register and will therefore undergo a new evaluation in 2024.

<sup>3</sup> By Law No. 79 of 29 June 2022, the terms of office of the Governing Board's members was extended from four to six years, with effects that also apply to the members of the current Governing Board.

<sup>4</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 programmes. The current version of the ESG was adopted at the European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference in 2015 and provides the standards used by ENQA and EQAR to assess the compliance of national evaluation procedures with international criteria.

that, in order to achieve full compliance with ESG, it would be appropriate and advisable for the Ministry of Universities and Research to adopt by early 2023 the Regulation for programming and evaluating the system of Higher Education in Art, Music and Dance provided by Law 508/1999. Finally, it should be noted that the Agency's inclusion in the EQAR register serves two important national objectives: that of allowing European Alliances of Universities coordinated by an Italian University to undergo a single accreditation procedure managed by ANVUR according to the **"European approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes"** model, with a further passage/validation at the individual agencies of the participating Universities and, more generally, that of simplifying the accreditation of joint courses delivered within international programmes.

A further area of major importance, on which the Agency has been working intensively during 2022, concerns the preparation for the visit scheduled for the first half of the year 2023 for the purpose of **accreditation** by the World Federation for Medical Education (**WFME**<sup>5</sup>). It is worth recalling that this accreditation, in addition to enhancing the attractiveness of Italian Universities' **Medical Schools** to foreign students, is essential to allow students graduating in Medicine in our country to continue their education and career in medical specialty schools in the US. In this regard, as will also be said in the section on the evaluation of Universities, specific guidelines and criteria for the evaluation of programmes in Medicine and Surgery have been developed within the AVA 3 model, with the aim of defining a model in which the student training places even greater attention on the clinical and care component, according to internationally recognised standards.

In addition to the positive outcome of the above-mentioned external evaluation procedures, ANVUR aims to further consolidate the excellent results achieved during the 2021-2022 period in building and consolidating a **network of relations with Agencies in other European and non-European countries**, also by strengthening its participation in the **international debate** on quality assurance in higher education. ANVUR will therefore work to strengthen or make effective the agreements signed during the period 2021-2022 with the Holy See's Agency (AVEPRO), the Agency of the Community of Aragon (ACPUA), the Peruvian national body of quality assurance (SUNEDU), the Argentine National Agency (CONEAU), the French Agency (HCERES), the Albanian Agency (ASCAL), the Madrid Agency (Fundación para el Conocimiento madri+d), the Agency of Montenegro (ACQAHE), as well as to enter into further agreements with other international agencies. After the interruption caused by the pandemic, **staff mobility** activities resumed in 2022, with ANVUR hosting representatives of ASCAL and ACQAHE for a few days. At the beginning of 2023, ANVUR staff (together with MUR staff) will be hosted by the Flemish and Dutch Agency NVAO as part of the project "Implementation and innovation in QA through peer learning" (IMINQA), while ANVUR will be hosting officials from the Hungarian and Armenian Agencies in March. During the 2023-2025 period, ANVUR will also be directly involved in **projects funded by the European Commission**; notably, the ERASMUS project "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 period), and the collaboration with the network of European agencies and with the university system (also through participation in a **working group set up by BFUG within the IMINQA project**) on the highly relevant topic of the European approach to quality assurance of joint programmes ("European Approach"), which will require specific regulatory adjustments in the coming years to ensure compatibility with the accreditation and quality assurance procedures adopted in individual countries. It would be important to establish close cooperation between ANVUR, MUR, CRUI and CIMEA in

<sup>5</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, it published the third updated edition of the standards for quality improvement in Basical Medical Education (cf. the "WFME BME Standards 2020" web page).

the coming year, so as to address this issue at national level. In order to facilitate the work of the Alliances and encourage the adoption of shared procedures for quality assurance, the European Commission meanwhile launched a call last June to test the release of a “**European label**” to joint degrees and to verify the potential use of cooperation instruments already available at European level (also with a view to the possible adoption of a European legal status by the Alliances). Some of the Alliances which include Italian Universities have responded to the call, receiving the support of both MUR and ANVUR, which agreed to participate in the proposals as associate partners.

Furthermore, the **involvement** of **ANVUR** in the activities of **international bodies** and **working groups** will continue, also in view of the forthcoming update of the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, scheduled for 2025.

For further information on the international activities carried out by ANVUR, please refer to the relevant section on the website <https://www.anvur.it/en/activities/internationalization/>.

## RESEARCH EVALUATION AND RESEARCH ON EVALUATION

The conclusion of **the VQR 2015-2019**, with the presentation of the results in July 2022, was certainly one of the highlights of the Agency’s activities in 2022 in terms of relevance and impact on the university and research system.

As already indicated in last year’s Activities Programme, the conclusion of the VQR 2015-2019 must be followed by a self-assessment and external evaluation of the procedure, so that any adjustments for the launch of the **VQR 2020-2024** are promptly proposed to the MUR. To this end, the Agency carried out an initial internal assessment of the procedure in the second half of 2022 and will launch an **international audit** in early 2023, involving experts from international organisations.

Equally important will be ANVUR’s active participation in the **Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (COARA)**. Such participation will be ensured by the presence of ANVUR in the COARA Steering Committee, following the election of Prof. Menico Rizzi on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. This will trigger the international debate on the application by the various European countries of the founding document of COARA, i.e. “**The Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment**”, which ANVUR joined among the first signatories on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Along with around 50 Italian Institutions – which are likely to increase in the near future – ANVUR is thus in a leading position at national level in the application of the principles of the agreement and in the reflection on research evaluation methodologies, which must primarily aim at enhancing quality through peer review and the responsible use of quantitative indicators.

In the same context also lies the support requested by the MUR to the Agency for the updating of the threshold values used in the **National Scientific Qualification (ASN)** indicators or, in any case, the active collaboration with the Ministry in the event of the proposal of a different evaluation model for individual researchers to be eligible to participate in local competitions for the role of university professor. Closely connected with the ASN is also the updating of the Regulation and the procedures currently used by the Agency for the **classification of journals** in non-bibliometric areas, as well as the periodic verification of the list of journals already ranked as scientific and Class A. In addition to the experience gained over the past few years, the new international approach to research evaluation and the need to enhance the involvement of the academic community in the analysis and classification process must be taken into account.

Regarding **PhD programmes**, the main effort will consist in consolidating the application of the new **evaluation and accreditation** criteria set out in DM 226/2021 and the guidelines referred to in DM 301/2022. ANVUR has made a decisive contribution to the definition of the new Regulation on Universities' Phd programmes by the MUR. In addition to the **initial accreditation** activities, particular importance will also be attached to the **procedures for the periodic evaluation of Phd programmes** which, besides being an integral part of the system of periodic evaluation of Universities and programmes (model AVA 3), may also be applied to individual Phd programmes. Monitoring and periodic evaluation by ANVUR are also required by the MUR for all **new programmes activated with PNR or PNRR resources** concerning industrial PhDs, in collaboration with companies, that prove to be innovative for public administration and cultural heritage, of national interest or included within programs dedicated to digital and environmental transitions.

The coming year 2023 will be a key moment for the Agency's role with respect to the ex-post evaluation of Research Projects, as part of the broader activity of **evaluating** the efficiency and effectiveness of the **public funding and incentive programmes for research and innovation activities** assigned to ANVUR by DPR 76/2010. In this regard, mention should be made of the provisions of Decree-Law No. 36 of 30th April 2022, which entrusted ANVUR with the task of **defining the criteria to be applied by the Italian Space Agency** for the **evaluation of research programmes**, as well as of the assignment to the Agency by the MUR of the **ex-post evaluation of PRINs**. To this end, a closer collaboration with the Ministry will be fundamental to identify evaluation methods that are useful for verifying the quality of the funded research, so as to avoid that the assessment is limited to formal aspects and the proper use of financial resources. A further field of activity could concern the ways in which Universities and research Institutions **use national funds** on objectives related to the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (**PNRR**). There is no doubt that a significant part of the measures and funding deriving from the PNRR refers to the so-called "impact assessment", according to an integrated and extended approach that requires considering all the indicators of **social, economic, environmental and/or cultural impact of research** towards end-users. In giving the utmost attention to this issue, the Agency aims to test the impact assessment model, also in consideration of to the Institutions' capacity to make available to society the results of their own research and the innovations which, thanks to the PNRR, should arise from the university and research system.

With the adoption of DM 1154/2021, relating to the new methods of self-assessment, evaluation, initial and periodic accreditation of Universities and programmes, the Ministry has provided for the reactivation of the Departments' Single Annual Report on Research and Third Mission/Social Impact (**SUA RD/TM**). By the month of January 2023, the Agency will submit a proposal to the Ministry aimed to resume the surveys that were interrupted in 2015, useful for the evaluation of the **results of research and third mission activities and the quality policies of the university departments**.

This survey model could be extended over the next three years to the **Public Research Institutions** and prove useful for collecting data of **inter-university research Consortia**. This may launch a project of continuous census of the activities, which otherwise risks being limited to the five-year VQR evaluation. Indeed, it is worth recalling that DPR 76/2010 entrusts ANVUR with the task of evaluating the quality of the processes, the results and the outcomes of management, training, and research activities, including technology transfer, also for the Institutions supervised or funded by the MUR.

In this regard, however, one should determine if (and how) ANVUR's mission must be redefined in the light of the functions attributed to the MUR's newly established "Technical Structure for the evaluation of research projects", approved by the decree-Law No. 50 of 17th May 2022, converted into Law No. 91 of 15th July 2022, which amended Law No 240/2010. This provision states, *inter alia*, that this structure shall assesses the impact of research activity, taking into account the results of ANVUR's activity, in order to increase the cost-effectiveness, effectiveness and efficiency of public funding in the field as well as to attract private sector funding.

On the subject of **research on evaluation**, the Agency is continuously involved in the debate on evaluation methodologies at national and international level. In addition to the participation in COARA, for the next three years (2023-2025) ANVUR intends to investigate a number of extremely topical issues that are animating an important scientific debate on the international scene: namely, **open access journals** and **predatory publications**, the evaluation of the **effects of VQR on the publication practices** and scientific performance of Italian Universities, the **role of bibliometric indicators** in the evaluation, the **function of the third mission/social impact** and its interaction with the research activity. Based on the information that will feed into the SUA RD/TM database, the Agency would also like to engage in a structured discussion at national level on the issue of **impact indicators**, which at the moment represent an **evaluation frontier** still to be built.

## UNIVERSITIES EVALUATION

In compliance with DM 1154/2021, the year 2022 saw the definition of the new model of periodic evaluation of Universities (so-called **AVA 3**) in view of the **second accreditation cycle**, which will take place from the first semester of the year 2023. This will be the start of a very demanding activity for the Agency, which, over the next five years, will have to evaluate all the 99 Italian Universities for the second time, by providing a judgement that will then be used by the MUR for the purpose of periodic accreditation of Universities and programmes. This commitment is expected to cover about 10 Universities in 2023, and then increase to 25 universities for each of the years 2024 and 2025, and to about 20 Universities for each of the years 2026 and 2027. It should be recalled that with the new AVA 3 model, the assessment framework becomes broader compared to the first periodic assessment cycle; indeed, Universities will be evaluated for the quality of processes and results in the five areas defined by the DM 1154/2021: Strategy, planning and organization; Management of resources; Quality Assurance; Quality of teaching and services to students; Quality of research and third mission/social impact. In addition to the assessment of Universities and programmes, particular attention will be paid to the periodic evaluation of Phd programmes, which becomes an integral part of AVA 3 – and to the specific evaluation of the teaching and care organization of Medicine and Surgery programmes. It is hoped that these criteria will act as a stimulus for the development of a training model that is decidedly student-centred and focused on the resulting professional profile, for the entire research training chain (PhD programmes) and for the care training chain (Medicine).

The application of the new AVA 3 valuation model marks a further break from the AVA 2 model; with AVA 3, indeed, the final accreditation score is eliminated, rating classes are reduced, and the duration of accreditation is tied to the percentage of focus points fulfilled by the University. In compliance with the recommendations made by ENQA and EQAR, the Agency also extended the evaluation to Phd programmes, provided for the presence of students in the Experts Committees for all evaluation procedures, set up a Guarantee Committee to handle any complaints from the Institutions and, finally, provided for the

publication of all evaluation reports on the Agency's website. The Agency's objective is to foster a logic of accompanying Universities, stimulating steady **improvement** and preventing accreditation from being perceived as a tool to create biased competition among Universities.

As regards to the **initial accreditation of newly instituted programmes**, the Agency will update on a yearly basis the Guidelines for quality planning and the Protocols for the evaluation of programmes, both in order to adapt them to the evolution of regulations, and to foster the raising of the quality level of the Universities' educational offer. At the same time, the initial evaluation of the new programmes will continue, together with the ongoing verification of the teaching achievement plans of the already accredited programmes and of those whose accreditation has been granted with recommendations/observations. Starting from the a.y. 2022/2023, special attention will be paid to the programmes activated within the European University Alliances, the assessment of which will be carried out directly by the Governing Board, by taking into account the peculiarities of an international educational offer.

Regarding accreditation and evaluation, it is also worth recalling the provisions of the former MIUR's policy act concerning the 2017 update to the PNA, approved by ANAC Resolution 1208 of 22/11/2017. This applies in particular to the request made to ANVUR to intensify **controls on the programmes of telematic Universities**<sup>6</sup>. In view of the provisions of the policy act and considering that the areas of verification are not the direct responsibility of the Agency, such a request should be more clearly circumscribed, for instance within the next Guidelines of the three-year programming that the MUR will have to adopt with reference to the three-year period 2024-2026. However, it should be emphasised that any further verification or control activities could only start from the year 2024, in conjunction with the necessary adjustment of the Agency's staff allocation, in terms that will be better described in the last section on the Internal Organization.

On the same subject of accreditation, and considering the provisions of DM 289/2021 regarding the three-year 2021-2023 planning of the university system, in the first months of 2023 ANVUR will propose to the Ministry an update of the criteria, arrangements and indicators for initial and periodical accreditation of the **Schools of Advanced Studies with special regulations** and of the **University Schools and Higher Colleges** established by the Universities. The objective is to start the periodic accreditation of Schools of Advanced Studies with special regulations and the initial accreditation of University Schools and Colleges during the 2023-2024 period. In the period 2023-2025 the Agency will also be engaged in the initial accreditation of the last two Schools of Advanced Studies that have been established by law: the **Scuola Superiore Meridionale di Napoli** and the **Scuola Superiore a ordinamento speciale della Difesa** of the Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa (CASD).

Among the strategic objectives of the Agency, it is important to highlight the continuity of the work carried out by ANVUR within the **Observatory of the Schools of Specialization in the Health Care area** and the **Observatory for the Degree Programmes in Health Care professions**. In both Observatories ANVUR is actively involved through the participation of a member of the Governing Board, which allows the Agency to have a broad view of the healthcare education chain. In the proactive role that falls to the Agency, the hope is to be able to actively participate in the proposal of **Guidelines** for the evaluation of **Specialisation Schools**, with the specificities that the Ministry of Universities and Research and the Ministry of Health deem to be a

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<sup>6</sup> On page 8 of the Policy Act, ANVUR is requested to intensify controls on the accreditation of programmes and areas/processes related to students' examinations and graduation, especially MA degrees and single-cycle MA degrees, as well as the procedures for carrying out and obtaining master's degrees, with controls on the actual in-presence examinations, on the composition of the committees, and on the level of the theses.

priority in this specific educational-professional field. From this point of view, it will also be fundamental to determine ANVUR's role in the light of the newly established MUR's "Technical Structure for strengthening the Quality of Specialised University Training in the health sector", approved by Decree-Law no. 4 of 27th January 2022, converted into Law no. 25 of 28th March 2022, in order to support the activities of the national and regional Observatories for specialised health training, as well as the activities of the National Observatory for Health Professions, also in order to avoid procedural inefficiencies.

Moreover, it should be noted that ANVUR also has a representative in ministerial work groups on the planning of programmes of Health Care area, as well as in two other ministerial working groups engaged in the definition of new training curricula for the nursing profession and in the adoption of the educational system of the programme in Osteopathy. Since the demand for an adequate number of professional figures relatable to degrees in the health professions that meets the needs of the territory is a priority for the country and involves a close collaboration between the MUR and the Ministry of Health, ANVUR will continue to be actively engaged both through the analysis of the different existing programmes on the national territory and in the requests for accreditation of new programmes, with the aim of supporting quality assurance in this specific disciplinary field.

A further sensitive context, which requires the transition from a system of formal requirements verification to one of substantive evaluation is that of **Schools of Psychotherapy** and **Schools for Language Mediators**. At the moment the Agency is called upon by the MUR to give an assessment on the possession of formal requirements<sup>7</sup> concerning aspects completely unrelated to the Agency's competences and to the quality of the training programmes. It is ANVUR's intention to propose to the MUR a different approach to the evaluation of the aforementioned Schools, which will require a possible regulatory amendment. As regards the Schools for Language Mediators, which, as a result of ministerial recognition, issue qualifications equivalent to the degrees in "Language Mediation Studies", ANVUR was involved in a ministerial working group in 2022. As a result of this debate, criteria and indicators for a qualitative evaluation of these Schools might be proposed to the MUR.

The demanding work carried out during the year 2022 on the side of AVA 3 has prevented the revision of the format for **university students' opinions** from being completed within the year. This objective is therefore postponed to the year 2023, with the awareness that it is a fundamental tool among those to be considered in the process of periodic evaluation of programmes and quality improvement. Aware of the sensitivity of the subject and the need to duly take into account the expectations of Universities and students, ANVUR will initiate a discussion with the respective representatives, with the aim of formulating – also in the light of the distance teaching experiences in recent academic years – a questionnaire and a filling-in methodology that, safe from misuse or distortion, can contribute to assess the quality of teaching and students services, by stimulating their improvement.

In 2023, also thanks to the ministerial contribution from FFO 2022, the activities of **delivering tests on transversal and disciplinary skills (TECO)**<sup>8</sup> acquired during education will continue, in order to combine the monitoring of teaching processes with a series of result indicators to support the system of internal and

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<sup>7</sup> As e.g., the adequacy of the spaces, the presence of regular rental contracts, etc.

<sup>8</sup> For the TECO-T, activities will continue to consolidate the tests already proved and to update the tests in Literacy, Numeracy, Problem Solving and Civics. For the detection of disciplinary skills (TECO-D), there will be an activity in support of ANVUR's working groups to produce/update the tests in the fields of Health Professions, Medicine, Pedagogy, Psychology, Philosophy, Classics, Modern Literature, Law and Veterinary Medicine.

external quality assurance of the Universities, with the aim of extending them to a greater number of disciplines and Universities and thus contributing to the improvement of the quality of educational processes. The results obtained from TECOs, duly related to the data on students' careers and employment outcomes, can represent an effective model for the evaluation and self-assessment of teaching (the latter accompanied by the students' opinions), allowing inter- and intra-University comparisons, also in order to monitor the contribution of educational programmes to the improvement of students' skills. The hope is also to be able to start, during the period 2023-2025, a discussion with **INVALSI**, so as to link the skills tests of the last years of high school with the TECOs of the first year of university, also for the purpose of evaluating and analysing the Universities' incoming orientation policies. The protocol signed during 2022 with the Italian Association of Evaluation (AIV) and the Italian University Network for Lifelong Learning (RUIAP) is also part of this framework, aimed at reinforcing the role of lifelong learning as a key resource for coping with current societal changes.

Remaining in the area of evaluation, the activity of the Working Group set up within ANVUR on "**Recognition and enhancement of teaching skills of university professors**" will come to an end in 2023. The Group's main objectives include mapping the educational experiences of Faculty Development at local level, defining standards and competence profiles of university professors, and formulating guidelines for a system of recognition and enhancement of the teaching skills of university professors.

With a view to broadening the perspective of evaluation of the university system, it is also the Agency's intention to deal in a more systematic way with the **placement** and employment opportunities of both **graduates** and **PhDs**. These issues are closely related to the effectiveness and impact of educational programs with respect to the country system, which require a highly articulated evaluation approach and the integration of different databases and information sources. The analysis of the **characteristics and determinants of job placement** of graduates and PhDs plays a central role for the effects that the match between the labour demand by companies and public administration and supply by educational Institutions produces in the economy and society. In order to analyse the employment outcomes of graduates, in addition to the surveys carried out by ISTAT (sample survey every three years) and AlmaLaurea (for the consortium Universities), administrative sources are available, to be integrated with the information contained in the ASN: the archive of the Statistical Information System of Compulsory Communications (COOB) managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, information from the Revenue Agency and from INPS. The objective of the Agency, which became part of the National Statistical System (SISTAN) in 2018, is to contribute to the creation of an **integrated archive**, which would make available a longitudinal view of the graduate/PhD with information on the type of contract, professional qualification, and economic field of the enterprise (in accordance with standard taxonomies and national and European legislation). The integrated archive would make it possible to develop statistical analysis on vertical mismatch (i.e. mismatch between professional qualification and degree) and horizontal mismatch (with reference to the SUA-CDS), as well as the possible effect of curricular and non-curricular traineeships on subsequent job placement. While waiting for this project to be completed, the collaboration with ISTAT will in any case be reactivated in the course of the year 2023, aimed at an overall redesign of the current survey on the job placement of PhDs, so far conducted by ISTAT at census level on a multi-yearly basis. The aim is to carry out a census survey on a yearly basis, addressed to those who have obtained a PhD (two and four years after the degree), which will include information on job placement and any research activities carried out. The ANVUR offices will also resume the drafting of a questionnaire to carry out an annual survey on the satisfaction of PhDs and PhD candidates, and

will publish the results. Similarly, it is the Agency's intention to initiate a discussion with CONFINDUSTRIA and MUR, to better analyse the characteristics and impact of industrial Phd programmes activated with the XXXVIII cycle.

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

By continuing the process of defining an overall quality assurance system started in recent years, the three-year period 2023-2025 represents the time horizon within which the Agency expects to make all the **accreditation and evaluation procedures of the AFAM system** operational, in full compliance with European standards and guidelines (ESG 2015). This objective, however, presupposes the adoption of the ministerial regulations implementing Law 508/1999, in particular the Regulation on the planning and evaluation of the AFAM system. Indeed, the period 2021-2022 represented an important moment in the process of gradually aligning the evaluation procedures of the AFAM system with the principles of ESG 2015: thanks to an intense and constructive collaboration with the Ministry, several circulars have been published that made it possible to proceed with the updating of the criteria for the initial and periodic evaluation of non-State AFAM Institutions under art. 11 of DPR 212/2005, as well as with the procedures for the accreditation and extension of the first and second level academic diploma programmes and masters proposed by non-state Institutions and legally recognized academies. However, the picture is not yet complete.

In the absence of ministerial regulations governing the methods for the periodic evaluation of State AFAM Institutions, it is ANVUR's intention of to start testing the evaluation procedure with a small group of Institutions at the beginning of 2023. To this end, evaluation standards and criteria have been defined during the second half of 2022, having been previously developed with the contribution of an international working group operating between the end of 2020 and 2021. These were also the subject of consultation with the main stakeholders, including the Ministry itself, the CNAM and the representative bodies of the Presidents, Directors and Students of the AFAM Institutions. The trial could therefore be usefully employed both to test the validity of the criteria and to provide an informed contribution to the MUR in the preparation of the aforementioned regulation.

The year 2022 also marked the consolidation of the **AFAM Evaluation Units Network**, which stemmed – similarly to what has already been envisaged for Universities – from the intention to intensify collaboration with the Evaluation Units. The latter are the main coordinating bodies of the AFAM Institutions' self-assessment activities and the internal engine of a virtuous circle between the identification of objectives, planning, monitoring of processes and results. The Network – with which ANVUR promotes an interaction based on dialogue, discussion, sharing of good practices, the development of tools to disseminate and systematise them – actively **participated** in the drafting of the **new Guidelines for drafting the annual report of the Evaluation Units**. In compliance with the Budget Law 2022, ANVUR has also defined the criteria and guidelines for selecting the members of the Evaluation Units that, based on the definition of the fees by decree of the MUR in agreement with the MEF, will have to be applied by the AFAM Institutions. In order to provide AFAM Institutions with an additional service, ANVUR has also set up the **AFAM Register of Quality and Quality Assurance Experts**, which the institutions will be able to draw on for the recruitment of external members of the Evaluation Units.

An area in which discussion with the AFAM Institutions and the Evaluation Unit Network will prove particularly important is the definition of a national format for surveying the **AFAM students' opinions**, which

will be one of the cornerstones to launch the internal self-assessment of the Institutions and the more detailed analysis of the Evaluation Units in the annual reports.

As required by the Regulations for the evaluation and accreditation of Universities phd programmes (DM 226/2021), by the a.y. 2023/24 the AFAM Institutions system should also be endowed with its own Regulation defining the **accreditation** procedures of **AFAM Phd programmes** and the criteria for the establishment of programmes. Similarly to the Universities and in line with ESG provisions, the Agency should be actively involved in the initial and periodic evaluation of the aforementioned programmes. Hopefully, the quality of Phd programmes in the field of Art will be assured, providing that – within the regulatory framework being defined by the MUR – particular attention is paid to creating a system symmetrical to that recently redefined for the accreditation and evaluation of university Phd programmes. Special attention should therefore be paid to the possibility of setting up AFAM Phd programmes that comply with adequate standards in terms of the quality of the Institutions and structures, and opportunities for artistic research offered to enrolled students, starting from the evaluation of first and second level programmes, which form the necessary basis for the of third-level educational offer.

One of the most topical issues for the AFAM system is therefore the development of **criteria** for the **evaluation** of **artistic research and production** activities that, also in view of the activation of Phd programmes, will be a topic of major importance to promote education and research inspired by quality and internationalisation in the field of art, music, and dance as well. To this end, a new working group composed of national and international experts is to be set up to formulate proposals based on an assessment of existing international good practices.

Finally, it is hoped that in the first months of 2023, in agreement with the Ministry, the **reorganisation of the IT evaluation platforms** can be launched, in order to make them more effective and efficient and to achieve a complete digitalization of the Institutions' applications, of the preliminary analysis falling within the remit of CNAM, of the ANVUR's qualitative and quantitative assessment and of the authorization and provisions falling within the remit of the MUR.

All the planned activities will be accompanied and supported, as in the past, by the dialogue and the constant interaction with the main institutional stakeholders and representative bodies of the AFAM sector (Ministry of Universities and Research, CNAM, Conferences of Presidents and Directors of AFAM Institutions, Conferences and Student Councils of AFAM Institutions, etc.).

## **SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONAL RELEVANCE**

This section deals with the institutional activities provided for by current regulations with reference to specific areas and objectives, together with activities that have been added to the Agency's institutional tasks in recent years.

As required by DPR 76/2010, the Agency draws up every two years a **Report on the university and research system**, which is submitted the Minister, who in turn forwards it to the Prime Minister, the inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Planning and Parliament. In January 2023, the fourth edition of the Report will be presented, which will contain several new features compared to previous editions. Alongside a part where topics and data related to the situation of the university and research system will be illustrated, in continuity with the 2018 Report, a second part will be devoted to **specific thematic focuses**, with the aim of providing

useful information for assessing the **impact of the actions taken** in recent years, including those implementing the university reform introduced by Law 240/2010.

The presentation of the Report on the University and Research System will also be an opportunity to launch a new line of activity of the Agency, closely related to its evaluation tasks. Indeed, it is the Agency's intention to organise in the course of 2023 **in-depth seminars** on the themes dealt with in the Report, by inviting stakeholders of the university system and research to discuss the data presented and perspectives in relation to the individual topics (e.g., orientation, enrolment, recruitment, drop-outs, artistic research, etc.). The aim is to provide the country – and in particular policy-makers at national and local level – with **data, elements, reflections, and stimuli** for improving, correcting existing strategies and processes or identifying **new actions and measures for the country's development** through higher education and research. Similar initiatives have already been undertaken by the Agency during the year 2022, e.g. with the presentation of the Report on students with disabilities and SLDs in Universities. The hope is that, during the two-year period 2023-2024, continuity will be given to this survey, which should also be extended to AFAM Institutions, under the coordination of the MUR and with the participation of the Agency.

These in-depth study and analyses activities will also be useful in consolidating the Agency's role as a national reference point for statistics and information on Higher Education and Research, which will lead to the **next edition of the Biennial Report** during 2025.

Closely related to this activity is the Agency's need to create, by 2025 and with the collaboration of MUR and CINECA, an **integrated database** bringing together existing information on the areas of teaching and research assessed by ANVUR and integrating it with Universities' budget data, with the aim of producing a **dashboard** that monitors in real time the trends of the main **indicators of Universities' efficiency, effectiveness, performance and sustainability**. Such a tool would be particularly useful for sharing information and supporting both ANVUR and MUR in their respective policy, regulatory and evaluation activities, as well as Universities in their comparison at the national level.

During the 2021-2022 period, the national legislator introduced some important innovations in the areas of strategic planning, personnel planning, performance assessment, anti-corruption, and accountability. Following the enactment of Decree-Law No. 80/2021, and especially of Ministerial Decree No. 132/2022 of the Minister for Public Administration in agreement with the Minister, all public administrations are called upon to adopt the Integrated Plan of Activities and Organization (**PIAO**). Considering that, under Legislative Decree no. 150/2009 and Legislative Decree no. 218/2016 ANVUR, has specific remit with regard to the evaluation systems of Universities and research institutes, the Agency's objective is to start during the first months of 2023 a first **monitoring of the PIAOs** of the aforementioned Institutions, in order to produce, with the involvement of the MUR and the other relevant Ministries, an update of the **Performance Assessment Guidelines** adopted by ANVUR in previous years, prior to the introduction of the PIAO legislation. As regards in particular the EPRs, it will be worth updating the work started in the 2020 with the establishment of the working 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 enforcing the sector's regulations by **reorganizing the evaluation processes** of the Institutions' organizational and individual performance.

Directly related to the PNRR is ANVUR's objective of completing, by 2024, the building of an **international database of Italian and foreign experts**<sup>9</sup>, to be both used internally and made available to the entire university, higher education in Art and Music, and research system. The database will be arranged in the form of a constantly updated repository, in which the profiles of all the experts available to participate in the different areas of evaluation will be collected (e.g., accreditation of Universities and programmes; accreditation of Institutions and programmes of higher education in art, music and dance; evaluation of research and third mission; evaluation of Phd programmes and scientific journals, etc...). The Register should also be supplemented with references to the main existing citation databases and possibly enriched by further glossaries defined ad hoc, in order to allow an informed selection of experts in relation to the evaluation processes, in support of an independent and authoritative evaluation, based on international best practices and on the involvement of the best experts in the various disciplines. The objective is to create, also resorting to Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques, a database that will quickly identify the most suitable and qualified experts in each area of assessment. The aim of this project, in line with the priorities defined in the 2021-2027 PNR, is to contribute to the extensive and inclusive growth of the research system, to the development of a new generation of researchers and actors in knowledge transfer, and to the promotion of the international dimension of higher education and research.

## INTERNAL ORGANISATION

Before describing the Agency's main strategic objectives in relation to the internal organisation, it must be highlighted that most of the actions planned in the previous paragraphs **can only be achieved provided that the personnel resources available to ANVUR are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate** for the many activities to be carried out. The Agency, operating since 2011, is indeed severely understaffed compared to the tasks it is assigned with (evaluation of teaching, research, third mission, and performance of Universities, EPRs supervised by the MUR and AFAM Institutions) and also compared to other agencies operating at European level. There current number of personnel is 42 staff members and 3 managers. It should be noted, however, that as many as 5 staff units have been seconded to the Prime Minister's Office or to the other Ministries for PNRR-related activities or to form offices in direct cooperation with the new government (continuing to be on the Agency's staff and partly also with salaries charged borne by it). While these displacements acknowledge and highlight the quality of ANVUR's personnel, it is necessary to point out the resulting difficulties in terms of internal organisation: difficulties which risk becoming permanent and preventing the Agency from carrying out its institutional activities. In this regard, it should be recalled that in 2023 the Agency will undergo an important external evaluation procedure (aimed at the confirmation of the ENQA membership and inclusion in the EQAR register) and also the staffing aspect is fundamental for the positive outcome of the evaluation: the standard 3.5 of the European ESG states that "Agencies shall have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to fulfil their mandate". The goal for 2023 is therefore to be able to **increase the number of staff** from 42 to at least 50 with the support of the MUR. Another issue closely related to the Agency's organizational welfare is the need to restore as soon as possible the salary equalization of the staff with that provided by the CCNL of the MUR staff (as provided for in DPR 76/2010). In this regard, it should be noted that the DPCM of 23 December 2021 adjusted, as of the year 2020, the **administrative allowance** for the Ministries' staff, but not that of ANVUR's staff. The primary objective is to realign the unfair differentiation, also with the willingness to cover the costs with resources

<sup>9</sup> Article 5, paragraph 3 of DPR 76/2010 states that "*omissis*". The Agency is also entrusted with the creation and continuous updating of a database of Italian and foreign evaluation experts, *omissis*".

from the Agency's budget. The solution in any case requires a regulatory intervention, to be implemented with the support of the Ministry of Universities and Research.

Pending the resolution to the above priorities, the **new organisational structure** will be operational by the first quarter 2023, and the competitions for the recruitment of 5 permanent positions launched during 2022 will be completed by the first half of 2023. As envisaged by the new organizational chart, this will not be a particularly revolutionary reorganisation, but one aimed at creating the best conditions for managing the many processes and tasks attributed to the Agency. Within an organisation such as ANVUR, which is mainly made up of **highly specialised officials** engaged in a classic **division of work** by subject areas and functions within specific **organisational units**, the activity and the creation of **project groups** will be strengthened to support the Governing Board and the Director in the realization of the strategic objectives illustrated in the Programme.

The organization of all Agency's activities was the subject of a major investment in terms of IT infrastructure during the 2021-2022 period, with the gradual transition to the processing and storage of documents directly in the cloud, thanks to the applications of the Office 365 platform. Also as a result of this investment, the **remote working model**, which is suited to the Agency's activities, has now been consolidated. By January 2023 the Integrated Plan of Activities and Organisation (**PIAO**) will be adopted, which will also include the Three-Year Plan for the Prevention of Corruption and Transparency (**PTPCT**), redefined in 2022 according to a qualitative approach together with personnel performance management. In this regard, it is worth highlighting that over the years the Agency has gradually digitised these work organisation tools, which since 2022 are integrated into a specific telematic platform.

Among the organizational development measures complementary to the reorganization of the offices and the working methods, it is planned to give continuity to the various staff **development** tools. Having completed the two rounds of horizontal economic advancement (PEO) in the years 2021 and 2022 and defined the new system of staff classification by **profiles**<sup>10</sup>, in 2023 the priorities will be the definition of the ANVUR's **supplementary contract** and the **staff training**. In particular, the procedures for internal **career advancement**, both vertically between areas and horizontally within areas, will be included in the supplementary contract, subject to the available financial allocations and according to criteria that must comply with the principles laid down by the CCNL. As regards training, following the assessment of the skills held by the staff and taking into account the skills specific to the different professional profiles, in addition to general training (team work, problem solving, IT, language skills, administrative and legal skills) already made available to staff, more **personalised training plans** will be added, in order to create the conditions for an improvement in work performance and for the individual growth of all those working at the Agency. Finally, with a view to consolidating the internal evaluation system, the SMVP approved in 2022 will be confirmed for the year 2023, with the aim of strengthening the concept of **institutional and organizational performance**.

As far the **communication** is concerned, since in September 2022 the Agency did not renew its press office service, important and structural progress will be needed. It is planned to launch a new call for tenders for the selection of the new press office service, with the aim of drawing up an **integrated communication Plan**, to support the various institutional events that await the Agency during the three-year period 2023-2025,

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. art. 18 of the CCNL of the Central Functions period 2019-2021.

which will then have to be implemented, monitored, and constantly updated. Central among the communication tools to be redesigned is the development of the **new website**, which will be operational by the first half of 2023.

Finally, special attention should be paid to the choice of the Agency's **new headquarters**. After the move from Piazzale Kennedy to Via Ippolito Nievo in 2014, the permanence is the subject of a dispute between the State Property Agency and the owner, which has requested the release of the building by the end of 2022. The ANVUR has already taken action, with the collaboration of the MUR, in the search for a possible alternative solution. In 2023, should it not be possible to remain at the Via Ippolito Nievo headquarters, the next location of the Agency must be formally decided, for a move that is expected to be completed in 2024-2025.



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