The Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC)

(Nucleo di Valutazione, NdV)

Role, tasks and relationship with Governance

The Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC)

The role of IEC in the Italian University system
- *IEC composition*
- *Relationship with University Central Governance*
- *Relationship with Research and Teaching (R&T) Units*
- *Some specific tasks of IEC in HR evaluation*

Tasks and Activities
- *Reports and studies*
- *Continuative activities*
- *Spot activities*
- *Some examples in teaching and research*
- *The annual report: the AVA system*

Composition of the Independent Evaluation Committee

- **The IEC consists of 7 members:**
  - 2 professors from UNISI
  - 4 external members (Professors, Local or Central Authorities)

    [in our case, 3 professors from other Italian Universities, 1 General Director of another Italian University]

  - 1 student of UNISI

- *Equilibrium between external point of view & internal support towards improvement*

Relationship with University Governance

- **The subjects the IEC refers to:**
  - *Rector and General Director*
  - *Administrative Board*
  - *Academic Senate*
  - *All the actors of the AQ system*

- **Main objectives**
  - *Monitoring and evaluation of University activities*
  - *Recommendations for improving performance*
  - *Strategic and operational advice*

- **IEC may access all data available at the university level**

Relationship with Research and Teaching units

- **The subjects the IEC refers to:**
  - *Departments*
  - *Program Degree Committees*
  - *Teachers-Students joint committees (T&S)*

- **Main objectives**
  - *Monitoring the evolution of departments, programs*
  - *Compare and evaluate performance*
  - *Acknowledge best practices*
  - *Suggest improvement actions*

- ***Strong relationship between IEC and Teaching and Student joint committees***

IEC and human resources evaluation

- **Main HR evaluation processes**
  - *Teaching staff performances*
  - *Student opinion survey*
  - *Evaluation of external teachers (direct assignment)*

- **Administrative staff**
  - *Well-being and HR evaluation survey*
  - *Performance evaluation of General Director*
  - *Customer satisfaction survey*

- **Crucial role of the Information System for monitoring HR activity**

IEC: tasks and activities

- **Reports and studies**
  - *Annual report for ANVUR and University board on University performance on Teaching/Research/Technological Transfer*
  - *Reports on special issues (advice for national accreditation, Research Center and Laboratory reports, budget reports)*
  - *Validation of the Administrative Performance Measurement System*
- **Continuous activities**
  - *QA system monitoring*
  - *Analysis of degree programs KPIs*
  - *Assessment of departmental research activity*
  - *Administrative performance (budget and target)*

IEC: tasks and activities

- **Spot/occasional tasks**
  - Audits of degree programs
  - Audits on department organization and research
  - Meetings with the Governance Board and Administration board
  - Consultation on specific topics (surveys, department merge or split, authorizations …)

- An example: Analysis of the reports from Teachers &Students joint committees

T&S committees reports

- Every year the T&S Committees edit a report on Teaching courses QA (*enrolment, student performances, internationalization, teaching activity…*)
- IEC performs a deep analysis of these reports, based on a format linked to QA activity
- Feedback on the report is given to each T&S Committee and to the Department governance
- A *meeting* with all the T&S Committees is organized every year to present best practices and discuss strengths/weaknesses sorted out from the analysis
- The meeting is useful to gain awareness of QA processes relevance and deployment

IEC: annual report

- A detailed assessment of how all the issues in the AVA system have been addressed

- For each issue, the IEC analyzes the existing situation, and evaluates the effectiveness of the existing documents

The AVA system

ACCREDITATION AND EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITIES

THE AVA SYSTEM

- The AVA system (*Self-assessment - Evaluation - Accreditation)* aims to improve the quality of teaching and research through the application of a Quality Assurance (QA) model based on:
    - planning, management, self-assessment and improvement procedures
    - transparent, external verification

- *Verification* results in an <u>accreditation judgment</u> as the result of a process through which it is assessed:

  - the *possession* (initial accreditation) or

  - the *permanence* (periodic accreditation)

  of the *Quality Requirements* that make the institution suitable for carrying out its functions

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE AVA SYSTEM

1. *To ensure, through MUR and ANVUR evaluation activity, that higher education institutions operating in Italy uniformly provide a service of adequate quality to their users and to society as a whole (equity)*

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE AVA SYSTEM (II)

2. the *responsible and reliable autonomy* in the use of public resources as well as in collective and individual behaviors relating to training and research activities

3. *improving the quality* of training and research activities

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE AVA SYSTEM (III)

4. Let the universities acknowledge, *in a self-assessment perspective*, the level of development achieved by their QA system, not as an end in itself, but as a tool to ensure and implement the quality of training and research developed within it

5. *implement a "process-type" evaluation*, aimed at verifying the consistency between the objectives, the strategies implemented to achieve them, and the results actually achieved through a "dashboard" of indicators on the students' careers

6. *operate with a view to transparency and external responsibility*

7. *encourage continuous improvement of the system, stimulating its periodic review and the application of corrective measures*

Accreditation

The accreditation process verifies that certain requirements are met:

➤ *Initial Accreditation* (carried out for Universities and single Degree Programs)

➤ *Periodic Accreditation* verifies that the requirements for accreditation are still fulfilled, ascertaining whether the Quality Assurance system implemented by the University is appropriate, credible and able to guarantee the quality of the training offered by the programs and related support services

INITIAL ACCREDITATION

- *Initial accreditation is the authorization to the University by the Ministry (MUR) to activate University institutions and degree programs.*

- *Involves verifying the compliance of the institutions and degree programs with the ex-ante indicators, aimed at measuring and verifying the teaching, structural, organizational, qualification requirements of teachers to guarantee quality, efficiency and effectiveness as well as to verify the economic-financial sustainability of the activities*

INITIAL ACCREDITATION

- *Transparency: verification of the completeness of all the information requested in the forms describing the programs*
- *Teaching requirements: verification of the consistency of the teaching staff and its qualification*
- *Teaching units duration: establish the minimum duration of the training activities*
- *Structural resources: structures made available to the individual courses (classrooms, laboratories, libraries, study rooms, etc.)*
- *Requirements for Quality Assurance : provide design of QA activities for the degree programs*

INITIAL ACCREDITATION

- *Survey of the opinion of students (undergraduates and graduates): for each course, survey forms on training activities and related services must be administered to students*

- *Compilation of the Annual Single Card (SUA) of the course: each degree program must duly complete the SUA card within the established deadlines*

- *Drafting of the Review Report: each degree program must produce an Annual Review Report and a Cyclical Review Report (every 5 years) within the established deadlines*

PERIODIC ACCREDITATION

"The periodic accreditation of Universities and Degree Programs is the verification of the quality, efficiency and effectiveness requirements of the activities carried out. Periodic accreditation takes place at least every five years for the Universities and at least every three years for Degree Programs and is based on verifying the persistence of the requirements (...), on additional indicators defined by ANVUR and on the results of the evaluation. (...)"

Requirements for PERIODIC ACCREDITATION

- The Periodic Accreditation of the Offices has a maximum duration of five years
- A necessary condition for the Periodic Accreditation of the Offices and the degree programs is that they satisfy:

➤ the Requirements for Initial Accreditation (compliance with all the requirements is verified "ex post" with particular attention to the requirements declared in the SUA-CdS that are not automatically verified through the information systems)

➤ Quality Requirements R1, R2, R3 e R4 on the basis of the outcome of the visit of the Committee of Experts of Evaluation (CEV)

Requirements for PERIODIC ACCREDITATION

The check must also take into account:

➢ analysis of the data of the Annual Report of the IEC

➢ analysis of the results of the monitoring and quality control activities of the teaching activities of the Degree Programs and of the research of the Departments

➢ Evaluation of the information contained in SUA documents

Actors in the AVA system

ACCREDITATION AND EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITIES

The quality assurance of the courses

- *The degree program committee:*
    - receives quantitative indicators from ANVUR
    - receives and analyzes the report from the T&S Committee
    - gathers students' opinion, both directly and through the survey forms filled by the students
    - analyzes the indicators writing the Annual Review Report (SMA)
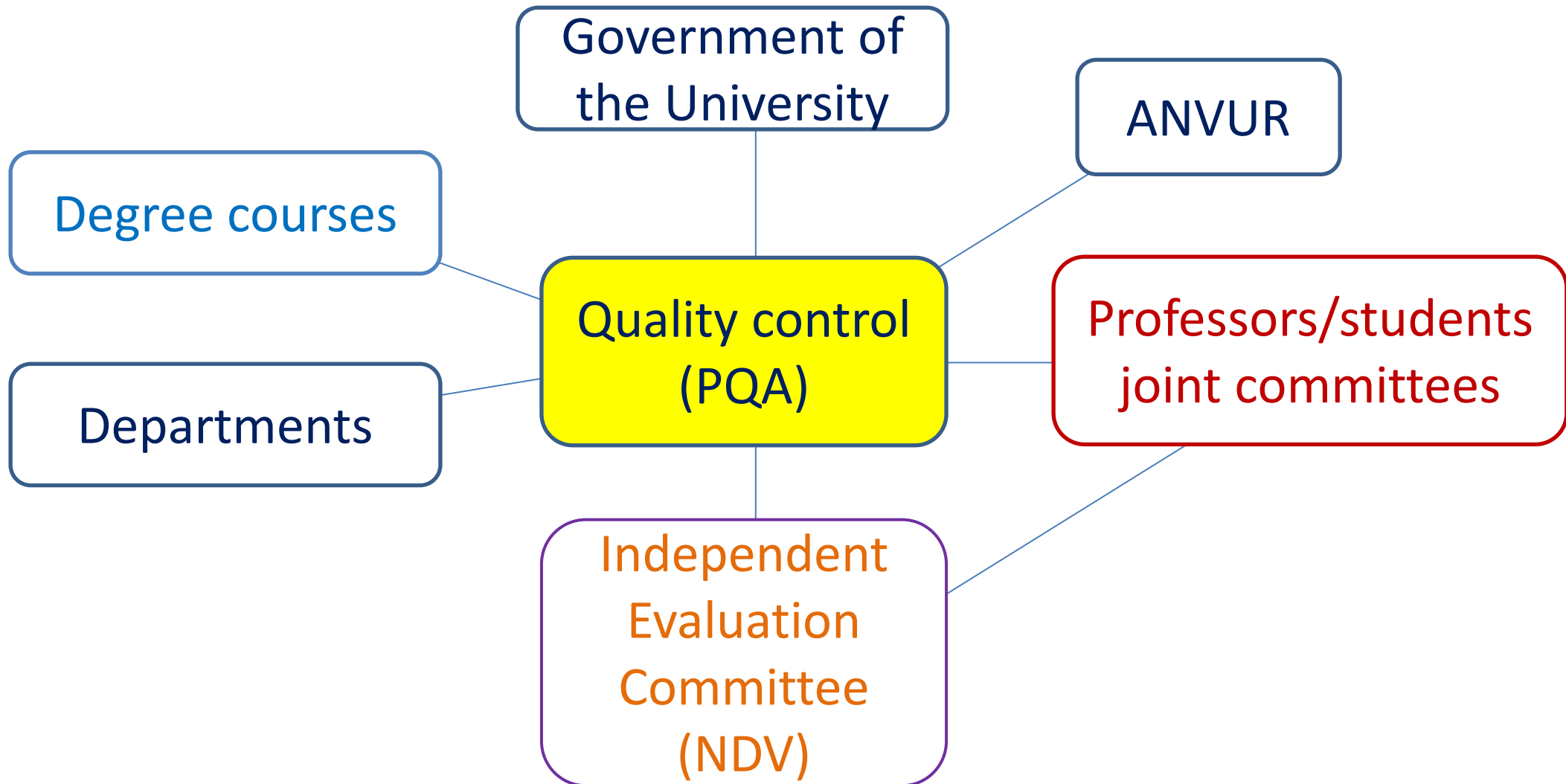   - detects critical issues and designs improvement strategies

The annual review report (SMA)

➢ It's a very concise document

➢ critical comments on the quantitative indicators provided by ANVUR

➢ Selection, among those proposed, of *the most significant indicators* in relation to the character and specific objectives of the course

➢ *Comparison with the courses of the same Degree Class* and type (Bachelor's, Master's, Single Cycle Master's, etc.) and of the same geographical area to detect the *cases of strong deviation* from the national or macro-regional averages

➢ Acknowledgement, also through any other element of analysis, of critical situations

The cyclic review report

- At least every 5 years, and in any case
  - If an institutional visit is planned (CEV)
  - upon request of the IEC
- in the presence of substantial changes to the degree program
- It contains an in-depth self-assessment of the overall performance of the DP
- Identifies relevant problems, analyzes them and proposes solutions
- Unlike the Annual Review Report, which is very synthetic, the cyclic review report is generally more extensive and has a flexible format

The role of Quality Control (PQA)

Government of the University

ANVUR

Degree courses

Departments

Quality control (PQA)

Professors/students joint committees

Independent Evaluation Committee (NDV)

The role of Quality Control (PQA)

- Supervises the proper application of QA procedures of the entire University
- annually monitors and reviews the degree courses
- ensures the information flow with the IEC and ANVUR
- Collects data to monitor quality indicators (qualitative and quantitative) and manages the dissemination of the results (towards DP, IEC, ANVUR)
- Activates any useful initiative to promote quality within the University
- Monitors the implementation of the follow-up process following the CEV visits
- Prepares a summary report on QA requirements in preparation for the accreditation visit
- It is usually *not* responsible for carrying out evaluations

The role of Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) -1
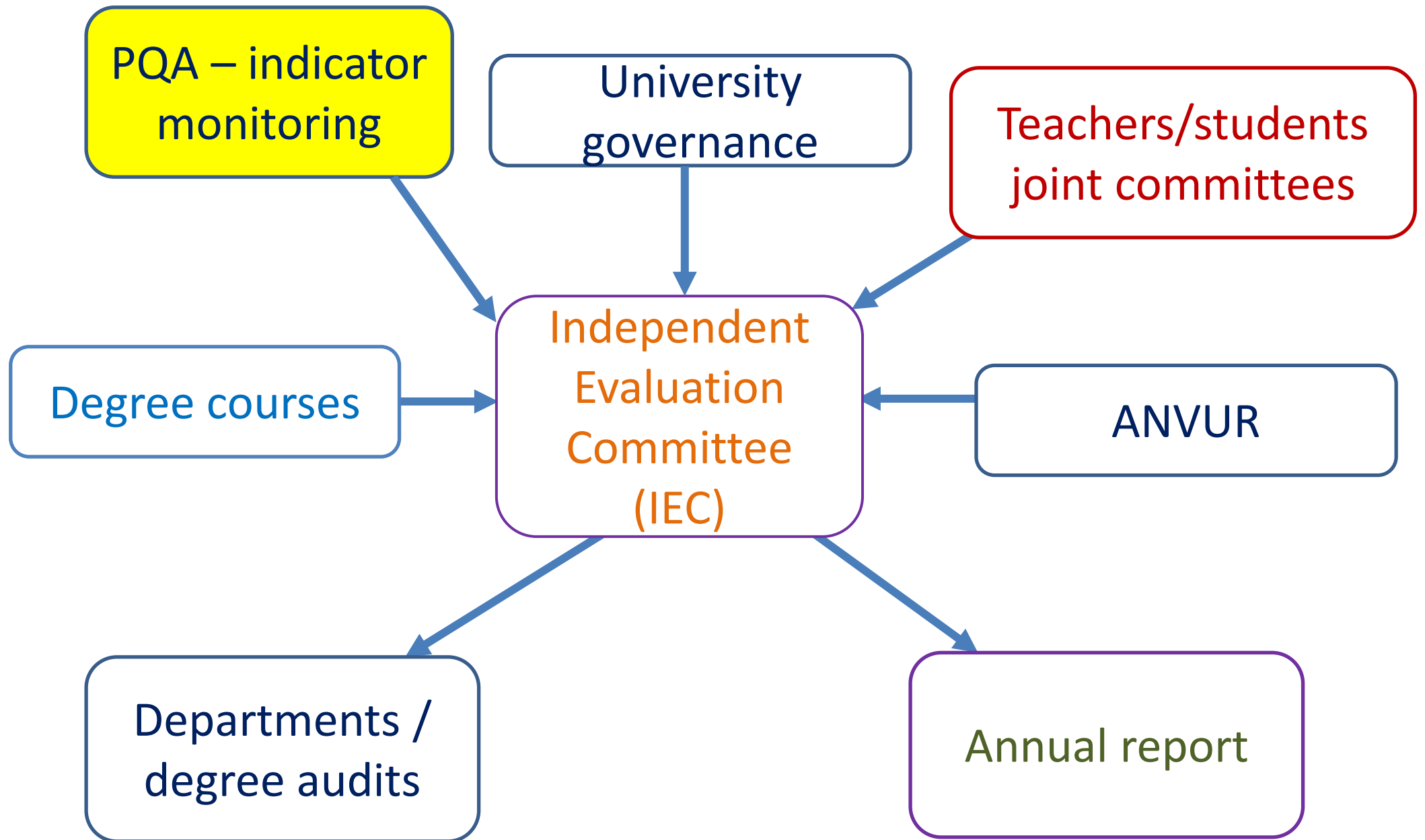
The role of Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) -2

With respect to accreditation procedures, IEC performs the following functions:

➢ Expresses a judgement on the fulfilment of requirements for the Initial Accreditation for new degree programs

➢ Checks the effectiveness and proper functioning of the QA system and supports ANVUR in monitoring the fulfilment of requirements in Periodic Accreditation procedures (at both the degree and the University levels)

➢ Supports University government structures and ANVUR in monitoring the results attained with respect to the indices of periodic evaluation

The role of Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) -3

➤ While the PQA monitors QA, the IEC defines the general monitoring methodology and evaluates the overall QA processes of the University

➤ Cyclically evaluates the operation of the degree committees and of the Departments, by means of analysis of the results, and possibly also audits

➤ The IEC prepares an annual report (for ANVUR) addressing all the issues defined in AVA system, discussing how they have been taken into account in the University, the actions carried out and all initiatives enacted by the University to promote quality

After the periodical accreditation visit from ANVUR experts, the IEC:

- reports about if and how recommendations formulated by ANVUR have been implemented

- reports about monitoring of all degrees

- points out the degrees for which critical issues have emerged by the internal evaluation activity

PERIODIC ACCREDITATION OF DEGREE PROGRAMS

Periodic accreditation of degree programs - 1

- The accreditation cycle of a Degree Program has a maximum duration of three years
- Periodic accreditation is granted to the DPs that meet:
  - the Requirements for Initial Accreditation
  - the Quality Requirement R3, also taking into account the indicators of the periodic evaluation and the internal evaluation by the IEC
  - The periodic Accreditation of the University implies the periodic Accreditation of all its DPs (except for those evaluated negatively, which are suppressed) for a maximum duration of three years
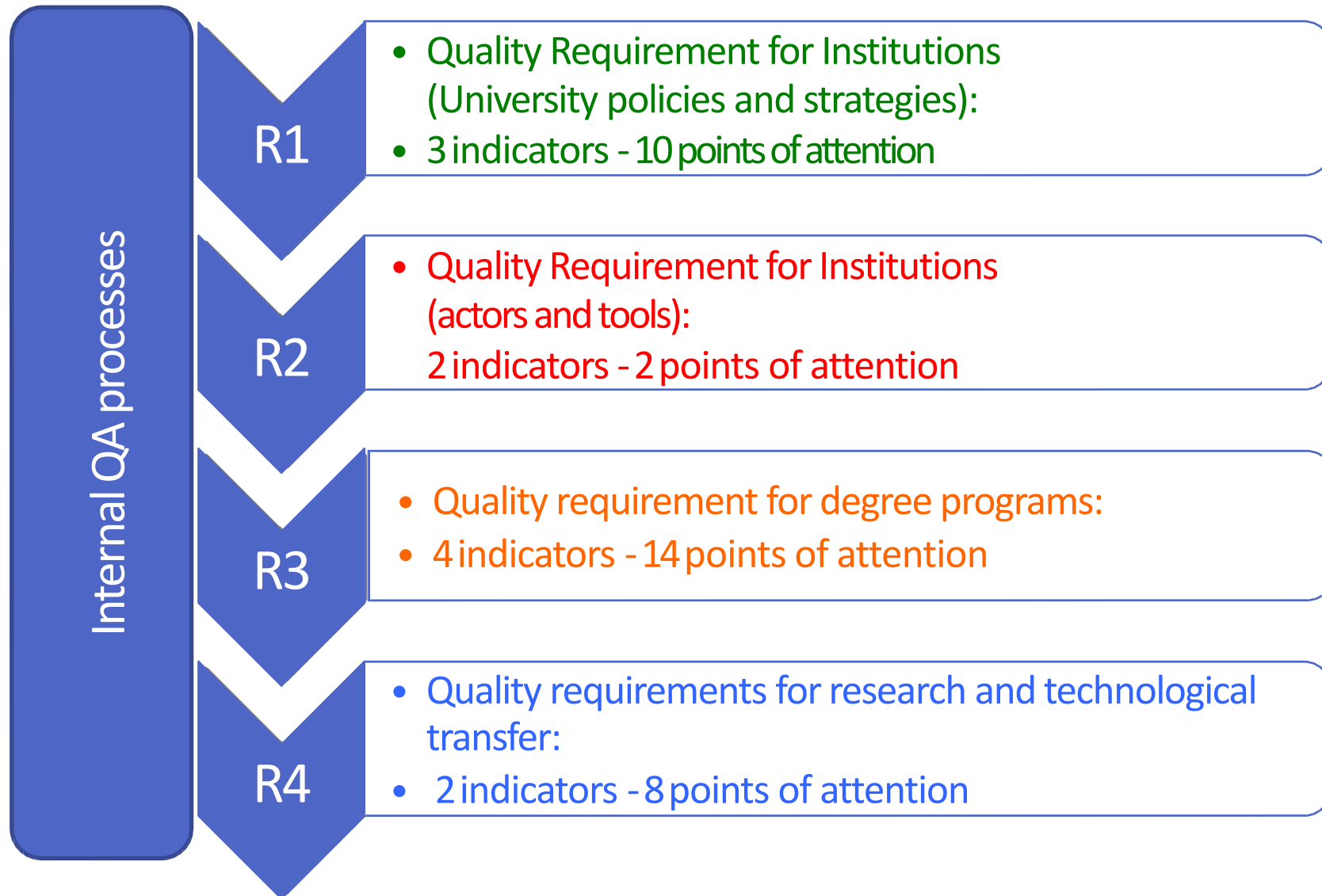
Periodic accreditation of degree programs - 2

The IEC, in the Annual Report three years from the last Periodic Accreditation of the University:

- reports about the overcoming of the Recommendations and Conditions formulated by the CEV on the Degree Programs visited
- reports to ANVUR the Programs having strong criticalities in view of the internal evaluation activity of the last five years

- This information will be used by ANVUR for the purpose of extending the accreditation
- After three years from the periodic accreditation of the University, the accreditation of the program is renewed on the basis of the remote evaluation by ANVUR

Periodic accreditation of degree programs - 3

- ➢ ANVUR's evaluation of the courses will be based on:

  - verification of the fulfilment of the Initial Accreditation requirements

  - outcome of the internal evaluation of the IEC

  - outcome of ANVUR monitoring

- ➢ If highly critical elements are found, or if recommended by the IEC, ANVUR can arrange for an in-depth evaluation of the Degree Program

- ➢ If the assessment gives a positive result, the duration of the accreditation of the Degree Program is automatically extended until the end of the Accreditation of the University

- ➢ otherwise, the accreditation is revoked and the program suppressed with a specific ministerial decree

Quality requirements

Internal QA processes

R1
- Quality Requirement for Institutions (University policies and strategies):
- 3 indicators - 10 points of attention

R2
- Quality Requirement for Institutions (actors and tools):
2 indicators - 2 points of attention

R3
- Quality requirement for degree programs:
- 4 indicators - 14 points of attention

R4
- Quality requirements for research and technological transfer:
- 2 indicators - 8 points of attention

Requirements, indicators, points of attention

Req./Ind.	
Req. R.1	Vision and policies of the University for QA (10 points)
Ind. R1.A	Vision and policies for teaching and research (4 points)
Ind. R1.B	Policies for the design and planning of degree programs (3 points)
Ind. R1.C	Policies for recruiting and sustainability (3 points)
Req. R.2	QA system at the University level (2 points)
Ind. R2.A	System for quality evaluation of the Degree Programs (1 point)
Ind. R2.B	System for monitoring the qality of the Degree Programs (1 point)
Req. R.3	QA management for the Degree Programs (14 points)
Ind. R3.A	Objectives, design and structure of the DPs (4 points)
Ind. R3.B	Teaching management (5 points)
Ind. R3. C	HR, services and support structures (2 points)
Ind. R3. D	Monitoring, strategy review, improvement actions (3 points)
Req. R.4	QA in research and technological transfer (8 points)
Ind. R4.A	QA policies for research and technological transfer at the University level (4 points)
Ind. R4.B	QA policies for research and technological transfer at the Dpt. level (4 points)

REQUIREMENTS AND QUALITY INDICES IN TEACHING, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFER

Requirement R1

Does the University have a clear vision of quality assurance in teaching, research and technological tranfer?

Indicator R1.A

The University owns, declares and implements a vision of quality assurance of teaching and research, declined in a concrete *and* feasible *strategic plan, in which students are attributed an active and participative role at every level. This vision is supported by an organization that manages its implementation and periodically verifies the effectiveness of the adopted procedures for the design the updating and the review of degree programs*

R1.A.1

Quality of research and teaching in the policies and strategies of the University

➢ The relationship among research, teaching and learning plays a fundamental role in defining QA policies and verifying their effectiveness

➢ The University must express a clear vision of:
  - ✓ the quality of teaching and research with reference to the relationships among them
  - ✓ its potential for scientific development
  - ✓ dissemination in the socio-cultural context (third mission) in full coherence with its founding reasons expressed in the Statute, focusing on students and their learning processes and taking into consideration all the cycles of higher education (bachelor, master, PhD)

R1.A.1

Quality of research and teaching in the policies and strategies of the University

- ➢ Within the University, the QA system is described through planning documents (Policy descriptive documents, Strategic Plan, Integrated Plan or similar)

- ➢ Such documents must:
  - ✓ be accessible to both internal and external stakeholders
  - ✓ be articulated in clearly defined and achievable objectives
  - ✓ take into account the socio-cultural context, the University's scientific development potential, ministerial planning and the necessary and available resources

Structure of the QA system

- For the QA system to function properly, the University must have an organization that is functional to the implementation of its strategic plan and the management of the QA
- The organization must:
  - be based on a clear definition and division of tasks, actors and responsibilities
  - provide constant communication flows between the governing bodies and the structures responsible for teaching, research and the third mission
- In defining the architecture of the system, an adequate role should also be provided for students

R1.A.3

Critical review of the QA system operation

It is necessary that:

- the operation of the QA system is periodically monitored and assessed internally

- University activities must be designed aimed at the critical review of the tasks, actors and responsibilities of the QA, also through coordination with Degree Programs and Departments

- teachers, technical administrative staff and students are enabled to transmit their critical observations on the functioning of the QA system and the related improvement proposals to the governing bodies and structures responsible for the QA

- a systematic process of collecting and disseminating such opinions is activated in the event of major changes in the organization of services

R1.A.4

The role of the students

The University must:

➢ Make it easy for student representatives to have access to the decisions of Government Organs

➢ Assign the student an active role in QA processes, stimulating their participation at all levels

➢ Encourage student presence in various Committees

Indicator R1.B

Does the University adopt appropriate policies for the design, updating and revision of the Degree Programs, functional to the needs of students?

R1.B.1

Students admission and career

- ➢ The University must clearly define strategies and methods for admitting students to the Degree Programs and managing their careers and to communicate them clearly

- ➢ Incoming orientation activities and recruitment procedures must pay specific attention to the needs of specific categories of students (e.g. off-site students, foreigners, workers, the disabled, with small children, ..)

- ➢ The universities must plan support activities for students with weaknesses in the initial preparation and to activate paths of excellence for the most prepared and motivated students

- ➢ Appropriate strategies must be adopted to promote the recruitment of foreign students

- ➢ (e.g. initiatives to improve attractiveness, creation of a website in English and the drafting of guidelines in English to facilitate the removal of practical or bureaucratic obstacles)

R1.B.2

Planning of the overall degree catalogue

- ➤ The University is required to develop an overall and clear vision of the articulation of the training offer and its potential for scientific development, also in relation to the needs of the various Interested Parties and the reference context, be it local, national or international.
- ➤ The University must promote initiatives to encourage the internationalization of its training offer such as:
  - ➤ the programming of courses entirely delivered in a foreign language
  - ➤ the offer of CdS with double degree
  - ➤ the provision of individual courses in a foreign language
  - ➤ the organization of teaching of foreign experts also within institutional courses
  - ➤ the international mobility of students and teachers

R1.B.3

Design and update of degree programs

➢ Ensure that the degree programs are designed and delivered in such a way as to encourage students to take an active role in the learning processes, helping to stimulate their motivation, critical spirit, autonomy and involvement in learning processes

➢ The profit checks (exams) consequently must reflect this approach

➢ Ensure an adequate consideration of the development needs expressed by the stakeholders in the reference context (also identified through consultations with a range of interested parties)

➢ Ensure that the design of the courses takes into account the relationship between the scientific skills available and their relevance to the educational objectives

R1.B.3

Design and update of degree programs

➢ The centrality of students and their learning processes should be enforced

➢ The University ensures that the training offer is constantly updated and reflects the most advanced disciplinary knowledge, also in relation to the PhD programs activated

➢ Constant monitoring of the effectiveness of the courses can also be conducted through collaboration between the Degree Programs and the Departments and interaction with internal and external interlocutors (Address Committee)

➢ Adequate consideration should be given to the results of the assessments received (e.g. from MIUR, ANVUR, CUN, IEC)

Indicator R1.C

The University guarantees the competence and updating of its teachers, the sustainability of the teaching load and human and physical resources to support institutional activities

R1.C.1

Recruitment and qualification of the teaching staff

➤ The University identifies and explains the strategies to ensure a coherent recruitment of teachers, from a quantitative and qualitative point of view, with its own strategic vision

➤ The University must promote initiatives to improve the scientific qualification of its teaching staff, also through the recruitment of professors with a high scientific profile from roles or research paths outside the University and through the use of specific ministerial programs

R1.C.1

Recruitment and qualification of the teaching staff

➢ The University must promote the scientific and teaching growth of the professors, with the aim of strengthening the link between training and research as much as possible

➢ The presence of a study center or teaching support structures (also in relation to the use of new technologies), as well as the organization of study and training seminars for teachers constitute a title of merit.

➢ Initiatives should be enacted to foster internationalization of teaching (degrees held in a foreign language, provision of single courses in a foreign language, teaching by foreign experts also within institutional courses, experience of staff mobility)

R1.C.2

Support services to teaching and research, administrative personnel

➢ The University must ensure that the Degree Programs, Research Doctorates and Departments have adequate resources, facilities and support services for teaching and students, easily accessible to everyone

➢ The University must periodically verify the sizing and organizational adequacy of its technical-administrative staff, according to the needs of teaching and research management

R1.C.3

Teaching sustainability

L'Ateneo must:

➢ have developed adequate tools to monitor the ratio students/teachers of each degree program

➢ know how to act to address critical situations without overloading individual teachers

➢ have a strategy to monitor and optimize the overall amount of teaching hours provided by the various Departments in relation to the amount of teaching hours that can be provided (120/90 hours / year for full-time / half-time professors, 60 hours / year for assistant professors

R1.C.3

Teaching sustainability

➤ Teaching at PhD should be included in the computation of a teacher's overall workload

➤ The University must have tools:

  ➤ To monitor and manage the actual ratio students/teachers of the various degree programs

  ➤ To suitably address situations in which student population significantly differs from reference figures for each degree program (overcrowded courses can be split)

Requirement R2

Does the University have
an effective QA system?

Indicator R2.A

Does the University have an effective monitoring and data collection system for Quality Assurance purposes?

R2.A.1

QA management and monitoring of information flows

The University:

- Should have an effective system for the collection of data and information to be used by the various structures for the management of teaching and research
- must ensure collaboration and adequate circulation of data and information between the structures responsible for the QA (PQA, IEC, CPDS), so as to ensure that the general QA policies are implemented at the level of the individual degree programs
- must verify that the structures responsible for the QA interact effectively with each other and with the academic bodies responsible for teaching

Indicator R2.B

Self-evaluation and periodic evalution of Degree programs and Departments

R2.B.1

The Self-Assessment carried out by each degree program must:

- Allow verification of the achievement of the objectives established according to the needs of society and students
- actively involve students
- detect in advance, through appropriate monitoring tools, the potential significant criticalities

R2.B.1

Self-evaluation of the degree programs and IEC check

The University:
- verifies, through the Evaluation Unit (which can also operate through auditions, sample or rotational examinations):
  - the progress of the degree programs and Departments
  - the status of the QA system and the correct compilation of the related documents (SUA - CdS, SUA - RD, Annual Monitoring Sheets and Cyclical Review Reports)
- ensures that the self-assessment of the degree programs (Cyclical Review) and Departments (SUA-RD) provide the data and information necessary to allow the analysis of problems and their resolution

R2.B.1

Self-evaluation of the degree programs and IEC check

- IEC, PQA and CPDSs must ensure that from the analysis of the problems emerging from the Review Reports of the CdS, the reports of the CPDS and from other sources, proposals for plausible and achievable improvement actions arise and that their effectiveness is adequately monitored

Requirement R3

Quality assurance in Degree Programs

Indicator R3.A

The Degree Program defines the cultural and professional profiles of the person who intends to train and proposes coherent training activities

R3.A.1

Design of the degree program and consulting with the stakeholders

➢ In the design phase (and also in relation to subsequent study cycles), the degree Committee ensures an in-depth analysis of the needs and development potential (humanistic, scientific, technological, health or economic-social) of the reference sectors

R3.A.1

Design of the degree program and consulting with the stakeholders

➢ To this end, the Committee systematically consults the main interested parties (students, teachers, scientific and professional organizations, representatives of culture and production) both directly and through the use of sector studies

➢ A committee should be devised (for example a Steering Committee) to discuss the contents of the degree program, consistent with the outgoing cultural profiles, which reflects, deepens and provides information on the actual employment potential of graduates

R3.A.2

Professional profiles definition

The degree program must:

➢ clearly define cultural and professional figure of graduates

➢ declare coherent learning goals

➢ describe in a clear and complete manner, in the disciplinary contents and in the methodological aspects:

- the knowledge

- the skills

- the competences

➢ any other useful element to characterize the cultural and professional profiles to which the degree program refers

R3.A.3

Coherence among profiles and learning goals

The program guarantees that the training objectives and the expected learning outcomes (disciplinary and transversal) are:
- clearly declined by thematic areas
- referable in a coherent manner to the declared cultural and professional profiles

R3.A.4

Teaching offer and course structure

The degree program guarantees that the courses proposed are consistent with the training objectives defined:

- in the disciplinary contents
- in the methodological aspects and related to the logical-linguistic elaboration

Does the Degree Program promote student-centered teaching, encourage the use of up-to-date and flexible methodologies and correctly ascertain the skills acquired?

R3.B.1

Orientation and tutoring

The degree program must:

- guarantee an effective service of orientation to their studies (prospective, current and outgoing students), consistent with the cultural and professional profiles outlined

- encourage students to make informed choices, for example:

    - organize orientation activities in line with the cultural and professional profiles designed by the program

    - propose effective tools for self-assessment of knowledge required to prospective students

Orientation and tutoring

The degree program must take into account:

- the results of career monitoring for ongoing and outgoing guidance

- monitoring of outcomes and real employment prospects for work accompanying initiatives

R3.B.2

Initial knowledge required and recovery of deficiencies - 1

The degree program:

- identifies, describes and advertises in an explicit and easily understandable way the knowledge required or recommended for incoming students

- ensures the verification of the possession of the initial and indispensable knowledge and that any deficiencies found are promptly communicated to the students

- defines and implements initiatives for the recovery of possible deficiencies and guarantees the students support activities (preparatory courses, support tutoring, etc.)

- guarantees that teachers prepare and adequately advertise a form describing the structure of the individual courses and the knowledge required to access them (Syllabus)

R3.B.2

In second-level degrees:

➢ It is highly recommended that interventions are organized to encourage the integration of students from different first level degrees and/or from other universities

R3.B.3

Flexible learning paths - 1

➢ The program must encourage students' autonomy in their choices, critical learning and study organization and guarantees adequate guidance and support from teachers for this purpose (for example, meetings are organized to help the choice among curricula, tutors are designated to help students for the issues relating to the career plan, etc...)

➢ The architecture of the DP must ensure curricular and support activities that use flexible teaching methods and tools tailored to the specific needs of the different types of students (for example support tutoring, in-depth courses, ….)

Flexible learning paths - 2

- ➢ Support initiatives are also desirable for:
  - ➢ students with specific needs (for example off-site students, foreigners, workers, the disabled, with small children, ...)
  - ➢ students with disabilities regarding accessibility to teaching facilities and materials

R3.B.4

Internationalization of teaching

The degree program:

➢ promotes initiatives to enhance student mobility in support of periods of study and internship abroad (also collateral to the Erasmus Program)

➢ ensures, with particular reference to international courses, that the international dimension of teaching is effectively achieved, guaranteeing a satisfactory amount of teaching hours provided by foreign experts and the presence of an adequate number of students from abroad

Exams

The degree program:

➢ defines a system of rules and guidelines for carrying out intermediate and final exams

➢ guarantees that the verification methods adopted for the individual courses are:

  ➢ adequate to ascertain the achievement of the expected learning outcomes

  ➢ properly publicized and communicated to students

  ➢ above all, clearly described in the course sheets

Indicator R3.C

Does the Degree Program have an adequate supply of teaching and technical-administrative staff? Does it offer accessible services to students and does it benefit from facilities suitable for teaching needs?

R3.C.1

Qualification of the teaching staff- 1

The program ensures:

➢ that the number and qualifications of the teachers are adequate to support the needs of the program, taking into account both the scientific contents and the teaching organization

➢ For the evaluation of this aspect, for each program at least 2/3 of the reference teachers should belong to *basic* or *characterizing* disciplines for that program

R3.C.1

Qualification of the teaching staff- 2

The degree program:

➢ enhances the link between the scientific skills of the teachers (also ascertained by monitoring their research activity) and their relevance to the teaching objectives

➢ guarantees the presence of initiatives to support the development of teaching skills in the various disciplines (such as teaching training, classroom mentoring, sharing methods and materials for teaching and assessment)

R3.C.2

The program:

➢ checks that the teaching support services (Department, University) ensure effective support for the performance of their institutional activities

➢ guarantees the verification of the quality of the support provided to teachers, students and external subjects by the technical-administrative staff

➢ guarantees that the University provides adequate teaching support structures, such as libraries, study rooms, teaching aids, IT infrastructures, etc., and that the services connected to them are effectively usable by all students and teachers

Indicator R3.D

Is the Degree Program able to recognize the critical aspects and the margins for improvement of its teaching organization and is it able to define consequent interventions?

R3.D.1

Contribution of teachers and students - 1

The program ensures collegial activities dedicated to:

- revision of the learning paths

- coordination among courses

- rationalization of timetables

- temporal distribution of exams and support activities

Contribution of teachers and students - 2

The program:

- performs the analysis of detected problems and their causes

- allows teachers and students to easily make their observations and suggestions for improvement

- guarantees the availability of procedures for handling any student complaints and ensures that they are easily accessible to them

The program ensures that :

- ✓ the results of the surveys of the opinions of students, undergraduates and graduates are appropriately analyzed

- ✓ credit and visibility are granted to the overall considerations of the T&S committees (and of the other QA bodies)

R3.D.2

Involvement of external stakeholders - 1

- The Degree Program guarantees ongoing interactions with the interested parties consulted during the planning phase
- The methods of interaction:
  - reflect the cultural, scientific or professional character of the course
  - are consistent with the objectives and needs for periodic updating of training profiles also in relation to subsequent study cycles (including the PhD)
- Based on these needs, dialogue is also developed with other interlocutors in addition to those initially consulted

Involvement of external stakeholders - 2

- Furthermore, if the employment outcomes are unsatisfactory, the Degree Program interacts with external subjects to increase the job opportunities of its graduates, creating, for example:
  - opportunities for new internships
  - apprenticeship contracts
  - internships or other work accompanying initiatives

R3.D.3

The DP ensures that the training offer:

- is constantly updated

- reflects the most advanced disciplinary knowledge, taking into account:

    - subsequent study cycles (including the PhD)

    - improvement proposals received from teachers, students, external interlocutors

    - the considerations expressed by the T&S committees and other QA actors

Review of learning paths - 2

Finally, the DP ensures monitoring and analysis of:

- study paths

- exam results

- employment outcomes of graduates also through a comparison with other programs belonging to the same Degree Class on a national, macro-regional or regional basis

- the interventions promoted and the evaluation of their effectiveness

Requirement R4

QA in research and technology transfer

Indicator R4.A

Has the University developed, advertised and implemented adequate policies aimed at guaranteeing the quality of research and technological transfer?

R4.A.1

Strategies and policies for research quality

➢ The University has defined a concrete strategy to ensure the quality of research and the third mission, with a specific program and objectives, which take into account the development potential and the socio-cultural context

➢ Furthermore, the objectives identified by the University are plausible and consistent with its own political and strategic lines and with the potential highlighted by the results of the VQR (national evaluation of research quality)

➢ The University has adequate bodies and structures to achieve the research objectives, and the tasks, authorities and responsibilities of the bodies and structures involved are clearly identified

R4.A.2

Scientific research monitoring and improvements actions

➢ The University has an effective system for monitoring the results of the research carried out internally

➢ The Governing Bodies and the structures responsible for monitoring and evaluating the research have developed tools and indicators useful for the periodic evaluation of the quality of the results,

➢ The University ensures that
  • the results of periodic monitoring are analyzed in depth
  • the proposed improvement actions are plausible and achievable
  • their effectiveness is adequately monitored

R4.A.3

Distribution of resources, definition and publication of criteria

- ➤ The University, in line with its strategy, clearly explains :
  - the criteria and methods for distributing research resources (economic and personnel)
  - the criteria for distributing incentives and bonuses
- ➤ Such criteria are consistent with the University's policies and strategies for research quality
- ➤ They take into account the methodologies and results of national and local research evaluation activities

R4.A.4

Technological transfer and public engagement

The University:

- has developed a specific strategy for the promotion and monitoring of "third mission" activities

- has an effective activity tracking system developed internally

- is able to assess the impact on social, cultural and economic development, taking into account the specificities and needs of the area

Have the Departments defined and implemented their own strategy for improving the quality of research in line with the strategic planning of the University?

R4.B.1

Definition of strategic lines

The Department defined:

- its own strategy on research through an overall program and specific objectives

- an organization functional to implement its strategy

- The goals:

  - are plausible and consistent with the policies and strategic lines of the University

  - are compatible with their potential and their general objectives

  - take into account the results of national and local evaluation initiatives

R4.B.2

Outcome evaluation and improvement actions

The Department ensures:

- the monitoring of research results
- in-depth analysis of the successes achieved, as well as of the challenges and possible problems
- that the proposed improvement actions are plausible and achievable, and that their effectiveness is adequately monitored

R4.B.3

Definition and publication of resource distribution criteria

➢ The Department, in line with its own strategic program and that of the University, clearly indicates the criteria and methods for the internal distribution of resources (economic and personnel), as well as the criteria for the distribution of any incentives and bonuses.

➢ These criteria are also consistent with the strategic guidelines of the University and the indications and methodologies of research evaluation activities

R4.B.4

Endowment of staff, structures and teaching support services

The Department :

- ascertains that research support services ensure effective support to the performance of its institutional activities

- plans the work of the technical-administrative staff, distributing tasks and responsibilities in line with the objectives set

- ensures that adequate support structures are available for research and, in particular, for the PhD, such as libraries, laboratories, IT infrastructures, etc. and that the services connected to them are effectively usable by PhD students and researchers

Evaluation phases for the Accreditation

The visits to Universities and DPs for the Periodic Accreditation consist of three phases

Remote screening → On-site visit → Report finalization

The evaluation process is based on the assessment of the Quality Requirements

Positive evaluation of the Points of Attention

For each Point of Attention (PA) a judgment is formulated on the basis of the score obtained and thus modulated:

PA = 9 or 10   the activities carried out concerning the PA are associated with or guarantee excellent results and can be taken as example of good practice for other universities.
The CEV expresses a "report of meritorious practice"

PA = 7 or 8   the activities carried out concerning the PA guarantee good results

PA = 6   the activities carried out concerning the PA guarantee the absence of major criticalities or problems can be overcome through suitable correcting actions

Negative evaluation of the Points of Attention

Scores less or equal to 5 signal the presence of critical issues of different entity and are associated with reservations expressed by the CEV:

PA= 4 or 5   The activities carried out with reference to the PA do not prevent the occurrence of criticalities
The point of attention is approved with reservations
The CEV expresses a "Recommendation"

PA= < 4   There exist (or are highly likely) major criticalities associated with this PA
The point of attention is not approved
The CEV expresses a "Condition" to be fulfilled before the accreditation can be given

Indicator evaluation - 1

No evaluation is attributed to the *individual Requirements*

The evaluation of each indicator is given by the arithmetic mean of the PA scores of the Attention Points that compose it

The judgment relating to each indicator is modulated as follows:

$PI \geq 7,5$ VERY POSITIVE

$6,5 \leq PI < 7,5$ FULLY SATISFACTORY

$5,5 \leq PI < 6,5$ SATISFACTORY

$4 \leq PI < 5,5$ CONDITIONAL

$1 \leq PI < 4$ UNSATISFACTORY

Recommendation

Reservation regarding the resolution of structural or non-critical content deficiencies, which do not prevent the proper conduct of the training processes by the DP and in any case remedied by the subsequent annual review procedure. The presence of recommendations does not prevent accreditation and their compliance is subject to verification at the subsequent periodic accreditation

Condition

Clause concerning the resolution of structural or content defaults that are believed to be overcome within a defined term according to their severity and number. In the event of failure to comply with the condition set within the established timeframe, the accreditation granted with a time constraint ('conditional') is transformed into a non-accreditation judgment

Overall assessment of the degree program

Each Degree Program evaluated receives an *accreditation* or *non-accreditation* proposal, depending on the score obtained as <u>the arithmetic mean</u> of all the scores attributed to the program in each of the Points of Attention of Requirement R3, according to the scale:

PC ≥ 4   The degree gets the Accreditation

PC < 4   The degree does not get the Accreditation

The University receives an evaluation form for each DP accompanied by the scores attributed to the individual Pas and the judgments associated with each indicator, integrated with any reports of Recommendations and Conditions, duly justified.

Institution judgement: Phase 1

The overall Institution Judgement is a two-phase process.
In Phase 1 the following are computed:

PS   overall arithmetic average of the scores attributed to the single points of attention (PA) of all the requirements of the University (R1, R2 and R4.A)

PCtot   arithmetic average of the scores attributed to the single points of attention (PA) of all DPs evaluated during the visit

PDtot   arithmetic average of the scores attributed to the single points of attention (PA) of all Departments (R4.B) evaluated during the visit

The Final Score (**Pfin**) is computed as:

$$Pfin = 14/20 \, PS + 3/20 \, Pctot + 3/20 \, PDtot$$

Final score and outcomes

Final score (Pfin)		OUTCOME
Pfin≥7,5	A: very positive	5-year periodic accreditation
6,5≤Pfin<7,5	B: fully satisfactory	5-year periodic accreditation
5,5≤Pfin<6,5	C: satisfactory	5-year periodic accreditation
4≤Pfin<5,5	D: conditional	Conditional Accreditation, i.e., if criticalities are not overcome within a specified time limit, the outcome is the same as in the unsatisfactory case
Pfin<4	E: unsatisfactory	Shutdown of the University