

Bocconi

**GUIDELINES FOR THE ANNUAL
MONITORING OF DEGREE
PROGRAMS**

Reference Source

- ✓ Guidelines for the University Quality Assurance System (ANVUR, October 12, 2022)
- ✓ Guideline to the Cyclical Review Report (Quality Assurance Committee, May 2023)

Introduction

The process of the annual Monitoring of Degree Programs is an essential activity within the Quality Assurance (QA) system of teaching. Its purpose is to encourage those responsible for managing the programs and their respective Review Groups to systematically assess their progress. This is achieved through the analysis of a selected set of performance indicators, from which objective strengths and any weaknesses of areas of concern of the DP can be derived. The considerations resulting from this analysis may also lead to the adoption of specific corrective or improvement actions.

The monitoring activity consists on the preparation of Annual Monitoring report (SMA), which consists of two parts:

1. An articulated table containing values of a series of statistical variables and indicators concerning the monitored Degree Programs. These values are processed and provided by ANVUR, drawing from certain national databases¹.
2. An open space reserved for the Degree Programs Review Group to provide a critical commentary on the indicators presented in the table, considering their temporal trends and values compared to specific reference benchmarks. These benchmarks are represented by averages related to other Degree Programs within the same field of studies provided by Bocconi, by other Universities in the same geographical area and by all Italian Universities).

The Annual monitoring is a mandatory activity for all active Degree Programs, except for those newly established or in the process of being deactivated. For these Degree Programs, the completion of the SMA is not required, although it is available within the AVA Quality Portal ("ava.miur.it").

In this regard, it is important to highlight that, within the AVA model, the indicators provided through the SMA are not only intended to encourage self-evaluation and monitoring activities by individual Degree Programs (and, at the aggregate level, by the University), but also to allow ANVUR to remotely verify their performance within the accreditation and periodic evaluation processes. These guidelines are regularly updated to consider any new instructions provided by ANVUR regarding the conduct of this process and the indicators monitored.

¹ In particular: The National Student Registry (ANS), the SUA-Degree Programs forms, the "DB Faculty Role," database of human resources and the results of the VQR program (Evaluation of the Quality Research).

Structure of the Annual Monitoring Form (SMA)

The first part of the SMA, accessible from the "Quality Portal," contains a set of indicators calculated by ANVUR (whose values are updated on a quarterly basis²), preceded by an identification section of Degree Programs. The indicators are presented according to the following clusters:

- Cluster A – Teaching Indicators (codes from iC01 to iC09);
- Cluster B - Internationalization Indicators (codes from iC10 to iC12);
- Cluster E - Additional Indicators for teaching evaluation (codes from iC13 to iC19);
- In-depth Indicators for experimentation - Career regularity (codes from iC21 to iC24);
- In-depth Indicators for experimentation - Satisfaction and Employability (codes from iC06 to iC07TER, iC18, iC25, iC26, iC26BIS);
- In-depth Indicators for experimentation - Consistency and Qualification of the Faculty (from iC27 to iC28).

For each indicator, in addition to the data referring to the last available survey, some comparison values are provided, including:

- a historical time series of several years to assess the trend over time;
- the average data relating, respectively, to the Degree Programs of the same field of study (excluding the Degree Program under examination) provided by Bocconi, the Degree Programs of the same field of study provided by other non-telematic Universities belonging to the same geographic area of reference (in the case of Bocconi, the North-West Italian area) and all the Degree Programs offered by all the ensemble of non-telematic Italian Universities, to assess the trend in comparison with similar Degree Programs (defined as the "benchmark" areas).

It should be noted that:

- the reference year indicated in the SMA tables is the first of the academic year in question (E.g.: "2019" refers to the academic year 2019-2020);
- Depending on the availability of data, indicator values are provided for a variable time period, up to a maximum of 5 years.

Below, an illustrative excerpt of the Table that constitutes the first part of the SMA (while in Annex 1 to these guidelines, a detailed note is available explaining the calculation methods for all indicators included in the Table):

² The fixed target dates are: March 31st, June 30th (data related to this "release" should normally be used for comments to be included in the SMA), September 30th, and December 31st.

Gruppo A - Indicatori Didattica (DM 987/2016, allegato E)

Indicatore	Anno	CdS			Media Ateneo			Media Area Geografica non telematici			Media Atenei NON Telematici		
		Num	Den	Ind	Num	Den	Ind	Num	Den	Ind	Num	Den	Ind
iC01 Percentuale di studenti iscritti entro la durata normale del CdS che abbiano acquisito almeno 40 CFU nell' a.s.	2017	154	174	88,5%	406,0	453,3	89,6%	216,2	286,4	75,5%	152,8	223,0	68,5%
	2018	148	166	89,2%	401,0	453,5	88,4%	219,5	287,1	76,5%	147,6	211,6	69,7%
	2019	136	157	86,6%	375,3	443,5	84,6%	229,7	294,1	78,1%	151,2	212,3	71,2%
	2020	156	173	90,2%	374,5	436,8	85,7%	235,5	304,7	77,3%	154,6	223,4	69,2%
iC02 Percentuale di laureati (L; LM; LM CU) entro la durata normale del corso*	2016	72	79	91,1%	216,3	229,8	94,1%	115,0	138,2	83,2%	73,8	102,2	72,2%
	2017	93	96	96,9%	230,0	239,8	95,9%	119,0	140,6	84,7%	77,4	105,3	73,6%
	2018	78	83	94,0%	226,3	233,3	97,0%	116,6	134,5	86,7%	79,5	104,8	75,8%
	2019	83	90	92,2%	239,8	249,2	96,3%	116,6	133,9	87,0%	78,1	101,8	76,8%
	2020	83	86	96,5%	238,3	243,8	97,7%	122,5	140,5	87,2%	78,1	99,7	78,3%
iC04 Percentuale iscritti al primo anno (LM) laureati in altro Ateneo*	2017	18	87	20,7%	74,0	219,3	33,7%	51,0	145,0	35,2%	37,6	114,4	32,8%
	2018	25	80	31,3%	79,3	218,8	36,3%	54,2	147,1	36,8%	36,5	109,8	33,3%
	2019	29	79	36,7%	76,8	211,7	36,3%	56,8	149,2	38,1%	38,1	112,2	33,9%
	2020	29	93	31,2%	74,5	213,8	34,8%	61,5	162,8	37,8%	42,9	119,6	35,8%
	2021	30	78	38,5%	79,3	215,3	36,8%	53,9	142,7	37,8%	42,2	107,1	39,4%

Below the Table, there is a blank box where comments should be provided for the indicators it includes (internally referred to as "indicators of Table 1") and for other parameters selected by the Quality Assurance Committee (POA), in addition to those of the ANVUR set (internally known as "indicators of Table 2"). These comments are essential as they are useful as measures for the degree of achievement of University's Strategic Plan objectives specifically related to the teaching area.

Methods and timing of SMA compilation (commentary on indicators)

Methods of compilation

Although ANVUR provides that the access to the SMA (available in a reserved area of the "Quality Portal") is to be directly managed by each Degree Programs Direction, in Bocconi it is common practice for the Quality Assurance Committee (supported by the QA & Accreditation Office) to "download" the forms related to each Degree Programs from the Portal and then share them with the respective Directions. This is done together with the Tables containing the internally monitored indicators ("Tables 2"). In this way, the required comments can be filled with reference to both groups of indicators³.

For each Degree Programs (or group of Degree Programs), the POA, assisted by the Deans of the three University Schools, performs an initial selection of indicators - from both ANVUR and internal sources - that can be commented on for their consistent informative value in relation to the characteristics of the Degree Programs and/or the development objectives specified in the Strategic Plan for the respective School. This set of "relevant" indicators is referenced in the cover page containing instructions for completing the SMA, which accompanies the transmission to each Degree Programs Director for completion.

³ To access the SMA forms, you need to (i) go to the web page <https://ava.miur.it/>, (ii) enter your login credentials (username and password), (iii) select the SUA-CdS forms of the reference year, (iv) scroll down the web page to the section "manage SUA forms", (v) choose the option "View forms" to enter the page containing the methodological note, the Degree Programs records, and access to the SMA.

The drafting of the accompanying comments for the SMA should be conducted by the Degree Programs Review Group⁴, under the responsibility of the Director. The completed SMA is then to be approved by the Degree Programs Committee in accordance with the timelines indicated below.

In order to harmonize the compilation of the SMAs by the Review Groups of the various Degree Programs and facilitate the correct management of this process, the following guidelines are provided to be followed:

- It is necessary to comment on all the indicators referenced in the cover page provided by the PQA, regardless of the values expressed in the last year of survey or the temporal trend highlighted in the SMA table. If the data for these indicators are positive (in absolute terms and compared to benchmark values), a brief comment may be sufficient. However, in the opposite case, it is advisable to provide more detailed explanations, specifying the reasons (ascertained or presumed) for the highlighted values and offering guidance on how to address these specific areas of concern or actual critical issues.
- In addition to the set of indicators referenced in the cover page provided by the PQA, the Review Group is also required to comment on any other indicators reported in the SMA that show negative trends in time or show significant deviations (in the range of 20% or higher) compared to external reference benchmarks (regional and national averages).
- Other indicators not falling within the two aforementioned cases may be commented upon at the discretion of the Review Group. In this regard, it is always useful to provide information regarding indicators for which specific improvement actions have been taken in response to unsatisfactory values identified in previous years.
- It is important to bear in mind that, if significant critical issues were to emerge from the analysis of indicators (which cannot be remedied by minor actions), **it is necessary to start the activities for the cyclical review of the Degree Program**⁵.
- For the preparation of the comments, it is suggested to group together the indicators that relate the same aspects (e.g. those related to the regularity of the students' careers - ic21, ic22, ic23, ic24).
- For greater clarity, it is always advisable to reference the code of the indicator being commented upon in the text (e.g. ic02).
- Finally, it is useful to conclude the comments with an overall self-assessment judgment of the Degree Program highlighting awareness of its strengths and identifying the aspects emerged as critical or that need to be improved.

⁴ The Committee, it is worth noting, is composed of the Degree Program Director, the Assistant (Faculty member) of the Director, the staff member responsible for the Administrative Office of the Degree Program, a student representative in the Study Program Committee (directly appointed by the Director), and possibly one or more reference Faculty members from the same Degree Program.

⁵ To this end, it is necessary to follow the University's QA document "Guideline to the Cyclical Review Report" (PQA, June 2018).

As an illustrative example, you can find below some possible comments on indicators referring to two different situations:

- A. Example of a comment on a situation of under-performance compared to the benchmark data:

iC24: Percentage of Degree Programs dropouts after N+1 year.

An indicator that highlights a negative trend is the iC24, which increased from 8.3% in 2017 to 10.8% in 2018. Based on these data, the Review Group considers appropriate that the Directions further investigate the reasons behind the recorded dropouts and the characteristics of those students who made this choice. Gathering relevant information can help defining corrective actions, such as identifying the students at higher risk and engaging with them before they take such a drastic decision.

- B. Example of a comment of a highly positive performance:

iC12: Percentage of students enrolled in the first year of the bachelor's (L) and master's (LM, LMCU) degree program who obtained their previous degree abroad.

Another indicator that testifies the growing internationalization of the program is the iC12, which increased from 20.6% in 2016-17 to 29.5% in 2020-21, reaching the highest level during the reference period and exceeding the percentage of another program of the same field of study offered by the University (28.6%). Moreover, this indicator is significantly exceeding the average values referring to the other Degree Programs of the same field of study provided by Universities belonging to the geographical area of reference (16.7%) and all Italian Universities (15.2%).

Preparation deadlines

Below, the summary of the steps and related internal deadlines for the compilation process of SMA defined by the PQA. In this regard, it should be noted that the strict deadline set by ANVUR for completing the process is December 31 of each year.

By the end of July:

The PQA, through the QA & Accreditation Office, provides to:

- Download the Annual Monitoring forms made available by ANVUR in the "Quality Portal".
- Integrates each SMA with additional internal data compared to the ANVUR set (the so-called "Table 2").
- Transmits the forms to each Director of Degree Programs (with the request to share them with the Review Group), accompanied by operational instructions on the completion process and explanatory notes on the meaning of the selected individuals' indicators.

By the beginning of September:

The Directors of the Degree Programs can request access to benchmark data related to specific Degree Programs offered by other Universities. These are specific data that ANVUR allows to be acquired (through the consultation of a dedicated database available to all Universities) to perform targeted comparative with reference to individual Degree Program (or even groups of Degree Programs) considered more directly comparable to the one under review.

By the end of September:

The Review Group begins to draft an initial version of the comments on the indicators.

By mid-October:

The QA & Accreditation Office receives the completed draft SMA forms from the Degree Programs Directors and submits them to the POA for a verification on the completeness of the reported comments with respect to the data expressed by the indicators (which may lead to request for further integration or better detailing of the conducted analyses).

By the end of October:

The Review Group finalizes the definitive version of the SMA (considering any observations made by the POA) and the Director of each Degree Programs submits them for the approval to the Degree Program Committee.

By the end of December:

The SMAs, approved by the respective Committees, are transmitted by the Degree Programs Directors to the POA, which proceeds to upload them to the "Quality Portal" and, subsequently, transmit them to the Dean of the Schools and to the Student-Faculty Joint Teaching Committees (limited to the relevant Degree Programs), as well as to the University Evaluation Unit, for their respective considerations and evaluations.

Employment and follow-up of completed SMA

A first analysis of the completed SMA forms takes place during one of the School Councils following their approval by the respective Degree Programs Committees. On this occasion, which generally occurs towards the end of the calendar year, each Dean's School summarizes the salient elements that can be deduced from a cross-examination of the most relevant trends highlighted by Degree Programs indicators pertaining to the School. The Dean also refers to the most significant comments reported in the forms regarding "critical" situations or those considered worthy of attention.

This is a valuable moment not only for sharing the outcomes of the just-completed annual monitoring, but also for acknowledging areas of performance that unequivocally identify the strengths of each School's teaching offerings, as well as areas that reveal weaknesses (chronic or temporary) and require, in any case, more thorough monitoring of their potential future developments.

The contents of the SMA are also examined by the Student-Faculty Joint Teaching Committees (CPDS), each with reference to the Degree Programs under their purview. These aspects are among the matters that such bodies are required to consider in their periodic verification activities, which contribute to the preparation of their annual report.

Specifically, the CPDS is tasked with assessing whether the annual monitoring has been conducted attentively and accurately by the Degree Programs' Review Groups, resulting in exhaustive comments regarding all considered "relevant" indicators and a proper identification of situations that require specific attention. The findings of these evaluations are reported, by each CPDS, in the appropriate section of their annual report⁶.

The indicators reported in the SMAs and the corresponding comments formulated by the Degree Programs' Review Groups are ultimately subject to verification by the University Evaluation Unit. In its own annual report, the University Evaluation Unit:

- Provides an overall evaluation of the correctness of the annual monitoring process carried out by all the Degree Programs that compose the University's teaching offer, considering also the observations and considerations made by the CPDS in this regard;
- Focuses on the less positive values highlighted by the indicators in reference to individual Degree Programs, offering an assessment of how these findings were commented upon in the SMA forms and on the adequacy of (i) the reflections made on the possible causes of the results emerged and (ii) the possible actions defined to improve future performance.

If the CPDS reports and/or the University Evaluation Unit report contain specific indications or recommendations addressed to individual Degree Programs (e.g. to further investigate the causes of certain indicators' trends or to identify more impactful measures to improve specific performances), the Degree Programs Directions and the respective Review Groups must take them into account and provide appropriate feedback during the subsequent annual monitoring process.

Attachments

1. ANVUR Methodological Note for SMA Indicators (April 3, 2023).

⁶ As a rule, CPDSs highlight the outcomes of their examination on the SMA that have been approved by the Degree Programs Committees in the same reference year of the report.