

Bocconi

GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING THE PERIODIC REVIEW REPORT OF PHD PROGRAMS

(Quality Assurance Committee, Rev. February 2024)



**Università
Bocconi**
MILANO

1. Periodic review – meaning

The Periodic Review constitutes the **main moment of in-depth self-assessment of the implementation of "quality requirements" for PhD Programs** (PhD hereinafter) provided by the AVA model, in which, in light of the preset objectives and results achieved, a PhD is called upon to **identify the main strengths that distinguish it, any difficulties or existing issues, the most relevant challenges, and improvement interventions to be implemented** in the subsequent cycle.

The review activity must essentially highlight the continued validity of the PhD's founding assumptions and the management system used. It aims, therefore, to delve into the current relevance of educational objectives, academic or professional profiles characterizing graduates, and developed skills, **taking into account a series of elements and inputs**, among which the main ones are:

- Academic careers of PhD students, employment conditions of graduates, and other essential PhD performance indicators;
- Satisfaction data from PhD students and graduates;
- Insights and improvement proposals from faculty, PhD students, and staff;
- Outcomes of the most recent stakeholder consultations.

The resulting analyses, evaluations, and proposals converge into a detailed document, the Periodic Review Report, which is to be articulated as a self-assessment of the application status of Quality Requirements related to PhDs ("D.PHD" domain) defined by the "Modello di accreditamento periodico delle sedi e dei corsi di studio universitari" (ANVUR, 13/02/2023). In this regard, the periodic review also represents an opportunity for a complete self-assessment of the PhD in preparation for the periodic Accreditation visit of the University and selected PhDs.

The Periodic Review must be conducted with a frequency not exceeding five years, and in any case in the following situations:

- Upon specific request from ANVUR, MUR, or the Evaluation Committee;
- Before the periodic accreditation visit by the CEV (in this case, the report should be prepared if the most recent one dates back to over 2 years before the visit date or if, although drafted later, it is not updated to the PhD's current reality);
- In the presence of significant criticalities;
- In the presence of substantial modifications to the PhD's regulations (in cases where this need is identified, it is necessary to clearly indicate in the report the reasons justifying the proposed regulatory change and the aspects to be subjected to modification).

The Periodic Review Report is articulated into four sections (four of which correspond to the sub-domains provided by the AVA 3 model - see reference format in Attachment No. 1):

1. PhD Program Design (D.PHD.1): The objective of this section is to verify the presence and implementation level of quality assurance processes during the PhD design or re-design/revision phase.
2. Planning and organization of teaching and research activities for PhD students (D.PHD.2): The objective is to ascertain the presence and implementation level of quality assurance processes in PhD students' teaching and research activities, and whether the program offers PhD students adequate opportunities to become known in their reference scientific community.
3. Monitoring and activity improvement (D.PHD.3): The objective is to verify the PhD's ability to recognize critical aspects and margins for improvement in its organization and define consequent interventions.
4. PhD Indicators Comments: The objective is to provide a synthetic analysis of the PhD's main performance indicators, primarily referencing the set of quantitative indicators indicated by national regulations.

Excluding the final part related to indicators, each section is further subdivided into three sub-sections, structured as follows:

- a) **Synthesis of the main changes observed from last review**, where it is necessary to identify and comment on the most important changes compared to the previous Periodic Review (or, in its absence, from the PhD's activation moment), including in relation to improvement actions implemented (starting from those defined in the previous review report).
- b) **Analysis of current situation (according on data), which lists the main elements to observe** (i.e., sources that should contain the data subject to analysis) **and recommended points of reflection**, on which to focus attention and articulate comments and self-assessments to identify criticalities and/or areas for improvement (through defining objectives in the subsequent sub-section).
- c) **Objectives and improvement actions**, where to indicate improvement objectives to be realized in the following cycle, actions to be prepared to achieve them, reference indicator(s) for their measurement, responsible party, any necessary resources, and expected implementation times.

In drafting the Review Report, comments and analyses can also refer to aspects and information different from those listed in Sub-sections b). In these cases, it is always appropriate to adequately cite the source of the referenced information and the reasons motivating its treatment.

2. Actors and Recipients

The Periodic Review Report of the PhD Program shall be drafted by the PhD Review Group under the guidance of the review's responsible (generally, the program coordinator) and subsequently submitted for **approval by PhD Faculty Board**, which assumes responsibility for it.

Newly activated PhDs that have not completed an entire cycle (and therefore do not yet have Doctors), or those being phased out, are not required to compile the periodic review report. For PhDs that are subject to merger/transformation, it is advisable that the Review Report be drafted by the program that continues and, as such, is activated in the Educational Offering and has completed a study cycle.

The Periodic **Review Report** of each PhD **must be forwarded to the Quality Assurance Committee**, which is tasked with verifying its formal correctness and conformity with the reference format provided. After approval by the Faculty Board, the Quality Assurance Committee shall transmit it, for their respective competencies, **to the PhD School Dean of the and the University Evaluation Unit**.

3. Reference Regulations and Documentary Sources

Regulations on Periodic Review Report are reported in:

[1] "Modello di accreditamento periodico delle sedi delle università e dei corsi di studio", ANVUR, 13.02.2023.

[3] Italian Ministerial Decree No. 1144/2021

The main Documentary Sources for the Periodic Review Report are:

- **Annual accreditation form** of each PhD program;
- **PhD yearly official Call** for the admission of candidates;
- **Previous Periodic Review Report** (when available) or **PhD Plan** (when available);
- **Yearly reports of University Evaluation Unit;**
- **Results of satisfaction surveys for PhD students and graduates** on program teaching and research activities and on single courses;
- **Placement surveys;**

- Other **data** from internal **monitorings**;
- Composition of PhD teaching body (internal / external Faculty, citizenship, experience abroad, etc.);
- **Reports of stakeholders consultations**;
- **PhD Faculty Board meetings minutes** and suggestions from Faculty, students, staff or external interlocutors;
- **PhD School Council meetings minutes** from which emerge the decisions and actions of the PhD adopted in response to solicitations coming from PhD Students' questionnaires, Annual Reports of the Evaluation Committee and Quality Assurance Committee, and other possible sources;
- **Formal or informal reports from faculty, PhD students, administrative staff, and external stakeholders** (these information elements must be referenced by specifying how such reports were received - e.g., reported by representatives or through student conversations, captured in evaluation questionnaires or external surveys, emails, social networks - and whether they were reported in formal documents or other media);
- **Courses syllabi**.

N.B.: The documentary sources used for the analyses reported in the Review Report must be explicitly referenced in the dedicated box within sub-sections b. (distinguishing whether it is a "key" document or a "supporting" document and reporting, for each of them, the title, a brief description, and the reference to the chapter/paragraph where the referenced contents of interest are located).

4. Verification of the Implementation of Defined Actions

Following the drafting of the Periodic Review Report, the **PhD Director shall annually monitor the progress and implementation status of defined interventions actually undertaken**, providing a brief assessment of their estimated effectiveness. To this end, to facilitate the management of such verifications and maintain adequate traceability over time, **it is recommended to use the summary module attached to these guidelines** (Attachment No. 2), which must be fully completed at the end of each monitoring performed and transmitted to the Quality Assurance Committee.