

# *Managing Quality Assurance at the University of Siena*

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# PQA: Origins, Composition and Tasks

The University of Siena has established the **University Quality Assurance Presidium (PQA)**, which promotes and supervises the *appropriate and uniform implementation of quality assurance (QA) procedures* throughout the University, based on the guidelines of the governing bodies

The PQA was established by the **Academic Senate** at its meeting of 5 March 2013, pursuant to Article 29 of the University Teaching Regulations and in accordance with the provisions of the regulations and guidelines on QA

# PQA: Origins, Composition and Tasks

The PQA was established for the exercise of the functions envisaged by the current provisions on *Self-assessment - Periodic Evaluation - Accreditation (AVA)*

More specifically, the PQA is called upon to fulfil its role as the operational head of QA at the University through the following functions:

# PQA: Origins, Composition and Tasks

*Implementation of the quality policy* (as defined by the University's governing bodies)

*Organisation and supervision of the University QA procedures* (with specific reference to the survey of the opinions of students, the updating of the information contained in the SUA-CdS, the periodic review activities and the effectiveness of corrective and improvement actions, etc.)

*Proposal of common tools for system actors* (guidelines, formats, templates, data, etc.)

*Support for the management of information and document flows relating to QA* (with particular attention to those to and from the University's Governing Bodies, Evaluation Unit, Joint Faculty-Student Committees, Departments/Schools and Courses of Study-CdS)



# PQA: Origins, Composition and Tasks

*... and, last but not least...*

***The promotion of the  
CULTURE OF QUALITY,  
ORGANISATION AND  
INFORMATION ACTIVITIES***  
*for staff and people variously  
involved in QA in teaching,  
research and public  
engagement*



# PQA: Origins, Composition and Tasks

The PQA consists of:

9 lecturers with the necessary experience in QA

2 representatives of the student community

1 administration executive for the teaching area identified by the Director General

1 administration executive for the research and third mission areas identified by the Director General

the Head of the QA Office

# PQA: Origins, Composition and Tasks

The lecturers are appointed by decree of the Rector after a selection procedure by a committee composed of the Rector or his/her delegate and two members of the Academic Senate; these members hold office for four years and may be reappointed once

The representatives of the student community are appointed by decree of the Rector upon designation by the Student Council; they hold office for two years and may be renewed more than twice consecutively

The selection of the member(s) of the Quality Presidium takes place, where possible, in compliance with the principle of gender equality

The Presidium elects a Chairperson who sets the agenda and chairs the meetings





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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Actors

## The Governing Bodies (Rector - Academic Senate - Board of Directors)

In the field of QA, the governing bodies, in line with the regulations and guidelines in force:

- ▶ *guarantee the activity of critical review of the policies, the QA set-up (tasks, functions and responsibilities), and the achievement of objectives and their continuous improvement*
- ▶ *conduct the analysis of the material information collected at the different levels by the structures responsible for QA procedures*



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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Actors

## The Independent Evaluation Unit

It is the body responsible to verify the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's QA system and processes and to make proposals in order to improve them

- *evaluation of the University's QA policy*
- *evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's organisation for teaching and research and for the QA of such activities*
- *evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the QA system of Courses of Study/Degree Programmes ("CdS") and Departments (Internal Audits)*
- *evaluation of the implementation and monitoring of the QA of education and research at the different levels (University, Departments and any connecting structures);*
- *verification of the persistence of the quantitative and qualitative requirements for the initial and periodic accreditation*
- *formulation of guidelines and recommendations aimed at improving the quality of the University's teaching and research activities*



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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Actors

## The PQA

It promotes **the culture of quality in the University and the implementation of the quality policy as defined by its governing bodies by performing the following tasks:**

- *organises and monitors the continuous updating of information on the requirements for the establishment and activation of CdS*
- *organises and monitors the QA procedures for teaching, research and third mission activities*
- *regulates the periodic Cds review activities on an annual basis*
- *supports and monitors the quality of the Departments' research and third mission activities on an annual basis*
- *checks the functionality of reporting from and to the University's governing bodies, the Evaluation Unit and the Student-Faculty Joint Teaching Committees*
- *evaluates the effectiveness of improvement measures and their actual outcomes*



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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Actors

## The Departments (Head of Departments – QA Contact Persons)

Departments have **full responsibility for both teaching and research and third mission activities**. Hence, the accreditation of Universities requires:

- *the QA of the CdS (for which the Departments are primarily responsible, drawing up and approving their curricula and didactic regulations, and arranging for the coverage of educational activities)*
- *the QA of the Departments' research and third mission activities*



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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Actors

## The Head (or Director) of the Department

- *is the legal representative of the department*
- *handles its relations with the governing bodies of the University*
- *exercises the functions of coordination and supervision over all its activities*

Each Department is required to designate a **Contact Person for the Quality of Teaching**, a **Contact Person for the Quality of Research** and a **Contact Person for the Quality of the Third Mission**

- *act as an interface and link between the central and peripheral AQ systems*
- *assist and represent the Head of the Department on QA issues*
- *support the Department in carrying out and organising QA activities*
- *monitor the implementation of QA policies, and verify the effective implementation of planned improvement measures*



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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Actors

## Student-Faculty Joint Teaching Committees

The Student-Faculty Joint Teaching Committees (CPDS) are constituted at the level of each Department (or connecting structure) and represent **a permanent observatory on the department's teaching activities**

The CPDS:

- *monitors the range and quality of teaching, as well as the student service activities by the Department's professors and researchers*
- *identifies indicators for the evaluation of results*
- *formulates opinions on the activation and abolition of CdS*
- *analyses data and information on the range and quality of teaching and draws up an annual report which it submits to the Evaluation Unit*
- *makes proposals to the Evaluation Unit for improving the quality and effectiveness of teaching facilities*
- *carries out dissemination activities of the University's quality policies towards students*
- *monitors indicators that measure the degree of achievement of teaching objectives*



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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Actors

## CdS, Teaching Committees and AQ Management Groups

Courses of study (CdS) are at the **core of the educational mission of higher education institutions**

They are designed through the conception of one or more “outbound profiles”, defined through the ***identification of their scientific, cultural and/or professional characteristics and, coherently, of the training paths leading to the acquisition of the specific knowledge and skills associated with them***

The design of the CdS **must involve the most appropriate internal and external stakeholders**, according to the characteristics and objectives of each specific degree program



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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Actors

**The Teaching Committees (CpD)** are joint bodies of teachers and students, responsible for the University's degree courses, with responsibilities in the *planning, management, review and improvement of the CdS*

The CdS **QA Management Groups** comprise the Chair of the Teaching Committee and a representation of the CdS lecturers and students, and are responsible for compiling

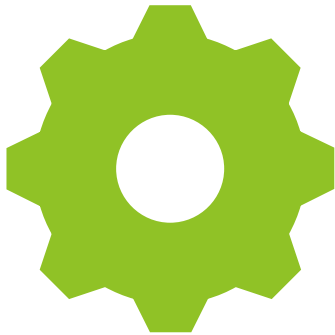
- *the SUA-CdS*
- *the Annual Monitoring Form (SMA)*
- *the CdS Cyclic Review Report*





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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Tools



## The SUA-CdS

The Single Annual Form for Study Courses (SUA-CdS) is the tool through **which each Degree Course expresses the objectives it aims to achieve**

The SUA-CdS provides all the information to students, families and stakeholders, useful to:

- *clarify the training objectives*
- *describe the training plan and the learning environment*
- *illustrate the training outcomes*
- *explain the organisational structure and responsibilities in terms of QA*
- *indicate the results of the review activities carried out annually*

The SUA-CdS is **one of the reference tools in the CdS self-assessment and evaluation process**



# The Architecture of the QA System: The Tools



## The SMA-CdS

The CdS Annual Monitoring Form (SMA), which has replaced the Annual Review Report (RAR), must be completed annually (by the month of December) and consists of a concise **critical commentary on the quantitative indicators made available by ANVUR**

In addition to an initial section with summary contextual information (taken from the SUA-CdS and ANS - National Student Registry), useful for reading and interpreting the data, the **indicators are divided into 6 sections:**

- *Teaching Indicators*
- *Internationalisation Indicators*
- *Additional Indicators for the Evaluation of Teaching*
- *Study Path and Career Regularity Indicators*
- *Satisfaction and Employability*
- *Consistency and Qualification of the Teaching Staff*



# The Architecture of the QA System: The Tools



## CdS Cyclic Review Report

The CdS Cyclic Review Report (RRC) is the tool through which the **set objectives are critically analysed, and the performance and results achieved are assessed**

The RRC is considered as one of the “key documents” examined by the Commissions of Evaluation Experts (CEV), and it **must mainly highlight the permanent validity of the founding assumptions of the CdS and of the management system used to achieve them**

The RRC must therefore consider:

- *the need to make any changes to the training objectives and the methodologies that the CdS intends to use to achieve them*
- *the quality of the service provided to students*
- *the sustainability of the CdS*



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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Actors

## Student Representatives

The University of Siena recognises students as **an essential component of academic life**

The participation of student representatives is envisaged in all QA Management Groups and, on an equal footing, in the Teaching Committees and the Student-Faculty Joint Teaching Committees.

The main tasks are to **report observations, criticisms and proposals for improvement regarding the educational contents of CdS and to ensure that transparency and information sharing are guaranteed**



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# The Architecture of the QA System: The Tools

## **The AQ System and the role of students**

Concerning the **quality of the CdS**, students can contribute at several levels:

### ▶ **Demand sensing**

*Master degree students can help identify the demand for adequate bachelor training*

### ▶ **Designing**

*The representatives approve the CdS in the Department Council and in the Teaching Committees*

*Students of the CdS can contribute to measuring the teaching load*

### ▶ **Education delivery**

*Contribution in the tutoring phase (Tutoring-Students)*

### ▶ **Monitoring and Review**

*Participation in the CPDS, in QA Management Groups and Teaching Committees*

### ▶ **Periodic accreditation visit by ANVUR**

*Student Experts within the Commission of Evaluation Experts (CEV), Classroom meetings with the CEV, Meetings with the CPDS and the QA Management Group*

### ▶ **Overall quality of the University's educational offerings**

*Survey of students' opinions to capture valuable feedbacks*



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# QA Procedures



Teaching QA procedures



Research QA procedures



Third mission (public engagement)  
QA procedures



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# Teaching QA procedures



The **Teaching QA Plan** is articulated at the **University level** with general objectives and at the **CdS level** with specific objectives



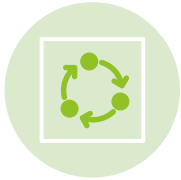
The **University's Teaching QA Plan** begins with the approval by the governing bodies of the University's three-year "**Strategic Plan**" and its declination in the "**Policies and Planning**" document



The objectives identified in the Plan and in the Document, and the actions implemented to achieve the objectives, **are monitored annually (review)**



During the review, the objectives of the plan and document and the actions defined therein **may be updated and reshaped on the basis of the outcomes of the monitoring activities**



The **cycle closes** at the end of the three-year period **with a three-year review** that will be the starting point for the drafting of the new three-year strategic plan

# Teaching QA Procedures



The Cds Teaching QA Plan is more complex and consists of various aspects:



Annual and Cyclical Review Reports



SUA-CdS



Student-Faculty Joint Teaching Committees  
Annual Report



Monitoring of corrective actions



Syllabus



Consultation of stakeholders



Survey of students' opinions



# Monitoring and Review Activities

Monitoring and review are part of the self-assessment process aimed at verifying the achievement of objectives and the effectiveness of the actions put in place to achieve them

## ► University level

The quantitative University's indicators calculated and provided by ANVUR and the objectives and actions identified in the University Teaching QA Plan are monitored. During the review, the objectives of the plan and the actions defined therein may be updated and reshaped on the basis of the monitoring results

## ► CdS level

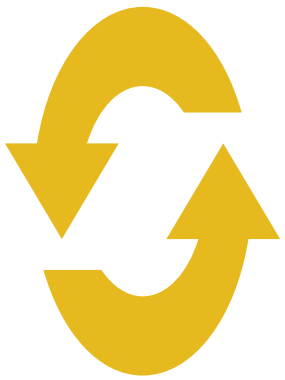
The monitoring and review verifies the adequacy of the learning objectives that the CdS has set, the correspondence between the objectives and the results, the effectiveness of the way in which the institution is managed and includes the search for the causes of any unsatisfactory results. The main purpose of the monitoring and review is to adopt specific corrective actions for the improvement of the CdS and/or its management system



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# Monitoring and Review Activities (and Tools)

## The PQA



- ▶ draws up a report about the monitoring of the University's indicators, suggesting possible initiatives with respect to any critical issues identified
- ▶ draws up guidelines for the drafting of the SMA-Cds
- ▶ has developed an editable template for the Cds Cyclic Review Report



# SUA-CdS

- ▶ divided into two parts
- **QUALITY SECTION:** is the main tool of the AVA system
- **ADMINISTRATION SECTION:** where all the course activation data are automatically incorporated

## The PQA

- ▶ has developed Guidelines for the drafting of the SUA-CdS - Quality section
- ▶ annually monitors the drafting of the SUA-CdS, comparing the content of the quality section with the Guidelines

# Student-Faculty Joint Committee Annual Report



The CPDS draws up an annual report, broken down by CdS, which considers the entire range of educational offerings, with particular reference to the results of the student opinion survey, indicating any problems specific to individual CdS

The CPDS report, based on elements of independent analysis (and not only on the CdS review reports), has to reach the Evaluation Unity, the PQA and the CdS, which receive it and take action to elaborate proposals for improvement

The PQA has also developed [an editable template](#)

# Monitoring of corrective actions



CdS carry out an annual monitoring of the corrective actions implemented as a result of the reports and suggestions contained in the Student-Faculty Joint Teaching Committees Annual Report

The PQA has developed an [editable template](#)

# Syllabus

The AVA system requires a Syllabus to be drawn up for each teaching activity within the Cds

This is a detailed document in which the lecturer defines the objectives and content of the course, specifying in detail the topics and teaching materials and describing the methods for assessing student learning

It may also contain other indications considered useful to facilitate students' attendance and individual study activities, encouraging conscious and active learning

The PQA has drawn up [specific guidelines](#) for the drafting of the Syllabus





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# Consultation of Stakeholders

For the purposes of QA, it is important for the University and the CdS to carry out initial and periodic consultations with stakeholders in order to survey their needs and the development potential of the CdS, especially when graduates' employment outcomes are unsatisfactory



The PQA has developed specific guidelines and questionnaire formats



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# Survey of Students' Opinion

Students' opinion on teaching is essential information for QA and it is one of the central aspects in the AVA system

The survey of students' opinion is organised and monitored by the PQA (according to ANVUR guidelines)

The University captures the anonymous opinions of the student community through an online questionnaire that can also be filled out in the classroom using smartphones, tablets and notebooks

Detailed instructions for completing the questionnaires can be found in the Student Handbook







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# Survey of Students' Opinion

The results of the survey are published (unless the concerned lecturer has explicitly denied his/her consent to publication)

Lecturers can access the results on-line

The PQA and the Evaluation Unit promote the analysis of the results of the students' opinion survey

From the year 2019/2020, as an action to increase student participation and improve the reporting process of the survey results, the PQA and the Evaluation Unit have proposed to all Departments to provide a day for the discussion of the survey results





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# The PQA Report on the Annual Review of the Teaching QA Plan

This document lists the activities carried out by the PQA in a given year for the setting up and performance of the annual review procedure of CdS, which along with the collection of students' opinions and the CPDS reports effectively constitutes the Annual Review of the Teaching QA Plan for that given year

The [document](#) outlines the organisation of the entire annual review process conducted by the PQA and a summary of the results

It illustrates the activities related to

- ▶ the self-assessment of the CdS through the drawing up of the SMA
- ▶ the monitoring of the corrective actions implemented by the CdS following the evaluation expressed in the CPDS annual reports
- ▶ the analysis of the drafting process of the CPDS annual reports
- ▶ the collection of students' opinions and the return of the results of the survey



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# Research QA Procedures



The Research QA Plan follows a three-year cycle



For both the University and the Departments, the cycle begins with the approval by the governing bodies of the three-year “**Strategic Plan**” and its **declination** at the departmental level



The objectives identified in the plan and the actions implemented to achieve the objectives are monitored annually (review)



During the review, the objectives of the plan and the actions defined therein may be updated and reshaped on the basis of the results of monitoring activities



The cycle closes at the end of **three years**, with a three-year review that will be the starting point for the drafting of the new three-year strategic plan



# Research QA Procedures



For **Inter-university and Inter-departmental Research Centres and Joint Laboratories with External Parties**, the cycle begins with the approval by the Departmental Councils and Governing Bodies of the **research projects** proposed for the creation of these research structures



The objectives identified and the actions implemented to achieve the objectives are monitored annually (review).



During the review, the objectives of the plan and the actions defined therein may be updated and reshaped on the basis of the outcomes of their monitoring.



The cycle closes at the end of three years with a three-year review, which will be the starting point for any rene



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# Monitoring and Review Activities



The Review of the Research QA Plan consists of

- ▶ Annual and Cyclical Review of the University's Research QA Plan
- ▶ Annual and Cyclical Review of the Departmental Research QA Plan
- ▶ Annual and Cyclical Review of the Research Centres Research QA Plan
- ▶ Annual and Cyclical Review of Joint Laboratories Research QA Plan



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# Monitoring and Review Activities



The PQA has developed the following editable [templates](#)

- ▶ Year-end Review of Research QA Plan (University/Departments)
- ▶ Request for the establishment/renewal of Research Centres and Joint Laboratories (including a QA plan)
- ▶ Year-end Review of Research Centres and Joint Laboratories Research QA Plan
- ▶ End-of-Three Year Review of Research Centres and Joint Laboratories Research QA Plan



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# The PQA Report on the Annual Review of the Research QA Plan

Also on this respect,  
the PQA analyses,  
illustrates and  
discusses the results  
of the Annual Review of  
the Research QA Plan



# Third Mission (Public Engagement) QA Procedures



The Third Mission QA Plan follows a three-year cycle



For the University and the Departments, the cycle begins with the approval by the Governing Bodies of the three-year “Strategic Plan” and its declination at the departmental level



The objectives identified in the plan and the actions implemented to achieve them are monitored annually (review)



During the review, the objectives of the plan and the actions defined therein may be updated and reshaped on the basis of the results of monitoring activities



The cycle closes at the end of three years, with a three-year review that will be the starting point for the drafting of the new three-year strategic plan



# Third Mission (Public Engagement) QA Procedures



For Inter-university and Inter-departmental Research Centres and Joint Laboratories with External Parties,

the cycle begins with the approval by the Departmental Councils and Governing Bodies of the research projects proposed for the creation of these research structures



The objectives identified and the actions implemented to achieve the objectives are monitored annually (review)



During the review, the objectives of the plan and the actions defined therein may be updated and reshaped on the basis of the outcomes of their monitoring



The cycle closes at the end of three years with a three-year review that will be the starting point for any renewal.



# Monitoring and Review Activities



The Review of the Third Mission QA Plan consists of

- ▶ Annual and Cyclical Review of the University's Third Mission QA Plan
- ▶ Annual and Cyclical Review of the Departments Third Mission QA Plan
- ▶ Annual and Cyclical Review of the Research Centres Third Mission QA Plan
- ▶ Annual and Cyclical Review of the Joint Laboratories Third Mission QA Plan



# Monitoring and Review Activities



The PQA has developed the following editable templates

- ▶ Year-end Review of Third Mission QA Plan (University/Departments)
- ▶ Request for the establishment/renewal of Research Centres and Joint Laboratories (including a QA plan)
- ▶ Year-end Review of Research Centres and Joint Laboratories Third Mission QA Plan
- ▶ End-of-Three Year Plan Review of Research Centres and Joint Laboratories Third Mission QA Plan



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# The PQA Report on the Annual Review of the Third Mission QA Plan

Also on this respect,  
the PQA analyses,  
illustrates and  
discusses the results  
of the Annual Review of  
the Third Mission QA  
Plan

# Annual Reports on PQA Activities



- ▶ The University of Siena QA System requires the PQA to submit an **annual report to the Governing Bodies** at the end of the organisation, review and monitoring of QA activities in order to summarise overall information and proposals, formulated in the light of the whole set of QA processes
- ▶ Hence, the document (also) lists all the activities carried out by the PQA in that given year



# Annual Report on PQA Activities (2021)

- ▶ Drafting of the PQA Regulation
- ▶ Reworking and monitoring of the University's QA web pages
- ▶ Monitoring and updating of Departments' web pages
- ▶ Quality design of newly established CdS for the academic year 2021/2022 (format preparation)
- ▶ 2021 CPDS Annual reports: a) updating of the drafting template; b) transmission to the Academic Senate
- ▶ Annual monitoring of the CdS implementation of the corrective actions proposed by the CPDS: a) updating of the format sent to the Chairs of the CdS Teaching Committee; b) analysis of the documents received; c) transmission to the coordinators of the CPDS



# Annual Report on PQA Activities (2021)

- ▶ SMA-CdS: a) update of the guidelines; b) verification of documents received and possible request for revision to Departments
- ▶ Report to the Governing Bodies on the annual teaching activities review process for the year 2021
- ▶ SUA-CdS - Quality Section for the academic year 2021/2022: a) update of the guidelines; b) informative reporting to the Chairs of the Teaching Committees and the competent offices; c) monitoring of compilation
- ▶ Students' opinion survey: a) report to the Evaluation Unit on teaching evaluation activities a.y. 2019/2020; b) revision of the academic year 2021/2022
- ▶ Update of Syllabus guidelines



# Annual Report on PQA Activities (2021)

- ▶ End-of-year review of the Departments' research and third mission QA plans, year 2020: a) preparation of templates; b) analysis of documents received; c) transmission of comments to Departments; d) report to Governing Bodies
- ▶ Year- and cycle-end review of Departments' research and third mission QA plans, year 2021: a) preparation of templates; b) analysis of documents received; c) transmission of comments to Departments
- ▶ Definition of QA procedures for Research Centres and Joint Laboratories