

University of Milan (UNIMI)

Procedure regarding the accreditation of a new joint programme at UNIMI

The design of a newly established degree program is one of the key processes of Quality Assurance in Education and must be managed by each university, having the following documents as fundamental, which are defined and/or updated by the Ministry of Education (MUR), the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research Systems (ANVUR), and the National University Council (CUN) for each academic year:

- European Standards and Guidelines
- Decrees and Provisions of the MUR for the preparation of the Educational Offer;
- Guidelines for the Quality Assurance System in Universities of 13/2/2023;
- Guide to writing Didactic Regulations by CUN;
- Guidelines and/or operational indications prepared by the proposing University for the Quality Assurance of Education and for the design of degree programs, with particular reference to those of the new establishment.

The process of designing a new educational offer is developed through the following phases:

1. **Analysis of educational needs and census** by the University of new institutions and/or "replicas" in another location of study programmes that are intended to be proposed, and eventual parallel deactivation of their own study programmes (this census should be conducted based on a summary document prepared by the proponents coherently with a format made available by the University Quality Office - PQA);
2. **Verification by the University of the coherence** of the new institutions with the strategic planning and with the document "University Policies and Programming" and possible updating of the latter;
3. **Selection of proposals** for new institutions to be initiated for detailed design;
4. **Detailed design of new study programmes**, to be carried out based on the reference documentation mentioned above and with the technical support of the PQA and/or other designated University body/organization;
5. **Acquisition of positive opinions for proposals for new institutions** from the Joint Commission of Teachers-Students (CPDS) referring to the proposing Department/School/Faculty (or Departments/Faculties in case of jointly proposed programmes);
6. **Evaluation and positive opinion of proposals** for new institutions by the Evaluation Unit (NdV), in coherence with what is defined by art. 8 paragraph 4 of Legislative Decree 19/2012 and art. 7 of DM n. 1154/2021;
7. **Approval of proposals for new institutions** by the Academic Bodies (OOAA);
8. **Acquisition, for all study programmes**, including replica courses (excluding those entirely at a distance), **of the positive opinion** from the Regional Coordination Committee (CORECO) of the Region/Autonomous Province (Attachment 4 of DM n. 289/2021) where the study programme is scheduled to be delivered. If the teaching site of the programme is located outside the Region/Autonomous Province where the University is based, the relevant Regional Coordination Committee competent to express its opinion is that of the delivery site, while communication must be given to the CORECO of the Region/Autonomous Province of the administrative seat of the

proposing University. For Medicine and Surgery programmes (LM-41), Dentistry and Dental Prosthetics (LM-46), and Veterinary Medicine (LM-42), acquisition of the positive opinion of the Region/Autonomous Province where the degree program will be activated, which expresses itself having evaluated the specific conditions of the educational offer in the sector at the regional level and its interaction with healthcare, as provided for by Legislative Decree 517/99 and subsequent amendments.

9. **Uploading of proposals for new institutions and/or replica programmes**, complete with the positive opinion of the NdV and approved by the Academic Bodies (OOAA), onto platforms for submission to the Ministry.
10. **The Ministry** passes on to the two advisory boards, **ANVUR and CUN**, the proposal for their evaluation.

For the initial accreditation of newly established study programmes, ANVUR verifies compliance with the requirements outlined in Annexes A of Decree 1154/2021.

Annex A of Decree 1154/2021 specifies accreditation requirements for study programmes concerning:

- Transparency;
- Teaching staff;
- Division of educational activities;
- Structural resources;
- Quality assurance.

The types of newly established study programmes requiring ANVUR evaluation are as follows:

- New programmes in the municipality where the university's legal headquarters are located;
- New programmes in an existing decentralised location;
- New programmes in a new decentralised location;
- "Replicas" of already active programmes in the municipality where the university's legal headquarters are located;
- "Replicas" of already active programmes in an existing decentralised location;
- "Replicas" of already active programmes in a new decentralised location.

By "replica," it is meant a programme with the same educational structure as an already active study programme in the proposing university, for which the opinion of CUN is not required.

Starting from the academic year 2024-2025, it is also required to report on study programmes that will issue a joint degree, using one of the following modalities:

- Joint degree within European Alliances
- Joint degree outside European Alliances
- Double/Multiple degree within European Alliances
- Double/Multiple degree outside European Alliances

CUN provides opinions and proposals to the Minister of Education, University, and Research on the following matters:

- Objectives of university planning;

- Criteria for the utilisation of the university funds;
- General criteria for the organisation of university programmes, in accordance with Article 17, paragraph 95, of Law No. 127 of May 15, 1997;
- University teaching regulations;
- Scientific-disciplinary sectors (see below).

CUN is called upon to express its opinion during the establishment of the study programme. During the modification of the curriculum of the study programme, CUN exclusively expresses its opinion in the following cases:

- Proposal for merging study programmes;
- Variation of the framework of curriculum activities;
- Modification of the denomination, language, or mode of delivery (conventional or distance learning) of the study programme;
- Formal request by the Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR).

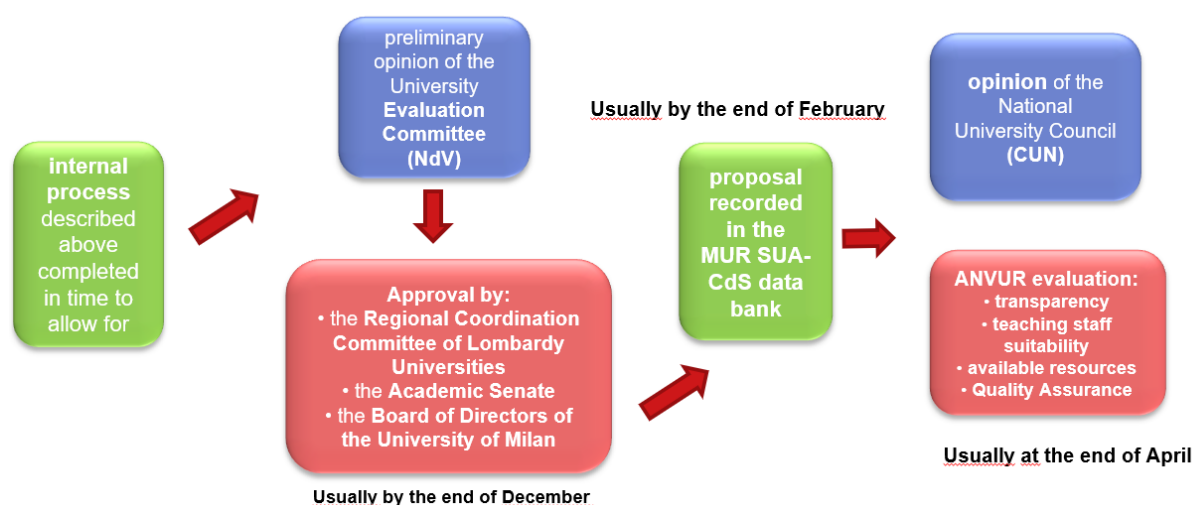
Internal regulations or instructions, e.g. regarding the curriculum, mobility track, student's pathway or enrolment

According to Italian regulations, the organisation of Joint Programmes is established by the partners who define the educational objectives and learning outcomes. Therefore, the organisation of the international study programme can be structured taking into account the educational proposals of the partner institutions while adhering to identical educational objectives and learning outcomes. It must be noted that in Italy educational activities are grouped into scientific-disciplinary sectors based on criteria of scientific and didactic homogeneity. **The educational paths** of each study programme are aimed at achieving the objectives defined in their respective educational frameworks and include:

- Activities in the **basic disciplinary areas**, for both bachelor's and single-cycle master's degree programmes.
- Activities in the disciplinary areas **characterising the study programme**.
- Activities in one or more disciplinary areas that are **related or complementary** to the basic and characterising ones, also considering contextual cultures and interdisciplinary training.
- Activities **autonomously chosen** by the student, provided they are consistent with their educational plan.
- Activities related to the **preparation of the final exam** for obtaining the degree.
- Activities related to **acquiring proficiency** in at least **one European Union language** other than Italian.

Timeline for internal accreditation

Roadmap for Accreditation of a new Study Programme (CDS)



The formulation of a Study Programme (CDS) marks the pivotal inception of the institutional activation process for the course itself, representing a significant undertaking for the University. It lays out the educational offerings, anchoring resources to specific objectives over a multi-year span. Departments lead this process, often collaborating, by presenting proposals for the enhancement of their educational repertoire and the creation of new training programmes. These proposals articulate the reason behind the choices made and furnish comprehensive information to clarify the educational endeavours they seek to embark upon. In crafting programmes, careful attention must be devoted to the underlying scientific and educational goals, ensuring they align with genuine and substantiated needs. Moreover, it is imperative to assess the adequacy of the available teaching staff in terms of both numbers and expertise. **The unveiling of a new study programme necessitates compliance with the requirements set forth by ANVUR.** This entails completing a designated document known as the Design Form (Scheda di Progettazione), which serves as a repository of essential insights into the rationale behind the proposal.

The Design Form mandates the inclusion of the following considerations:

1. **Preliminary analysis of the needs** within the pertinent context, tailored to the evolving socio-economic landscape and the burgeoning demand for professional competencies within society.
2. **Engagement with stakeholders involved in the project**, encompassing potential employers and students. This consultation typically involves liaising with local representative bodies from production, service sectors, and various professions, often convened under the auspices of an Evaluation Committee.

When designing a new programme, it's imperative to conduct a thorough examination of the existing offerings within the University, particularly within the same discipline or similar fields. The Board underscores the importance of precise scrutiny, especially for master's degree programmes. A comprehensive assessment of the current educational landscape should be undertaken, exploring possibilities for augmenting existing teaching methodologies. This may involve restructuring curricula, transforming ongoing courses, or proposing postgraduate

programmes to address emerging educational requirements. Furthermore, it's essential to appraise existing programmes at both regional and national levels. This analysis serves to ascertain the genuine necessity for new initiatives in light of the prevailing educational spectrum. Its primary objective is to identify strengths and weaknesses, thus facilitating enhancements to the overall quality and content of the educational offerings. The procedural steps leading to the formulation of the training project can be outlined as follows:

1. **Identification of needs:** This involves consulting with stakeholders and conducting an analysis of sector studies, if accessible, to pinpoint the pertinent requirements.
2. **Definition of competencies:** Once the needs are established, the competencies that graduates (or master's graduates) must possess to address these needs are delineated.
3. **Specification of learning outcomes:** This entails articulating the expected learning outcomes, delineating what students should know, understand, and be capable of upon completion of the study programme.
4. **Development of the study plan:** Constructing a study plan that aligns cohesively with the attainment of the expected learning outcomes forms the final step.

The requisite documents include:

- **Resolutions from all Department Councils** engaged by the proposers and involved in the project.
- **Opinion from the Faculty/School Committee** (Comitato di Direzione).
- **Study Programme Planning**, emphasising the identification of reference lecturers based on their actual availability and the fulfilment of requirements for programmes activated during the reference year.
- **Utilisation plan for classrooms and laboratories** designated for teaching activities, grounded in actual space availability and occupancy for programmes activated by the teaching structure in the reference year.
- **Didactic organisation outline (RAD)** enlightening the anticipated training trajectory, including exams, ECTS credits, and methodological indications.
- **Single Annual Form of Study Programmes (SUA-CdS)**, encompassing key elements of the AVA system and serving the purpose of study programme design, implementation, self-assessment, and redesign.
- **Didactic Regulation** of the course.
- **Study Programme Manifesto**, detailing coverage for various courses.
- **Minutes of Consultation** with local and social partners.
- **Opinion from the Joint Teaching Staff/Students' Committee** (meeting minutes).
- **Tuning Matrix and Syllabus** for planned courses.

ACTION/PROCESS	FORMAL STATEMENT	SUBJECTS INVOLVED	DEADLINE
Definition of potential local and national study programmes	Local and national quota-based programmes: Resolution by the Teaching Committee and Department on the educational potential, also for foreign students.	- Teaching Committee - Department Council	By the end of December each year

	Resolution/Opinion	Faculty Board	By the end of January each year
Definition of educational plan and assigned teachers	Resolution about educational assignments plan and teaching contracts	- Teaching Committee - Department Council	By the end of December each year
	Resolution about the designation of assigned teachers		
	Storage on the University data system of contract proposals, and detail of assigned teachers	Department's Administrative Personnel	By the half of January each year
Programmes Description (Manifesto)	- Resolution about the Programmes Description aimed at Students.	- Teaching Committee - Department Council	By the end of December each year
	Faculty Board Resolution about Programmes Descriptions, educational assignment plan and teaching contracts	Faculty Board	By the half of January each year
	Programmes Descriptions review and publication aimed to the Educational Planning Division and Registrar	Faculty Student Offices Sector	By the half of January each year
	Programmes Descriptions final check and approval	- Educational Planning Division - Student Registrar	By the end of February each year
Approval by governing bodies Submission to Ministry	- Investigation by governing bodies for approval - Uploading resolutions to the Ministry database	- Educational Planning Division - Academic Senate	By the end of February each year

Any specific requirements or challenges

It is commonly observed that the main hurdle is **the volume** of procedures and bureaucratic requirements that slow down the accreditation process.