

# **QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**May 2021-April 2022**

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## **1. Preamble**

This Report refers to the time interval between May 2021 and April 2022. It will be presented to the Bodies, the Assessment Board (NdV), and the Joint Students and Teachers Board (CPDS) and made available on the institutional website in the [Quality@IMT](#) section.

### **1.1. Composition of the Quality Enhancement Committee**

The Quality Enhancement Committee (PQ) of the IMT Alti Studi Lucca School (School) was established on February 21, 2019, by Director's Decree No. 00984(52).I.11.21.02.19 and subsequently modified in its composition by Director's Decrees No. 004160.I.11.06.04.20 and 01288(76).II.19.16.02.21. Following the provisions of the "Regulations for the Operation of the Quality Enhancement Committee", the PQ's mandate terminated at the end of the term of the School's Rector.

Considering the possibility of renewal of appointments, by Director's Decree No. 11733(364).II.19.14.12.21, the Quality Enhancement Committee was reconstituted for the three-year period 2021-2024.

The members in office at the time of drafting this Report are:

- Prof. Massimo Riccaboni, Full Professor, serving as President;
- Prof. Ennio Bilancini, Full Professor;
- Prof. Mario Zanon, Associate Professor;
- Dr. Andrea Averardi, Fixed-term Researcher;
- Ms. Serenella Valiani, XXXV cycle Ph.D. student;
- Dr. Valentina Calvi, technical-administrative staff;
- Ms. Caterina Tangheroni, technical-administrative staff.

### **1.2. Purpose of the Annual Report**

The Report, prepared annually by the PQ, has the dual purpose of monitoring and reporting on the activities carried out under the School's Quality Assurance (QA) system and making known the main issues that the PQ deems necessary to address.

### **1.3. Context**

The period to which this Report pertains was dense with events and changes for the School, first and foremost, the election of the Rector and the consequent beginning of the mandate of the new Governance. In this context, the education offering underwent a significant revision (Ministerial Decree no. 226/2021 and subsequent amendments to the Ph.D. Regulations). This culminated in establishing the XXXVIII cycle of three Doctoral Programs (Cognitive and Cultural Systems; Economics, Analytics, and Decision Sciences; Systems Science) and the National Doctorate in Cybersecurity for which the School will be the leading institution. Registration is also

open for two executive courses (Innovating and Competing through Neuroscience; Generational Change and Digital Innovation in Family Business).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the new AVA3 model of the Self-Assessment, Periodic Evaluation, Accreditation system and the "Guidelines for Accreditation of Doctoral Programs 2022" triggered a revolution in terms of quality, evaluation, and accreditation. The latter, in section 3.2, indicates the adoption of a quality assurance system for designing and managing doctoral training under the Standards for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as a requirement for Ph.D. Program Regulations. Since, according to the above Guidelines, ANVUR will have to provide universities with due guidance in this regard, the future perspectives reported in this document may be subject to revision.

## **2. Assurance of Educational Quality**

During the period covered by this Report, the PQ paid particular attention to the educational QA system, promoting actions aimed at streamlining and simplifying the processes for managing the results of the surveys and the questionnaires themselves. The choices made aim to encourage participation in the surveys and adequately use the results of the surveys to improve the quality of teaching.

### **2.1. Student opinion survey**

Taking into account the centrality of students in the educational QA system, the School pays special attention to systematically listening to their opinions with reference to the teaching provided and the distinctive aspects of the Doctoral Programs.

At its March 29 meeting, the PQ initiated a discussion on the procedure for managing the results of the questionnaires and, in particular, the role of the Coordinators of the Doctoral Programs. On April 13, the PQ President met with the Coordinators of the Doctoral Programs in activation for the Academic Year (AY) 2022/23 and the Delegate for Didactics and Information Services. Opposite to the current, excessively structured way of managing survey results, they suggested a simplified way, in particular for the Teaching Evaluation Questionnaire:

- pending the release of the AVA3 system and more guidance from ANVUR on QA systems' requirements for Doctoral Programs, it is proposed to have the Coordinator of the Doctoral Program ensure that TEQ's results are discussed in a Scientific Board meeting after receiving potential comments from the CPDS, the PQ and the NdV. It is also proposed that sharing the outcomes of the discussion via an excerpt of the meeting minutes constitutes the final stage of the QA cycle as well as the basis for planning improvement actions and possible changes to teaching assignments;
- Given the gap introduced by the start of the new Doctoral Programs in AY 2022/23, to complete the QA cycle for the current AY it is proposed that the Coordinators of the

Doctoral Programs include in the agenda of the first useful meeting of the Scientific Board the discussion of survey results and the acknowledgment of the issues reported by the CPDS in the 2021 Annual Report and then share the excerpt of the minutes with the School Bodies in charge of QA.

It is also worth mentioning that the Working Group in charge of mapping the process of administering and managing the results of student surveys (see [Section 7.1](#)) has started a review of the document entitled "Student Opinions and Satisfaction Survey System" which will also formalize the management of the End of Year Questionnaire introduced by the PQ in 2021 (see [Section 2.2.3](#)).

## 2.2. Questionnaires in use

The following three types of anonymous questionnaires are currently administered online:

- The Teaching Evaluation Questionnaire (TEQ) used to evaluate each course;
- The End of Year Questionnaire for the evaluation of each of the years of the Doctoral Program after the first;
- The Ph.D. Program Evaluation Questionnaire for the assessment of the Ph.D. Program as a whole at the end of it.

The changes to the educational offerings that will be introduced starting in the XXXVIII cycle (Academic Year - AY 2022/23) provided the PQ with the opportunity to undertake a critical analysis and a thorough review of the questionnaires in use. This review will be completed by the end of AY 2021/22 to ensure that the new version is administered to the new cycle.

In the session of January 27, 2022, the PQ and the Delegate for Didactics and Information Services agreed on some changes to the TEQ, which received a favorable review from the CPDS and were later found to apply to all questionnaires (Table 1).

Issue	Proposed amendment
Lack of gender neutrality in the Italian wording of the questions	Administering the questionnaire exclusively in English, as the official language of the School's Doctoral Programs, to ensure gender neutrality
Required questions	Adding "prefer not to answer" to the response options for each question

**Table 1:** Changes to be applied to all questionnaires.

### 2.2.1. Changes to the Teaching Evaluation Questionnaire (TEQ)

Given the CPDS's concerns about the TEQs (2021 Annual Report, Section II, Framework A), during the session of January 27, 2022, the PQ discussed with the Delegate for Didactics and Information Services the possibility of making further changes to the TEQ (Table 2) in addition to those listed in Table 1, which apply to all surveys.

Issue	Proposed amendment
Question Q3 "Was the course relevant and useful for my research project" may be critical for first-year students who have not yet defined their research project. In addition to that, some mandatory courses may not be directly useful for the student's research project	Rewrite question Q3 as "The course was relevant and useful for my research goals and/or doctoral education"
Question Q6 "The examination method was appropriate" is not applicable to courses without exam	Rewrite question Q6 as "The lecturer clearly defined the examination procedures (including the no final exam option)" and move it to the second section of the questionnaire devoted to evaluating the lecturer

**Table 2:** Changes to be made to TEQs starting from AY 2022/23.

The proposed changes were shared with the CPDS on January 31, 2022, receiving positive feedback on February 1, 2022. To guarantee the comparability of the data collected for the current year (AY 2021/22), the PQ and the CPDS agreed that the changes would be effective from AY 2022/23.

In addition, the PQ and the Delegate for Didactics and Information Services agreed on the necessity of encouraging participation in the surveys. In particular, it was deemed appropriate to promote the good practice in which each teacher allocates a time slot during the last lesson of each course for the students to take the survey and illustrates, during the first lesson of each course, the results of the previous year's course evaluation, focusing on the critical issues that emerged and on the corrective actions

Finally, it is reported that, in consultation with the Delegate for Didactics and Information Services, the PQ reserves the right to discuss further TEQ changes in style and content before the start of the new academic year.

### 2.2.2. Changes to the Ph.D. Program Evaluation Questionnaire

During the session of March 29, the PQ initiated a review of the Ph.D. Program Evaluation Questionnaire, noting the following issues:

- Duplication of a question (#17 and #18);
- Reference to the "IMT Advisor" and "Dissertation Advisor" (in Section III) for which there is no correspondence in the "Ph.D. Regulations";
- Possible difficulty in guaranteeing anonymity related to the requirement to indicate cycle and curriculum affiliation;
- Uneven wording of questions in different sections.

In addition, in light of the changes to the TEQ, the PQ also deemed it appropriate to propose for the Ph.D. Program Evaluation Questionnaire the addition of the "prefer not to answer" option among the response options for each question and the administration of the questionnaire exclusively in English, the official language of the School's Doctoral Programs. The latter choice also ensures gender neutrality in the wording of the questions.

The PQ shared the proposals with the CPDS on April 5, asking for feedback and, at the same time, suggestions for further modification or improvement. On April 22, the CPDS responded with comments on the content, structure, and style of the survey and suggested amendments.

In light of the CPDS's comments, during the session of April 27, 2022, the PQ carefully analyzed the Ph.D. Program Evaluation Questionnaire with the Delegate for Didactics and Information Services, opting for a significant revision according to the following criteria:

- Reducing the total number of questions;
- Preventing content overlaps with other questionnaires;
- Using overall assessment questions only, to be answered based on the experience and maturity achieved during the Ph.D. Program;
- Introducing some questions regarding the career services, given that the CEVS reported the need to strengthen them during the initial Accreditation visit.

The President, Prof. Tribastone, and Dr. Calvi were designated to redraft the Ph.D. Program Evaluation Questionnaire based on what was discussed and agreed upon.

At the same time, it was also agreed that to maximize the response rate, the questionnaire should be administered upon receiving the "Thesis Defense Form" instead of after the defense.

Finally, in the session of September 24, 2021, the PQ suggested sharing survey results with the Coordinators of the Ph.D. Programs in January (with respect to who obtained their degrees in the previous calendar year) in the hope that each Coordinator would then share the information with the Scientific Board.

### **2.2.3. End of Year Questionnaire**

The End of Year Questionnaire, introduced by the PQ in 2021 (see the 2020-21 Annual Report for more details), was administered for the first time between June 14 and July 19, 2021 to all



students enrolled in year two and following years. The PQ actively promoted the survey via email and achieved an overall response rate of 65% (77 out of 118 questionnaires were completed).

After the August 31, 2021, meeting, the PQ shared the survey results with the CPDS inviting them to include the data in the Annual Report.

During the meeting of September 24, 2021, the PQ analyzed the results of the questionnaire in detail and suggested the following timeline:

- Administering the survey between mid-June and mid-July;
- Sharing the survey results with the Ph.D. Program Coordinators in late July.

These recommendations were then shared with the Ph.D. and Higher Education Office for implementation and will be formalized in the revised version of the "Student Opinions and Satisfaction Survey System" (see in [Section 2.1](#)).

### **2.3. Focus group**

The design of surveys through focus groups (small group discussion on a designated topic led by an external moderator), which was included among the PQ objectives for the year 2020, has been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the meeting between the Presidents of the Bodies and Committees in charge of Quality Assurance (see [Section 5.1](#)), focus groups were highlighted as one of the issues to be addressed jointly. In particular, it was pointed out that focus groups can be a tool that can obviate the problems encountered by the School in administering questionnaires to small groups of compilers in addition to serving the students as a testing ground in anticipation of the periodic Accreditation visit by CEVS given the interlocution with an external moderator.

Resuming the discussion regarding the experimentation of focus groups at the PQ meeting on March 29, 2022, different sensitivities emerged regarding the use of this tool and the benefits the School could gain from it. Subsequently, a plan of action was established, including an in-depth meeting with an expert and subsequent evaluation of the actual functionality in the School's context.

In particular, the PQ considers it appropriate to assess the potential of focus groups as tools to sift out critical issues or discontents that would otherwise be difficult to detect and to focus them on issues such as student services and research activity because the teaching activities characterizing the first year of the Ph.D. Programs are already extensively investigated by the TEQs. While the students face the most critical phase of their journey from year two onwards, the feedback tools available to them are limited (End of Year Questionnaire and Ph.D. Program Evaluation Questionnaire). Focus groups could help the School understand in which areas the student community requires more support and assistance.

## **2.4. Future Perspectives**

To complete the review of questionnaires initiated in 2020, in the coming months the PQ will be engaged in reviewing the Ph.D. Program Evaluation Questionnaire and the End of Year Questionnaire in collaboration with the Delegate for Didactics and Information Services and the CPDS. The updated versions of the TEQ, End of Year Questionnaire, and Ph.D. Program Evaluation Questionnaire will be used from the AY 2022/23.

Regarding the necessary update of the document titled "Student Opinions and Satisfaction Survey System," the PQ reserves the right to support the Working Group in charge of mapping the process of questionnaire administration and data management in interacting with the Coordinators of the Doctoral Programs and in drafting the document to be submitted to the Governing Bodies for approval.

Finally, given the upcoming approval of the "Regulation of further education and professional development courses" and the start of the first executive courses in AY 2022/23, the PQ reiterates the importance of discussing the design of dedicated surveys to probe the opinions of students with different needs from the Ph.D. ones.

## **3. Campus and student services**

As part of the quality monitoring activities, the PQ focused on ensuring that adequate space for teaching, research, and study activities is available to students and guaranteeing the continuous improvement of services.

### **3.1. Covid-19 Emergency Management**

When drafting the End of Year Questionnaire (see [Section 2.2.3](#)), the PQ considered it appropriate to include the following questions to assess the impact of the Covid-19 emergency and the School's emergency management:

- The Covid emergency has worsened the quality of research training that I received;
- The Covid emergency has worsened the quality of the relationship with my Ph.D. Advisor/co-Advisor;
- The Covid emergency has caused disruption to my research period abroad;
- The School has responded promptly and adequately to the emergency.

As highlighted by the CPDS in the 2021 Annual Report, the overall assessment of the Covid emergency management by the 77 participants is positive. More details are provided in Table 3.

The comments collected in the free text questions present mixed opinions: two express appreciation for the School's work, two report a lack of internal communication, and one indicates a perceived delay in responding to the emergency and finding appropriate solutions.

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>N/A</b>
The Covid emergency has worsened the quality of research training that I received	25.00%	33.82%	33.82%	7.35%	0.00%	-
The Covid emergency has worsened the quality of the relationship with my Ph.D. Advisor/co-Advisor	13.24%	22.06%	16.18%	38.24%	10.29%	-
The Covid emergency has caused disruption to my research period abroad	29.41%	16.18%	20.59%	7.35%	0.00%	26.47%
The School has responded promptly and adequately to the emergency	8.82%	27.94%	22.06%	23.53%	17.65%	-

**Table 3:** responses to End of Year Questionnaire questions referring to emergency management from Covid-19.

### Privacy and sensitive data

Following the communication sent by CPDS on December 29, 2021, concerning, among other things, the issue of privacy of students residing on Campus, which had become particularly relevant during the Covid-19 pandemic, the President met with the General Director on January 12, 2022, asking for briefings on the subject. The President pointed out the need to revise the "Regulations for the Protection and Processing of Personal, Sensitive and Judicial Data" which date back to 2012, as well as the lack of attachments.

During the meeting of January 27, 2022, the PQ took up what was reported by the CPDS and reiterated the need for a revision of the abovementioned Regulations, possibly considering how to regulate the handling of sensitive data in extraordinary cases.

Urged by the PQ, the Legal Affairs and Compliance Unit has subsequently updated the Regulations review plan, envisaging to review the "Regulations for the Protection and Processing of Personal, Sensitive and Judicial Data" by the end of 2022. The Legal Affairs and Compliance Unit has also explained that, following the significant regulatory changes on the issue of privacy and, in particular, the adoption of the European Regulation No. 2016/679 on the Protection of Personal Data (GDPR), it would be possible to repeal said Regulations. Considering the peculiarities of the Campus model, the PQ prefers the revision of the Regulation to its repeal, as a guarantee for the

School's actions. The PQ will, therefore, monitor the progress of the Regulations review plan and compliance with the communicated timelines.

### **3.2. Spaces available**

#### Spaces for distance learning activities

On July 30, the PQ received a summary of the meeting held on July 9, 2021, between the CPDS, the student representation of the XXXVI cycle, and the Delegate for Didactics and Higher Education that was discussed at the meeting of August 31. Concerning the management of spaces dedicated to teaching activities, the CPDS reported:

- The poor audio quality experienced by remote students and the subsequent corrective action implemented by the School, namely the installation of new microphones in the classrooms;
- The lack of rooms available to students to attend online courses and the proposal to book a room for each of them regardless of the delivery mode (online, blended, in-person).

#### Study stations

Following up on what was reported by CEVS during the initial Accreditation visit ("The School should improve the availability of study stations and classrooms for students"), the CPDS 2021 Annual Report monitored the actions the School took to ensure the availability and adequacy of study stations for students. The document shows how this problem has become even more significant following the use of off-campus facilities (Hotel San Martino, San Micheletto complex) to ensure single-room accommodation.

The PQ promptly requested updates on the matter from the Campus Management and Front Office and, during the meeting of January 27, 2022, acknowledged the intervention of the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Lucca, which resulted in the replacement of one of the two beds with a desk in the ten double rooms in the dorm that lacked one.

The issue was, moreover, taken up by the Spaces Committee, appointed by Director's Decree No. 11472(356).II.1.06.12.21, which was prompted by the PQ to check the current availability of study stations (Table 4).

168 desks are available at the time of writing, with 170 students enrolled. It should be noted that this number also includes students awaiting graduation who are not actively on Campus.

62 desks in the dorm	32 desks in the open space on the 3rd floor
66 desks in the 6 study rooms	8 desks in the offices reserved for Students
<b>Total 128</b>	<b>Total 40</b>

**Table 4:** Overview of the study stations available on Campus.

In view of the expected increase in the number of students following the start of the XXXVIII cycle, the PQ will check the ability to guarantee a study station to each in the upcoming months also in light of the planned interventions (12 desks to be added in the Refectory and 16 in the Via Brunero Paoli complex).

In this regard, the PQ believes that the Spaces Committee's proposal to use a software to manage study station reservations is suitable to ensure the efficient use of study stations and continuous monitoring of any unmet need.

### 3.3. Services

Regarding the monitoring of the quality of services provided by the School, the PQ uses as a reference the results of the annual Customer Satisfaction survey under the Good Practice project, referring to the services provided by the School in the previous year as well as any reports in the CPDS Annual Report. In March 2022, the PQ met the first time with representatives of some offices to discuss the results of the survey and to consider corrective actions in response to the critical issues that emerged (for more details, see [Section 6.2](#)).

During the period covered by this Report, special attention was paid to resolving critical issues related to Wi-Fi network coverage.

#### Wi-Fi signal coverage

From the analysis of the Customer Satisfaction questionnaire administered as part of the Good Practice 2020 project, the PQ inferred the perpetuation of the critical issue related to Wi-Fi signal coverage within the San Francesco complex. Related to this is also what the CPDS reported in the 2021 Annual Report, namely the identification of rooms with inadequate coverage, the subsequent taking up of the problem by the new Rector and the subsequent intervention of the IT Services Office.

The PQ discussed this action's outcome during the session of December 23, 2021, deeming it appropriate to ask the IT Services Office for more detailed information about the analysis of the problem and the corrective actions.

On January 27, following the office response, the PQ noted that:

- Reconnaissance of Wi-Fi signal coverage problems was carried out in November 2021;

- Installation points for new access points have been identified with the collaboration of Tecnoservice SRL, the company managing the maintenance and installation of technical equipment in the San Francesco complex;
- Between November 17 and 24, 6 new access points were installed to increase signal coverage.

On January 28, 2022, the message from the IT Services Office was forwarded to the CPDS in response to the issues reported in the 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports.

Following the most recent intervention, no further notifications of critical issues were received from the CPDS or students.

#### **4. Quality Assurance of Research and Third Mission**

During the first months of 2021, the PQ, as part of the activities related to the construction of a QA system, initiated a reconnaissance of indicators related to Research and Third Mission that the School's administrative offices monitor, with a focus on those impacting on university ordinary and reward funding. This reconnaissance, which is also part of the Planning, Control, and Quality Unit project to design a dashboard as part of the 2021-2023 administrative objective, was conducted by the Library and Research Enhancement Office, the Planning, Control, and Quality Unit and the Research and Knowledge Transfer Office and concluded in July 2021.

##### **4.1. VQR 2015-2019**

As already described in the 2020-2021 Annual Report, ANVUR launched the evaluation exercise covering the period 2015-2019 in October 2020, making significant changes in the modalities of participation and evaluation. The most important changes concerned the number of products to be submitted, no longer prefixed for each evaluated subject, but at the choice of the institution within a range calculated on the basis of subjects, and the selection of a Third Mission case whose impact fell within the period considered by VQR.

The product submission process was completed in April 2021, within the deadline, with 99 products selected from the 136 submitted by the 39 participants.

Regarding the Third Mission case study, at the request of the Rector and the General Director, an initial reconnaissance of all Third Mission activities carried out by the School in 2015-2019 was initiated by the Planning, Control, and Quality Unit in collaboration with the Research and Knowledge Transfer Office and the Communication and Events Office. To collect the necessary data for the preliminary study, the Planning, Control, and Quality Unit provided the other offices involved with a form based on the one proposed by ANVUR in the VQR call. Taking into account the complexity and importance of both the choice of the activity to be used as a case study and its description, at the same time as the reconnaissance work, in October 2020 the PQ proposed

to the Rector the appointment of an advisory committee for the selection of the case study to be evaluated.

The first results of the VQR 2015-2019, were presented by ANVUR President Prof. Uricchio on April 11, 2022, during an online meeting. This event, attended by the Rector, was followed on April 13 by the press release on ANVUR website and the presentation of the preliminary data.

The available documentation provides some data on the exercise as a whole and allows for a first glimpse of the evaluations obtained by the School at the institutional level and a comparison with other University Schools for higher education and research with a special status.

A more in-depth analysis of the School's achievements by the PQ will only be possible after the publication of the final ANVUR and Area reports, which is expected at the end of June.

#### **4.2. Incentivizing the use of IRIS**

In February 2022, the PQ launched a campaign to promote the use of the IRIS institutional repository among faculty members and researchers. The promotion campaign was necessary to bridge a mismatch between the Scopus database and IRIS. The lack of data in IRIS became apparent when updating the data for the preparation of the 2022-2024 Integrated Plan and was also pointed out by the NdV when validating the document. In fact, referring to 2021, Scopus shows 201 publications, while IRIS 126.

An analysis of Scopus data conducted by the Library and Research Enhancement Office revealed that some publications had been incorrectly associated with the School. Despite reporting these cases to Scopus, the difference between the two databases remained significant.

After the PQ notice was sent to all teaching and research staff, 51 publications related to the year 2021 were deposited in IRIS.

The PQ will continue to monitor data and promote the use of the institutional repository in the coming months and will initiate a discussion on possible processes to incentivize the use of IRIS.

#### **4.3. Discipline of the performance fund**

In 2019, during the Initial Accreditation visit, CEVS, while appreciating the approach of the system governing the performance fund defined in the "Regulations for the management of the performance fund," pointed out the lack of internal reward policies on which to base faculty performance as well as procedures for measuring scientific and teaching quality.

In July 2021, the School, then, defined and presented its Program of Interventions within the framework of "Programmazione delle Università 2021-2023 (PRO3)", entitled "Merit, training and cultural interchange," targeting its actions for improvement within the framework of objectives D - "To be protagonists of an international dimension" and E - "To invest in the future of young researchers and university staff." In particular, the latter sees among the indicators chosen by the School E\_k - Resources available on the performance fund compared to the total cost of

university personnel and, as a target, a marked improvement over the reference situation (year 2020).

Noting the absence of indicators to go along with the "Regulations for the management of the performance fund" for the effective disbursement of the fund, the PQ, in its new composition, has, since its appointment, deemed it appropriate to point out the urgency of defining a set of indicators applicable to the areas of didactics, research and Third Mission as well as the procedure for applying for and awarding the prize and the related timing.

At its meeting on March 29, 2022, the PQ took note of the initiation of a reconnaissance of indicators to be used for the disbursement of the performance fund by the Research Committee. Subsequently, the PQ President met with the Coordinators of the Doctoral Programs and the Delegate for Didactics and Information Services on April 13, 2022, and they agreed that a proposal of indicators would result from the joint work of the Didactics, Research, and Third Mission Committee.

It should be noted that at the same time, as explicated in [Section 7.1](#), the PQ urged the Working Group to start working on the definition and mapping of the process related to the performance fund.

Based on the current situation, following the discussion at the April 27 meeting, the PQ considered it appropriate to report to the Directorate:

- The need for a connection between the various Committees appointed by Director's Decree No. 11472(356).II.1.06.12.21 and as amended or added, to ensure uniformity in the definition of indicators as well as the balancing of the various dimensions considered in the evaluation;
- The urgency to define the indicators and make any changes to the "Regulations for the management of the performance fund," if deemed necessary, by the end of this academic year.

Finally, the PQ reserves its opinion on the proposal of indicators and procedure for designing a mechanism for evaluating the quality of research and Third Mission.

#### **4.4. Future Perspectives**

As already highlighted last year, the VQR 2015-2019 exercise was an excellent test case for constructing a monitoring system for research and Third Mission activities. In particular, the PQ notes the following functional development possibilities for building the system:

- Extending the monitoring of research products to Assistant Professors, Post Doctoral Fellows, Research Collaborators, Collaborators, and Research Grant Holders, as already done for the campaign to promote the use of the institutional repository;



- Creating a database of all Third Mission activities promoted by the School and collecting data useful to assess their impact;
- Promoting the construction of a QA system for research and Third Mission, as well as a reward system, in collaboration with stakeholders and the Research Committee;
- A better defining the role of the Advisory Board in the QA process of research and Third Mission.

## **5. The relationship with the Joint Students and Teachers Board**

The "Regulations for the Operation of the Quality Enhancement Committee," particularly in Article 4, entrusts this Committee, among other things, with the task of "supervising, monitoring and evaluating the application of the system of Quality Assurance of didactics, research and Third Mission," also adding that, in collaborating with all the Bodies involved in Quality Assurance and evaluation, it "ensures the correct flow of information to and from the Assessment Board and the Joint Students and Teachers Board".

In continuity with what has been done in past years and without prejudice to the distinction of competencies, the PQ continued to ensure a fruitful dialogue with the CPDS during the period covered by this Report.

Following Ms. Valiani's participation in a training course on "The Joint Students and Teachers Boards (CPDS)", the role of the CPDS, also in relation to that of the PQ, was discussed during the session of August 31, 2021. The PQ highlighted how the CPDS tends to play a key role in the School, with a broader scope than the fulfillments required by Law No. 240/2010.

At the same meeting, it was also noted that QA Bodies and Committee members, as well as members of the Community, still have limited knowledge of the roles and areas of responsibility of the School's Bodies and Committees and of the relationships between them.

Having read the CPDS 2021 Annual Report, which recommends "a serious and urgent effort to review internal procedures and communication channels within the School's Quality Assurance system", "to stimulate a better understanding of the nature, tasks, and institutional interlocutors of the CPDS within the Quality Assurance system, for the benefit of the students and the School as a whole", "to reiterate to the entire School Community the prerogatives, tasks and importance of the CPDS within the School's Quality Assurance system", during the session of December 23, 2021, the PQ agreed on the need to clarify the competencies of the different Bodies operating within the QA framework, ensuring discussion and the widest participation in the proceedings.

In line with the provisions of the "Regulations for the Operation of the Quality Enhancement Committee" and the "Guidelines for the Joint Students and Teachers Board", the PQ is promoting activities aimed at increasing the transparency of the QA Bodies and Committee actions, encouraging the involvement of the Community. Specifically, the following actions were put in place:

- Coordination meeting between the Presidents of the PQ, CPDS, and NdV ([section 5.1](#))
- Sharing meeting agendas among PQ, CPDS, and NdV members
- Joint participation in the CPDS Annual Report presentation event ([section 5.2](#)).

Lastly, it should be noted that the technology tutors and student representatives in the Communication Committee suggested writing FAQs in order to make information retrieval on the internal procedures easier for students and to clarify whom to contact depending on the circumstances.

The PQ expresses appreciation for the proposed initiative and hopes the document will be made available by the start of the new Academic Year.

### **5.1. Meeting between the Presidents of the Bodies and Committees in charge of Quality Assurance**

At the invitation of the President of the PQ, the Presidents of the PQ, CPDS, and NdV, as well as Dr. Calvi, met on February 24. The online meeting aimed at improving communication and information sharing among QA Bodies and Committees as well as fostering an alignment of purpose.

The Presidents agreed on sharing the respective agendas to monitor the topics covered and initiate joint discussions where necessary. They deemed it appropriate for the Presidents of the PQ and NdV to speak at the CPDS Annual Report presentation event (see [Section 5.2](#)) and to organize, on an annual basis, a joint session in September/October.

A discussion on sharing meeting minutes among the three Bodies and Committees members was opened and is ongoing.

### **5.2. CPDS Annual Report 2021 and presentation event**

As in previous years, the CPDS asked the PQ for feedback on the Annual Report draft before approving it.

The PQ, therefore, analyzed and discussed the content of the document during the session of December 23, 2021, the first in its new composition, and forwarded its comments to the CPDS on December 24.

The CPDS approved the 2021 Annual Report on AY 2020/21 on December 29, 2021. The report was then published on the institutional website in Italian and English.

On March 28, 2022, the CPDS presented the 2021 Annual Report to the Community. The meeting was held in Cappella Guinigi with the possibility of remote participation. Opening remarks by the Rector were followed by an introduction by Prof. Bertolacci, President of the CPDS, and speeches by Prof. Del Vecchio, President of the NdV, and Prof. Riccaboni, President of the PQ. It should be noted that the event saw for the first time the participation of the three Presidents in a spirit of collaboration and unity of purpose of the School's Quality Assurance Bodies.

### **5.3. Training activities**

The PQ has supported the activity of the CPDS on several occasions by promoting specific training activities. In particular the PQ suggested the CPDS to participate in the training course organized by the CRUI Foundation entitled "Le Commissioni Paritetiche Docenti Studenti (CPDS)" and in the workshop "La partecipazione degli Studenti all'Assicurazione della Qualità" (Student Participation in Quality Assurance) organized by CONPAQ (National Coordination of University Quality Chairs).

## **6. Good Practice Project**

Intending to monitor the quality of services provided, the School has also renewed its participation in the Good Practice (GP) project, coordinated by Politecnico di Milano, for the 2021-22 edition. To improve Customer Satisfaction, the PQ conducted an in-depth review of the results obtained and the corrective actions implemented by the Administration in response to the highlighted critical issues.

### **6.1. Main critical issues that emerged**

According to what CPDS reported in the 2021 Annual Report, the School has promptly responded to previous reports and resolved the issues related to the services provided.

The PQ has deemed it appropriate to ask the offices for updates on the interventions for enhancing Wi-Fi signal coverage in the dorm and providing dedicated study stations to students. During the session of January 27, 2022, the PQ read messages from the IT Services Office and the Campus Management and Front Office on the matter, taking note of the School's response to the issues reported by the CPDS in the 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports.

### **6.2. Meetings with office representatives**

On March 7 and 10, 2022, the PQ Chair and Dr. Calvi met with the representatives of some offices responsible for providing services to discuss the results of the Customer Satisfaction survey referring to the year 2020 as well as any issues reported by the CPDS in the 2021 Annual Report.

Table 5 provides an overview of the possible areas of action discussed, the proposed corrective actions and those involved in implementing them.

The PQ has then shared with the General Director a summary of the issues addressed during the individual meetings and their proposed solutions that will serve as a basis to design corrective actions.

Following the release of the results of the surveys conducted in February 2022, which we note refer to services provided in 2021, the PQ intends to meet again with the office representatives to analyze the evolution of satisfaction rates in light of the corrective actions implemented by the School.

Scope	Issue	Solutions implemented and/or proposed	Subjects involved
<b>Website</b>	Difficulty in finding information on the institutional website	Pending indications about a possible general makeover of the site, the proposal is to create a side site dedicated to the call for admission to the Doctoral Programs. This site will be connected to the institutional one and provide key information on how to apply as well as contact people details	Communication and Events Office IT Services Office Ph.D. and Higher Education Office Rector General Director
<b>Website</b>	Nonuniformity of sites linked to the institutional site (e.g., Research Unit, Master's, executive courses)	Preparation of Guidelines to facilitate stylistic and graphic uniformity of sites in addition to content creation	Communication and Events Office
<b>Library</b>	Catalog (print and online) deemed insufficiently extensive	1. Involvement of internal users to gather their needs and plan accordingly for upcoming purchases 2. Reconnaissance of the journals most frequently used by faculty and researchers for the publication of research results and verification of their catalog availability	Library and Research Enhancement Office Library Committee
<b>Missions</b>	Mission reimbursement	Dissemination of existing documentation (infographics with key steps from mission request to reimbursement request and related timelines and answers to frequently asked questions - FAQ) among internal users also in collaboration with technology tutors	Human Resources Office Technology tutors
<b>Canteen</b>	Quality and variety of the food served in the canteen	1. Changes to the proposed menu in agreement with the service manager, ensuring the variety of dishes and the possibility of having a special menu in case of allergies and/or special dietary needs 2. Regulated access to the kitchenette in the San Francesco complex, which was closed during the most critical periods of the pandemic	Campus Management and Front Office

<b>Sustainability</b>	Energy and environmental sustainability	Assessment of possible energy efficiency measures in the San Francesco Complex, in consideration of the School's incentive policies and sustainability goals	Campus Management and Front Office Rector General Director
<b>Teachings</b>	Content overlap between different courses	Introduce a Drive folder to make, on a voluntary basis, the teaching material available to the entire IMT Community	Ph.D. and Higher Education Office IT Services Office Lecturers
<b>Exams</b>	Lack of an exam calendar and the risk of having multiple exams in a short period of time	Invitation to lecturers to make explicit the date of the final exam when drafting the syllabus	Ph.D. and Higher Education Office Lecturers
<b>Wi-Fi</b>	Wi-Fi network coverage in the dorm	1. Installation of 6 new access points 2. Funding application under DM 1275/2021 submitted to MUR to replace the current Wi-Fi network with more-advanced technology	IT Services Office Rector General Director

**Table 5:** Possible areas of interventions discussed by the President of the PQ and the representatives of the administrative offices.

### 6.3. Good Practice Project 2021/22

To monitor service quality, the School would benefit from increased participation in the Good Practice (GP) project, in particular among Faculty and Researchers. Therefore, the PQ considered it necessary to play an active role in promoting the completion of questionnaires.

On February 4, 2022, the President, on behalf of the PQ, informed all the Faculty, Researches, Research Fellows, and Ph.D. students who had an active contract for at least part of 2021 of the launch of the survey. The Planning, Control, and Quality Unit then sent a weekly reminder on behalf of the PQ.

Following weekly verification of the response rate, the PQ deemed it appropriate to involve the student representatives and the members of each Research Unit in promoting the survey.

In particular, the PQ encouraged student representatives to play an active role in encouraging survey participation among students, remarking how higher response rates mean higher data quality and reliability. The President also requested the intervention of the Research Unit Directors, inviting them to remind the researchers, Research Fellows, and Ph.D. students in their Research Unit of the importance of the GP project.

Finally, on February 28, 2022, the Rector encouraged the completion of the survey by sending an email to all potential respondents.

Following a deadline extension, the survey closed on March 11. Table 6 summarizes the response rates in comparison with those obtained in the previous edition. The data confirm the excellent participation of technical-administrative staff and show an increase in responses from Faculty, Researchers, and Research Fellows. However, a decline in the response rate of Ph.D. students is noted.

	Good Practice 2020			Good Practice 2021		
	No. of completed questionnaires	No. of potential respondents	Response rate	No. of completed questionnaires	No. potential compilers	Response rate
<b>Technical-administrative staff</b>	32	38	84.2%	40	42	95.2%
<b>Faculty and researchers</b>	18	41	43.9%	25	38	65.8%
<b>Ph.D. students</b>	74	157	47.1%	60	167	35.9%
<b>Research Fellows</b>	9	32	28.1%	13	40	32.5%
<b>Total (Faculty, Researchers, Research Fellows, Ph.D. Students)</b>	101	230	43.9%	98	245	40.0%

**Table 6:** Comparison of response rates of Customer Satisfaction surveys (Good Practice project) with reference to services provided in 2020 and 2021.

#### 6.4. Future Perspectives

The overall response rate is well below 5%, particularly with regard to doctoral students and Research Fellows. Therefore, it seems appropriate to raise the Community's awareness of the importance of Customer Satisfaction questionnaires as tools for monitoring service quality and reporting possible improvement areas.

In addition, taking into consideration the reports of some compilers about the difficulty of applying some questions to the specific reality of the School and the absence of questions related to

campus life, the PQ explored the possibility of adding a new questionnaire on Campus life and services to the existing surveys.

Prompted by President, the Planning, Control, and Quality Unit initiated a discussion with the group coordinating the Good Practice Project at Politecnico di Milano on a customization of the Customer Satisfaction questionnaires. Once the feasibility of the customization is assessed, the PQ plans to review the survey to reduce the number of questions and focus only on those aspects that may improve the School's functioning.

## **7. Process mapping**

In 2019, the School embarked on an ambitious journey to overhaul its administrative processes: the technical-administrative staff underwent extensive training on Lean Thinking thanks to an experienced Management Engineer. This path found continuation during 2020 with a natural slowdown due to the difficulties related to the evolution of the Covid-19 emergency, the conversion of activities to online mode and the adoption of the smart working regime.

In 2021, due to the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic and the end of the Management Engineer's appointment, process-mapping activities slowed down and came to an end between July and December.

Before completing its term of office, the PQ decided to provide an overview of what has been done since 2019 to inform the decisions of the new Governance.

Then the PQ, in its previous composition, invited the future Rector to the session of October 21, 2021, (the last) and highlighted the need to promptly resume process-mapping activities in 2022. The PQ also suggested focusing on a small number of processes that are particularly important for the smooth running of the administration.

### **7.1. Recommencement of activities in 2022**

From the start, 2022 has been characterized by an effort aimed at process improvement through the resumption of mapping activities.

At the urging of the PQ President, a meeting was held on January 28, 2022, between the PQ President, the Rector, the General Director, Dr. Calvi, and Ms. Bertoncini, Head of the Human Resources Office, during which a list of processes of the Administration was presented including those already mapped in previous years and for which revision is deemed necessary, processes for which analysis has been initiated and those for which mapping is appropriate. In this context, the strategy to be adopted for mapping and prioritization was discussed. The final ranking was obtained based on the average scores collected for each process.

During the session of February 22, the PQ, taken note of the ranking and of the need to establish a minimum number of processes to be mapped within the year, set the mapping of the following processes as a priority for the year 2022:

- Educational programming
- Student opinion surveys (administration and management of results)
- Management of the performance fund
- Study plans and registers
- Organization of Winter/Summer Schools
- Organization of research seminars.

In particular, the PQ highlighted the importance of mapping the management of the performance fund process, given the direct connection with the Program of interventions presented by the School as part of the "Programmazione delle Università 2021-2023 (PRO3)" as well as the need to re-evaluate and streamline the processes of organizing research seminars and Winter/Summer School in light of the large number of them.

The composition of the Working Groups (WGs, Table 7) was established according to the indications of the Rector and the General Director. Technical-administrative staff members, who participated on a voluntary basis, were divided into WGs based on their skills and the relevance of the topic to their role. To each WG was then added a faculty member, specifically the President of either the Didactics, Research, or Communication Committee.

Please note that following the training course on "Lean Thinking and Process Mapping" scheduled for May 10, additional technical-administrative staff members may join the WGs.

Process	WG Members	Committee	Faculty member
Educational programming	Lara Bertoncini, Silvia Lucchesi, Umberto Stefani	Didactics Committee	Mirco Tribastone
Student opinion surveys	Valentina Calvi, Chiara Magini, Caterina Misuraca, Caterina Tangheroni	Didactics Committee	Mirco Tribastone
Management of the performance fund	Lara Bertoncini, Francesco Pezzino, Anna Smaniotto, Caterina Tangheroni	Research Committee	Maria Luisa Catoni
Study plans and registers	Daniela Giorgetti, Emilia Spinetti, Umberto Stefani	Didactics Committee	Mirco Tribastone



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Organization of research seminars	Martina Ambrogi, Valentina Calvi, Silvia Lucchesi	Communication Committee	Emiliano Ricciardi
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**Table 7:** Working Groups composition.

At the time of writing, process mapping and review activities are being carried out by the following WGs: Student opinion surveys and Management of the performance fund.

## 8. Attachments

### 8.1. List of meetings of the Quality Enhancement Committee

In the period to which this Report refers, the PQ met ten times, on the following dates:

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Date	Mode
May 4, 2021	Online
June 29, 2021	Online
August 31, 2021	Online
September 24, 2021	Online
October 21, 2021	Mixed
December 23, 2021	Online
January 27, 2022	Mixed
February 22, 2022	In-person
March 29, 2022	Mixed
April 27, 2022	Mixed

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### 8.2. List of training events and activities

Some PQ members participated in the following online events organized by CONPAQ<sup>1</sup> (National Coordination of Quality Enhancement Committees):

- October 7, 2021 - Workshop "Student Participation in Quality Assurance"
- May 26, 2021 - Workshop "Quality Enhancement Committee: composition, tasks, and relationship with Governance."

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.crui.it/conpaq.html>

In addition, following participation in the training course on "The Joint Students and Teachers Boards (CPDS)" organized by the CRUI Foundation, the CPDS shared the training materials with the PQ.