



Guidelines
for the Commissione Paritetica Docenti Studenti (CPDS)

Prepared by the University Quality Unit



Introduction

Along with the university's Quality Unit (QU) and Evaluation Committee (EvC), the Commissione Paritetica Docenti Studenti (CPDS) is one of the main actors working to ensure the quality of the university.

Italian Law 240/2010 assigns the following functions to the CPDS:

- *monitoring of the teaching activity and the teaching quality as well as the student services provided by lecturers and researchers.*
- *analysis of the results of teaching and service activities according to the indicators adopted by the university for their evaluation.*
- *formulations of opinions on the activation and cancellation of study programs.*

The document “*Accreditamento periodico delle sedi e dei corsi di studio universitari: Linee guida*” (“Regular accreditation of university campuses and study programs: Guidelines”), referred to here as AVA.2, published by the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research Systems (ANVUR) in December 2016 and most recently revised on August 10, 2017, suggests important innovations in the role of the CPDS. This document offers the university some indications on how to adapt the constitution and functioning of the CPDS to the new accreditation guidelines.

1. Tasks and functions

The CPDS has a dual nature, as the students and its members are also active participants in the academic community and users of the services. It therefore carries out an important role in improvement processes and external assurance and evaluation processes. The AVA.2 guidelines specify these tasks and highlight the CPDS's role as the body primarily responsible for the evaluation of the quality of the Study Programs (SPs) and student services:

- From the perspective of improvement processes, the CPDS's independent and central role in quality processes, whose importance for the monitoring of the SPs is increased by the simplification of the annual review procedure (now “annual monitoring form”), is highlighted. The CPDS's annual report also represents an essential input for the cyclical review procedure.
- The independence of the CPDS's role is evident in the request for the preparation of “an annual comprehensive report for each SP, taking into consideration the entirety of the course, with particular reference to the surveying of students' opinions, indicating any specific problems to the individual SPs.” The AVA.2 guidelines reaffirm that the CPDS has autonomy in defining the format of its annual report, as the structure proposed by the ANVUR in the annual report format provided in the table in Attachment 7 of the AVA.2 document reproduced below is intended only as a suggestion.



Attachment 7

to the Guidelines for the Regular Accreditation of University Campuses and Study Programs

Format for the Annual Report of the Commissione Paritetica Docenti Studenti

August 10, 2017 version

Section	Subject
A	<i>Analysis and proposals on the management and use of student satisfaction questionnaires</i>
B	<i>Analysis and proposals relating to teaching materials and aids, labs, classrooms and equipment in relation to the achievement of learning objectives at the desired level</i>
C	<i>Analysis and proposals relating to the validity of methods of assessment of knowledge and skills acquired by students in relation to expected learning results</i>
D	<i>Analysis and proposals relating to the completeness and effectiveness of the annual monitoring and cyclical review</i>
E	<i>Analysis and proposals relating to the effective availability and accuracy of the information provided in the public sections of the SUA-CdS (Annual Unique Form for Study Programs)</i>
F	<i>Further improvement proposals</i>

AVA.2 emphasizes the fact that the CPDS report, “based on elements of independent analysis [...] must reach the Evaluation Committee, the Quality Unit and the Study Programs, who must take it into consideration and move to develop improvement proposals” and lastly that “the relevant aspects of this process must be highlighted in both the EvC reports and the cyclical review reports,” and therefore:

- The CPDS represents the central point of contact of the EvC, and therefore for evaluation procedures. In this regards, the AVA.2 guidelines require on-going communication between the CPDS and the EvC, which uses the CPDS’s information and reporting for evaluation purposes. The EvC verifies that the CPDS’s indications are taken into appropriate consideration by the SPs.
- One of the tasks specified by Law 240/2010 is to “formulate opinions on the activation or cancellation of study programs.” In the event of proposals being sent to the Italian Ministry for Education, Universities and Research (MIUR) for the activation/cancellation of study programs, the CPDS will be invited to provide its own opinion and analyzing the proposed course and the appropriateness of the physical structures, teaching and services planned for the new study programs, including in relation to the effects that such actions could have on the dedicated resources and the organization of already-existing SPs.

2. Constitution

The AVA.2 document specifies that the CPDS can be constituted at different levels: departmental, groupings of similar SPs or, in universities that have them, at the level of linking structures. At UNISG,



there is only one CPDS for both SPs, with the presence of one student for each SP. The CPDS is therefore constituted by two lecturers and two students.

3. Operational indications

Based on the indications outlined in the AVA.2 guidelines, the QU proposes the following operational suggestions to the CPDS with the intention of encouraging the assimilation of the structuring and variety of assigned tasks.

General aspects

- a. The composition of the CPDS, the length of the committee's mandate and a contact, for example an e-mail address, for the receipt of observations and suggestions, should be indicated on the university's website.
- b. The CPDS should not meet only occasionally, for example only when it is time to prepare the annual report or when asked for an opinion in line with regulations, but on an on-going basis.
- c. Regular meetings should be organized with the student representatives from each year, aimed at monitoring in a direct way any issues that could potentially emerge and gathering observations and suggestions.
- d. It is recommended that the CPDS communicate to the students the actions being carried out to ensure quality at the university and in the individual SPs, particularly through the committee's student members, so that they feel actively involved in the university's on-going improvement.

Organizational aspects

- a. It is useful for the CPDS to set a calendar of meetings at the start of each academic year, and to immediately inform the Study Program Directors about the activities carried out each time.
- b. The coordination of the activities and the management of communication with the Study Program Directors, the QU and the EvC are facilitated during the CPDS's meetings by a member of the office that supports the university's Quality Assurance system.
- c. At the end of each meeting, minutes should be drawn up and made available on the university's website, in the Quality Assurance section, so as to:
 - keep a record of the activities carried out and ensure their easy consultation by interested bodies such as the Study Program Directors, the QU and the EvC.
 - allow an easy verification of the activities carried out by the EEC (Evaluation Expert Committees) during the regular accreditation of the SPs and the university.
 - ensure that the activities carried out are transparent for the academic community.

Management of activities

- a. In regards to the aspects to be considered and the indicators for the evaluation of teaching and student services referenced in Law 240/2010, to be communicated to the EvC and to be used in the



monitoring and evaluation activity, the CPDS will rely primarily on the indicators proposed by the ANVUR.

- b. The results of the student surveys in regards to individual courses represent the main source of information for the CPDS's activity. These must be discussed and evaluated in a coordinated way in order to understand the reasons behind any evaluations that are significantly below average and to suggest measures aimed at improving the critical aspects relating to students' interaction with the course.
- c. It is recommended the QU is kept informed about any further investigations, including student surveys carried out in the middle of a course or using different methods.
- d. Systematic engagement with the EvC is also recommended, in order to have on-going feedback relating to the verification of the planned actions.
- e. The preparation of the annual report by the CPDS should be the result of a regular monitoring activity by the committee.

4. Annual report

The law states that by December 31 of each year, the CPDS should have prepared a structured report for each individual SP to be sent to the QU, the SPs, the EvC and the Faculty Council, and made public to the ANVUR and the MIUR, using the usual electronic means. The QU will annually set one or more internal deadlines compatible with the fulfillment of the legal obligations.

Structure and indications regarding the content of the CPDS's annual report

- Introduction

The introduction will provide information relating to the committee's members, the dates on which meetings were held and a brief summary of the business conducted in each meeting.

- Structure

The CPDS has autonomy over the definition of the format of the annual ANVUR report. The framework proposed by the ANVUR (Attachment 7) is intended as a suggestion, but represents a pertinent and useful outline to be followed at least at the start. It could be useful to distinguish the analysis of the different aspects under consideration, the corrective actions and the related operational proposals.