



Presidio della qualità

Guidelines for Consultation with Representative Organisations for the Production of Goods and Services, and for Professions ("interested parties")

D.CDS Quality Assurance in the Courses of Study

Guidelines for Consultation with Representative Organisations for the Production of Goods and Services, and for Professions ("interested parties") for the Courses of Study

Introduction

The AVA3 System establishes, by dedicating a specific accreditation requirement ("Point of attention D.CDS.1.1 - Aspect to be considered D.CDS.1.1.2), that "the principal parties interested in the graduate training profiles of the Course of Study be identified and consulted directly or indirectly (including by means of activity category models where available) in the design (initial design and review of the training offer, also following reviews) of the Course of Study, with particular attention to the employment potential of graduates or to the continuation of their studies in subsequent cycles; the outcomes of consultations with interested parties are taken into account in the definition of the objectives and graduate training profiles of the Course of Study". Point of attention D.CDS.4.1 – Aspect to be considered D.CDS.4.1.1) also requires that "The Course of Study systematically analyses and takes into account the outcomes of the ongoing interactions with interested parties also on the basis of the periodic updating of training profiles".¹

Two specific frameworks in the SUA-CdS are dedicated to this aspect:

- A1.a, which is part of the Course Structure (RaD) and can only be changed when the Course is established or when the structure itself is modified (after passing through the CUN). In particular, for the establishment of a Course of Study the training objectives must also be identified through consultation with the interested parties so that the preparation of graduates can also take into consideration the demand for training emerging from the broader needs for knowledge and skills expressed by society and the labour market. It is also important that the consultation is repeated in the event of substantial changes to the training project (change of structure) for the Course of Study and that, in any case, it takes place on a regular basis (by virtue of the reference to systematicity expressed in the aspect to be considered D.CDS.4.1.1);
- A1.b, which is part of the annual training offer and must therefore be updated annually with the existing activities. In this sense, in Framework A1.b of the SUA-CdS it is necessary to provide evidence of updated consultations, which can assume several forms in this case:
 - o consultation with representative bodies, referred to in the previous point;
 - o annual review of the literature relating to the prospects and needs of the relevant professional sectors (activity category models, statistics, studies, etc.);
 - o the possible request for input from the numerous "privileged observers" (professionals involved in teaching, speakers at seminars, etc.) encountered in the course of ordinary teaching activities.

Consultation (multi-year) with interested parties

Consultation with interested parties, carried out for the first time when the Course is first established, is a process that must then be repeated continuously (at least every 3 years), during the Cyclical Review and/or prior to a proposed change of structure. The recommended period for consultation is March-September, before the start of the process of preparing the SUA-CdS document, in order to be able to define in good time any changes to be made to the Course design.

A prerequisite for the organisation of the consultation is that at least one draft of the training project of the Course of Study (in the case of a newly established Course of Study) or of the draft revision of the Course of Study has been drawn up.

The subject of the consultation is the project of the Course of Study, with particular reference to the following elements:

- professional profiles of reference;
- training objectives also expressed in terms of expected learning outcomes with particular attention to both disciplinary and transversal competences;
- training activities, expected learning outcomes and methods for assessing learning;

¹ See the ANVUR Document "Model of Periodic Accreditation of Universities and Courses of Study with Notes" - Version approved by Resolution of the Governing Council no. 26 of 13 February 2023.

- identification of new needs in terms of skills arising from discussions with interested parties and/or the University's area of reference;
- internship/work placement experiences.

The purpose of the consultation with interested parties is to acquire a body of knowledge useful for improving the quality of the educational offer of the Courses of Study. Consultation with interested parties is also useful to support context analyses and strategic development analyses, to develop a cooperative relationship with interested parties by favouring coordination with the related socio-economic system, to carry out institutional communication (training offer, etc.), to enhance internship/work experience and placement activities.

The consultation may be organised by groups of related Courses of Study and/or by Faculties, ensuring in each case that each Course of Study is dealt with specifically.

It is advisable to provide interested parties with an appropriate set of information in advance of the meeting (training project; data and information on graduate employability; etc.).

At the end of the consultation, it is necessary to prepare a record of the meeting, which should be shared with the Dean of the relevant Faculty and discussed in the Faculty Council. The parties consulted must be informed of the suggestions received and accepted by the Course of Study.

Consultations must primarily take place with the following subjects, identified by the Course of Study in line with the characteristics of the Course under consideration, its context of reference and the University's strategic planning:

- trade associations;
- professional associations;
- representatives of public administrations and public-sector agencies;
- national and international bodies;
- institutions and associations;
- study cycles subsequent to the Course of Study under consideration.²

Secondarily, other types of organisations representing the relevant professional contexts may also be involved, such as:

- enterprises particularly representative of the sector's needs;
- third-sector foundations and operators;
- trade fair organisations.

Although meetings with representative organisations can be structured in different ways - closed discussion panels, conferences, round tables open to the public, meetings as part of the Third Mission - it is strongly recommended that the Courses of Study should have a Steering Committee or a permanent Consultation Panel to be convened annually. This operational method is in fact particularly suitable for carrying out consultation activities - and makes it possible to establish a continuous dialogue over time with the identified interested parties.

The records of the meetings (Annex 1) must report (also in accordance with the "Guide to the Writing of Teaching Structures" updated annually by the CUN):

- the date on which the consultation took place;
- type of organisations consulted;
- procedures and frequency for the consultation;
- indication of roles (but not names) of the participants;
- description of the outcomes and suggestions gathered.

²As defined in ANVUR's Notes to the AVA3 Model (ANVUR, Model of Periodic Accreditation of Universities and Courses of Study with Notes" - approved by Resolution of the Governing Council no. 26 of 13 February 2023, "the study cycles subsequent to the Course of Study under examination and belonging to the same University constitute, to all intents and purposes, interested parties insofar as they welcome as incoming students the outgoing students of the Course under examination; the persons in charge of the subsequent study cycles must therefore be consulted in a structured manner".

The organisation of these meetings is the responsibility of the Faculty, at the instigation of the QA Management Groups, which will also be responsible for their minuting and summarisation in the SUA-CdS Frameworks.

Periodical consultation of information sources

In addition to consulting directly with interested parties, in order to keep their outgoing profiles constantly up-to-date, Courses of Study must plan to periodically consult studies and industry surveys on the evolution and development potential of the Course's target sectors. In order to encourage the circulation of this information, Courses of Study are invited to notify the Presidio della Qualità of publications or sources of interest so that they may be widely circulated.

The results of the analysis of studies in the sector of interest (e.g. ISTAT publications, Unioncamere, Confindustria, OECD, trade associations, ISFOL, etc.) are to be used for the purpose of reflecting on the appropriateness of any corrective actions and for updating Framework A1.b of the SUA-CdS. In addition to these studies, there are specific analyses conducted by the University:

- the AlmaLaurea surveys on the employment status of graduates and on the profiles of undergraduates;;
- the feedback report by company tutors on the strengths and weaknesses of interns prepared annually by the Career Service and Business Relations Office;
- the Report prepared by ALIULM on feedback from the professional contexts of reference;
- the reports of any sectorial monitoring activities (Observatories) conducted by the University.

Continuous consultation of “privileged observers”

Many of the interested parties work continuously in collaboration with the university both in person and remotely (e.g. the events organised by the Career Service and Business Relations Office, the presence of representatives of national and international institutions such as the OECD, the Ministry of Culture, etc. among the contract lecturers).

In this regard, it would appear that a certain level of systematisation of the information emerging from the many opportunities for exchange and comparison that the university organises with companies and professionals operating in the sector is necessary, both in order to take this into account in the constant updating of the outgoing training profiles, and in the event that it is to be adequately accounted for in the SUA-CdS.

Of course, this comparison can be carried out advantageously not with mere (albeit valid) professionals, but only with those exponents of the relevant professional contexts who consider themselves "privileged observers" of these contexts, i.e. who (due to their role, importance in the specific market, experience, etc.) can offer a more general overview. It will therefore be the responsibility of the Course Coordinator to identify and select the most representative professionals to collect the contributions deemed to be of interest.

In order to carry out the aforesaid assessment, it is advisable to activate a mechanism for the prior identification of the guests who are expected to participate in the lessons in order to reconstruct, without any pretensions to being exhaustive, a picture that is as complete as possible of the professionals and speakers whose participation is envisaged.

This survey mechanism is particularly appropriate for Courses of Study that have not set up a permanent panel for annual discussions with "interested parties".

Among the experiences of primary interest, we can mention:

- structured lecturer contacts: workshops, seminars and open meetings with professionals and companies; meetings in the context of the Third Mission; participation in committees and advisory boards. At the beginning of each cycle, the Course Coordinator, in consultation with the Faculty Office, should ask lecturers to communicate, in accordance with the predefined format (Annex 2), any guests and speakers scheduled as part of their teaching. The lecturers organising the events will be asked to send a brief summary of the insights gained with specific reference to market needs in terms of skills and professions;
- contacts of contract lecturers: workshops and open meetings with professionals and companies. At the beginning of each cycle, the Course Coordinator, in agreement with the Faculty Office, should ask the lecturers involved to communicate, according to the predefined format (Annex 2), any guests and

speakers within their field of teaching in order to keep a record of the meetings organised and contacts made, also considering whether to "interview" any of the guests who respond to the profile of "privileged observer" (using the format in Annex 3). Given the additional effort required, it is expected that a small number of "interviews" will be carried out during the year, identifying those deemed most significant;

- projects with companies (Career Weeks, Job Seminars, Project Work, research projects, etc.): alongside these initiatives, it would be appropriate to report in a standard format (Annex 3) the information gathered from discussions with the companies involved regarding the aspects covered by these Guidelines.

Annex 1

Template for reporting consultation meetings of interested parties; Bachelor's degree in

On (date) at (time), at (place), a consultation meeting was held between the coordinators of the Bachelor's/Master's degree course in and the representatives of the organisations representing the related industries and professions.

The following were present at the meeting:

For the Bachelor's/Master's degree course:

- (name and role)
- (name and role)

For the organisations represented:

- (name, role and name of organisation)
- (name, role and name of organisation)

The discussion addressed (possible topics of discussion):

- The name of the Bachelor's/Master's degree course
- The training objectives of the Course of Study
- The professional profiles identified for the Course of Study
- The needs of the sector in terms of professional figures and skills
- The consistency of the study plan with the needs of the sector
- The results of external surveys (e.g. Almalaurea data, activity category models) or internal surveys (e.g. occupational monitoring units)
- Opportunities for work experience and internships

The following points emerged during the meeting:

The report should summarise the individual remarks by highlighting the thinking of the various parties represented. The records must therefore comprehensively report the general sense of what emerged during the discussion in relation to the subject(s) of the consultation.

The report must be brought to the attention of the Faculty Council.

Annex 2

Template for reporting meetings and events with industry professionals

In order to assess the suitability of meeting briefly with members of the world of work who are involved in teaching activities in order to gather any observations on the training profiles of the Course of Study, you are asked to indicate as far in advance as possible references to events and/or lessons in which they will be involved.

The information should be sent to: (each Course of Study will indicate the recipient)

Title:

Time and place/room:

Participants and their roles:

Coordinating teacher:

Short description of activity or title of intervention (max 4 lines):

Annex 3

Template for reporting on consultation between parties/partners job lab/project work

In order to collect observations and contributions from the "privileged observers" in a structured form - both on the occasion of individual meetings and within the framework of possible round tables - a series of points of attention is given below, conveniently expressed in the form of questions, useful as an outline for the recording of a hypothetical interview. Depending on the interlocutor, the template can be submitted directly (as if it were a questionnaire) or filled in by the lecturer following the interview.

No question is compulsory, but in order not to prejudice the effectiveness of the tool, it might be necessary to collect some comments at least for the questions marked with an asterisk.

In the case of persons in positions of responsibility within companies or organisations, it might be useful to ask for the opportunity to speak with other members of the organisation who can provide useful information on the issues involved.

The completed form should be sent to: (each Course of Study will specify the recipient).

Name and surname:

Company/Organisation:

Role:

Compiler's name and surname:

- 1) Have you had IULM students/graduates for internships/work experience?
 - Yes, curricular work experience (prior to graduation)
 - Yes, extra-curricular work experience (after graduation)
 - No
- 2) If so, how would you rate IULM trainees on average on a scale of 1 to 5?
 1. very negatively
 2. negatively
 3. neither positively nor negatively
 4. positively
 5. very positively
- 3) Have you employed IULM graduates in your company?
 - Yes, on fixed-term contracts
 - Yes, on a permanent basis
 - Yes, on a consultancy/freelance basis
 - No
- 4) As part of your experience with IULM students, did you find any particular learning gaps and in what areas:
 - yes
 - no

Critical areas and weaknesses:

- 5) In your experience with IULM students, did you identify any strengths or areas of excellence in the skills of IULM students?
 - yes
 - no

Strengths:

- 6) What knowledge do you expect a graduate in ... to possess? *
- 7) Could you specify three operational skills that you expect from a graduate in ...? *

8) With reference to the needs of your company/organisation, can you specify one to three areas of competence on which you consider it essential for university education to have greater influence *

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

9) With reference to the needs of your sector/professional field, what in your view will be the most in-demand profiles/skills in the coming years? *