Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)\textsuperscript{1}

Quality Assurance System (QAS) SUPSI

\textsuperscript{1} In the case of conflicting meanings between language versions, the Italian version prevails.
1. Objectives of the QAF
The QAF defines the structure and organisation of the Quality Assurance System (QAS), in accordance with the Quality Policy and Strategy (QPS).

Structure describes the basic criteria that the QAS provides for the continuous improvement of key processes with regard to the setting of the Quality Handbook (QH) and its variants for affiliated schools (AS). At the same time, it describes how to manage the reference documentation, including the reports on the continuous development of the QAS.

Organisation describes the Matrix of skills and responsibilities in quality, with the detail of the responsibilities of all the bodies involved in the QAS management.
2. Structure

The QAF is based on known quality-assurance methods, such as:

- the modelling of our organisation through a set of selected key processes,
- the development of the quality of the entire institution through the adoption of a continuous improvement cycle (PDCA or Deming cycle) in four phases for each individual process:
  1. definition and approval (Plan)
  2. implementation (Do)
  3. self-assessment (Check)
  4. improvement (Act)
- the periodic external evaluation (Check) through a critical comparison of quality assurance methods with external peers.

The QAF consists of the following key interlinked processes, divided into 4 operating contexts. An AS may include an additional process to the key processes identified if they are considered relevant to its quality. The processes are linked to the quality standards applicable to institutional accreditation and implement the requirements of the Federal Act on the Funding and Coordination of the Higher Education Sector (Higher Education Funding and Coordination, HEdA).
### Operating context

#### Key processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Strategy</th>
<th>P1 - Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Institutional mandates: training, research and service performance</td>
<td>P2 - Evaluation of the basic training portfolio&lt;br&gt;P3 - Training course evaluation&lt;br&gt;P4 - Student evaluation of teaching&lt;br&gt;P5 - Development of teachers' pedagogical and teaching skills&lt;br&gt;P6 - Continuous training management system&lt;br&gt;P7 - Research projects and provision of services&lt;br&gt;P8 - Evaluation of research and service units&lt;br&gt;P9 - Intellectual Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Governance and management</td>
<td>P10 - Participation&lt;br&gt;P11 - Definition of regulations&lt;br&gt;P12 - Indicators&lt;br&gt;P13 - Equal opportunities&lt;br&gt;P14 - Risk management&lt;br&gt;P15 - Internal audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Resources and stakeholders</td>
<td>P16 - Employees&lt;br&gt;P17 - Finance and controlling&lt;br&gt;P18 - Information technology management&lt;br&gt;P19 - Real Estate and Facility Management&lt;br&gt;P20 - Student and employee Mobility&lt;br&gt;P21 - Student life cycle&lt;br&gt;P22 - Organisational communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to take account of the specificities of the AS, the QAF provides for a QH with a specific variant for each AS. These variants describe the distinctive features and the consequent level of compliance with the QH, in line with the affiliation contracts that govern the relationships of the AS within SUPSI. Each process is described in the QH with a uniform structure.

In order to ensure adequate reporting on the ongoing development of the QAS, the following periodic reports are required:

- the **Self-assessment report (SAR)**, to be prepared every 7 years as part of the institutional accreditation process,
- the **Four-year report on the QAS**, integrated into the process of SUPSI’s Four-year Strategy, to ensure full consistency between it and the Quality Strategy,
- the **Two-yearly report on the QAS**, halfway through the four-year period.

The specific reporting of each key process is to be considered as an integral part of the process itself and is outlined in the QHs.

QAS reference documents are archived and managed centrally via an appropriate document repository (Docuware®). The criteria and procedures for managing the documentation are set out in the QH.
3. Organisation

The tasks and responsibilities in the area of quality are consistent with the general organisation of SUPSI as defined in the SUPSI by-laws and are spread over several levels. The organisation with the tasks and responsibilities are schematically represented in the Matrix of competences and responsibilities in quality, whose approval and management is the responsibility of the General Director, in collaboration with the members of the SUPSI management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QCC</th>
<th>SERVICES</th>
<th>DEP1</th>
<th>DEP2</th>
<th>DEP3</th>
<th>DEP4</th>
<th>AS1</th>
<th>AS2</th>
<th>AS3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PM1 - Strategy</td>
<td>QC SERVICES</td>
<td>UPC x1</td>
<td>UPC x2</td>
<td>UPC x1</td>
<td>UPC x3</td>
<td>UPC x4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM2 - Evaluation of the basic training portfolio</td>
<td>UPC x1</td>
<td>UPC x2</td>
<td>UPC x3</td>
<td>UPC x4</td>
<td>UPC x5</td>
<td>UPC x6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM3</td>
<td>UPC x1</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Legend: SERVICES This refers to the services of the management and the services integrated within the staff of the General Director

QCC Quality Coordination Commission

UQC Unit Quality Commission (Services, Departments and AS)

PM Process Manager

UPC Unit Process Coordinator (Services, Departments and AS)

The named version of the Matrix of competences and responsibilities in quality is constantly updated within the QH. The main tasks of the bodies involved in the QAS are as follows.

Strategic tasks

The following strategic tasks fall within the remit of the SUPSI Board and the Boards of AS. For the latter, the tasks refer to the area of competence of the AS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>SUPSI Board</th>
<th>AS Boards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve the QPS, in line with the SUPSI four-year strategy.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve the QAF, as recommended by the SUPSI management.*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the measures proposed by the SUPSI management aimed at the development of a culture of quality.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve, upon proposal by the management, the level of harmonisation, defined in the QH variants of the ASs, based on affiliation contracts.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve the SAR to be sent to the Swiss agency of accreditation and quality assurance (AAQ) for institutional accreditation.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve the improvement measures implemented as a result of the reports of the Swiss Accreditation Council.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve the two-yearly report and the four-yearly report on the QAS.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approving the inclusion or exclusion of a process in the QAS.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The SUPSI Board delegates the task of approving the QAF to the Management and Governance Commission.
Operational tasks

**General Director**
The General Director:
- is responsible for the implementation of the QAS in all its aspects,
- presides over the work of the SUPSI management and the QCC,
- is responsible for the management of the *Quality Competence and Responsibility Matrix*, in collaboration with the members of the SUPSI management,
- is responsible for approving the inclusion or exclusion of a sub-process in the QAS,
- stimulates the development of internal communication on the QAS, which is the responsibility of the specific PR.

In order to carry out these tasks, the General Director is supported by the Quality Assurance Service.

**SUPSI Management**
The SUPSI Management:
- supports the General Director in the implementation of the QAS,
- proposes to the SUPSI Board the level of harmonisation for ASs,
- gives notice of periodic reports prepared by the QCC, for approval by the SUPSI Board,
- approves the contents of the QHs and resolves any differences in their application within the units,
- implements any improvement measures adopted by the SUPSI Board, also in the wake of the Accreditation Council's report,
- actively supports internal communication on the QAS.

The members of the management also chair their respective Quality Commissions (UQC).

**Quality Coordination Commission and Unit Quality Commission**
They are the coordinating bodies, respectively:
- the QCC, at the system level that integrates the Process Managers (PM) and the Quality Assurance Service,
- the UQC, at unit level, which includes all the Process Coordinators of the respective units (UPC).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>QCC</th>
<th>UQC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinates and harmonises QAS processes to ensure an overall view.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defines the criteria for the management of individual processes and their networks, ensuring its implementation through the PMs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible for preparing the periodic reports required by the QAF, adequately involving those engaged in the respective processes.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defines the criteria for the QAS's document management and ensures that it is processed by the PM.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposes and keeps updated the methods and instruments adopted by the QAS.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights non-conformities in the application of QAS.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors the actions of continuous quality improvement.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinates the internal communication of the QAS.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PMs, in addition to the tasks under the QCC, are responsible for developing and implementing quality on the basis of that defined in the QAS. They are required to regularly inform the General Director of the implementation of their process and make use of the active support of the UPCs, in compliance with the affiliation contracts with regard to the AS.
Quality Assurance Service
The Quality Assurance Service is integrated within the staff of the General Director and ensures the following tasks:

- supports the General Director in the performance of his/her duties,
- ensures the form and harmonisation of the QH content,
- collaborates with the PM in the definition of processes and related improvement aspects,
- is responsible for the management of the QAS documentation, in close collaboration with the PM,
- ensures quality control,
- coordinates the QCC meetings,
- collaborates on internal QAS communication.

Employees, students, and Alumni
Employees, students and Alumni are regularly involved in the different QAS practices. In particular, they actively participate according to the P10 - Participation process, in the following areas:

- the relevant colleges, when they are consulted on quality issues,
- the procedures that are described in the individual QAS processes,
- meetings for the preparation of the SAR within the context of institutional accreditation.

Consistent with the provisions of the Ethical Code and the SUPSI Educational Agreement, employees and students are aware of their individual responsibility for the effective adoption of the principles and operating procedures of all QAS processes.

External peers
The QAS with its framework is open to comparison with peers from other schools or experts who are regularly involved in the process analysis, as described in the QH.

Alberto Petruzzella      Franco Gervasoni
The President of the Board     The General Director

Version 0 approved on April 2, 2019 by the SUPSI Management and Governance Commission, as delegated by the SUPSI Board.