



# **THE ROLE IN SOCIETY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL) QA**

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**Thematic Peer Group C on QA  
Astana, Kazakhstan, June 1, 2023**

## DEFINITION, CONTENTS, CATEGORIES

- **Lack of a common definition of “third mission” / societal impact**
  - Social responsibility, service to society, community engagement
  - Higher education oriented to professional practice
  - Longlife teaching and learning
  - Cultural, technological, public engagement... activities through which Universities interact with their local contexts, promoting its economical and social growth
  - All activities outside learning and teaching (“teaching, research and *related functions*“)
  - Dissemination (as it is defined in European calls for funding)
- **Blurred borders with respect to teaching and research activities, ambiguities (a university kindergarten is a third mission activity)?**
- **Participatory approach (*not* bottom up!) as a qualifying element**
- **Difficult (and perhaps inappropriate) definition of categories**

## EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND METHODS

- **Rarely evaluated separately from teaching (and research)**
  - Non explicitly covered
  - Integration with the other missions (embedded in the evaluation framework)
  - Addressed differently according to the type of HEIs (research or teaching oriented)
  - Use of narrative criteria within institutional evaluation / evaluation of case studies
  - Peer review / use of indicators

## AIMS, PERCEPTION, BENEFICIARIES

- Main beneficiaries (students, society, government, public bodies, companies, policy makers...)
- Perception of public value by the stakeholders
- Allocation of public funding (rare!)

## NEEDS AT A EUROPEAN LEVEL

- Shared definition
- Recommendation / Guidelines
- A peer learning group or a European project?



## THE EVALUATION OF «THIRD MISSION» ACTIVITIES IN ITALY

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# EVALUATION ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY ANVUR

Art. 3.

*Attività, criteri e metodi*

1. L'Agenzia svolge le seguenti attività:

a) valuta la qualità dei processi, i risultati e i prodotti delle attività di gestione, formazione, ricerca, ivi compreso il trasferimento tecnologico delle università e degli enti di ricerca, anche con riferimento alle singole strutture dei predetti enti; le predette valutazioni si concludono entro un periodo di 5 anni;

ANVUR evaluates the **quality and outcomes** of management, teaching, research and **technological transfer activities of universities and research institutes**.... these evaluations are performed within a 5-year period

Presidential Decree no. 76/2010 (“Regulation on the structure and functioning of ANVUR”)

## THE “VQR” (EVALUATION OF RESEARCH QUALITY)

- The quality of the outcomes of the research produced by universities and research institutes is evaluated mainly through **peer review**, assisted by the use of bibliometrics
- It also takes into consideration the results of **“third mission” (societal impact) activities**, by evaluating a choice of **case studies** selected by the institutions
- The VQR is carried out **every five years** and it is used to allocate the **performance-based share of public funding** to the Italian university system
- Research “products” and third mission cases studies are evaluated by **panels of experts**. The “third mission” panel is composed of 30 members (15 university professors + 15 professionals and civil society representatives)





# “THIRD MISSION” IN THE VQR

## VQR 1 (2004-2010)

- **Broad definition** of third mission (patents, spin-offs, museums, public engagement activities, etc.)
- Use of a set of **indicators based on counting** (number of spin-off companies,...)
- data coming from **internal monitoring systems of the institutions** (no central data collection system)

→ Need for a more refined definition and more reliable data

## VQR 2 (2011-2014)

- Construction of a **central data collection system** (SUA-RD, Third Mission) for comparability and standardization
- **Output and outcome indicators** (revenues and employees of spin-off companies, ...)
- Development of an **informed peer review model** (publication of the Evaluation Manual): data + expert judgement

→ Difficulty in the choice of appropriate indicators and in considering the context

## VQR 3 (2015-2019)

- As in in VQR1-2, the **broad definition** of TM is confirmed, in line with the *Guidelines for the compilation of SUA-TM (ANVUR 2018)*
- New evaluation methodology: instead of the activities, a **selection of case studies** chosen by the evaluated institutions, in order to bring out **institutional and territorial specificities**, and to **valorize best practices**

→ *Work in progress!*

## THIRD MISSION AND IMPACT CASE STUDIES

“Third Mission is the set of activities with which the Institutions interact with society, besides the traditional missions of research and teaching”

from: *Rapporto sullo Stato del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca 2013* – p. 559

Case studies related to TM activities in one or more fields of action, whose impact was verifiable in the period 2015-19

Usually referred to Departments or similar structures (max 2 per Department) or to the whole Institution

Referred to activities performed during the period 2015-2019, but that generated an impact in part or the whole period 2015-2019

Case studies with an impact outside the period of evaluation were not considered admissible

## THE DEFINITION OF “IMPACT”

- In the VQR decree there was **not a strictly closed definition of impact**
- Impact was supposed to take place in the period 2015-2019 and should have emerged as the **difference between the situation before and after the development of the activities**
- Impact is generally intended as the **transformation or improvement generated for economy, society, culture, health, environment** (also in relation to the results obtained by the research products presented by the Institution); more in general, the **fight against economic, social and territorial inequalities** in order to increase the quality of life in a territorial context (local, regional, national, European or international); **the reduction or prevention of damage, risks, or other negative externalities**
- Priority was given to assessing the **impact generated outside the institutions** (but also spillover effects within them were taken into consideration)



# FIELDS OF ACTION

*Valorisation of intellectual and industrial property*

*Academic entrepreneurship*

*Technology transfer structures and other Third mission intermediaries*

*Production and management of artistic and cultural heritage*

*Clinical experimentations and health protection*

*Lifelong learning and open education*

*Public engagement*

*Production of public goods and policy instruments for inclusion*

*Innovative tools to support Open Science;*

*Activities related to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals*

## **PRESENTATION OF THE CASE STUDIES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

### **THE INSTITUTION HAD TO SUBMIT:**

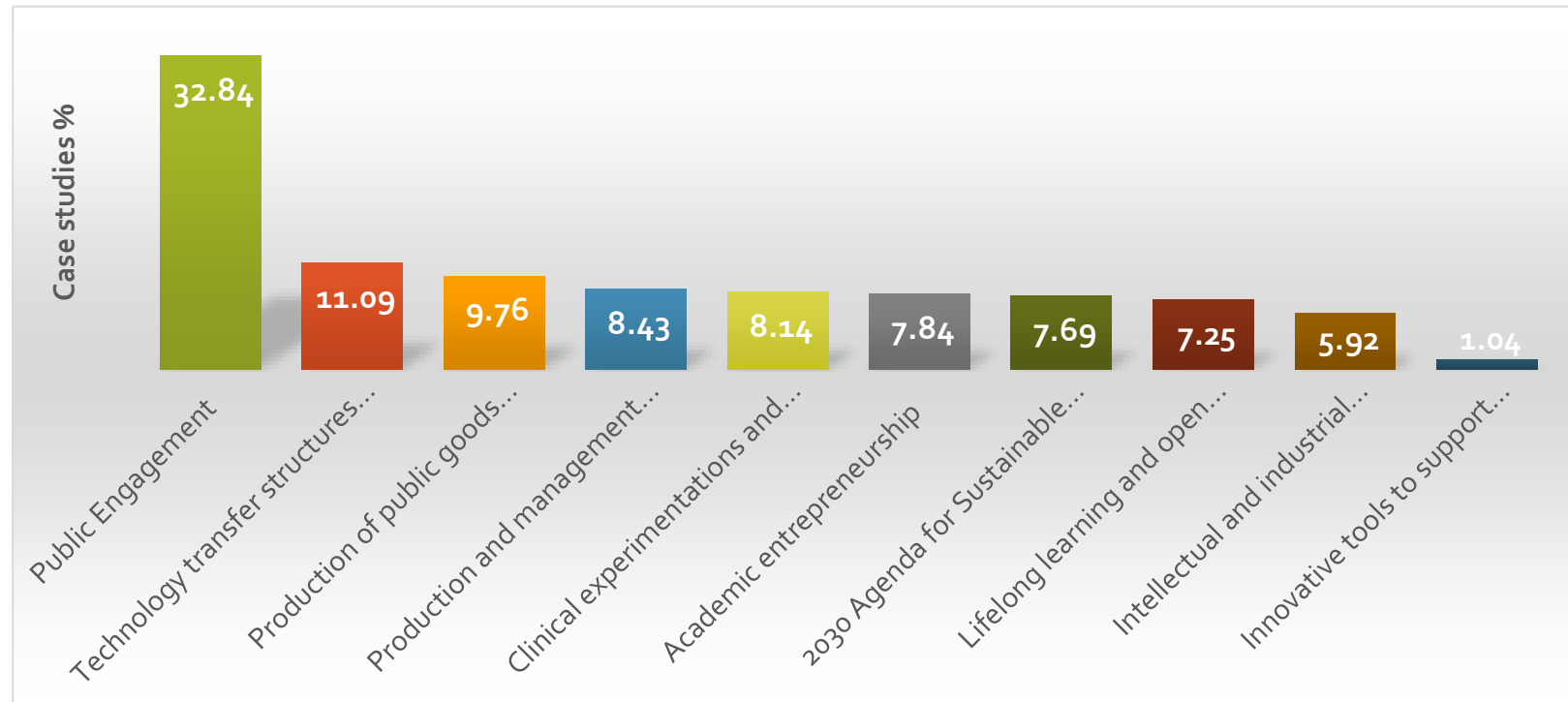
- **A detailed narrative description of the case study**
- **A detailed description of the impact in the period 2015-2019**
- **Suggested indicators of impact (if any)**
- **Publications related to the case study (if any)**

### **THE EXPERTS HAD TO EVALUATE:**

- **The social, economic and cultural dimension of the impact**
- **The relevance to the reference context**
- **The added value for the beneficiaries**
- **The contribution of the proposing Institution/Department(s)**

# MAIN FIELDS OF ACTION CHOSEN BY THE INSTITUTIONS

Institutions	No.	Case studies	%
Universities	98	460	68,05
Research Institutes	14	159	23,52
Voluntary	22	57	8,43
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>100%</b>



## THIRD MISSION IN THE VQR 2020-2024

- Criticalities in the **classification of the fields** of actions
- **Number of case studies** per Institution/department
- Criteria for the choice of the **experts**
- Selection and use of **impact indicators**

