

# RESEARCH THEME

XXXIX cycle – a.y. 2023/2024

---

**Title of the doctoral research**

Designing quality public services. The challenge to provide quality and meaningful user engagements and experiences when it comes to public and social services.

---

**Proponent professor**

Anna Meroni

---

**Abstract**

Service design is progressively entering all areas of the public sector, transforming the culture and approach to service delivery on the one hand, and user behavior and experience on the other.

Researchers point out that design still lacks an understanding of the nature of the public sector in terms of the complexity of its institutional aspects. However, this is not the only deficiency: in fact, we can argue that the understanding of how to provide user-centered design that can lead to meaningful and quality engagements and user experiences is also still lacking, even more so when it comes to hybrid service journeys and encounters.

The research program aims to investigate, through primary/secondary and applied research, the approaches, frameworks, and directions that design can take to achieve quality and sustainability when it comes to services that: i) target a broad population; ii) aim to fulfill rights or duties; iii) are related to co-production and user participation; iv) aim to address social needs; and v) aspire to commoning and to produce public value.

The goal of the program is to outline a knowledge base that can inform service design practice on the specifics of usability, aesthetics, affordance, meaning, performativity, interaction, and sustainability of public services.

---

**Keywords**

Service design, Public services, Service aesthetics