

A new name, the same mission as always

With the Decree n. 3226 of 5 November 2020, the Rector ratified the proposal of the Department Council to change the name of the 'Department of Drug Sciences' (DSF) to the new name of 'Department of Drug and Health Sciences' (DSFS) (Dipartimento di Scienze del Farmaco e della Salute).

At the basis of this choice, the Council shared some general considerations:

* the term 'drug' (medicinal) refers to the active ingredients, of both natural and synthetic origin, but also to the relative formulations for therapeutic use ('medicines'), capable of exercising on humans or animals a diagnostic, curative or rehabilitative function through a pharmacological, immunological or metabolic mechanism of action (cf. European Medicines Code).

Conversely, industry and market in this field are increasingly moving towards 'non-medicinal' products that play an important role in the diagnostic field (biomarkers) and in the maintenance (homeostasis) or recovery of functional and physiological activities, the so-called 'Health products'. These mainly include food products with specific properties (food supplements, fortified foods, novel foods, etc., often grouped in the unofficial term of 'nutraceuticals'), medical devices, highly functional cosmetic products and others.

Just to give an example, among the European countries, Italy represents the first market in terms of sales volumes for food supplements, a sign of the ever-increasing importance attributed to well-being and health by the consumers; similarly, the sector of quality cosmetic products has seen the turnover of companies grow constantly in recent years.

* The Department of Drug Sciences, already as a Faculty of Pharmacy and then as a Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, has always host various researchers and working groups who conduct studies, basic research and industrial projects in the field of natural compounds and more generally of health products, as well as of drugs.

The physico-chemical and biological evaluation and the formulation of natural compounds are also one of the strategic research lines that the department has identified in its current strategic plan.

* The training profile that the degree Courses belonging to the department provide to our graduates is increasingly enriched with basic, characterizing and professional notions and knowledge that go beyond the field of 'drug / medicine', to reach the different types of health-care products.

* Therefore, the new name of 'Department of Drug and Health Sciences' intends to convey a more direct and complete message on the real mission of the department itself and on the teaching, research and third mission profile which it already carried out and which it is intended to be strengthened in the next future, both within the academic and scientific community, as well as in training of professional operators involved in the pharmaceutical and health products sectors.