

White Rose University Consortium: College of Arts and Humanities

Arts and Humanities Research Culture in Italy

Universities

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Higher Education

Italy is home to many of the world's oldest universities: in particular, the University of Bologna, the University of Padua and the University of Naples, which were founded in 1088, 1222 and 1224, respectively. Most universities in Italy are state-supported.

At present, the university sector is made up of 89 university institutions which are classified as follows [\[source\]](#):

- 58 State universities
- 17 non-State universities (legally recognised by the State)
- 2 universities for international students
- 6 higher schools specialising in postgraduate university studies
- 6 online universities

The Italian university system is non-competitive. All degrees are, by law, equivalent. For this reason students tend not to move away from home or from their local region to study, especially given that there are more opportunities for scholarships or grants if they study in the region in which they were born. As such, there is no Italian 'Oxbridge' equivalent. Some universities are more prestigious (usually 'older') than others; however, individual programmes offered at universities are more renowned rather than the universities themselves.

University rankings are not considered as important as in the UK; while they are published every year, they are not considered fundamental for the choice of a place to study.

In general, attendance in Italian universities is not compulsory, though attendance depends largely on the professors' requests and the degree studied. Students who have not attended a course can contact the professor and agree on a different exam content, which might include the reading of different books or additional study material.

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University Departments

As of January 2011 faculties have been abolished in all Italian state universities and have been substituted by larger departments in charge of both teaching and research.

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Studies

Italian universities are part of the Bologna Process' framework, adopted in 1999, and thus follow the 3+2 system. The first degree is the *Laurea triennale* that is awarded after three years of studies. Students may then decide to take another two-year course called *Laurea magistrale*, in which they specialise in a subject. Triennale corresponds to a Bachelor's Degree while Laurea Magistrale is effectively a Master's Degree. Laurea Magistrale is required for students to progress to third-cycle programmes (i.e. MPhil and PhD degrees). However, there is also a unique five-year degree, *Laurea Magistrale Quinquennale* (Five-Year Master of Arts), for some programmes such as Law (Giurisprudenza), Art (Accademia di Belle Arti) and Music (Conservatorio).

Undergraduate level

Degrees that have similar formative aims, courses and occupational possibilities are grouped within the same *classe di laurea*. The name of the different courses within the same *classe di laurea* can differ. These are in fact decided by each university and do not coincide with the name of their *classe di laurea*.

For example, the *classe di laurea* in Linguistic Mediation (*Mediazione Linguistica*) includes the following degrees: *Science della Mediazione Linguistica* (Linguistic Mediation Science), *Traduzione* (Translation), *Interpretariato e Comunicazione* (Interpreting and Communication Studies), *Lingue e Culture dell'Asia e dell'Africa* (Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa),.

Visit the [Centro Studi Orientamento](#) for a complete list of all the different *classi di laurea* and the corresponding degrees available in various Italian universities.

In each academic year different *sessioni d'esame* (exam periods) are available, usually in January, May-July and September (this may vary at certain universities). Exams are repeated during each session so that students can choose when to take a particular exam. For some courses students are required to take the exam within a certain period of time (for example, within six months of attending the course).

The *Credito Formativo Universitario* (CFU) is the unity of measure used to calculate the number of credits that a student must do in order to complete a course of study. In order to establish this, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is used. This is a standard for comparing HE students' attainment and performance across the [European Union](#) and other collaborating European countries. ECTS credits are awarded for successfully completed studies. One academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS credits that are equivalent to 1500–1800 hours of study in all countries, irrespective of standard or qualification type, and are used to facilitate transfer and progression throughout the Union.

Two England/Wales/Northern Ireland credits are equivalent to one ECTS credit, which means that during an Italian academic year a student is required to obtain a total of 60 credits (equal to 120 in the UK).

At the end of each specific course of study, students are required to take a final exam, called *esame di laurea*. Each university decides how students will be assessed, although assessment usually involves oral discussion (in front of a committee) about the student's dissertation, which is submitted by the student in advance. The final exam cannot be taken until the student has passed all the required exams in his/her course of study. The final mark is decided based on the average across all three (for undergraduate studies) and two (for masters) years of study; it is expressed as a total on a scale of 0-110. *Lode* (distinction) is awarded to students whose performance has been exceptional. Everybody (also members of the public) can attend the student's oral discussion.

MA level

An Italian Master's degree is different from a UK Master's degree. In Italy, a *Corso di Master di primo livello* (Master's degree) is a programme, usually lasting one year, that gives the student specific professional competence in a given academic area. A *Master di primo livello* can be attended by people who have a relevant Bachelor's degree.

In order to be accepted on a *Corso di dottorato di ricerca* (doctoral degree programme) students need to have gained a specific *laurea magistrale* degree (Master's degree). In Italy, a Bachelor's degree alone is not sufficient for progression to a PhD.

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Glossary

Academic abbreviations and acronyms

I sem. *Primo semestre* - First semester

II sem. *Secondo semestre* - Second semester

a.a. *Anno accademico* - Academic year

ANVUR *Agenzia Nazionale di valutazione del sistema universitario e della Ricerca* - National Agency for the Evaluation of Academia and Research

CFU *Credito formativo universitario* - European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

DAMS *Discipline delle Arti, della Musica e dello Spettacolo* - Media and Performing Arts

Mat. *Matricola* - Student ID

SSD *Settori Scientifici Disciplinari* - See key academic terms

Key academic terms

Anno accademico (a.a.) - Academic year. The academic year usually starts on the 1st of October and ends on the 30th of September, but this may vary in different institutions.

Anno di corso - Year of study in which a student is enrolled.

Appello - Days in which students can take exams. In each exam period there are different *appelli*. Students can usually choose in which *appello* they would like to take the exam.

Credito Formativo Universitario (CFU) - The unit of measure used to calculate the number of credits that a student must do in order to complete a course of study.

Classe di laurea e di laurea magistrale - Degrees that have similar formative aims, courses and occupational possibilities are grouped within the same *classe di laurea*.

Collegio docenti (Programme Board) - A committee of professors that chairs decisional and managerial meetings for a specific course of study.

Corso di laurea triennale - Bachelor's degree

Corso di laurea magistrale - Master's degree. There are no Master's by Research degrees in Italy.

Corso di laurea magistrale a ciclo unico - Degree composed of five years of study.

Corso di Master di primo livello - A programme, usually lasting one year, that gives the student specific professional competence in a given academic area.

Corso di Master di secondo livello Same as above, but in this case the student needs to have completed a Master's course (*laurea magistrale*) to apply.

Corso di studio Degree

DAMS Acronym for *Discipline delle Arti, della Musica e dello Spettacolo*. It refers to a specific *classe di laurea* in 'Media and Performing Arts'.

Diploma di maturità Educational qualification gained upon completing high school (14-19) - similar to the A-level qualifications awarded in the UK.

Equipollenza 'Equivalence' of academic degrees in different countries.

Esame di profitto Exam Marks are out of 30. In order to pass an exam the student needs to gain at least 18 points. In exceptional cases, a student can get a *30 con lode* (30 with distinction).

Esame di laurea Final exam at the end of each specific course of study.

Frequenza Required attendance to courses.

Immatricolazione Matriculation. An administrative procedure required to enrol on a degree programme.

Insegnamento Course. Each course is identified by a specific *settore scientifico disciplinare* (scientific and study area) and a number of credits. E.g. the module *linguistica generale* (general linguistics) at the University of Turin is worth 30 credits and is under the L-LIN/01 (glottology and linguistics) scientific area.

Insegnamento propedeutico / Prova propedeutica Assessment of each module can sometimes be divided into several *prove* (tests/assessed activities). When a test is *propedeutico*, it means that one needs to be passed before another can be taken. Also modules can be *propedeutici*. In this case, the exam needs to be passed before the student can sit on another module, which usually requires a more advanced knowledge of the discipline. For example, in order to sit the module *morfologia generale* (general morphology) students must first pass *fonologia generale* (general phonology). Each study programme has different rules.

Laurea ad honorem, or honoris causa Honorary degree

Libretto *Libretto* is a document that students keep throughout their studies. The *libretto* contains information about the student and his/her academic history, including a list of exams taken and their corresponding mark. It can be either in electronic or paper format.

Matricola (numero di) ID/student number

Modulo Each course can be divided into different *moduli* (which are not to be confused with English modules, which in Italian are called *corsi*). A *modulo* can be a seminar, lecture or a practical session.

Piano di Studio / Carico didattico The didactic plan of a student: the list of modules that each student decides to take. Students should usually decide which modules they will take before the start of the first semester, but different universities have different regulations.

Retta Course fees. Fees depend on the course of study and sometimes on the student's financial situation.

Rettore Rector

Rinuncia agli studi Termination of studies

Senato Accademico Academic Senate

Sessione Exam period

Semestre Semester. Like in most UK institutions, in Italy there are two academic semesters.

Settori scientifico disciplinari (S.S.D.) See *Insegnamento*.

Studente a tempo pieno (o full – time) Full-time student

Studente a tempo parziale Part-time student

Tassa di iscrizione Course fees

Tasse Universitarie Course fees

Terms for institutes of higher education

Università pubblica Public university

Università privata Private university

Politecnico / Università politecnica Polytechnic

Università popolare Folk High School. Institution, usually private, for adult education that generally does not grant academic degrees

Unitre (Università della Terza Età) Lifelong Learning Institute

Università telematica Universities that offer distance learning degrees.

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Web Links

[Centro Studi Orientamento](#) (IT) List of *classi di laurea* (see *glossary* for definition).

[Ministro dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca](#) (IT) List of *settori scientifici disciplinari* (see *glossary* for definition).

[Study in Italy](#) (EN) Website by the Italian ministry of education, university and research (MIUR). It provides useful information on study opportunities and life conditions for international students to make the best of their stay in Italy. The "[course search](#)" function enables you to find out information on all degree courses of the 1st and 2nd cycle (undergraduate and postgraduate) offered by Italian universities.

[Università.net](#) (IT) CENSIS Italian University Rankings for 2012-13

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