



Guide to education

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INDRODUCTION

This booklet is part of a series of booklets initiated and prepared under my responsibility as the Mayor of Rome's Delegate for Multiethnic Policies. It is meant to be a useful tool especially for foreign families living in Rome and facing problems having to do with studies, with the aim of accompanying children, youths and their families in the world of education.

We would like to express, first of all, the concept of the value of education, which as administrators of the city like Rome, consider not only to be a duty but a right of all who live in our city, be they host citizens, guests or immigrants.

This brief text illustrates the Italian school system that children go through from Nursery to university and it also addresses the issue of adults who never had a chance of going to school in their home countries or in our country for various reasons.

In fact, fortunately, even though the Italian law is still weak as far as the acquisition of Permits of Stay and citizenship are concerned, there is the possibility and in fact it is recommended that all children present in our territory go to school until they clear the obligatory education.

Also, at this particular moment in which the number of foreigners of school going age is increasing because of family reunification, it is important to give them the possibility of completing their studies and to be integrated into classes that correspond to their age and level of studies already attained in their home countries.

This guide also shows the possibility of joining the world of work which education permits as well as the possibilities and ways of enrolling at the employment centres.

Our objective is to make the young people and their families aware of their rights, duties, of the laws established by the Italian society to safeguard the right to education as a way of acquiring independence and security in the host country.

There is also information on international conventions regulating the recognition of academic qualifications already attained in the home country and rules for further additional courses and formation to be taken.

And to conclude the path that takes the young people from the academic world to that of work, information has been provided on regulated professions in Italy and the competent offices for recognising the professional qualifications attained in European Union member states in accordance with the European Economic commission norms.

We hope that this simple instrument will show how the Institutions, teaching staff, educational structures are ready to receive the foreign guests for training and expression of their identity and to facilitate their integration by making them always feel part of the society in which they live.

Councillor Franca Eckert Coen

the Mayor of Rome's Delegate for Multiethnic Policies.





ITALIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

How the education system changes under Moratti reforms

The Italian education system has substantially changed since the Law n.53/2003, better known as “legge Moratti” – Moratti Law came into effect.

In order to fully implement the reforms, different stages were foreseen.

First of all, the duration of obligatory education changes. The Law n.53/2003 guarantees obligatory education **at least for 12 years or until children become 18 years old** or until they obtain a professional qualification.

Some of the most important changes brought about by the Moratti reforms include: passage to credit system, creation of many educational and formational paths according to the habits and choices of the pupils, offering the pupils support in the passage from studies to work.

Nursery school

The new educational system has also introduced the Nursery school which anticipates school attendance to children who turn three by 30th April of the academic year in course.

This three-year cycle is not part of the educational cycle and is therefore not obligatory. At this stage it is not obligatory to enrol the children. It is simply an extra opportunity for parents.

The real obligatory and right to education begins from the primary school and it is here that there will be the first elements of education which is equal to all children, to those coming in from Nursery school and those who never went to school before.

Normally enrolment to Nursery school takes place in January of the academic year in course. In any case the City and Municipal Councils autonomously set the deadlines for enrolment.

First educational cycle (8 years)

Primary school (5 years) - Lower secondary school (3 years)

The first cycle of education consists of primary school and lower secondary school, and it lasts for 8 years.

This cycle is free obligatory and free.

Children who are turning six by 31st August of the academic year in course must enrol for the primary school.

The deadline for enrolment is set by a Circular letter from the Ministry of Education, University and Research. But normally this is to be done by 31st January of the academic year in course.

The primary school, which lasts for five years, is broken down into three parts: There is the first part which lasts for a year and two by-annual educational terms.

The parent enrolling his/her daughter at primary school will have to apply to the chosen school using prepared forms. The parent must indicate the personal data of the child and other choices. For example, whether or not the child is to take Catholic religious lessons, whether the child will use the school refectory or not, whether the child will use the school transport or not, as well as whether the child will use pre-school and after school services.

Parents, in agreement with their children, have the possibility of choosing the total hours of weekly school attendance. As far as primary school is concerned, the school attendance for a minimum of 30 hours and a maximum of 40 hours per week must be guaranteed.

The passage to lower secondary school will happen automatically, without pupils having to do a State exam, and without them having to enrol afresh if the pupils will continue schooling in the same institution. However, an application





for enrolment will have to be made in case the pupil changes school.

The lower secondary education lasts for three years and it completes the first educational cycle. It consists of a by-annual term and one year term. The minimum obligatory weekly attendance is 27 hours.

At this point, after attending school for eight years, the pupil has to take a State exam in order to move to the second education cycle which represents a higher level of education.

The Second cycle

After passing the State exam, the pupil proceeds to the second cycle where they have to pay enrolment fees.

Normally pupils move to second cycle of education at the age of 14. This moment also represents the first important choice in the life of the pupils since they have to choose between a range of 'High Schools' known as *licei* and technical education.

The High school which lasts for five years, consists of two by-annual terms and a final one year term for completing and deepening the studies already taken as well as for orientation towards university studies.

There are eight types of High schools: classical, scientific, linguistic, human sciences, economic (institutional and firms' specialisation), technological (Mechanic and Mechatronic, Electric and electronics, Information Technology and Communications, Chemistry, Biological and biotechnical food productions, Constructions, environment and territory, Logistics and transport, Textile technologies and clothing) artistic (figurative arts, Architectural design, Multimedia and audiovisual scenography) and finally musical and Choreutic high school (Music and Choreutic section).

The technical training educational system, instead, lasts for four years (with the possibility

of an optional fifth year).

Both the high school and technical training end with a State exam which allows those who pass to proceed to the university.

Both high school and technical school systems are structured in a way that enables the student to switch from one type of education to the other, as well as from one type of high school to the other.

The possibility of switching from one type of education to the other is also guaranteed by the new system of evaluating the performance of students through the introduction of the formative credits and scholastic credits.

Formative credit (Il debito formativo): is attributed to the student who at the end of the academic year has failed one or more of the subjects, but who holds that he/she can recover. In this way, the student can be promoted to the next class with a virtual pass, with a commitment to regain the required credits, or being failed.

As a way of supporting this "parallel" system, schools do organise for revision courses.

The so called **scholastic credits** are normally awarded to students who meet the required standards of participation, either individually or as a group, to projects and extra curricular and optional activities.

The credit acquired by the student during the year can be evaluated into points which later on can be turned into grades.

The credits acquired in this way and certificates can be taken into consideration should one later on decide to change course or interrupt studies and continue later on.

Another change brought about by the Moratti reforms is diversification of the hours and programme of studies in obligatory and optional education.

In fact the study path is organised into activities and teachings which are obligatory for all students, optional obligatory activities and





subjects (having a total number of obligatory credits, but there is a possibility of choosing subjects).

As already said, at the end of studies, students of both high school and technical trainings have to pass a State exam in order to proceed to the university.

ENROLMENT OF FOREIGNERS TO SCHOOL

The right to education is guaranteed to a foreign citizen who is living in Italy legally under the same conditions as Italian citizen.

The right to education of foreign minors

Minor foreigners in Italian territory have a right to education regardless of their legal status in the country under the same conditions as Italian citizens.

Obligatory education, integrated in the concept of right and duty to education and formation (in accordance with Law. 53/03) is also applicable to minors between 15 and 18 years regardless of their legal status in Italy. The foreign minors have a right to enrol to school at any time during the academic year.

However, the enrolment of the minor who is in Italy illegally to school doesn't regularise either the minor's or the parent's position in Italy.

Lack of documents doesn't prevent the minor from enrolling for obligatory education. In fact, it is the duty of the school staff not to report the illegal status of the foreign students.

Article 45 of D.P.R. n. 394/1999 in a particular way foresees the modalities and criteria for enrolment of foreign minors in Italian territory.

A foreign minor can enrol at school at any moment, even if the academic year has already begun.

In case the foreign minor doesn't have docu-

ments showing his/her personal data, one of the parents or the guardian can declare under his/her personal responsibility, the personal data of the minor.

In this case the enrolment is done conditionally but this doesn't affect the issuing of academic titles at the end of the studies.

In case of lack of documents showing the identity of the pupil, the final academic titles are issued under the name used at the time of enrolment.

Admission of students to classes

As far as criteria to be used by teachers to identify the class a student is to be admitted in are concerned, the law states that age of the student is to be given priority. The teaching staff can in any case refer to other requirements such as:

- educational system of the pupil's home country
- proof of pupil's ability and level of preparation
- the study course taken by the pupil in his/her home country
- the academic title held by the pupil, or certificate of attendance of the academic year underway

Each of the above documents must be translated into Italian, while the academic title must be accompanied with a declaration of value issued by the Embassy/Consulate of the country that issued it.

Vaccinations

The foreign minors are to be admitted at school even without certificates showing the vaccines taken.

The document showing obligatory vaccines taken by the foreigner in his/her home country must be translated into Italian.

In case such documents are missing, the school will enrol the child but inform the Local Health Office (ASL).



The cultural mediator

In order to make effective the right to education and facilitate the integration of minor foreigners, the law states that the State, Regions and Local Institutions should establish programmes aimed at promoting and facilitating the reception, integration of foreign pupils into the Italian social context as well as to protect the pupil's original culture and language.

The teaching staff do allocate foreign students to different classes, preferring to group together foreign students from the same country so as to facilitate the work of cultural mediators and the teaching of Italian language and activities aimed at helping understand the culture of the students' home country.

ADULTS' RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The right to education is also recognised to foreign adults.

Law 286/'98 in a particular way states that learning institutions, as part of a territorial programmes, also in convention with Regions and Local Institutions, should promote the reception of foreign adults who are living in Italy legally, through the creation of various learning activities and intercultural exchange programmes.

Such activities, above all, tackle various subject needs of foreign adults living in Italy.

The first need of many foreigners is to learn Italian language.

In this respect many learning institutions do create language courses on different levels (basic, intermediate and advanced level). The foreigner will obviously be admitted to the class that corresponds to his/her level of Italian language knowledge after a preliminary test.

In this way, they'll in fact obtain elementary licence.

Foreign adults who would like to attend lower secondary school education must apply to the

Principal of the chosen institute, indicating his/her personal data, undertaken studies and work. In these cases knowledge of Italian language is required as well as a Permit of Stay.

Those who've already attended obligatory school and would like to proceed to Higher secondary school can enrol directly for higher education.

Another problem normally faced by foreign citizens who migrate to Italy is that of studies left half-way. This is why many learning institutions do arrange for courses to supplement studies taken in the foreigners' home countries.

Generally, the implementation of the project for permanent education of adults is assigned to the Territorial Permanent Centres for Adult Education - Centri Territoriali Permanenti per l'educazione degli adulti (Ctp). Such centres have the duty of receiving applications and providing adult education.

UNIVERSITY

Foreign university students in Italy

The article 39 of the Immigration Law states that foreigners living legally in Italy have the right of access to Italian universities under the same conditions as Italian citizens. They are required to have studied for a total of 12 years.

The application letter is sent directly to the chosen Faculty attaching all the relevant documents listed on the website of the Ministry of Home Affairs (www.esteri.it).

The Bossi-Fini immigration law also guarantees foreign students right to access to Italian universities under the same conditions as Italian citizens, but the decree for effecting it poses very strong limits: from the yearly planning of the number of student Visas and Permits of Stay, to the uncertainty in renewal of Permits of Stay for studies, to the financial requirements for foreign students to come to Italy, to the dif-





faculty mechanism for recognition of academic qualifications obtained abroad, to the problems concerning medical assistance and foreigner's right to education.

Bureaucratic procedure

Here's what a foreign student who would like to come to Italy for studies should do.

He/she should first of all go to the Italian Embassy/Consulate in his/her home country to apply for student Visa.

The number of Visas to be issued is set depending on the number of places available in individual universities. By 31st December every year, individual universities do communicate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the number of places reserved for foreign citizens. On the basis of this communication, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues between March and April, a decree determining the number of student Visas and permits

Immediately after the issuance of the decree, a foreign citizen who would like to enrol in Italian universities can apply for pre-admission to the chosen university through the Italian Embassy/Consulate in his/her home country.

After the application for pre-admission (the Embassy/Consulate forwards the application to the university), the student can apply for a student Visa.

The student has to make formal application for the Visa attaching passport size photos, valid passport or travelling document, proof of availability of financial support and availability of suitable accommodation in Italy as well as availability of money for return journey home. This can be proved by showing a return air ticket. The student also has to prove he/she has medical insurance covering medical treatments and hospitalisation. This can be proved by showing the medical insurance premium certificate in case there is no agreement on medical assistance between the student's home country

and Italy.

Financial requirements

Access to university is only allowed to those who prove they have enough financial support to cover for their up keep throughout their stay in Italy and enough money for return journey home.

They should have more than 350 euros per month throughout their stay. Since the Visa is usually valid for a year, the student has to show he/she has about 4500 euros.

For those who don't have that amount, there is a possibility of receiving financial guarantee from Italian institutions registered at the Registry of the Prime Minister's Office, those whose constitutions state that they can give scholarships. Until recently the financial guarantee could be offered by a physical person but this possibility is gradually becoming less common.

Usually the student Visa is issued at the end of August of the academic year in course. The student has to be in Italy by early September to start processing admission to the Italian university.

Upon entering Italy, the student must within eight days, apply for the Permit of Stay which will only be valid for first part of enrolment in the chosen faculty. Normally this permit is valid until the end of December.

In order to be admitted, the student has to first of all pass the Italian language test which is done at each faculty in early September. In order to enrol to faculties with limited number of students (for example Faculty of Medicine), the student also has to pass the admission test.

After passing the Italian language test and the admission test where applicable, and finalising admission procedures, the student can be issued a Permit of Stay for studies valid for a year.

This permit is renewable throughout the duration of the studies if the holder meets the set



conditions.

According to the law, the permit can only be renewed if the student has passed at least an exam in the first year and two exams in the subsequent years. This type of permit cannot be renewed if the holder exceeds the original duration of the course by more than three years unless this has happened due to unavoidable circumstances.

Please be reminded that a Permit of Stay for studies allows the holder to work for a total of 1054 hours per year, and can be converted into one for work depending on the quotas allocated by the Quota Agreement (Decreto flussi).

There is, however, a very important new element: Students who graduate in Italy can convert their Permit of Stay (if they meet the conditions) at any time in the course of the year, even before the publication of the Quota Agreement or after the quotas have been terminated. In this way, the quotas used for conversion of such permits will be deducted from the quotas for the next year's Quota Agreement.

Admission to professional bodies

A foreigner living abroad who has graduated at an Italian university can apply for entry Visa and temporary Permit of Stay in order to sit for exams to be allowed to practice in given professions. Those who pass the exam and meet all the requirements are immediately enrolled to the professional bodies. ***The enrolment to the professional bodies depends on available quotas and those who have lived in Italy for at least five years have precedence over other foreigners.***

Benefits and scholarships

According to the Immigration Law, foreign students can have access to financial support under the same conditions as Italian citizens. This can have to do with being given scholarships, accommodation or help with payment of rent, food

allowances, etc.

There are also other benefits granted by the Regions in collaboration with universities. These include prizes for dissertations, support in studies and further specialisation abroad, etc.

RECOGNITION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Educational qualifications attained abroad are not legally valid in Italy, so a foreign citizen who attained educational qualifications in other countries, be they EU or non-EU countries, has to apply for recognition of the qualification if he/she would like to practice the same profession in Italy.

The Regolamento di attuazione n.394/99 indicates the procedure to be followed in applying for recognition of educational qualifications. It provides for ***recognition of qualifications for the purpose of continuing with studies*** (academic recognition) ***and for the purpose of practising a profession in Italy*** (professional recognition) ***and recognition of medical qualifications.***

Recognition of qualifications for the purpose of continuing with studies (academic recognition)

It is the duty of the university to recognise qualifications for the purpose of continuing with studies.

In this case one has to send application to the Rector of the chosen university by enclosing all documents showing level of education and any certificates attained at his/her home country.

The documents to enclose include: the diploma attained abroad, certificates of exams and programme of studies, the declaration of value of the educational qualification. All these documents must be translated into Italian and



legalised.

The declaration of value of educational qualification certifies its validity, the duration of the studies undertaken in order to attain it, the faculty to which the holder of such a qualification can be admitted to. This document must be attained from the Italian Embassy/Consulate in one's home country.

Each university, can ask the applicant to provide additional documents.

In most cases, the universities recognise some exams and allow the student to enrol in the appropriate faculty to complete his/her studies.

Recognition of qualifications for the purpose of practising a profession in Italy (professional recognition)

In order to recognise educational qualifications for the purpose of practising a profession in Italy, one must apply to the concerned ministry or institute as stated by the law (**see table on page 84**) by enclosing all the necessary documents. This should include: the diploma attained abroad which should be translated into Italian, transcript of exams taken and any work experience.

In case the programme of study taken abroad is the same to the Italian one, the applicant can be asked to take an equivalent exam which can consist of doing an internship or a test of attitude.

In these cases, the professional qualification allows the holder to enrol with the professional associations or organisations and to practice the professions according to the modalities stated by the immigration law and the Quota Agreement (Decreto flussi).

The same procedure is to be followed for **all qualifications attained by EU citizens. It is not necessary to apply for the recognition of the qualifications in order to carry out professions which don't require enrolment with professional bodies.**

In fact according to EU norms, the Member States have the duty of eliminating any obstacle to the practising of professions and the freedom of movements of professionals.

Medical professions

The recognition of medical qualifications and authorisations to practice the medical professions is done by the Ministry of Health.

Medical professions are activities aimed at prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation.

In order to carry out such activities, one must have authorisation.

In medical field, the recognition of qualification is an indispensable condition for exercising the profession.

In this respect, the foreigner who would like to practice in this field must apply for the recognition of his/her qualifications (either personally or through a delegate with a written delegated authority).

The application can be done whether the applicant lives abroad or in Italy.

A foreigner living abroad must send his/her application through the Italian Embassy/Consulate in his/her home country or delegate someone to do so on his/her behalf. The applicant must delegate in writing his or her delegated authority.

In both cases, the application for recognition must be sent to the Ministry of Health.

A foreigner who is living legally in Italy can personally apply for recognition of his/her qualifications or do so through his/her employer.

Other documents to attach to the application are:

- Specific educational qualification required for a given activity
- Certificate authorising the holder to practise the activity
- Copy of programme of studies and the certificate of exams taken



- Enrolment certificate to the Professional Registry in one's home country
- Declaration of value
- Certificate of no impediment (either criminal or professional) to the practising of the activity one would like to practice

NB: All documents in foreign languages must be translated into Italian and legalised. While handing in the application, the applicant must also attach his/her ID and a written delegation (in case the application is not personally handed in by the applicant).

Some Regions (Calabria, Lazio, Umbria, Campania, Liguria, Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Lombardia, Valle d'Aosta) and the Autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano handle autonomously the procedure of recognition of Nursing and Technical-medical, medical radiology qualifications attained in non-EU countries.

Therefore, those who would like to work in such Regions must send their applications together with the relevant documents to the competent Regional and Provincial offices.

THE WORLD OF WORK

The first steps for joining the world of work.

The professional training

Let's assume that a foreign student doesn't have a professional qualification and would like enrol for professional training organised by the Italian Regions.

Professional training is in fact always very important for the production sector. The European Social Fund do finance professional training together with the Regions and Provinces.

These courses are organised by Training Institutes (Public, private conventioned Institutions) and firms.

The courses are organised at different levels: post obligatory school, post-diploma and post-university diploma, post graduate (courses and

Masters), and they are almost always free.

The European Social Fund also promotes continuous formation which is considered as updating of workers, especially those who risk unemployment, being laid off, due to industrial transformations and evolution of production systems.

The continuous formation takes place within the firm or at Training Institutions. Foreign citizens are not excluded from these courses.

In fact by looking at the list of those who should attend these courses on the website of the Ministry of Social Policies and Welfare, we find that foreigners are also included.

The non-EU citizens are included in the same category with the "handicapped, former prisoners, drug addicts, the marginalised". It is also written that foreigners who are guests for work, or formation, can also be admitted to the professional formation in accordance with the international conventions and applicable laws.

In order to be admitted, normally the professional training institutes require a declaration that the applicant has gone to school for 12 years.

The employment centres

And what if I don't find work? The last step to take is to enrol at the employment centres which have been established at the provincial level.

In order to do this, it is sufficient to translate your academic qualifications into Italian and have it authenticated by the Tribunal of your city.

For one to be enrolled as unemployed with a high school diploma, one must have studied for 12 years.

In some countries (mainly South American countries), the educational cycle lasts 11 years. In such a case, it is advisable to enrol at a high school and complete the educational cycle.

This is convenient both for enrolment at the





employment centres as well as for pursuing further studies.

The education qualification which has been translated is only authenticated as conforming to the declared value. The employer can therefore ask for its recognition.

The translation can be done by an official translator enrolled at the Register of Translators, or by a foreigner or Italian who is an expert in the foreign language.

The Ministry of Social Policies and Welfare also deals with job opportunities for foreigners. It is the duty of the general directorate of immigrations and coordination of social integration policies for immigrants and activities aimed at fighting racism.

This office also has the duty of managing resources for migration policies, coordinates initiatives concerning influx of immigrants for work, and supports international cooperation.

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