



Brief Background: Art and culture play a very important role in a country where beauty, design, good taste, and fashion are an everyday imperative. Italy's charms—a diverse landscape, an immense cultural and historical legacy, iconic and historic sites, incomparable cuisine, an impressive history of inventions and discoveries—are attractive to tourists and international students. It boasts the greatest number of UNESCO world heritage sites of any country and is also home of the oldest European university—the University of Bologna, which was established in 1088. This, coupled with high quality university education, makes Italy an ideal place for living and studying.

The Italian education system is composed of 97 universities, 12 national research centers, and 137 higher education institutions in arts, dance, and music (referred to as *alta formazione artistica e musicale* or AFAM). The 2018 *Times Higher Education World University Rankings* ranked 30 Italian universities among the top 500 universities in the world. According to the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, approximately 90,000 international students were pursuing degree programs in 2016-2017. Italy is the second leading destination country in the world for US students studying abroad, only after the UK, according to IIE's 2017 Open Doors Report. In 2015-16, 34,000 US students studied in Italy for academic credit.

Italian universities use the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which is designed to facilitate international mobility within different educational systems. It is a central tool in the Bologna Process, which aims to make academic credits more easily transferable between different national education systems. Italy is also part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the result of collaborative efforts of 48 countries to reform

higher education on the basis of common key values. For participating countries, the main goal is to increase staff and students' mobility and to facilitate employability. International students enrolled in Italian universities benefit from these policies.

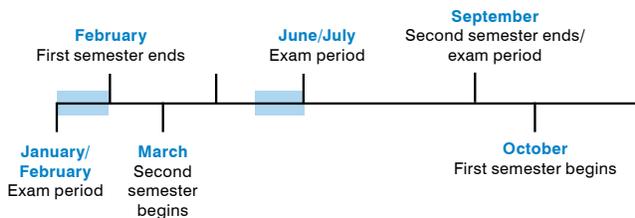
Good to Know: Bachelor's degrees are known as *laurea triennale*, or first cycle degrees, and last three years. A high school diploma is the common requirement for admission to a first cycle degree. Students who are interested in continuing their studies can pursue a master's degree or *laurea magistrale*, which may be required for work in certain fields. These programs typically last two years.

For some subjects (i.e., law, medicine, veterinary science, dentistry, pharmacy, chemistry, pharmaceutical technology, architecture, and building engineering) there is a common study path without division between bachelor's and master's degrees. Called a single cycle master's degree (*laurea magistrale a ciclo unico*), such programs can last from five to six years depending on the subject. To be admitted, students need to have a high school diploma and meet other subject-specific criteria. For example, applicants for medicine, veterinary science, and dentistry (which are *numerus clausus* programs—a process used to manage enrollment size), must pass a national exam that can be in Italian or English, and which takes place on the same day and time at all Italian universities. The results are valid at the national level.

Students interested in arts, music, dance, and theater can apply to AFAM institutions to acquire knowledge of artistic methods and techniques. As at universities, AFAM students spend three years to get a first level academic diploma and two years for a second level academic diploma.

Most courses are taught in Italian, but many courses are also offered in English. An international student can choose to apply to a course fully taught in English or fully taught in Italian. Applicants to English courses may be required to submit an English proficiency certificate. For courses taught in Italian, international students have to pass an Italian language exam to be admitted. Visit the [Lingua Italiana website](#) for additional information on language certification.

Academic Calendar: Depending on the institution and program, the academic year is generally divided into two semesters: the first one starts in October and ends in February (with a break for Christmas and New Year's), and the second one starts in March and ends in September (with a break in August for summer holidays). Each semester, a certain number of weeks are devoted to lessons and the other weeks are dedicated to exams. Students are required to take an exam at the end of each course, which may be written and/or oral. The length of exam sessions may vary among universities, but they are usually held in the months of January-February, June-July, and September.



Search: For more information about the availability of university courses taught fully in English, enrollment requirements, and visa information, please visit the following websites:

- [University](#) run by the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research
- [Study in Italy](#) run by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- [Uni-Italia](#), an association that promotes academic study in Italy

Apply: Applications are made directly to each institution. Deadlines, required documents, language certificates, etc., can vary across Italian institutions. Some may require students to participate in an interview using Skype or another online communication tools.

Medicine, veterinary science, architecture, health care professions, and primary education sciences are courses of study with restricted admission because the number of applicants is greater than the number of spots available in the course of study. Each year, the Italian Ministry of Education establishes a quota for the number of international students who can be admitted.

Deadlines: Each institution/program sets its own deadlines, so students should check each university's website.



Application Fees: It is common for higher education institutions to charge an application fee—typically several dozen euros. The amount varies by institution.

Admission Requirements: To be admitted to an Italian university, international students have to demonstrate academic eligibility for university study in their country of origin. Examples include a US high school diploma or an IB diploma. Students can apply before completing high school, but will need to submit the official, original documents once they are received.

Demonstration of Italian language skills is mandatory for enrolling in courses taught in Italian. If a course is entirely taught in English, students will be required to prove their command of the English language. Always check with Italian institutions as to whether a student's English studies are sufficient to meet this requirement. In these cases, an Italian language test is not required. [Lingua Italiana](#) provides additional information.

Upon Acceptance: Each higher education institution will provide admitted students with useful information about next steps, such as documents to translate or to have authenticated through Italian diplomatic representatives at their local consulate or embassy. Once students arrive in Italy, they need to bring all the documents released and sealed by the Italian representatives to their university to finalize enrollment.

Before enrolling in an Italian university, international students pursuing a bachelor's or master's degree must complete a pre-enrollment process through the Italian diplomatic representatives in the student's home country. This is different from having a letter of acceptance and enrolling at the university. This process must be completed before applying for a student visa. Usually this procedure starts in March and finishes in July. For more detailed information, US students can use the [embassy's website](#) to find out which Italian consulate serves their area.

Tuition and Fees: Regular tuition fees for EU and non-EU students depend on the student's family income and on the program. On average, public institutions charge 900 to 4,000 euros per year; private institutions charge 6,000 to 20,000 euros per year, not including living expenses and books. Students must pay the first installment before attending courses. The tuition fees may be covered by institutional merit-based scholarships offered annually to talented international students.

Housing: Students are encouraged to rent a place to live before leaving for Italy. Many higher education institutions have an office that can help international students find housing.

Renting a private room in an apartment with shared facilities (bathroom, kitchen, etc.) is a popular option for students because the price is more affordable compared to renting an individual apartment. The price for a private room in a shared apartment is around 300 to 600 euros;



Photo courtesy of Carly

Italy

“There are three reasons I always give when people ask me [why I decided to pursue an undergraduate degree outside the United States]: it's more affordable, it's only three years, and it's Italy! Though my university is one of the more expensive in Italy, my entire three-year degree will cost less than one year of tuition at some of the US universities I was considering.”

—Carly Cornell, Pennsylvania, Bocconi University

the price for an entire apartment is more than 800 euros. Prices will vary depending on size, location, and city, as well as other factors, such as the apartment's proximity to public transportation and universities.

Depending on a student's financial status and academic merit, students may be eligible for university housing.

Visa and Other Permits: US citizens are eligible to enter Italy without a visa for study reasons and for a period of time shorter than 90 days. If students are applying for a study course that is more than 90 days, they need to apply for a student visa through the Italian embassy or consulate in the US prior to departing for Italy. The student visa, called National Visa Type D, is needed to apply for a student residence permit.

To get a student visa, several documents have to be submitted to the Italian diplomatic or consular representatives, which include evidence of the ability to cover living expenses in Italy (5,889 euros per year) plus the amount of money needed to rent a room/apartment.

Students must apply for a residence permit (which costs about 120 euros) within eight working days of their arrival in Italy. Before applying for a residence permit, which is valid for one year, students need to get a fiscal code (*codice fiscale*) at Italy's Revenue Agency (*Agenzia delle Entrate*) and obtain health insurance.

International students who apply for a residence permit may take out private health insurance with Ina-Assitalia, which is very limited and only covers urgent medical assistance. If students prefer to have wider coverage, they can sign up with the national health service (*servizio sanitario nazionale*). This guarantees full health care and ensures students receive the same treatment as Italian citizens. Registration lasts for a year (from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31), is not divisible, and costs about 150 euros. US students who already have private health insurance should check with the Italian diplomatic representatives at their local embassy or consulate as to whether it provides coverage in Italy.

Non-EU students who have a residence permit for study purposes can work part-time for a total of 20 hours a week. Work does not have to be related to students' academic program, but should students work in a related field, they are eligible to gain credits through the ECTS system.

Advice from the Field: Students can send questions to Uni-Italia, a nonprofit organization that supports internationalization of Italian higher education institutions, with offices located at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The Uni-Italia association—founded jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; the Ministry of Education, University and Research; and the Ministry of Interior—has the aim of promoting Italian higher to foreign students and researchers and encouraging academic cooperation between Italy and other foreign countries. Uni-Italia works closely with Italian diplomatic offices across the globe and cooperates with the Italian cultural institutes and the Italian consulates abroad.

Uni-Italia also assists students for the length of their stay. Their aim is to facilitate integration into the new social, academic, and cultural environment. Counselors can reach out to Uni-Italia using the following methods:

1. Email: student@uni-italia.it
2. Phone: (+39) 06 3691 2651
3. Facebook: Search for Uni-Italia Rome
4. Twitter: @Uni_Italia
5. Website: uni-italia.net



Photo courtesy of Carly

“Classes here are very theoretical. They may take some getting used to at first, but in the end, it is interesting to be exposed to a new approach to university education. Academics can be difficult at any of the world’s top universities, but if you attend university in Italy, at least you’ll be living the dolce vita in the process!”

—Carly Cornell, Pennsylvania, Bocconi University

Though English is spoken widely at universities, Italian is the common language outside the campuses. To enjoy the Italian lifestyle, students are encouraged to learn some Italian before and during their studies.

Graduates of Italian higher education institutions in fields strongly associated with Italy and Italian culture—such as engineering, music, arts, medicine, design, architecture, fashion, economy, and gastronomy—may have an edge over other competitors in the job market.