

Higher Education in Art and Music *(Alta formazione artistica e musicale – Afam)*

Higher Education in Art and Music (Afam) is part of the Italian higher education system

Afam includes:

- Fine Arts Academies
- Music Conservatories and Recognized Music Institutes
- Higher Institutes for Applied Arts
- National Academy of Dance
- National Academy of Drama.

The institutions carry out teaching, production and research in visual arts, music, dance, drama and design. Since the 1999 reform, *Afam*'s educational offering has been structured in three cycles, in accordance with the Bologna Process objectives.

The first cycle is made up of **first level diploma programmes** that aim to provide students with adequate mastery of artistic methods and techniques as well as with specific professional and disciplinary skills. Admission requirements are an upper secondary school diploma issued after a total of 13 years of schooling and successful completion of the required state exams, or a comparable foreign diploma. Admission may also require candidates to take an entrance exam to assess an adequate level of knowledge, in accordance with institutional regulations. There may also be preparatory educational activities carried out in collaboration with upper secondary schools. The maximum number of places available is determined by each individual institution. Study programmes last three years. To obtain the first level diploma, the student must have acquired 180 credits. The diploma gives holders access to competitive exams in the public sector, as well as to artistic careers and further studies in the 2nd cycle.

Second cycle is made up of **second level diploma programs**, which offer students an advanced level of education for complete mastery of artistic methods and techniques as well as a high level of professional competency. Admission requirements are either a first level diploma, a university degree or a comparable foreign qualification. There may also be specific requirements as defined by the different institutional regulations. Study programs last two years and require the acquisition of 120 credits.

Third cycle. This cycle is made up of **Research training programmes**. Their goal is to provide the competences to plan and carry out high-level research activities.

Other courses

Afam institutions may also offer:

- **Specialization courses:** these courses provide high level professional competences in specific areas;
- **Advanced or Master courses:** these courses provide in-depth study in specific sectors as well as professional development, retraining and continuing education. They have a minimum of 60 credits. Admissions requirements are determined by institutional regulations.

Academic credits: study programs are expressed in academic credits. One academic credit generally corresponds to 25 hours of student workload. The average workload for one academic year is conventionally set at 60 credits.