

## **Definitions and characteristics of Italian higher education institutions**

### **University sector**

#### **State Universities (Università statali)**

State universities are public entities endowed with scientific, teaching, managerial, financial and book-keeping autonomy; they have full legal capacity in matters of both public and private law. Their major tasks are scientific research and higher education. Due to the principle of university autonomy, each university may draw up its own statutes and regulations, issued by rectoral decrees. At this implementation stage of the 1999 reform, all universities have adopted their autonomous statutes which define the organs for institutional governance, and teaching and research structures. The main governing authorities within a university are the Rector, the Academic Senate, the Board of Directors. - The Rector chairs the Academic Senate and the Board of Directors, supervises the general running of all university structures and services, is responsible for disciplinary matters, draws up agreements for external cooperation, plans all the teaching and research activities of the institution. The Rector is elected among full professors and is the legal representative of the university. - The Academic Senate establishes the general guidelines for the activities of the university and plans its development. It approves the university regulations, coordinates teaching activities and has the authority to plan, coordinate and control university autonomy. The Senate is made up of the Rector, the Faculty Deans, and other representatives of the academic community, all elected in conformity to the rules of the university statute. - The Board of Directors supervises the whole administrative, financial, patrimonial and personnel management of the university; in particular, it approves the budget. It is made up of the Rector, the Head of Administration, and other representatives of both the academic and external business community according to the rules laid down in the statute. Universities reach their institutional goals in teaching and research through specific structures: faculties, degree programmes, departments, institutes, and service centres. - Through the faculties universities organise their action in the various subject areas. Faculties coordinate subject courses and arrange them within the different degree programmes; they appoint academic staff and decide -always respectful of the principle of teaching freedom- how to distribute roles and workload among university teachers and researchers. The Faculty is run by the Faculty Council and the Dean. - Departments organise those research sectors that are homogeneous by objectives or methods, and group all related subjects courses. They promote and manage research, organise doctoral programmes, carry out research and consultancy work -according to specific agreements and contracts- on request of external organisations. The Department is run by the Department Council and the Director. - Institutes deal each with a homogeneous scientific sector; their role is to carry out teaching and develop research. The Institute is run by the Institute Council and the Director. - Service centres may be set up by individual Faculties or by the university itself to provide services of general interest. For the achievement of common research or teaching purposes, a university may establish interuniversity centres or consortia with other universities or with public and private organisations. Interdepartmental research centres and interdepartmental service centres may also be set up; the first to carry out research work of special relevance, the second to fully exploit particularly complex services and equipment. Taken for granted the unity of the teaching function, university teachers are organised in two different categories sharing the same guarantees of teaching and research freedom: a) full professors (first category) b) associate professors (second category). The following profiles are also a part of the teaching staff: c) researchers d) assistants (a category in extinction) and a few similar

categories. Besides, a university may call to cooperate to its teaching activities the so-called: e) contract teachers. At the university structures the holders of research stipends and post-doctoral fellowships carry out research, while postgraduates enrolled in doctoral programmes or in specialisation schools attend seminars and/or subject courses and carry out research as well.

### **Non-State Universities (Università non statali, legalmente riconosciute)**

Non-State universities may be recognised by a decree of the Minister of Education. Legal recognition takes place after an evaluation process concerning the university statute, its organisation model, budget, etc. The degrees awarded by non-State universities legally recognised by the State have the same legal value as those of State universities. Non-State universities have to comply with the same general principles and criteria as defined by the national university legislation for State institutions. The differences between State and non-State universities concern funding and governance.

### **Technical Universities (Politecnici)**

In the Italian system those universities are named "Politecnici" (technical universities) that concentrate exclusively in the subject fields of the two Faculties of Engineering and Architecture. They adopt the same institutional model as that of State universities.

### **Universities for Foreigners (Università per Stranieri)**

Universities for foreigners are State institutions specialised in teaching and research for the development and diffusion of the Italian language, literature and culture.

### **Higher Schools (Scuole Superiori)**

Higher schools regulated by special legislation are institutions specialised in postgraduate university studies and scientific research. They offer 2nd and 3rd cycle programmes (master and research doctorates).

### **Online Universities (Università telematiche)**

Telematic universities are non-State universities specialised in e-learning. They, when legally recognised, provide distance programmes accredited by the State.

## **Non-University sector**

### **Academies of Fine Arts (Accademie di Belle Arti)**

The main purpose of academies of fine arts is to provide education and training for the practice of artistic professions. They offer the highest level of traditional art education under State supervision. Engaged in education, specialisation and research in the artistic sector, academies also carry out related production activities. They are endowed with juridical personality and enjoy full autonomy (statutory, teaching, scientific, administrative, financial and book-keeping). They set up and run 1st level programmes (admission by school leaving qualification and entrance exam) as well as advanced and specialisation courses, on completion of which they award specific academic diplomas at 1st and 2nd level as well as diplomas of advanced or specialization studies, or of training to research in artistic fields.

### **Higher Schools of Design (Istituti Superiori per le Industrie Artistiche-ISIA)**

ISIAs are State institutions of advanced education, specialisation and research in industrial and visual design; they also carry out related production activities. ISIAs have juridical personality and enjoy full autonomy (statutory, teaching, scientific, administrative, financial). ISIAs set up and run 1st level programmes (admission by school leaving qualification and by a competitive entrance exam), advanced and specialisation courses; they award academic diplomas at 1st and 2nd level as well as specialization diplomas, diplomas of training to research, of advanced studies (diplomi di perfezionamento), or Masters, all of them in design.

### **National Dance Academy (Accademia Nazionale di Danza)**

The Academy runs courses for the education and training of dancers, choreographers, and dance teachers. In addition to the traditional techniques of the statics and motion of the human body, the academy teaches also the modern technique of bodily harmony and eurhythmy. It used to award the following diplomas: licensed dance teachers, choreographers, and solo dancers. As a consequence of the 1999 reform of higher education in the arts and music, the Academy new teaching regulations provide for the setting up of 3-year 1st level programmes, and 2-year 2nd level ones.

### **National Academy of Drama (Accademia Nazionale di Arte Drammatica "Silvio D'Amico")**

It runs courses for prospective stage actors and directors. Admission is based on a public competition, which consists of three different parts and is open to candidates between the age of 18 and 25, except for foreigners and observers. Courses last 3 years; participants' number is limited, daily attendance is compulsory; curricula include general cultural subjects as well as technical and specialistic ones related to acting and direction. The academy also runs some "special" programmes.

### **State Music Conservatories and Recognised Music Institutes (Conservatori di Musica e Istituti Musicali Pareggiati)**

Music conservatories are State institutions belonging to the system of advanced education, specialisation and research in the arts and music (AFAM). They have juridical personality and enjoy full autonomy (statutory, teaching, scientific, administrative, financial). Their objectives are the promotion of higher education,

specialisation, and research in music, and the development of related production activities. Recognised music institutes are non-State institutions which have been recognised by ministerial decree through comparison to music conservatories.

### **Higher Institutes for Musical and Choreographic Studies (Istituti Superiori di Studi Musicali e Coreutici)**

Music conservatoires and recognised music institutes will assume this name once fully transformed in conformity to the the AFAM reform law.

### **Higher Institute for Choreographic Studies (Istituto Superiore di Studi Coreutici)**

The national dance academy will take on this name when transformed in conformity to the AFAM reform law.

### **Art Polytechnics (Politecnici delle Arti)**

The AFAM reform law envisages the establishment of art polytechnics, consisting in consortia of higher education institutions in the arts and music and universities which decide to cooperate on the basis of their proximity and of the complementariness and possible integration of the respective study programmes.

### **Higher Schools for Language Mediators (Scuole Superiori per Mediatori Linguistici)**

These higher schools are the former higher schools for interpreters and translators (SSIT) as transformed in conformity to the Ministerial Decree No. 38 of 10 January 2002. They award qualifications equivalent to all legal effects to 1st university degrees in class 3 (class of Laurea degrees in sciences of language mediation). Study programmes last 3 years, i.e. 180 university credits. Their main objectives are: 1) provide students with sound academic education at higher level, both general and specialistic, in at least two foreign languages in addition to Italian, and in the respective civilisations; 2) develop specific technical language skills, written and oral, for professions in language mediation.

### **Specialisation Institutes/Schools in Psychotherapy (Istituti/Scuole di Psicoterapia)**

Quite a number of non-state institutes/schools offer postgraduate programmes in applied psychology and in psychotherapy which have been recognised by the Ministry of Universities and Research - MiUR. Minimum admission requirement is a five-year Laurea in Psychology or, after the 1999 university reform, a Laurea Specialistica class 58/S (psicologia), or a comparable foreign degree. These postgraduate programmes, whose main purpose to provide advanced education and training to professional psychologists wishing to specialise as psychotherapists, last 4 years for a total of 1,600 hours. They alternate theory (1,200 hours) with practical training and individual analysis (400 hours). The successful passing of the final examination, which includes the defence of a dissertation, results in the awarding of a professional qualification (e.g. Diploma in Psicoterapia Cognitiva) with the same legal validity of the postgraduate specialisation degrees in psychological fields conferred by Italian universities.

## **Programmes of Higher Technical Education & Training (Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore)**

Courses of higher technical education & training (IFTS) were established by Law No. 144 of May 1999. They are meant for young students and adults holding a school leaving qualification who, employed or unemployed, wish to specialise for a quick transition to or a requalification in the labour market. IFTS programmes last min. 2 to max. 4 semesters (from 1,200 to 2,400 hours), and lead to professional profiles with a high employment rate; they are jointly designed and run by universities, centres for postsecondary vocational education and training, upper secondary schools and businesses, often gathered in consortia. Set up taking into account both national standards and the local needs of individual Regions, IFTS courses include practical training "on job" for at least 30% of each curriculum. On course completion, a certificate is awarded, valid in the whole national territory; the student's workload is expressed in credits so as to make the qualification valuable for further studies, even if later in life.

### **National School for Cinema (Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia)**

The "Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia" (CSC), also known as Scuola Nazionale di Cinema, is a private foundation with juridical personality. CSC, an institution of higher education in cinematography, aims at developing the art and techniques of cinema and audiovisual production by running basic, advanced, and updating courses, and by promoting research and experimentation in the film and TV sectors. Its teaching activity is finalised to the education and training of future professionals.

### **Central Institute for Restoration (Istituto Centrale per il Restauro)**

The Central Institute for Restoration in Rome offers 3/4-year courses in conservation of metals and other materials of archaeological finds, and in conservation of paintings and their supports, of architectonic surfaces and related materials.

### **School for Restoration of Mosaics (Scuola di Restauro del Mosaico)**

The School, located in Ravenna, offers a specialistic 3-year programme in restoration of mosaics which is open to Italians and non-Italians; admission is based on a very strict competition.

### **School for Conservation and Restoration of Precious Stone Materials (Opificio delle Pietre Dure)**

The Workshop for the conservation and restoration of precious stone materials (Florence) has set up its own School which offers 3-year courses in fields related to the Workshop main specialisations: stone materials, mosaics and works in hard stones, terracotta, metalwork (goldsmithing, bronzes and antique weapons), furniture and engraving, gilding and polychrome wooden sculpture, paintings, murals, paper, textiles (tapestries and cloths).

### **Central Institute for the Conservation and Restoration of Damaged Books (Istituto Centrale per la Patologia del Libro "Alfonso Gallo")**

The Central Institute for the restoration of damaged ancient books runs short advanced courses open only to professionals who have already acquired a

considerable level of competence in the sector. The Institute also offers a basic course for the specialised training of prospective young professionals.

### **Foundation for the Conservation and Restoration of Ancient Books and Documents (Fondazione per la Conservazione e il Restauro dei Beni Librari)**

The Foundation offers a two-year programme open to candidates from EU member states (max. 15). Applicants must be under 25 years of age, hold an Italian school leaving diploma or a foreign comparable secondary qualification, possess adequate knowledge of written and spoken English and Italian, basic knowledge of Latin, knowledge of chemistry and physics, and pass a selective entrance examination. After the two-year basic course, students may take a one-year advanced course (Corso di Perfezionamento), and receive a statement of advanced specialised education and training (Attestato di Perfezionamento) as restorers of ancient books and documents.

### **Schools for Archiving, Palaeography and Diplomatics (Scuole di Archivistica, Paleografia e Diplomatica)**

Schools for Archiving, Palaeography and Diplomatics are State institutions of university rank. They are established at the state archives of the following cities: Bari, Bologna, Bolzano, Cagliari, Florence, Genoa, Mantova, Milan, Modena, Naples, Palermo, Parma, Perugia, Rome, Turin, Trieste and Venice.

### **Military Academies and Institutes for the Police (Accademie Militari e Istituti di Polizia)**

Programmes for the education and training of future officers in standing military service are offered by institutions such as the Aeronautic Academy in Pozzuoli (Naples), the Academy of Customs Officers (Bergamo), the Naval Military Academy (Livorno), the Army Academy (Modena). The State Police avail themselves of the Higher Institute for the Police in Rome. The Penitentiary Police Force are trained at the Higher Institute for Penitentiary Studies (Rome), the state Foresters' Corps take advantage of the School for non-commissioned cadet officers and foresters. Admission is always by school leaving qualification and public competition.

### **Regional postsecondary professional education and training (Formazione Professionale Regionale)**

Non-university higher education offers other training opportunities that are devised for the the new professional profiles required by the production system and for the further specialisation of those already existing. Such postsecondary opportunities build up the channel known as "regional professional education and training" (FPR), since it falls under the responsibility of the Regions. FPR programmes may be jointly financed by national and EU resources; in fact, they may be established with the support of the European Social Fund, of the Italian Ministry of Labour and of the Regions themselves.