



Education and Culture DG



**Structures of education,  
vocational training and  
adult education systems in Europe**

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European Commission



# **STRUCTURES OF EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN EUROPE**

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## **ITALY**

**2007/08**

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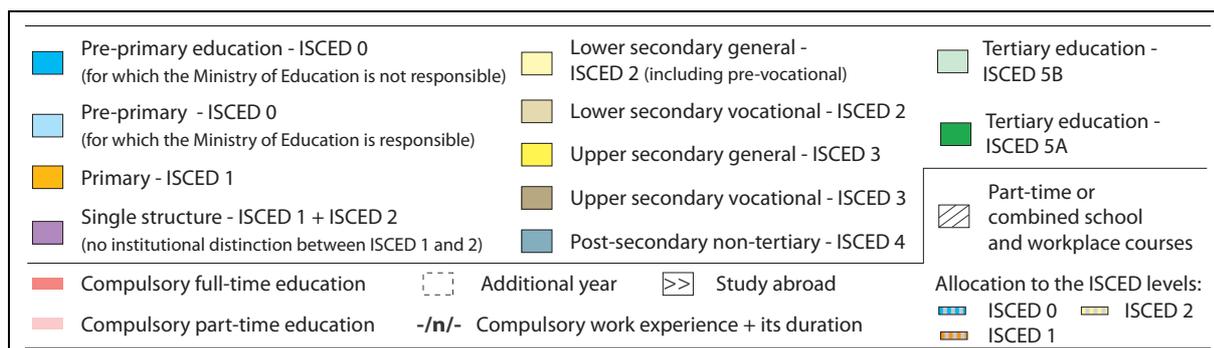
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## ORGANISATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN ITALY, 2007/08



Source: Eurydice.



## 1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

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### 1.1 Background

As of the latest census carried out on 31 December 2006, the population of Italy was 58 131 287. The country covers an area of 301 328 square kilometres.

Italy is a Parliamentary Republic headed by a President and a Parliament consisting of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, which exercise legislative power. Executive power is in the hands of the Government.

For administrative purposes, Italy is divided into 20 autonomous territorial areas, known as Regions. Each of these has its own legislative, administrative and financial powers (legislative powers are conferred on the Regional Council, while the Regional Commission is the executive body). The regions are divided into provinces, each of which consists of a number of municipalities, each with their own main town or provincial capital. At both provincial and municipal levels, administration is in the hands of elected councils.

Italian is the official language, although in some areas (Valle d'Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia) the use of the local languages is officially authorised for official documents and for education. These areas have a special form of autonomy and are known as 'Special-Status Regions'.

The most widespread religion in Italy is Roman Catholicism although it is not a State religion.

### 1.2 The education system: principles and legislation

The basic principles relating to education, laid down in the Italian Constitution of 1947, include: freedom of education; the State's duty to provide a network of educational establishments of every type and level, open to all without distinction; the right of private individuals to set up schools at no cost to the State; the right to education and basic vocational training for those unable to work and the disabled (Articles 34 and 33 of the Constitution). The application of the basic principles of the Constitution has inspired all subsequent legislation, which has insisted in particular on compulsory schooling, teacher training, allowing pupils to develop their full potential, integration of the disabled, vocational training and autonomy for educational establishments.

In Italy, supreme legislative power is exercised by the Parliament. However, in exceptional cases, the Government may also exercise legislative power, issuing legislative decrees and decree-laws, following delegation from the Parliament or in cases of necessity or emergency.

The Regions may legislate on certain matters specified by the Constitution. They may define the regulations which relate to national laws, and may delegate administrative authority to lesser local bodies.

Local administrations are responsible for all questions concerning the organisation of services within their area competence.

### 1.3 Allocation of responsibilities for the organisation and administration of the system of education and training

After the session of the new government in May 2006, in particular with Law No. 233 17 July 2006, the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) was reorganised into two ministries: The Ministry of Education (MPI) responsible for the education sector and the Ministry of University and Research (MiUR) responsible for higher education and scientific and technological research.

Law No. 59 of 15 March 1997 conferred on the regions, provinces and municipalities all the functions and administrative responsibilities exercised by any State body, apart from those linked to matters expressly reserved to the State.

The consequent delegated provisions have granted to schools from school year 2000/01 wide autonomy for teaching methods, organisation, research, experimentation and development. Autonomy of schools is exercised within a general framework set by the MPI and MiUR to guarantee the coherence of the education system.

At the higher education level, based on Law No. 370 of 19 October 1999 and the regulation No. 509 of 3 November 1999, all universities and university-level establishments are autonomous bodies, as regards both their administrative and financial management, as well as teaching methods and scientific research.

In implementation of the Labour Agreement of 1996, Law No. 196 of 1997 was issued, which launched an in depth process of renewal and re-qualification of the vocational training system. This process then came together in the Reform of clause V of the Constitution of 2001, which conferred exclusive legislative power over vocational training on the Regions.

Finally, as part of the drive to redesign the training provision, art. 69 of the Law No. 144 of 17 May 1999 created within the system of integrated advanced training (FIS) the system of higher technical education and training (IFTS) [see chapter 6, paragraph 6A.2]. The aim of this system is to widen the scope of the training courses intended for young people and adults (employed or unemployed).

### Ministry of Education – MPI

The general administration in the sector of academic education is entrusted to the MPI, while the higher education sector is entrusted to the MiUR:

- a) As regards school education, the new MPI carries out its own functions in the following areas: the general organisation of school education; school organisation and timetabling; the legal status of the staff; the definition of the criteria and parameters for the organisation of the school network; the determination of the financial resources to be borne by the State budget and school staffing; the assessment of the school system; the identification of the training objectives and standards in the field of higher education, etc.
- b) As regards higher education and research, the MiUR is vested with functions in the following areas: the scheduling of interventions on the university system and of the research bodies; orientation and coordination; general rules and financing; in both the university and non university sector (the system of high artistic and musical training – AFAM) monitoring and assessment; European harmonisation and the international integration of the university system and the AFAM system; rationalisation of the conditions for admission to university education and the AFAM sector; assessment of and support for research, etc.

As regards the teaching methods, there are no specific regulations. This also applies to the textbooks, which are chosen by the *Collegio dei docenti* (Teachers' Committee), the *Consigli di Interclasse* (Interclass Councils) and the *Consigli di Classe* (Class Councils).

### Administration at local level

The local administration is currently subdivided into two levels: provincial and municipal, with various responsibilities for school subjects and levels.

The Provincial School Office (former CSA – Administrative Services Centre) is designed simply as an internal wing of the *Uffici Scolastici Regionali* (Regional School Offices). It therefore has no operational autonomy of its own, since, as a provincial administrative body, it is merely the body responsible for public education at Provincial level. There are not MPI peripheral offices at commune level.

The organisation of the Ministry of Education, as defined by the Regulation No. 319 of 11 August 2003, provides for a 'peripheral' organisation made up of the regional school offices (general management level), which have replaced the regional school inspectorates, with the possibility of links, at provincial and sub-provincial level, with school consultancy and support services. These are autonomous centres of administrative responsibility exercising residual state functions, not transferred to the Regions and schools, as well as the functions involved in relationships with the Regions and local bodies, University and training agencies.

Also at regional level, there is the *Assessorato alla Pubblica Istruzione* (education department) of the regional administration. The powers of this department (which can have different titles in the different regions) cover, first and foremost, school assistance for pupils in all types of education establishments, including universities. For universities, the education department manages the system of assistance and the services for students through the *aziende per il diritto allo studio* (organisations for university education rights), which mainly take care of university residence, refectories, financial support, preventive medical care and sports and cultural activities. In addition, the education department has powers in the area of the planning of the integrated provision of vocational education and training; planning of the school network, based on the provincial plans; setting of the school calendar; contributions to non-State schools. It also has responsibilities relating to vocational training, with the exception of the functions and obligations which are reserved to the State (cf. art. 142 of Legislative Decree No. 112 of 31 March 1998) or which are devolved to the *Agenzia per la formazione e l'istruzione professionale* (Agency for vocational training and education), which was set up in 1998. The regional competences therefore include the initiatives geared towards ensuring initial integration, including higher education technical-vocational training, advanced training, vocational retraining, continuing training, etc. The reform of title V of the Constitution conferred on the Regions exclusive legislative power regarding vocational training.

In certain regions which have a special status, the regulations on the organisation of the *uffici scolastici* are different, as their Statutes provide for different forms of autonomy, which restrict the sphere of competence of the State administration.

### Schools and higher education establishments

In each school, the management and administration functions are vested in the *Consiglio di circolo* (for pre-school establishments and primary schools) or in the *Consiglio di istituto* (for secondary schools) and in the *Dirigente scolastico*.

The *Consiglio di circolo* and the *Consiglio di istituto* are responsible for questions relating to the budget and the organisation and planning of school activities. As part of this autonomy, each educational establishment draws up the *Piano dell'Offerta Formativa* (POF), which is the basic document that defines the school's cultural identity and plans for the future. This document must be consistent with the general and educational objectives of the various types of courses at national level. It must address the needs of the local cultural, social and economic context, taking into account the territorial planning of the training provision. This document is drawn up by the *Collegio dei docenti* on the basis of the general guidelines set out by the *Consiglio di circolo* or by the *Consiglio di istituto*, taking into account the proposals and opinions formulated by the bodies and associations of parents and, for upper secondary schools, by the students. This document is approved by the *Consiglio di circolo* or by the *Consiglio di istituto*, made public and handed over to the pupils and to the families at the time of enrolment.

The *Dirigente scolastico* handles the management of the school. He is its legal representative, and he is responsible for the management of the school's financial and material resources and for the results of the service. The *Dirigente* has independent powers of management, coordination and use of the resources, and to this end he has the power to promote actions aimed at guaranteeing the quality of the training processes.

In school year 2000/01, in the 'autonomous' schools the person in charge of administrative matters was given the title *Direttore dei servizi generali e amministrativi* (Director of general and administrative services). This Director has operational autonomy to oversee, within the framework of the guidelines issued by the *Dirigente* of the school and the set objectives, the administrative services and the general education services, to which end he coordinates the personnel concerned. He is responsible for directly issuing certificates which do not give discretionary assessments, he draws up plans and proposals aimed at improving the functioning of the services for which he is responsible and he manages the procedures set in place for the conclusion of agreements, contracts and conventions. He is *de jure* part of the Executive Committee, of the *Consiglio di circolo* or of the *Consiglio di istituto*.

The *Collegio dei docenti* (Teachers' Committee) formulates teaching and educational plans for each school year, and in particular the *Piano dell'Offerta Formativa*. This Committee periodically reviews the overall teaching activity to ensure that it conforms to the planned objectives, proposing improvements where necessary.

The *Consiglio di intersezione* (for pre-primary schools), the *Consiglio di interclasse* (for primary schools) and the *Consiglio di classe* (for secondary schools) formulate educational and teaching plans for the class, assess class teaching and discipline, organise innovation remedial and support initiatives, and carry out the periodic and final assessment of pupils.

Universities are legally represented by the Rector who is chosen by the professors from among their own ranks. The Rector carries out the decisions taken by the *Senato Accademico* (Academic Senate), a collegiate body with decision-making responsibilities as regards educational and scientific matters and questions of general interest, and by the *Consiglio di Amministrazione* (Administration Council), the board responsible for the administrative, economic and financial management of the university.

Each university is divided into a number of faculties which carry out administrative and scientific and educational activities. The *Consiglio di Facoltà* (Faculty Council) plans and coordinates teaching activities.

The Departments promote research activities. They have their own structures and enjoy financial and managerial autonomy. The *Consiglio di Dipartimento* (Department Council) takes decisions regarding research and teaching activities.

#### **1.4 Quality assessment**

There are essentially two procedures for evaluating education establishments: internal and external.

Internal evaluation of educational establishments is regulated by the Charter of Academic Services (DPCM/1995) and the Regulation on autonomy (DPR 275/1999) which encourages self-evaluation. The Charter of Academic Services identifies three quality areas (didactic, administrative, environmental), defines quality and standard factors for each area, stipulates self-evaluation procedures (revelation of elements through questionnaires for parents, staff and students).

Currently there is no external evaluation for the individual educational establishment, apart from the control on administration and accounts made by the Board of auditors. Many schools have kept to forms of external evaluation stipulated by the individual projects (ISO certification, Quality Prize).

On the national level, the education system is evaluated by INVALSI [national institute for the evaluation of the system of education] reformed with DL No. 286/2004 through the national evaluation system of the educational system of instruction and training. The learning levels reached by pupils are analysed through the INVALSI's annual findings

#### **1.5 Financing**

Although the Law No. 59 of 15 March 1997 grants to schools autonomy for teaching methodology, organisation, research, experimentation and development, it does not give schools financial autonomy. Therefore, as stipulated in art. 21(5) of the aforementioned law, the essential financial appropriation is made up of the allocation by the State of funds for administrative and didactic functioning, which is subdivided into an ordinary allocation and an equalising allocation. This appropriation is granted without any other commitment as to use other than the requirement to give priority to the education, training and guidance characteristic of each type and level of school.

The State directly provides the administrative and didactic financing of the school, while the Regions provide services and assistance for pupils (school meals, transport, textbooks in primary school, grants for less well-off pupils and social care). The Provinces and the Municipalities, for their part, can provide assistance and services by way of delegation from the Regions and can under their own competence provide schools with heating, lighting and telephones and handle the construction and maintenance of school buildings.

Enrolment and attendance in compulsory education are free of charge. For the pre-school level, even though it is not compulsory, tuition fees are not charged, while at upper secondary level pupils are expected to pay the enrolment fees, examination fees and contributions towards the functioning of laboratories/workshops.

The State finances universities through three funds which are part of the budget of the State and which are divided among the universities: the fund for the ordinary financing of universities (FFO), the fund for university buildings and major scientific equipment (FEU) and the fund for the planning of the development of the university system (FPS).

## 1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

The *Consiglio Superiore della Pubblica Istruzione* (Higher Council for Education) is a consultative body set up under Presidential Decree 233 of 30 June 1999 that assists the Minister in the planning and reviewing of school policy. It comprises 36 members, 15 of whom are elected by the elective component which represents the personnel of State schools on the local School Committees; 15 are appointed by the Minister from among personalities from the world of culture, art, school, university, work, professions, industry and associative life who ensure the widest cultural pluralism; 3 are elected by the German-language and Slovene-language schools and the schools of the Valle d'Aosta respectively; and 3 are appointed by the Minister to represent recognised non-State schools and schools which are dependent on the local authorities from among those designated by the respective associations.

The main advisory body for university education is the *Consiglio Universitario Nazionale* (CUN – National University Council), in which the representatives of the various categories of university staff and students participate. It issues opinions and proposals on the university programme, on the approval of university teaching rulings and on the recruitment of professors and researchers.

The *Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane* (CRUI – Standing Conference of the Rectors of Italian Universities) is the consultative body that promotes better organisation of teaching and scientific research. It expresses its own opinion on the draft decree prepared by the Minister concerning the setting for every three-year period of the objectives of the university system and the use of financial resources.

Students also have a participatory body: the *Consiglio Nazionale degli Studenti Universitari* (CNSU – National Council of University Students), which has powers of consultation and proposal in matters of general interest for the university. It is made up of 28 representatives of the students in *laurea* (L) and specialised *laurea* courses (LS), 1 representative of the students from specialisation schools and 1 representative of the students enrolled in research doctorate courses. All the members are elected, have a three-year mandate and cannot be re-elected.

## 1.7 Non-State education

Article 33 of the Italian Constitution states that legal bodies and private individuals may set up schools and educational establishments without contribution from the State (section 3). The subsequent paragraph 4 requires that ordinary law define the rights and obligations of non-State schools that request authorised status (*parità*) and to ensure that they have full freedom and that the educational opportunities of their pupils are equivalent to those of pupils attending State schools.

The Law No. 27 of 3 February 2006 stipulates that non-state schools be classified as two types of school, *scuole paritarie* and *scuole non paritarie*.

However, while waiting for this law to be implemented, the following three types of primary schools continue to exist:

- *scuole paritarie* (State-recognised schools): schools which on the basis of the Law No. 62 of 10 March 2000 have requested and obtained equal status and have become part of the national education system.
- *scuole private autorizzate* (authorised private schools): schools which are managed by citizens who have the upper secondary school diploma and established legal and moral credentials.

- *scuole parificate*: managed by legal persons or associations and recognised with agreements determining the amount of state contribution; these schools must adopt programmes and timetables stipulated by the state school; Only schools with equal status or authorised status can award academic qualifications that have legal value and only schools with equal status can be examination centres, including for candidates from private schools. Non-state recognised schools cannot issue study qualifications with legal value, whether intermediate or final.

The Law No. 27 of 3 February 2006 stipulated that non-state schools be classed in the two categories of *scuole paritarie* and *scuole non paritarie*.

However, while waiting for this law to be implemented, non-state secondary schools will continue to be divided into:

- *scuole paritarie*: schools which have requested and have obtained equal status; they receive the same legal treatment as State schools
- schools which are merely private: schools which have not requested and have not obtained equal status or legal recognition
- (on a transitional basis) legally recognised schools: schools which have been granted equal status but have not requested and have not been changed to legal status schools.

As regards non-State higher education, there are three types of establishments:

- 1) Establishments that issue non-university higher-level qualifications for the exercise of highly specialised professions in the artistic field. These establishments are set up and managed by public administrations or by bodies with legal status. Provided they offer a curriculum which is equivalent to that of similar State schools or is considered to be of public interest, they can obtain legal recognition for the qualifications they issue.
- 2) Colleges that train linguistic mediators. These are higher education establishments for interpreters and translators which, under the terms of a Ministerial Decree (No. 38/10 of January 2002), have been granted the status of Higher Education Establishments for Linguistic mediators (SSMLs). SSML courses last three years, after which time successful candidates receive *laurea* diplomas (L) issued by the universities at the end of the Class in Degrees in Linguistic Mediation Science.
- 3) Universities and other higher education establishments. Law No. 243 of 1991 recognised that Italy has for some time had non-State universities, which are referred to as legally recognised or private. These are set up by private individuals (who have provided the funding necessary for their functioning) or by local bodies, associations or foundations, which provide the necessary resources. In order to obtain legal recognition for their students' qualifications, private universities must agree to bring their curriculum into line with that of the State universities and submit to the supervision of the MIUR concerning the legitimacy of the administrative management and the organisation of the teaching programme.

The State may make contributions to legally recognised non-State universities and higher education establishments that have obtained the authorisation to issue legally valid qualifications. These contributions are based on the number of students enrolled, the number of *laurea* courses (graduate courses) being followed and the size of the staff (teaching and non-teaching), including the administration.

### State school

	Pre-primary school	Primary school	Lower secondary school
Pupils	979 301	2 545 491	1 668 184

Source: MPI, the State School; data summary school year 2005/2006, pp. IX-XXI.

**Non-state school – School year 2005/06**

	Pre-primary school	Primary school	Lower secondary school
Pupils	694 794	250 956	99 322

Source: MiUR, The School in figures 2006, Sistan.

## 2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION (*SCUOLA DELL'INFANZIA*)

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Pre-school education, although not compulsory, has since 1991 been the first stage of the education system. In 1968, with Law No. 44 that introduced *scuole materne statali* (State nursery schools), the State assumed total responsibility for pre-school education that up until that time had been organised at local level, mainly as a social service.

The system was radically reformed by Legislative Decree No. 59 of 2004, which was passed in implementation of delegated Law No. 53 of 2003 aimed at reforming the entire system of education and training. Under the terms of the reform, the three-year *scuola dell'infanzia* (the new name for nursery schools) is designed to foster 'the education and the emotional, psychomotor, cognitive, moral, religious and social development of children (...)' and to guarantee educational continuity with the childcare services and with schools. The *scuola materna* is fully included in the education system and is given the name nursery school.

Children can be enrolled by nursery schools if they have reached 3 years of age by 30 April of the relevant school year. It is therefore possible for children to start school at the age of 2½ years. However, this regulation was not immediately implemented insofar as it depends on the availability of the necessary financial resources, the ability of schools to accommodate these children, the operability of the municipal services and the introduction of new staffing categories. The Financial Law 2007 (Law No. 296 of 27 December 2006) annuls the standard making it possible to attend nursery school early. This remains possible temporarily for school year 2007/08 for children who turn three during the month of February 2008.

Families are free to choose the school they prefer. However, restrictions can be imposed based on the capacity of school buildings or the staff assigned to individual schools by the education authority.

Nursery schools are co-educational and may be located on the same premises as primary schools or on separate premises.

### 2.1 ORGANISATION

Responsibility for State pre-primary education establishments, for children aged from 3 to 6 years, lies with the Ministry of Education, with the administration of the majority of nursery schools being delegated to local education authorities. As the State nursery schools are unable to meet the demand, non-State schools (private and municipal) receive subsidies from the State, provided certain essential conditions are met. In addition to subsidies, there are sources of funding provided under the terms of regional laws. This funding is provided directly to schools or indirectly through pupils' families.

Nursery schools are under the administrative responsibility of a *Direzione didattica* (Education Directorate).

Within the confines of their organisational and didactic autonomy, schools are responsible for defining on the basis of educational plans a weekly and daily timetable that is compatible with the staffing resources and family demand. Within the overall weekly timetable, which can be considered as consisting of a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 48-49 hours for 35 weeks a year, there are model timetables which, for illustration purposes, can be of three basic types: minimum (mornings only – 25 hours), intermediate (40 hours) and maximum (48-49 hours).

From 1 September 2000, with the entry into force of autonomy, individual schools have considerable discretion as regards teaching methods and organisation, and nursery schools are therefore free to organise their school activities in a flexible manner.

The teaching activities begin on 1 September and end on 30 June. Art. 3, subparagraph 2, of Legislative Decree No. 59 of 2004 provides for a timetable calculated on an annual basis of between 875 and 1 700 hours, with holidays at Christmas and Easter and in summer.

Schools are divided into 3 sections, depending on the age of the children. Typically, a school has three sections catering for children of the same age (3, 4 and 5 years), but sections may also be composed of mixed age groups. In smaller locations, a school may have only one mixed-age section.

The sections are arranged according to the number of pupils enrolled, which is not determined in a rigid manner, but rather varies according to many different factors, such as the presence or otherwise of disabled pupils, the geo-morphological characteristics of the territory, the economic conditions and the level of social disadvantage and the availability of regional staffing. Generally speaking, in the case of nursery schools, the sections are arranged according to a maximum of 25 children and a minimum of 15, with two teachers per section. If there are any disabled pupils, the number of children cannot exceed 20.

## 2.2 THE CURRICULUM

Legislative Decree 59 of 2004 provides *National Guidelines* for the personalised plans of educational activities in nursery schools.

Revision of these national indications led to the issue, in September 2007 of the new *Indications for nursery school and the first education cycle*. From school year 2007/08 these will be subject to an experimentation phase on site lasting two years, before definitive approval.

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The new indications trace the lines and standards for reaching the training and learning objectives according to a working methodology of study and elaboration, accompanied by flexibility and step by step application. From 2009/10, the Indications for the curriculum will come definitively into force, accompanied by a proper Regulation.

The new indications for nursery school are intended to promote the development of identity, autonomy, competence and citizenship. Learning is through experience, exploration, relationships between children, with nature, objects, art, territory and its traditions through individual and collective reprocessing of experiences and through play activities.

Activities intended for children in nursery school are not subdivided by subject and are represented by the following aspects: self and others, the body in movement, languages, creativity, expression; discourses and words, knowledge of the world.

## 2.3 ASSESSMENT

At nursery school, the occasional and systematic observation of children and the documentation of their activities provide a means of gathering and assessing their needs, adjusting the range of educational services to the quality and quantity of their requirements and sharing them with their families. In fact, nursery schools are responsible for identifying educational processes that will allow all pupils to fulfil their potential.

Evaluation of development levels requires: an initial moment that defines starting capacity, moments within the didactic sequences which 'calibrate' the educational proposals and learning courses based on necessities, verification of the training requirements, the educational-didactic quality and the meaning of the academic experience.

## 2.4 TEACHERS

The Implementation Legislative Decree No. 227/2005 on initial and continual training of teachers, in conformity with the reform Law 53/2003, stipulates that each teacher should obtain a specialist teaching degree at any

academic level, as well as defining new recruitment procedures. Up to now, however, provisions for the concrete implementation of Decree No. 227 have not been issued.

Because of this, to work in the *scuola dell'infanzia*, teachers must still have the primary school teacher's certificate. The *laurea* course, which lasts four years and can be followed by persons who have any five-year secondary school diploma, is divided into two years of common training and two years specifically for primary school teaching. Access to degree courses is subject to passing an exam, since the number of places is programmed at a national level based on the requirements of the teaching personnel in the school. Once they have obtained the degree, to obtain a tenured post teachers must take a specific (competitive) examination for nursery, primary and secondary schools respectively.

Following appointment on the basis of an indefinite contract, the teachers must complete a trial period which coincides with the training year. During this year institute activities are planned with the support of a teacher tutor and training activities to elaborate aspects of teaching professionalism such as didactic-methodological, physical-pedagogic, relationship and communications aspects. At the end of the school year, the teacher being tested has a report on his activities and training and teaching experiences, and discusses it with the Board for evaluation of teachers so that his indefinite contract employment can be confirmed. Following appointment on the basis of an indefinite contract, teachers must complete a trial period. During service teacher training is considered as a right of teaching staff since it works toward the full realisation and development of his own personality. Each year a ministerial directive decides the objectives for preparing the updating and training plan of activities, deliberated by the schools and organised by courses set up by the schools, the MPI, universities, public bodies, associations, etc. Course methodologies are conducted by classroom lessons, research-activity and e-learning.

Teachers in the *scuola dell'infanzia* are not specialised in a particular discipline. They can work full-time or part-time, and are public employees with a civil law contract.

## 2.5 STATISTICS

### School year 2005/06 – State schools

Number of pupils per teacher	11.60
Number of pupils per section	23.5

Pupils	979 301
Teachers	84 130
Schools	13 614
Sections	41 927

Source: MPI – State School: summary of data school year 2005/06, pp. IX XXI.

### 3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION/TRAINING

The Law No. 53 of 28 March 2003 aimed at reforming the system of education and training, superseding the previous Law No. 9 of 20 January 1999 which provided for compulsory schooling for 10 years (until the age of 15 years) and redefined and broadened the concept of compulsory schooling and compulsory training, introducing the right-duty of education and training for at least 12 years from the age of 6 years. The right-duty is fulfilled within the education system or until the pupil obtains a qualification within the vocational education and training system by the age of 18 years. Following the political elections of April 2006, the new Government stipulated, with Law No. 296 of 27 December 2006 (Financial Law 2007), raising compulsory education to ten years, starting from the school year 2007/08, and to 16 years for accessing the world of work. The regulation adopted (Decree 22 August 2007) based on this law provides the standards for fulfilling the education obligation.

[The duration of compulsory schooling has been defined for school year 2005/06 whereby pupils must stay at school until the age of 16 years (see diagram).]

Reform law 53 of 2003 provides that *scuola elementare* (primary school) will henceforth be referred to as *scuola primaria* and that *scuola media* (lower secondary school) will be referred to *scuola secondaria di primo grado* (first-level secondary school) and that the two levels of education form one single cycle (first cycle of the education system). At the same time, the *licenza elementare* examination was abolished, while the *licenza media* examination was replaced by the State examination taken by pupils at the end of the first cycle.

#### 3A Primary education

Primary education was completely reformed with Legislative Decree No. 59 of 19 February 2004, which was passed in implementation of delegated Law No. 53 of 28 March 2003 aimed at reforming the entire system of education and training.

Based on the new organisation, the first cycle of education, which lasts a total of 8 years, consists of primary school and the first cycle of secondary school which are the first segment in which the right-duty to education and training is implemented.

Primary school lasts 5 years. It consists of a first year that serves as a transition from nursery school and two successive periods of two years. Children can be enrolled for the first year of primary school if they have reached the age of 6 years by 31 August of the relevant school year.

Children can also be enrolled for the first year if they have reached the age of 6 years by 30 April of the relevant school year. Early enrolment is an allowance made to families designed to meet the need to give them a decisive role to play in their children's academic career.

Primary education is provided at legally recognised State and non-State schools.

Enrolment and (compulsory) attendance are free of charge at State, equal status or *parificata* (authorised) schools. The municipality provides all pupils with textbooks free of charge. Transport and school meal services are always managed by the municipality, but the families are requested to make contributions, except for some exemptions.

##### 3A.1 Organisation of schools

In general, pupils are divided into classes according to age. In smaller schools, in isolated locations, there are still pluri-classes, that is classes with children of different ages grouped into one class from an administrative point of view. This phenomenon only affects a limited number of pupils.

Classes normally have a maximum of 25-27 pupils (20 if there are pupils with special educational needs) and a minimum of 10, while *pluriclassi* (mixed-level classes) have a maximum of 12 children and no fewer than 6.

The school year (lessons and assessments personnel updating activities) starts on 1 September and ends on 30 June.

Legislative Decree No. 59 2004 stipulates the following possibilities for organising teaching time

- compulsory timetable 891 hours per year, corresponding to an average of 27 hours a week;
- compulsory timetable + timetable for facultative and optional activities (99 hours a year, corresponding to an average of three hours a week), for a total of 30 hours a week. The school plans these activities as part of the *Piano di Offerta Formativa* (POF) [training provision plan] based on the requirements of the families and vocational skills available among the teaching staff;
- compulsory timetable + timetable of facultative and optional activities + timetable of activities dedicated to the canteen and after the canteen (up to a maximum of 330 hours a year corresponding to an average of three hours a week) for a maximum total of 40 hours a week.

The task of organising the school timetable is left to the autonomous discretion of individual schools.

### 3A.2 The curriculum

Legislative Decree No. 59 of 2004, which was passed in implementation of the law aimed at reforming the national education system, superseded the programs that had been in force since 1985 with the National Guidelines for Personalised Study Plans appended to the decree itself.

At the beginning of 2007 a revision procedure of the above indications was launched. This led in September 2007 to the issue of the new *Indicazioni per il curriculum per la scuola dell'infanzia e per il primo ciclo dell'istruzione*. [indications for the curriculum for nursery school and the first education cycle]. The school year 2007/08 stipulates an experimentation phase in this area to last two years, before the definitive approval (see paragraph 2.2).

The disciplines for primary school are: Italian, English, history, geography, mathematics, science, technology and information technology, music, art, physical education and the Catholic religion. One innovative element is the introduction across the board of English courses and basic courses in technology and information technology.

The decree does not specify the number of hours to be devoted to the teaching of the disciplines or of the education courses.

Schools have autonomy as regards the choice of teaching materials and textbooks.

The new Indications for the curriculum for nursery school and the first instruction cycle stipulate that the individual disciplines be considered specifically even if proposals within the three discipline areas: linguistic-artistic-expressive, historical-geographical; mathematical-scientific-technological. The importance of a non-fragmented discipline teaching is underlined, but one which can accept the interconnections between the different types of knowledge and launch the students towards a unified vision of knowledge. Interdisciplined approach and collegial work between teachers of different disciplines is favoured.

### 3A.3 Assessment/Certification

In primary schools, the level of learning and the behaviour of pupils are assessed periodically and every year by the teachers who are responsible for the educational and didactic activities, and they are also responsible for assessing the two-year periods for the purpose of transition to the next period and the certification of the skills they have acquired.

Reform Law 53/2003 abolished the *licenza elementare* examination whereby, based on the new organisation of the education system, the primary school is part of the first cycle of education, and the Italian Constitution (art. 33) lays down only one examination at the end of a school cycle. Therefore, the transition from primary

school to lower secondary school is the result of a straightforward final assessment at the end of the second two-year period of primary education. During the two-year periods, any decision not to admit a pupil to the next class must be taken by teachers unanimously and for exceptional reasons that must be explained.

The reform introduced the *individual skills portfolio*. This document records the academic progress of each pupil from the point of view of the attainment of the educational targets specified by the Personalised Study Plans and in terms of their behaviour. The document in question made up of one part dedicated to the evaluation and compiled on the basis of ministerial indications, and another to orientation, which includes materials produced by the pupil and observations of his teachers and parents.

The portfolio of the individual competences, provided by Legislative Decree 59/2004 has not been completely implemented, in particular a ministerial note (31 August 2006) stipulates that the portfolio not be understood as an evaluation instrument, but as a form of documentation of training processes under the school's autonomy. Adopting the portfolio would have educative and didactic value, and would support the pupils' learning processes. It does not have a public function of certification and evaluation. The note underlines the need to respect privacy recommendations.

### 3A.4 Teachers

The initial training of primary school teachers will be part of the *laurea* course in primary school teaching. The *laurea* is the qualification that allows the holder to take part in *concorsi* (competitive examinations) for teaching posts at pre-primary and primary level.

Primary school teachers are recruited for full-time or part-time posts, with indefinite or fixed-term contracts. Teachers in officially recognised private schools must have the same qualifications as their counterparts in State schools.

Teachers are not required to follow in-service training, but in-service refresher courses are considered to be their right and their duty (see paragraph 2.4 for further information).

### 3A.5 Statistics

School year 2005/06

State Schools	
Number of pupils per teacher:	10.3
Number of pupils per class:	18.5
Pupils	2 545 491
Teachers (fixed and non fixed time)	271 151
Schools	16 199
Classes	137 366

Source: MPI – The State School. Summary of the School Year 2005/06, p. IX.

## 3B Compulsory Secondary Education (*Scuola secondaria di I grado*)

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Based on the reform of the school system introduced with Law 53/2003 and the subsequent Legislative Decree 59/2004, the lower level of secondary education, which was previously referred to as *scuola media* (lower secondary school), will henceforth be referred to as *scuola secondaria di I grado* (secondary school level I). Pupils will move to this level of education at the end of primary school, the second segment in which the first cycle of education is provided. Together with primary school it also makes up the first segment in which the right-duty to education and training is implemented.

Secondary level I lasts a total of three years. It is divided into a first two-year period and a third year for guidance and the transition to the second cycle of education.

Pupils can be admitted to secondary education level I once they have completed primary school, on the basis of a positive assessment at the end of the second two year didactic period. The reform has in fact done away with the old *licenza elementare* examination (cf. 3A.3). Pupils between 11 and 14 years of age attend secondary school level I.

Secondary education level I is provided at public schools and at legally recognised private schools.

Enrolment and attendance are free of charge, but the families are required to pay for the textbooks.

### 3B.1 Organisation of schools

Pupils are divided into classes on the basis of age. No class may contain more than 25 pupils (no more than 20 if one or more of the children is disabled) and no fewer than 15 with exceptions for mountain locations, islands, etc.

The school year starts on 1 September and ends on 15 June (at different dates in each Region), with holidays at Christmas and Easter and in summer.

The compulsory annual timetable is 957 hours, subdivided into 33 weeks of teaching, which includes also the quota (yet to be specified) for the Regions, the quota for the school (currently 20 %) and the weekly hour for pupils who choose to follow the course in the Catholic religion. In addition to the compulsory weekly hours, there are 132 hours (approximately 4 hours a week) that are optional for families. The hours (maximum 231 a year) for school meals and after-school activities, are not included in this annual quota.

### 3B.2 The curriculum

The reform law and the subsequent implementing decree 59/2004 provided for arrangements at secondary level I and for primary school for the old study programs to be replaced by the Personalised Study Plans set out in the National Guidelines appended to the Decree itself.

At the start of 2007 the procedure for revising the above indications was launched, which led in September 2007 to issuing new *Indications for the curriculum for nursery school and the first education cycle*. The 2007/08 school year provides a two year experimentation phase on site before definitive approval (see paragraph 2.2).

The disciplines for which the specific learning targets are defined for secondary level I are: religion (optional), Italian, English, second Community language, history, geography, mathematics, science and technology, information technology, music, art and physical education.

The following table shows the distribution of the compulsory hours by discipline provided for by the National Guidelines for this level of education. It should also be borne in mind that families can opt for optional hours for extra activities or to revise curricular subjects.

Discipline	Min	Intermediate	Max
Italian History Geography	<b>307</b>	<b>313</b> (203) (60) (50)	<b>319</b>
Mathematics Science and Technology	<b>239</b>	<b>245</b> (127) (118)*	<b>251</b>
English Second language	<b>114</b>	<b>120</b> (54) (66)	<b>126</b>
Art	<b>54</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>66</b>
Music	<b>54</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>66</b>
Physical education	<b>54</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>66</b>
Religion	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>
		<b>891</b>	

\* With regard to this table, the compulsory annual timetable is increased by 66 hours of which 33 are dedicated to the English language for a total of 957 hours (Legislative Decree 226/2005).

The choice of textbooks and teaching materials is left to the discretion of teachers, in consultation with the *Consiglio di interclasse*. Pre-selected books are adopted officially by the *Collegio dei docenti*.

### 3B.3 Assessment/Certification

As regards assessment and certification at secondary education level I, Decree 59/2004 provides for the same arrangements as described above for primary schools (cf. 3A.3).

Furthermore, in order for the school year to be valid for the purpose of assessment, pupils must attend at least three quarters of the personalised annual timetable, which consists of a set number of compulsory hours and any optional hours.

Based on the results of the periodic assessment (the school year is divided into periods of three or four months), the schools provide the necessary arrangements for remedial work and the development of courses.

At the end of the third year of secondary level I, pupils take the Final State Examination for the first cycle of education, which has replaced the *licenza media* examination and which constitutes the entitlement for admission to the second cycle of education.

The Ministerial Circular No. 28 of 15 March 2007 stipulated the provisions for performing the conclusive state examination for the first cycle of education and to start certification of competences at the end of the first cycle of education. In fact up to the school year 2005/06 the exam consisted of written tests in Italian, mathematics and foreign language and a multi discipline interview on all subjects; from school year 2006/07, the exam is performed in compliance with this Ministerial Circular and as an experiment provided a further written text for a second EU language.

### 3B.4 Guidance

The third year of secondary school level I is devoted to courses that provide pupils with more in-depth teaching and guidance and assistance for the transition to the second cycle of education.

To be admitted to upper secondary level, pupils must have passed the State examination for the end of the first cycle of education.

It should be underlined that the standard changes made, such as raising the obligation (see chapter 3), the different function attributed to the portfolio (see paragraph A.3) and the publication of New National Guidelines

(see paragraph 2.2) have outlined a different situation. Pupils who finish the course of the first instruction cycle by passing a State exam are obliged to enrol in second grade secondary institutions or in experimental education and vocational training courses. From 2007/08, in fact, pupils are subject to another two compulsory years (up to the age of 16). However, based on the right-duty, they are subject to the obligation of attending education activities until the age of 18.

### 3B.5 Teachers

Teachers are specialised and teach a subject or a group of subjects, but they interact with other teachers through interdisciplinary arrangements. Each teacher is assigned to one or more classes. Generally speaking, teachers stay with the same classes throughout the course.

To teach in secondary schools it is necessary to have a degree as well as training in specialisation schools (SSIS), which will continue to work until Legislative Decree 227 of 2005 becomes operative. The Decree stipulates new means of training and recruitment for teachers of nursery and first and second cycle school.

### 3B.6 Statistics

#### State schools – School year 2005/06

Secondary education level I	
Number of pupils per teacher:	10.8
Number of pupils per class:	21.0
Pupils	1 730 031
Teachers	198 816
Schools	7 102
Classes	79 035

MPI, Bulletin on primary and secondary school grade I and grade II school year 2006/07 (July 2007), pp. 6 and 10.

MPI – The state school, summary of data school year 2005/06.

MPI (DG for Studies and Programming). School in Figures 2006, pp. 21 (pupil-teacher relationship) and 51 (pupil-class relationship).

#### 4. POST-COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION (*ISTRUZIONE SECONDARIA SUPERIORE*)

The Single Text of 1994 (Legislative Decree 297/1994) incorporates many of the legislative provisions that have been passed in the field of education, but it has undergone significant changes in the wake of the granting of autonomy to schools from school year 2000/01 (cf. Ministerial Decree 234 of 26 June 2000) and the subsequent provisions including in particular reform Law No. 53 of 28 March 2003 and its implementing decrees: DL No. 59 of 19 February 2004 that lays down the general regulations for primary schools and the first cycle of education, the legislative decree No. 76 of 15 April 2005, which introduces the right-duty with regard to education and training up to the age of 18 years, and legislative decree No. 226 of 17 October 2005 that introduces the regulations for the second cycle of the system of education and training.

Since the abovementioned reform of education (Law 53 of 28 March 2003), upper secondary education has been the second cycle of education. This cycle encompasses the *liceo* (artistic, classic, economic, linguistic, musical, scientific, technological, human sciences) of State competence and the vocational education and training system of Regional competence.

In the initial phase (2006) of application of the current legislation, various laws have been approved which apply to the system delineated by L53/2003 and Legislative Decree 226/2005. In particular L40/2007 stipulated that the second cycle of education is comprised of the upper secondary education system to which the *liceos*, technical institutes, vocational institutes and art institutes, the instruction and vocational training system belong.

The legislative decree No. 226 of 17 October 2005 implementing the reform of the second cycle has been 'frozen' and then suspended by Ministerial Decree 31 May 2006 and is waiting for amendments.

Implementation of the reform of the orders of the second cycle was postponed initially to the school year 2008/09. However, the Law No. 40 of 2 April 2007 confirmed that technical and vocational establishments would be permanently present in the education system, replacing the economic *liceo* and technological *liceo* stipulated by the Law 53 and the above decree No. 226. Based on the same law, the launch of the reform is postponed to school year 2009/10. Therefore the establishments for second grade secondary education and education and vocational training continue to function according to the old order (D. Lgs 297/1994) in expectation of the implementation regulations of Law 53/2003 coming into force.

Further, from the school year 2007/08 based on the financial year 2007, the first two years of upper secondary school become compulsory, apart from the possibility of fulfilling the obligation in the three year experimental vocational training and instruction courses that are based on the 2004 State-Region agreement. The financial law increases compulsory education to ten years, making 16 the age to begin work. At the end of first grade secondary school a student, starting from school year 2007/08 is subject to a further two years' obligation (see chap. 3) and two years' right-duty. The right-duty should have been completely implemented with the launch of the second cycle, but in the absence of this Art. 68 of L. 144/1999 continues to apply. This stipulates the obligation to attend educational activity until the eighteenth year of age (compulsory schooling).

In expectation of the Revision of Decree 226/2005, and the launch of the reform of the second cycle, the schools belonging to the general type of upper secondary education are:

- classical *liceo*;
- scientific *liceo*;
- artistic *liceo*;
- social-psycho-pedagogical *liceo*;

schools forming part of the vocational type secondary education are:

- technical establishments;
- vocational establishments;
- art establishments.

The language *liceo* is to be added to these establishments. This works formally in some state recognised schools, while it has been introduced experimentally into state schools (Brocca Project CM No. 27/1991).

These types of upper secondary schools cater for pupils aged between 13 and a half and 19 years.

The classes are generally composed on the basis of age and are co-educational. Generally speaking, in upper secondary schools the first year classes should have no fewer than 25 pupils and no more than 28. As a rule, in later years there cannot be fewer than 20 pupils. These figures can change because of the need to comply with the staffing requirements set by the Regional Education Office.

In second grade secondary school the timetables are very different according to the number of disciplines stipulated by the study courses of different directions and the teaching timetable reserved for them. There are 25 hours a week of the first class of scientific *liceo* to 36-38 hours of many technical institutes, 40 hours of many vocational institutes, to 43-44 hours of classes in third and fourth year artistic *liceo*.

In order to gain access to upper secondary schools, pupils must have the leaving certificate for secondary education level I.

All upper secondary schools charge tuition fees but, in accordance with the constitutional 'right to study', pupils in State schools may be exempt from fees (or receive financial support) on the basis of family income and their results at the end of the year. Generally speaking, pupils pay for their textbooks.

#### **4A Mainstream upper secondary schools (*Liceo classico and Liceo scientifico*), *Liceo artistico and Liceo socio-psico-pedagogico*)**

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The general aim of *Liceo education* is to prepare pupils for university and other forms of higher education.

##### **4A.1 Organisation of schools**

The classical and scientific *Liceo* have a unified structure (lasting five years) still split into two and three year sections.

In the classical *Liceo*, the teaching is predominantly classical and humanistic.

The scientific *Liceo* places the emphasis on scientific training, particularly during the last three years.

The school year begins in September (at different dates depending on the Region) and ends in mid-June, covering at least 200 teaching days a year, with the exception of the final State examination which continues into July. There are holidays in summer and at Christmas and Easter.

Now that schools are autonomous, each establishment is free to organise its weekly timetable to cover 5 or 6 days, and it can vary the number of lessons.

The school year may be divided into periods of three or four months, depending on the decision of the Teachers' Committee.

Teachers are free to choose their textbooks and teaching materials after consulting the Class Council. The books they select are officially approved by the Teachers' Committee.

## 4A.2 The curriculum

In the classical *Liceo*, the standard timetable is as follows:

SUBJECT	<i>Ginnasio</i>		Classical <i>Liceo</i>		
	IV	V	I	II	III
Italian language and literature	5	5	4	4	4
Latin language and literature	5	5	4	4	4
Greek language and literature	4	4	3	3	3
Foreign language and literature	4	4	--	--	--
History	2	2	3	3	3
Geography	2	2	--	--	--
Philosophy	--	--	3	3	3
Natural science, chemistry and geography	--	--	4	3	2
Mathematics	2	2	3	2	2
Physics	--	--	--	2	3
Art history	--	--	1	1	2
Religion	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2
	27	27	28	28	29

Religious education is optional.

At the scientific *Liceo*, the weekly timetable is as follows:

SUBJECT	Scientific <i>Liceo</i>				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Italian language and literature	4	4	4	3	4
Latin language and literature	4	5	4	4	3
Foreign language and literature	3	4	3	3	4
History	3	2	2	2	3
Geography	2	--	--	--	--
Philosophy	--	--	2	3	3
Natural science, chemistry and geography	--	2	3	3	2
Physics	--	--	2	3	3
Mathematics	5	4	3	3	3
Design	1	3	2	2	2
Religion	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2
	25	27	28	29	30

Religious education is optional.

The artistic liceo offers pupils specialised art teaching, in particular in painting, sculpture, scenography and architecture.

The course lasts four years and is split into two sections: one for the study of figurative arts and scenography and the other for the study of architecture. The first two-year cycle is identical for both sections, in the second cycle the number of hours of art subjects is different. The first section permits access to the Fine Arts Academy, the second to the faculty of architecture. Whenever pupils follow the fifth integrated year they obtain the fine arts certificate for upper secondary artistic instruction, which permits access to all the university faculties.

Using the experimentation tool, nearly all the artistic *licei* have a five-year study course at the end of which it is possible to enrol in university without having to attend the integrated course.

In the artistic *liceo*, the compulsory disciplines are divided into general and artistic subjects according to the following timetable:

	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year	
			I Sec.	II Sec.	III Sec.	II Sec.
<b>ARTISTIC SUBJECTS</b>						
Figurative drawing	10	6	8	4	8	4
Decorative drawing	10	6	8	4	8	4
Figurative modelling	--	4	4		4	
Decorative modelling	--	4	4		4	
Geometrical drawing	4	3	--		--	
Perspective	--	--	4		4	
Elem. of architecture	--	2	4		4	
Anatomy	--	--	2		2	
	24	25	34	26	34	26
<b>CULTURAL SUBJECTS</b>						
Literature and history	3	3	4		4	
Art history	2	2	2		3	
Mathematics and physics	4	4	--	4	--	5
Natural sciences, chemistry and geography	3	3	--	2	--	--
Religion	1	1	1		1	
Physical education	2	2	2		2	
	15	15	9	15	10	15

The hour of religion is optional.

The socio-psycho-pedagogic *liceo* is an experiment of the defunct Masters' establishments, since there is no regulated course for this sort of *liceo*. The 'Brocca Project' involves 34 hours per week for all five classes and the following disciplines: religion or alternative activities (optional), Italian, history, Latin, foreign language, mathematics, geography, earth sciences, music, law and economics, art history, philosophy, pedagogy, sociology, social legislation, socio-pedagogic research methodology, physics, chemistry, biology, physical education.

Within the same class, the subjects are taught to all at the same level.

From 1998, under article 21 of Law No. 59 of 1997, which introduced school autonomy, schools may – within the limits of the national learning objectives to be attained by means of autonomous training programmes which replace the national programmes – set their own curriculum in such a way that they include the basic subjects that must be included in the curriculum or extra optional subjects.

Teachers are free to choose the content and methods that are best suited to the class and to individual pupils, provided they remain within the individually and jointly established curricula.

Even in the absence of an organic reform, the curricula of upper secondary school, some of which go back to 1923, have over the years been modified, in fact schools use the experiment not just to introduce new study directions, but also to introduce other subjects (IT, history of art in the two year period and foreign language in the three years of *liceo classico*, etc.) or to modify the hours for some subjects.

Methodological guidelines at this level of education are rather thin on the ground. There have only been a few calls for interdisciplinary arrangements and for joint planning within the *Collegio dei docenti* (Teachers' Committee) and the *Consiglio di Classe* (Class Council) in ministerial instructions that are issued every year, especially when proposals are made for specific educational programs, such as health education and respect for the environment.

The National Indications appended to the Legislative Decree No. 226 2005 redesigned how the curricula of all the courses are set up, but they have not come into force and the decree in question is expected to be revised.

### **4A.3 Assessment/certification**

Assessment is made on a quarterly (rarely) or (more frequently) a three monthly basis depending on the choice of the Teachers' Committee of each school based on the results obtained by the students during the year in the written and oral tests in all the subjects, and based on the part he or she has taken in the lessons. At the end of the school year, a final assessment of the commitment and progress of each pupil throughout the school year is given. This is expressed by a mark out of 10, positive from 6 to 10 and negative from 0 to 5.

Each school has autonomous powers to define how pupils must make up for 'training debits' accumulated over the school year. The Class Council may even take the decision to bar the pupil from progressing to the next class if he or she has accumulated a large number of training debits (failures).

The evaluation draws on elements from the collegial work carried out by the teachers in the teachers' Colleges and in the Class Councils.

At the end of second grade secondary school, pupils take the State examination for the upper secondary school leaving certificate.

Law No. 425/1997 approved new standards which completely modified the procedures for performing the exams; this law was in turn partially amended by Law No. 1 of 11 January 2007. Further, performing the State examination is regulated by DPR No. 323/1998 and MO 15 March 2007.

All pupils who have attended the final year can take this examination. Generally speaking, practically all pupils take it. The examination consists of two written tests set by the Ministry of Education, a third test set by an examination board set up by the school and an oral examination – based on Law No. 1/2007 the composition of the adjudicating boards was amended: in the place of internal teachers and an external president stipulated by Law 425/1997, there are now three internal teachers of the class and three external ones as well as the external president. The final assessment is expressed in the form of a percentage, with the candidate needing 60 % to pass. The pupils' general results for each of their last three years of upper secondary education give them a credit of up to 20 points. Law 1/2007 raised this limit to 25 points, but this will be applied only from school year 2009/10 with the launch of the reform of the second cycle. Successful candidates receive a diploma and a certificate. The certificate mentions the branch and duration of their studies, the subjects and courses included in the curriculum in addition to the total duration of the course, the grade awarded in written tests and in the oral examination, along with their school credits and training credits. The training credits are awarded based on the pupil's experience outside of school in different aspects of social life. The Class Council sets the criteria for the assessment of these credits.

Diplomas and certificates are written in four Community languages so that they can be understood in the different countries of the EU.

Finally, for the appraisal of the education system the law has set up within the National Institute for the Assessment of the Education System a National Observatory with responsibility for monitoring, verifying and assessing the new arrangements for State examinations and to provide permanent support for the examining boards for the arrangements for the third written test.

#### 4A.4 Guidance

There are various guidance activities, mostly of an informative nature, during the final two years of higher secondary school.

There are many initiatives in connection with the branch of study in which they are organised, the socioeconomic and cultural situation of the territory in which the school operates, the funds and infrastructure that it can obtain not only from the Ministry of Education but also from companies, associations of industrialists, small businesses, professionals, local banks, etc.

The guidance activities are carried out according to the most diverse arrangements that vary from school to school and from year to year. The reason for this is that this task has not been institutionally assigned to a specific body.

#### 4B Upper secondary schools of vocationally type (art institutes, technical institutes, vocational institutes)

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The vocational sector of upper secondary school teaching in the course of the last decades has undergone very profound changes. In particular technical institutions, but also vocational institutions which have lost their highly vocational character. Their programmes have been gradually changed in favour of a highly cultural content and to the detriment of time dedicated to practical activities. This process attenuated what used to be the clear difference between general upper secondary instruction and vocational type instruction.

The main purpose of technical education is to give pupils between 13 and a half and 19 years of age specific theoretical and practical preparation for skilled tasks (vocational education) and preparation for work and artistic production (artistic education) in various sectors, with particular attention to the requirements of the local labour market.

This type of training is given in technical, vocational colleges and the Art Institutes.

##### 4B.1 Organisation of schools

There are different types of *Istituti Tecnici* (technical colleges): agricultural, commercial, touristic, surveying, industrial, company experts and correspondents in foreign languages, naval, aeronautic and social activities. Each offers several branches and specialisations. The courses are divided into two cycles (one of two years and one of three years). However, there are no examinations between these two cycles and the programmes are the same in the two-year period and differ in the three year period with regard to specialisations.

The lessons cover five or six days a week. Their number varies according to the branch chosen, but there are generally 32 to 38 a week.

*Istituti professionali* (vocational colleges) cover three-year sectors and directions: agriculture, industry and crafts, services, auxiliary sanitary and the special sector. Each sector offers a number of branches which correspond to the most important areas of professional life. Each branch leads to professional qualifications in a specialised area as a tradesman (after three years) or a technician (after the last two years).

These colleges may organise evening courses.

Vocational colleges offer *triennio di qualifica* (three-year courses) for pupils aged between 13 and a half and 17, after which there is a *biennio post-qualifica* (two-year cycle), for pupils aged between 18 and 19 which leads to the upper secondary education diploma and provides access to university.

The number of lessons, covering five or six days a week, varies according to the branch chosen.

Now that schools are autonomous, they may vary the number of lessons according to the way they organise their teaching and to suit local requirements.

The financial law 2007 as of school year 2007/08 reduced the weekly hours of lessons. DM No. 41/2007 fixed the weekly number of lessons to 36 hours (common area hours, and direction area hours) in expectation of a complete reordering of the second cycle.

The Arts institute prepares pupils for work and artistic production, according to the local industries and materials. There are about 40 regulated directions and these regard many sectors: printing and engraving, textiles and decorations, jewellery, metals, furniture, ceramics, painting, glass, set design, etc.

The courses last three years on obtaining the Master of Art Diploma. After the three years, it is possible to attend an experimental two-year period which permits pupils to obtain the upper secondary instruction diploma in applied art, and in this way to enter university. There are also many five-year course experiments with a common two-year period and a specialised three-year period.

The lesson hours divided into five or six days a week vary according to the direction which has been chosen. Since academic establishments are autonomous, each establishment can organise the weekly timetable over five or six days and may vary the lesson hour; generally the minimum weekly timetable is 36 hours, sometimes this is raised to 44 hours.

Lessons start in September with dates differentiated in the individual Regions and are concluded half way through June, with a minimum of 200 days of lessons a year, except for the final State exam for the experimental five year courses, which also partly takes place in July. There are also holiday periods in summer, Christmas and Easter.

In the Art institute as well, subjects are divided into general compulsory subjects (general and artistic) and artistic disciplines, which are optional based on the selected direction.

The compulsory disciplines are:

- general subjects: Italian, history, art history, mathematics, physics, natural sciences, chemistry and geography;
- arts subjects: surveying and architectonic drawing, life drawing and plastic arts.

The hour of religion or alternative activity is optional.

These basic materials, common to all directions, are integrated by different laboratories and practical activities according to the chosen artistic direction.

The lesson hours divided into five or six days a week vary according to the direction which has been chosen.

With didactic autonomy, the schools will have the right to determine their curricula within the context of the national learning objectives to be reached with autonomous training courses and not with national programmes. This will be in such a way as to include the fundamental disciplines, those which must include the curriculum or the added optional ones.

The methods are chosen by individual teachers with regard to individual and collegial programming and in these schools they are mainly based on laboratory activities.

## **4B.2 The curriculum**

During the initial two-year cycle, the curriculum of the technical colleges includes the following subjects, which are common to all specialisations: Italian, history, chemistry, geography, foreign language, mathematics, physics, natural sciences, biology, law and economics, physical education and religious education or alternative subject (optional).

The only difference concerns specific subjects corresponding to the branch chosen and the practical exercises belonging to each branch.

During the second cycle, which lasts three years, the general subjects are common to all specialisations. The other subjects vary according to the branch chosen. A considerable part of the curriculum is devoted to practical exercises in specialised fields.

Both cycles also include project time devoted to an interdisciplinary activity. This takes up no more than 10 % of the time allocated by the timetable to the various subjects involved.

Within the same class, the subjects are taught to all at the same level.

In the curriculum of vocational colleges, during the first *triennio di qualifica* (three-year cycle) teaching includes subjects that are common to all courses and different subjects depending on the branch chosen.

The subjects that are common to all sections take up a total of 22 hours a week during the initial two years and 12 to 15 hours in the third year. These are: Italian, history, foreign language, law and economics, mathematics and IT, earth sciences and biology, physical education and religious education (optional). There are also specific subjects for each specialisation, with their respective technologies, covering 14 hours a week during the first two years and 21 to 24 in the third year. Four hours are also available for autonomous work (in-depth study) for guidance activities and for extra coaching and remedial work. Management of the in depth area is entrusted to the autonomous programming of each institute, with a view to attaining the identified general objectives; and the teachers' board indicates the activities of the in depth area, considering also any possible working connections with the territorial realities to accentuate the character of practical guidance in the professional sector.

After attaining the qualification and a positive outcome of attending the first three year period, the students can: access the work world, enrol in post qualification two year courses to obtain the upper secondary education diploma with a vocational direction; attend successive modules also carried out in the school in agreement with the Region to obtain a second and higher level of qualification.

Within the same class, the subjects are taught to all at the same level.

Since the schools are granted educational autonomy, they have been free to set the curriculum, subject to the constraints of the national learning objectives to be achieved by means of the autonomous training programmes which replace the national programmes. The curriculum must contain the basic disciplines which form the compulsory part of the curriculum and the additional (optional) subjects.

The teaching methods are adapted to the objectives specific to each specialised branch and to local economic and social requirements. An endeavour is made to encourage polyvalent professionalism, which will form the basis for any subsequent specialisation.

Practical activities must be provided to give students experience which will enable them to work with the production processes that are typical of the sector concerned.

### **4B.3 Assessment/Certification**

As regards the assessment criteria and the methods of assessment, the information given in para. 4A.3 also applies to technical and vocational colleges and for art colleges.

In particular, in vocational colleges pupils take the qualifying examination at the end of the three-year period. The corresponding diploma gives them direct access to the world of work, enrol in post qualification two year courses to obtain the upper secondary education diploma with a vocational direction; attend successive modules also carried out in the school in agreement with the Region to obtain a second and higher level of qualification.

#### 4B.4 Guidance

See 4A.4.

#### 4B.5 Teachers

See 3B.5.

#### 4B.6 Statistics

Enrolled in second grade secondary state schools for type of school, school year 2005/06

	Pupils attending	Classes
Classical <i>Liceo</i>	263 955	10 539
Scientific <i>Liceo</i>	548 415	21 422
	536 230	
<i>Istituto professionale</i>	883 244	26 301
<i>Istituto tecnico</i>	57 104	42 463
<i>Istituto d'arte</i>	40 590	2 992
<i>Liceo artistico</i>	192 043	1 809
	2 521 581	
Total	263 955	105 526

Source: Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, *La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati*, school year 2005/06.

School units, classes and teachers in second grade secondary school, school year 2005/06

Education level	School units	Classes	Fixed term and indefinite term teachers
II grade secondary school	5 039	116 387	274 523

Source: MPI – State school, data summary academic year. 2005/06.

## 5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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Initial Vocational Training (IVT) regards vocational training on a regional level starting from the end of the first and the second training cycle by accredited training agencies on the national territory. This is characterised by a direct contact with the working world, especially for the stage measures.

The three year vocational instruction and training courses in interaction and integration with the school leading to the regional qualification certificate or qualification diploma are part of initial training, as are one year or two year courses for disadvantaged young people, apprenticeship courses; second level courses or courses for young people with an upper secondary school diploma.

This section describes the characteristics of the above courses, including where possible, statistical data to take account of the various training realities from the quantitative viewpoint as well.

### 5.1 Organisation

The Italian Constitution stipulates that the State 'provides for the training and professional enhancement of workers' (art. 35) and assigns exclusive competence to the Regions for vocational education and training. The Regions also exercise these powers by delegating and transferring functions and tasks to the Provinces. The State nonetheless remains responsible for setting the essential minimum levels of provision.

Exclusive competence was assigned to the Regions very recently (constitutional law 3/2001), and the implementing regulations of the new framework for the allocation of powers have not yet been defined. Pending this, the vocational training system remains rooted in the previous legislation, which assigned to the Regions primary (but not exclusive) competence in this area, within the scope of guidelines defined at central level. Consequently, framework law 845/78, which introduces vocational, initial and continuing training into the same body of legislation, remains the reference for the system, given that at the present time all the regional implementing regulations are based on this law.

The framework law on vocational training assigns an important role to the social partners. They are identified as essential interlocutors for the Regions, who are to be consulted for the planning of training activities. In addition, the social partners are called upon to participate in the activities connected with the social monitoring of the initiatives. In the 1990s, the role of the social partners was further reinforced as joint decision-makers in the context of training and employment policies with the signing of trilateral agreements with the Government, which led to the most important provisions in recent years for the reform of the vocational training system.

In particular, in implementation of the 1996 Employment Pact, Law No.196/97 was enacted. This law began a radical shake-up of the vocational training system. This renovation is part of a wider context of reform of the public administration and decentralisation of powers and functions implemented under the terms of the Bassanini laws (Law 59/97, Decree 469/97 and Decree 112/98) and subsequently prompted the recent reform of Title V of the Constitution, which confers on the Regions exclusive legislative powers in matters of vocational training.

It will be remembered that the reform law No. 53/2003, repealed compulsory schooling until 15 and redefined compulsory training as right-duty of education and vocational training for at least 12 years and until a school leaving certificate or qualification before the age of 18 is obtained. With the repeal of the increased compulsory schooling age to 15, the moment for the young people to choose their studies is at the end of the third year lower secondary school. Because of the protocols of understanding between the Ministries of Education, Labour, Regions and Autonomous Provinces this is accompanied by the experimentation of the three year vocational training and instruction courses according to the Joint Conference Agreement 19 June 2003.

The innovations on the apprenticeship aspect for minors, introduced by the implementation decree No. 276/2003 of Law No. 30/2003 (Biagi Reform), provided that the regulation of the apprenticeship training profiles for completing the right-duty to instruction and training be passed to the Regions and Autonomous Regions, with

the agreement of the Ministries of Labour and Education, having consulted with the social partners. In the absence of a provincial/regional regulation on the subject, the decree stipulates that the previous national standard also remain in force to perform the external training of minor apprentices. This measure was amended when Law No. 296/2006 raised the work access age from 15 to 16 years.

This law (financial law 2007) then amended the education system, starting from the academic year 2007/08, by raising compulsory education for at least 10 years, after which the right-duty to instruction and training as endorsed by art. 13 c 8 of Law No. 40/2007 applies.

Finally the regulation dissolving the education in the Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 138/2007 is very significant. This endorses raising compulsory education to 10 years, to be carried out, as indicated in financial law No. 296/2006 in school, and at least until 2008/09, in the experimental instruction and training courses of the Agreement of 19 June 2003. In any case fulfilment of this obligation is aimed at 'obtaining an upper secondary school qualification, or a professional qualification lasting at least three years by the 18th year of age, whereby the right-duty as per decree No. 76/2005 is fulfilled.' The decree further presents attached the technical document on the key competences of the citizen already indicated in the European Recommendation. These represent the general learning objectives to be reached in the two year obligatory period apart from the type of courses, in order to provide each pupil with the indispensable instruments to exercise concretely the forms of active citizenship and exploit in full the possible learning opportunities throughout life, also in a context of social inclusion.

According to the different types of courses that make up the IVT segment the following are described:

- basic or first level training courses, aimed at young people who have concluded the first study cycle. This type of course is always more characterised, as we have seen, by forms of interaction/integration with professional instruction;
- second level training courses for young people with diplomas and qualifications.

Alongside these two types of full time training, training interventions for young people hired with an apprenticeship contract are also part of the initial vocational training system.

The basic or first level activities are intended to provide a qualification to young people who have finished the first cycle of study and want to fulfil the instruction obligation (14-16) in Vocational training, spending two years in this training segment. They then continue the third year of training to acquire a three-year qualification by the 18th year of age.

At regional level, however, there is a different range of training courses for young people according to the principle of right-duty. In addition to the three-year courses connected with the aforementioned Agreement, in many of the Regions there are still courses that last two years and in some cases only one year, to which pupils are often admitted after one or two years of school attendance, so that they complete the period of three years.

This system is designed to guarantee a smoother transition from vocational training to school and vice-versa, in order to promote integration of the systems and the reversibility of the choices made by the students.

As regards the three-year courses, the Regions, based on the Agreement of 19 June 2003, have organised a range of training courses according to two broad types:

- vocational training courses focusing mainly on the work of the training agencies and aimed at helping students obtain a vocational qualification certificate;
- education courses combined with vocational training modules focusing mainly on schools and aimed not only at helping students obtain the qualifications required by the academic regulations, but also at helping them obtain a vocational qualification certificate or recognition of their credits for the transition to vocational training. In some Regions integration is also regarded as a transition to two-year or one-year vocational training courses after following one or two years of education courses.

The range of total hours of vocational training in courses varies by Region from 900/1 200 to 3 600 hours in the three years according to the courses carried out in the training agencies. The hourly breakdown is as follows: basic and transverse competences (24-50 % of total hours), technical – professional competences (33-50 %), customisation (5-15 %) and stage (8 to 32 %). Relative to the courses included, carried out in school principally for school pupils, training activities are performed within the normal timetable of the institute with curricular flexibility (15 % of total hours), using any in depth hours of the professional institutes for a total generally not exceeding 310 hours annually.

The Regions continue to provide year and two-year courses to meet the requirements of particular users with differentiated needs, such as handicapped children.

In all courses, generally, the stage measure is fundamental for its personalised nature which is a feature of the vocational training system. The length of the stage (mainly of an orientating nature in the first years and applicative in subsequent ones) is determined by the individual Regions, also based on the qualification to be assigned.

The only entry requirement for basic activities is completion of the first cycle of school.

The second-level vocational training courses are designed for young people who meet the admission requirements, i.e. they have obtained the upper secondary school leaving certificate or the level I qualification. When the demand for places outstrips supply, admission often involves a selection process based on tests and interviews. Sometimes other specific requirements are set for those wishing to attend a course (for example a specific certificate of secondary education).

The second-level courses are divided into short one-year cycles (400-600 hours). They only rarely last two years and are characterised by considerable planning in terms of tailoring to the specific needs of the local production system. These are full-time courses at the end of which young people obtain a second-level qualification. One particularly important feature of these courses is the fact that trainees have experience of placements in industry.

The *apprendistato* (apprenticeship) is a mixed employment contract that enables young people to obtain a vocational qualification.

This institution was reformed by law 30/03 and the related legislative decree 276/03.

Three types of apprenticeships are provided:

- an apprenticeship based on the right-duty to education and training: young people who have reached 15 years of age can be enrolled for all the fields of activity. The contract lasts a maximum of three years and is aimed at helping students obtain a vocational qualification;
- a vocational apprenticeship: students aged between 18 and 29 years can be enrolled. Depending on the type of qualification to be obtained, the collective contracts define the duration of the contract which, however, cannot be less than two years or more than six years. There is also a minimum quota of 120 hours of formal worker training (internal and external);
- an apprenticeship enabling the student to obtain a diploma or for advanced training courses: to obtain a secondary certificate, a university degree, higher education qualifications or IFTS qualifications (*Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore* – higher technical education and training), students between 18 and 29 years of age can be enrolled for all fields of activity.

For all the different types of apprenticeships, a definition of the training profiles is requested of the Regions and the institutions involved (Ministries, social partners and universities, based on the type of apprenticeship). The student's Individual Training Plan must be appended to the employment contract. This document outlines the programme of training that the apprentice will follow throughout the contractual period. In addition, there must be a tutor with sufficient training and competence to monitor the young person's progress within the company.

While there has been a progressive implementation of professional apprenticeship, both regarding the definition of the implementation regulations by the Regions and Autonomous Provinces, and regarding the collective contracting, it should still be underlined that the professionalising contract is not yet available for all companies over the whole national territory.

The fulfil the right-duty to instruction and training, as already said, apprenticeship concerns minors from the age of 16, and is still not available for businesses and young people: the Regions and Autonomous Provinces do not have a regulation through an understanding with the Ministry of Education. Therefore the apprenticeship contract for minors is the one designed by the old Law No. 196/97 and relevant implementing decrees.

Finally, with regard to the apprenticeship for a diploma or for advanced training courses the Ministry of Labour has promoted and financed some experiments which have been launched and which as of now only concern some Italian regions. The training offer provided for 'high' apprenticeship experimentation at the moment regards 77 courses involving 650 apprentices.

## **5.2 Vocational/initial training establishments**

In Italy, initial vocational training, including external training for apprentices, is provided by vocational training agencies appointed by the Regions.

According to Law 845/78, the centres that intend to give training with public resources must meet the following requirements: they must have been set up for vocational training; they must have suitable structures and organisational capacity; they must not be profit-making; they must guarantee social monitoring of the activities; and they must apply to the personnel the national collective contract applicable to the category.

The centres that meet these requirements can apply to offer courses based on the curricular guidelines of the Regions and an appropriate analysis of the needs of the local production system. Following an assessment of the projects submitted, the Regions decide which to finance.

However, this procedure was modified by DM 166/01. Therefore, from 2003 all training agencies wishing to give courses with public resources must first be accredited.

To be accredited by the Regions, the individual operating offices of the training agencies must demonstrate that they meet the following requirements: adequate logistics structures and management capacities, economic situation, professional competence, levels of efficacy and efficiency in the activities carried out and relations with the social and production system of the territory.

The criteria and the minimum levels for accreditation of agencies have been determined at national level; the requirements and procedures have been defined by the Regions.

## **5.3 Admission requirements**

See 5.2.

## **5.4 Financing**

Level I and II courses are financed by the Regions through national funds distributed by the Ministry of Education (the latter only for level I). Moreover, they can be part-financed using the resources of the European Social Fund. These courses are part of the public system and are therefore free of charge for young people.

For apprenticeships, the training activities are financed out of the national resources which are allocated every year.

## 5.5 The curriculum

The training units don't refer to syllabuses established at national level. In order to implement the training intervention, they instead put together a teaching plan based on an analysis of the tasks carried out and the necessary skills required for the trade targeted by the intervention. It is now common for course projects to be structured according to modules that can be subsumed into three types of skills: basic, transversal and technical-vocational. In some cases, the Regions determine the percentage and the minimum quota of hours to devote to the different types of skills and to the placement.

A few Regions have stipulated minimum standards for skills, at least for certain trades.

Since the introduction of Law 196/97 and following Decree 174/2001, a start has been made on constructing a system of certification based on minimum national training standards.

In particular, for the basic or level I training minimum standards have been defined for the basic skills required for the three-year experimental courses (Agreement of 15 January 2004) as a common reference to enable use of the training at national level. They can be structured and coordinated at regional level. The standards refer to the following areas: a) languages; b) science; c) technology; d) history and socio-economics.

The Regions have further specified minimum professional technical competence standards, for some professional figures (State-Regional Agreement 5 October 2006), still relative to the above cited experimental courses (par. 5.1).

To make the work on the definition of the minimum standards operative the Joint Conference Agreement (28 October 2004 on certifications – see 5.6) has been signed.

At the moment, attached to the Regulation on the fulfilment of the instruction obligation, as per the already cited decree of the MPI [ministry of education] No. 139/207, the key competences for 14-16 year olds are present which absolve this obligation in the school or in the three-year vocational training. The document on the citizen's key competences while not substituting curricular programmes or detailed planning of single courses, still represents a guide for teaching-learning the basic competences. Bearing in mind the European recommendations, these involve the acquisition of the following key competences: communication in mother language; communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence; basic competences in science and technology, digital competence; learning to learn; civic and social competences, spirit of initiative and enterprise; awareness of cultural expression. The knowledge and competences for fulfilling the instruction obligation refer to four cultural axes (languages, mathematics, scientific-technological, historical and social). This knowledge is broken down into ability, capacity and knowledge with reference to the description system provided for adopting the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The training methodologies used in training interventions are the most varied: classroom lesson, simulations, role play, group discussions, visits to businesses, etc., in particular especially for young people attending the basic interventions, the use of active methodologies are recommended. Distance training in second level courses is being used more and more.

## 5.6 Assessment/Certification

Within the framework of the different training courses, it is becoming increasingly common for agencies to use course assessment instruments, for which a teacher or the training tutor is responsible.

The field of vocational training is also increasingly using portfolios as a means of systematic collection of data on the skills acquired by students through the work they submit, with documentation, analysis, interpretation and assessments. The skills portfolio provides a means of assessing not only the student's performance but also the learning processes, the strategies used by the centre and the progress achieved.

As regards the forms of certification used in the system of vocational training, as in Decree No. 174/01 they are designed to guarantee the transparency of the training courses and the recognition of the skills acquired by

individuals. Certification is aimed at ensuring the recognition of qualifications, in order to enable students to enter or re-enter the system of vocational education and training, in order to match supply and demand on the labour market. Certification focuses on skills as a structured set of knowledge and abilities pertaining to specific trades and that can be acquired through training courses, work experience and self-tuition. The certified skills constitute training credit. The educational establishment attended by the student provides for the recognition of the credit, sometimes in cooperation with the establishment previously attended.

The Regions are responsible for certification and they organise the implementation procedures taking into account the minimum standards and the types of certification defined at national level.

According to the different types, skills can be certified in a number of different cases:

- at the end of a vocational course aimed at helping the student acquire a qualification. At the end of the course, students must take an examination before a board of examiners that includes, among others, representatives from the Region that has been authorised to award the qualification;
- in the case of part-time attendance of vocational training courses, if the student has dropped out of the training course before the end;
- following on-the-job or self-tuition experiences. In this case, the certification takes place at the request of the interested person and is aimed at enabling the student to gain access to the various levels of the vocational education and training system or to obtain a qualification (certification for training credits).

These opportunities can be used starting from the Agreement signed on 28 October 2004 in Joint Conference which endorsed final and intermediate nationally valid certification, and recognition of credits matured in training courses, also in order to favour passing between the instruction and training systems. The following appended devices are an integral part of the Agreement: professional qualification certificate; the intermediate competence certificate; recognition certification of credits in order to pass into the vocational training system, from apprenticeship and upper secondary school and also for internal transitions to vocational training.

The interministerial decree (Ministries of Education and Labour) No. 86 2004 also stipulated, with regard to the above mentioned Agreement, approval of two certification models to recognise credits to make the transition from vocational training and apprenticeship to the instruction system.

Another important feature favouring the transition between systems is the Order of the Ministry of Education No. 87 of 2004. This concerns the passage from the vocational training system and apprenticeship to the instruction system, abolishing the stipulated exam and establishing that proper Commissions evaluate the certifications introduced by the above interministerial decree No. 86 and testify that the young person has proper competences for admission to a determined class of the institute to which he has applied.

As far as regards the apprenticeship, the business issues the qualification, generally when the contract expires.

Recently, in our order, the training booklet has been introduced, defined by the interministerial decree of 10 October 2005. This document is released at the time of full inscription to an instruction or vocational training course. This document can note initiatives with a training content, in which the subject has participated, all the types of certification obtained and relative credits. The subject owns the training booklet, is uniquely responsible for updating it, while the Region and Provinces issue the booklet, although they can also delegate other subjects. In 2006 the Training Booklet was introduced on an experimental basis only in some Regions and with application procedures which are differentiated on a territorial level, but in accord with a common and shared work plan. At the end of 2006 the opportunity of a more detailed distribution and set up of the Book for all the citizens requiring it.

## **5.7 Guidance**

The principal agencies with responsibility for offering guidance to young people and adults in the labour market (which includes directing them to vocational training courses) are the territorial employment services (job

centres). These agencies are organised at provincial level, but they have many local branches that operate within the framework of active employment policies defined at regional level. The employment services provide information and guidance on the opportunities for training and work in the territory. In fact, they are also responsible for mediating between the demand and supply of jobs. The role of the employment services is particularly important in the case of young people subject to the right-duty principle. In fact, they help manage the register of young people based on their training status and provide information, guidance and tutoring in order to control the phenomenon of dispersion.

In addition to the employment services, within many vocational training agencies there is also a guidance service that helps young people to make their choice of course option and helps them to join the job market at the end of the course.

Other guidance centres are organised by the Municipalities.

## **5.8 Teachers/Trainers**

The trainers in regional vocational training courses are employees or other staff members hired by the local authorities (in the case of training agencies belonging to public administrations) or by the private training centres. There is a regional register, but there are no formal channels for access to the register, as the job descriptions and responsibilities of these trainers have not yet been clearly defined at national level.

At the moment the minimum required by the contract in force from the trainers is a diploma from an upper secondary establishment. The assignment is entrusted per call and selection or according to membership of a register.

The collective contract governing this category defines their professional functions taking into account the need for flexibility in the vocational training system. The term 'trainers' covers not only teachers, but also training tutors, who are normally given the role of overall control of the classroom.

The responsibility for the training of trainers is vested in the Regions, and the situation varies from Region to Region.

In the case of apprenticeships, the company must define the profile of the company tutor as the person chiefly responsible for the work-linked training (see 5.1).

## **5.9 Statistics**

### **Pupils of initial training**

Some information is summarised below on initial training in Italy, with regard to the number of pupils inscribed in I and II level courses and for apprentices in 2003/04 and 2004/05.

In comparison with the data an increase in the number of courses can be found in 2004/05. This is mainly due to level I training (about 1 000 more), including the third years of the experimental courses which have been discussed and training activities for apprentices which are increasing by about 4 200. A slight dip in post diploma II level courses is revealed.

Tab.1 – Initial training activities financed by regional and community funds (2003/04 – 2004/05) – absolute values

Type	Inclusive number of courses	Pupils enrolled	Inclusive number of courses	Pupils enrolled
	2003/04	2003/04	2004/05	2004/05
<b>Out of school vocational training</b>				
<i>Total level 1 or basic</i>				
1 <sup>st</sup> year	4 803	83 128	5 868	101 161
2 <sup>nd</sup> year				
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	3 014	45 862	3 794	68 986
	1 789	37 266	1 910	29 771
2 <sup>nd</sup> level (post qualification or post diploma)			164	2 404
	5 378	118 081	5 164	98 025
<b>Alternate training</b>				
<i>Total apprentices</i>				
1 <sup>st</sup> year	19 136	91 908	23 325	96 830
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	13 057	80 347	18 208	82 910
	6 079	11 561	5 117	13 920
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.317</b>	<b>293 117</b>	<b>34 357</b>	<b>296 016</b>

Source: Isfol finding provided by Law 845/78.

However, as far as concerns the academic and training year 2005/06 and the provision of vocational training regarding three yearly experimental courses (as per Agreement 19 June 2003) and two yearly and yearly courses (not subject to the agreement), the table below (table 2) shows that there is a total of 6 651 courses involving 119 953 pupils (see ISFOL, Participation and dispersal. VII Monitoring Report for compulsory training, 2007). Remember that the high number of enrolments also includes pupils for experimental instruction courses integrated with Vocational training modules. In these cases, the pupils are enrolled in school (see par. 5.1). For this reason, this data cannot be superimposed with that shown by the other tables which only take into account the courses run by the vocational training and pupils enrolled in training agencies.

Tab. 2 – Participation in vocational training courses for young people under 18 (academic and training year 2005/06)

No. three year courses as per Agreement 19 June 2003	5 335
No. of courses not subject to Agreement	1 316
Total courses	6 651
No. of pupils enrolled in beginning of course per Agreement 19 June 2003	93 253
No. of pupils enrolled in beginning of course not subject to the Agreement	26 700
<b>Total enrolments course beginning</b>	<b>119 953</b>

Source: Isfol, regional data and MPI.

### Drop out rate <sup>(1)</sup> (participation rate)

With reference to the training status of young people in right-duty (academic and training year 2005/06), based on the Isfol findings (Table 3), it is found that in a population of 2 340 010 14-17 year olds, about 88.5 % are enrolled in school, while vocational training (three year, two year and year courses) involves 108 083 young people or 4.6 % of the total population. Minor apprentices are 47 906, equal to 2 % of the young people. Only a marginal part of these (about 7 000) has actually participated in the external training stipulated by the standards. As the table shows almost 113 172 young people remain outside the training and school system, which is an

<sup>(1)</sup> For Italy the participation rate in Vocational training is referred to.

underestimate if apprentices who have not performed external training are added. The number of young people dispersed in the training year 2001/02 was about 175 000.

Table 3 – Training status of 14-17 year olds (academic and training year 2005/06)

	**	%
Young people enrolled in school	2 070 849	88.5 %
Young people enrolled in vocational training	108 083	4.6 %
Young people hired with apprenticeship contract	47 906	2.1 %
Young people enrolled in training channels	113 172	2.9 %
<b>Total 14-17 year olds</b>	<b>2 340 010</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: ISFOL elaboration of MPI data, regional data, ISTAT data.

### Training locations and personnel

Isfol's latest survey on the provision of publicly financed vocational training (2003/04) in Italy shows that 55 % of training providers are made up of training bodies and their subsidiaries; non profit associations and cooperatives figure among others (12 %), training structures belonging to local organisations and regions (10 %), schools and universities (8 %). 40 % have been active for over 16 years, with some organisations working for over 30. About 64 % have at least five rooms for theoretical activities and 22 % have no more than ten.

In registered premises those working on training services represent about two thirds of all personnel, and between them for each resource hired with an indeterminate contract 5.6 are hired with other types of contract. This reveals the tendency to outsource training services and to manage directing, logistical and administrative services internally.

## 6. HIGHER EDUCATION

The legal provisions in force for higher education in Italy are set out in Article 33 of the Italian Constitution, which recognises the right of universities and academies to act autonomously within the limits set by the law. Both public and private organisations have the right to establish schools and educational establishments. The higher education system is divided into State and non-State establishments. A distinction is also drawn between university and non-university higher education. The latter consists of *Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale* (AFAM – higher-level artistic and musical training), other courses offered by non-university higher education establishments and the IFTS course (higher technical education and training).

### 6A Non-university higher education

#### 6.A.1 Higher-level artistic and musical training (AFAM) and other non-university higher education establishments

Non-university higher education is governed by the Law of 21 December 1999 (No. 508), which was implemented by DPR No. 212 2005, a regulation governing the definition of the didactic orders of the Artistic, musical and choreographic education. This type of education is provided in establishments which have their own particular structures, regulations and organisation. These establishments can generally be subsumed into the following types:

- establishments which offer artistic and legal training (AFAM): 20 State art academies and 24 legally recognised academies, 4 higher education establishments for the artistic industries (ISIA), the Silvio D'Amico National Academy of Dramatic Arts, 57 music academies, 21 officially recognised music schools and the National Academy of Dance;
- other establishments which offer non-university higher education courses: The Santa Cecilia National Academy, the higher education establishments for linguistic mediators, the central institutes and the restoration schools of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, the national cinema school, the schools specialising in archiving, paleography and diplomacy, the military and police academies, the school for working hard stones, higher schools of religious sciences, central 'Alfonso Gallo' book school for pathology and the vocational training courses financed by the Regions and the European Social Fund.

##### 6A.1.1 Admission requirements

Generally speaking, candidates can be admitted to these establishments after the upper secondary school diploma has been obtained and they must have passed the entrance examinations. The number of available places is limited and is set each year. In certain cases, it is not required to sit the entrance examination if the requirements are already fulfilled by previous training.

##### 6A.1.2 Tuition fees/Financial assistance for students

Admission is not free of charge, and, generally speaking, the amount of the fee is set by the individual establishment.

The State provides financial support in the form of student grants, which are very limited in number. Certain 'weak' categories are also exempted from payment of fees.

##### 6A.1.3 The school year

The school year normally runs from November to June. This period is followed by examinations.

#### 6A.1.4 Courses

Based on Law 508/1999, and based on DPR No. 212/2005 which has defined the new academic titles and orders of AFAM and establishments that belong to them (3 years) the second course provides two year courses and third research training cycle is provided.

The *Accademie di belle arti* offer courses in visual arts (painting, sculpture and graphic design); teaching of art; projects and applied art (new technologies of art, decoration, restoration, artistic planning for companies and scenography). Attendance is compulsory.

The Higher Institutes for Art Industries (*Istituti Superiori per le Industrie Artistiche*) offer courses in industrial design and graphic design. Attendance is compulsory.

The National Academy of Dramatic Arts (*Accademia Nazionale d'Arte Drammatica*) in Rome offers training courses for theatre actors and directors.

The National Academy of Dance (*Accademia Nazionale di Danza*) offers courses in dancing for beginners and an advanced course in solo dancing, choreography or teaching.

The music academies, now higher institutes of music and dance studies, offer courses for different instruments. In addition to their chosen subject students study music theory and specific academic subjects. Attendance is compulsory.

Non-university higher education establishments offer specialised education in very diverse fields, including courses in restoration, the cinema, archiving, interpreting and translation and training for officers of the armed forces and the police. Courses consist of theoretical lessons that alternate, according to the arrangements and timetabling specific to each establishment, with practical and laboratory/workshop exercises.

In general, the students pay for their textbooks, but the cost of the materials used for the exercises and theses is paid by the establishment.

#### 6A.1.5 Assessment/Certification

Each establishment through its own didactic regulations sets the assessment criteria (either continuous or final). The teachers play a pivotal role in the assessment process.

Based on Law No. 508 and DPR No. 212/2005 the AFAM establishments award the following qualifications: academic diploma level I reached at the end of the relative course and with the acquisition of at least 180 academic credits (3 years) and academic diploma level II or specialised (2 years); an academic specialisation diploma obtained at the end of the course; a minimum number of credits is not obtained; and finally, a Master's diploma which is obtained at the end of the course and the acquisition of at least 60 academic credits (at least one year).

For each course a duration in years is defined, in proportion to the total number of credits, considering that usually 60 academic credits correspond to a year.

The establishments also issue a certificate which in accord with models that comply with the those adopted by European Countries (*Supplement diploma*) gives the main indications regarding the specific curriculum followed by the student for the qualification to be awarded.

#### 6A.1.6 Teachers

There is a special system of recruitment for tenured and non-tenured teaching staff. In particular, vocational education is given by well-known personalities. The staff enjoy a legal status which is different from that of their counterparts in non-university education.

## **6A.2 Higher-level technical education and training (*Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore – IFTS*)**

Art. 69 of the Law of 17 May 1999 (No. 144) and the subsequent implementing regulations adopted with the Interministerial Decree No. 436 of 31 October 2000 set up within the system of integrated higher education training the system of higher-level technical education and training (IFTS). The system is designed to speed up the access of young people to the world of work and to retrain those who already have work experience. This is done through courses which are designed to provide young people and adults (employed or otherwise) with more specific cultural knowledge and in-depth and targeted technical and vocational training.

The financial law 2007 art. 1 section 631 stipulated the reorganisation of the IFTS system to strengthen vocational training and measures to improve the technical and scientific line. Further, with L40/2007 the IFTS was redefined as 'Higher technical establishments', and provided for joining them in poly technical-professional establishments made up of technical, establishments, accredited professional establishments, vocational training structures and higher technical establishments.

The IFTS courses are designed and managed by at least four types of training agencies: schools, vocational training centres, universities and companies or other private or public bodies. These agencies sign different formal agreements, including consortium agreements.

### **6.A.2.1 Admission requirements**

Young people and adults (employed or otherwise) can be admitted if they have the upper secondary school leaving certificate. The course can also be followed by those who do not have the upper secondary school leaving certificate subject to an assessment skills acquired in previous instruction and training courses after the academic obligation has been fulfilled (level 3 of the literacy and mathematical skills on the IALS-SIALS scale which are tested before the start of the course by an appropriate commission).

### **6.A.2.2 Tuition fees/Financial assistance for students**

IFTS courses are free of charge as they are financed by the MIUR under the terms of Law 440/1997, the CIPE funds and Law 53/2000 and by the Regions through their own resources and the European Social Fund.

### **6.A.2.3 Planning of courses**

The planning of courses takes place at the point when there is integration between the national and regional decision-making levels. The National IFTS Committee draws up the guidelines for the planning of courses, which is then entrusted to the Regions. The regions then publish the conditions for the presentation of projects and the arrangements for assessment.

### **6.A.2.4 Courses**

The purpose of the IFTS courses is to provide job training at post-secondary level to meet the demands of the labour market. The professional profiles are defined on the basis of the ISTAT classification on professions and the ATECO classification on sectors of economic activity.

The courses begin based on when the planning of the course itself is published. However, the minimum and maximum duration of courses are specified, i.e. 1 200 hours (2 semesters) and 2 400 hours (4 semesters). Each semester is divided into hours of theoretical, practical and laboratory/workshop work. The courses for employed workers take into account their employment commitments when the timetable is made up and the arrangements for attendance are defined. Company-based training and training courses must cover 30 % of the total length of the courses.

### **6.A.2.5 Assessment/Certification**

The provision of 2 March 2000 defines the criteria and arrangements for assessment and certification of the courses. The assessment tests for IFTS courses are divided into the following parts:

- a) an individual interview based on an analysis of:
- an individual course dossier, which is submitted by the course teachers;
  - an individual document, which is submitted by the trainee;
- b) a simulation test designed to assess, for each user, the acquisition of the knowledge and skills required for the specific course.

The Regions award an advanced technical specialisation certificate that is valid throughout the national territory (level ISCED 4). The final certificate, which is issued only if the student passes the tests, gives a detailed list of the skills acquired by the end of the course, subdivided into basic, transverse and technical-professional skills. The assessment is shown on the certificate only if the maximum grades have been obtained. Those who do not pass the tests are given the 'Intermediate Declaration' for the course followed, which indicates the skills the student has acquired and mentions any training credits obtained.

#### 6.A.2.6 Teachers

As regards teachers, the only limit stipulated for IFTS courses is that 50 % of them must come from industry. The remaining 50 % can come from an academic school or vocational training background.

#### 6.A.2.7 Statistics

Courses financed since 2000 to 2007 by economic sector	
Economic sector	Tot. courses
Not defined (pilot prog. from 2002/03)*	575
Agriculture	127
Industry and crafts – Manufacturing	545
Industry and crafts – ICT	421
Industry and crafts – Construction	82
Commerce and tourism, transport – Transport	84
Commerce and tourism, transport – Tourism	347
Public and private social services – Environment	347
Finance/insurance**	7
Overall total	2 535

\* Before 2002/03 the national vocational sectors and trades were not standardised. The heading NOT DEFINED shows the courses for which a specific sector is not indicated and those that are part of the 'pilot project' type. The pilot projects refer to non-standardised trades at national level that correspond to documented requirements of the territorial labour markets.

\*\* The 9 segments that are included in this sector were approved by the Unified Conference on 25 November 2004. They have therefore been used since then within the regional programs.

## 6B University higher education

University-level higher education is offered by various types of State and non-State establishments.

The didactic reform of university courses provided for by Regulation 509 of 1999 entered into force in school year 2001/02. In Italian universities courses of the previous order may still exist, progressively less, with those of the new order, but in a small number. The reform provides for a new structure of university degrees:

- *Laurea* (cycle I degree): this degree is obtained at the end of a three-year course (180 university education credits).

- Specialised *laurea* / master's (cycle II degree): this degree is obtained at the end of a two-year course (120 credits) after completing the *laurea*.
- University master's: this degree is obtained after a one-year course. These courses can be followed after the *laurea* and after the specialised *laurea*.
- Specialisation diploma (cycle III degree).
- Research doctorate (cycle III degree): this degree is obtained after a three-year course which can be followed after completing the specialised *laurea*.

The reform provides for a review of university teaching arrangements which involves the introduction of *crediti formativi universitari* (CFU – university training credits), which reflect the work completed by students. 180 credits are required to obtain the *laurea*, and a further 120 to obtain the specialised *laurea*/master's

### 6B.1 Admission requirements

Under the terms of the reform, to be accepted for a *laurea* course students must have an upper secondary school leaving certificate or another diploma which was obtained abroad and has been recognised as acceptable. The two ministerial decrees regarding didactic autonomy (DM 509 and DM 270/2004) stipulate that the teaching regulations of individual universities must also require that students have or acquire adequate initial preparation, and to this end the same regulations must define the knowledge required for access and the arrangements for assessment.

To be accepted for a specialised *laurea*/master's course, students must have the *laurea* degree or a three-year university degree or other study qualification which was obtained abroad and has been recognised as acceptable.

### 6B.2 Tuition fees/Financial assistance for students

All students must pay matriculation fees based on family income and assets and the regional tax for the right to study. Each university is free to set the number of students to be exempted from paying these fees based on their merit and income. Furthermore, students may receive financial assistance in the form of study grants and interest-free loans or in the form of services such as free board and lodging.

### 6B.3 The school year

See above Chap. 6A.1.3

### 6B.4 Courses

Under the terms of the reform, there are 47 classes of *laurea* and 109 classes of specialised *laurea*. A complete list of classes for degrees and specialist/master's degree is available from the continually updated national data base which can be consulted at <http://offf.miur.it>. Each class includes several *laurea* courses which the universities are free to offer based on various factors. For each course there is a study plan, established by each faculty in its own Statute, setting out the compulsory subjects, the number of examinations students must take and the order in which they must be taken. It also proposes supplementary courses to be selected by the students to complete their individual study plans. Each course may last one year or half a year. It may cover a single subject or be 'integrated' (*corso integrato*), according to the decision of the Faculty Council (*Consiglio di facoltà*). Integrated courses are composed of coordinated modules, which may be given by more than one member of staff. Students finish their study course when they have passed all the examinations listed on the study plan, have obtained the required number of credits and have presented and discussed their final thesis during an examination.

Overall, the teaching activities cover a certain number of hours, part of which may consist of theoretical lectures and the rest may be composed of seminars, laboratories/workshops, practical exercises, vocational courses and guided study activities.

Generally speaking, books and teaching materials are paid for by the students themselves.

### 6B.5 Assessment/Certification

Every course listed in the study plan entails passing a special examination, the *esame di profitto*. This examination may consist of written, practical and oral tests. The assessment of candidates is out of 30, and the minimum grade to pass an examination is 18/30.

Within certain limits, students may take examinations when they wish and may retake any number of further examinations if they fail. This means that the total length of studies is usually prolonged.

To obtain the *laurea* or specialised *laurea/master's*, students must discuss a report which they have submitted to the examining board or present a written paper on the training course and/or work in the laboratory/workshop, based on the university regulations. The final grade takes account of the average of the marks awarded for previous examinations and the quality of the thesis. The minimum pass mark is 66 out of 110. The maximum mark is 110 (*cum laude*).

The *laurea* degree gives students access to the labour market, to the specialised *laurea/master's* degree course, to the level I master's degree course and to certain specialisation courses. Students with a specialised *laurea/master's* can have access to the labour market, to the level II master's degree course, to certain specialisation courses or to the research doctorate course.

### 6B.6 Teachers

After an intense debate within the universities, the Law No. 230 of 4 November 2005 came into force. This reorganises university teaching. Some of the main characteristics are: introduction of a new recruiting system of university professors which stipulates a suitable national set up as presupposed by the universities' requirement, introduction of the researcher on fixed contract, possibility of transfer to associate professor for researchers, research agreements with businesses or foreign organisations, etc.

The teaching staff in higher education is divided into the following categories: permanent teachers, subdivided into first-band lecturers (*professori di prima fascia*), also called *ordinari*, and second-band lecturers (*professori disecunda fascia*), also called *associati*, researchers, contract lecturers (*professori a contratto*) and linguistic experts teaching their mother tongue and exchange lecturers.

University lecturers, especially those of the first and second bands, have always enjoyed a special legal status guaranteeing their freedom of teaching. As a result, they cannot be removed from their post and have considerable didactic freedom and scope for research but they have the duty to ensure their presence for no less than 250 hours a year for teaching activities, including participation in examination and degree boards.

After three years of teaching, foreign first band teachers, associate professors and researchers must undergo assessment in order to be confirmed in their post.

Each lecturer and researcher may choose between full-time and part-time status. The former cannot be combined with any freelance activity, but they can apply for internal university posts such as the Rectorate. The latter status permits the holder to engage in professional activities but cannot be combined with positions of responsibility within the university.

No in-service training is required for university lecturers.

## 6B.7 Statistics

### Teaching staff in degree (*laurea*) courses by faculty – School year 2003/04

Mathematics, physics and natural science	9 353
Pharmacy	1 757
Medicine and Surgery	12 782
Engineering	7 550
Architecture	2 142
Agriculture	2 270
Veterinary science	981
Economics	4 252
Political science	1 993
Law	3 230
Letters and philosophy	6 235
Didactics	1 490
Industrial chemistry	100
Conservation of cultural heritage	168
Foreign languages and literature	1 358
Psychology	563
Environmental sciences	51
Physical education	183
Statistical sciences	308
Sociology	464
Other	294
Total	57 524

Source: *Annuario Statistico Italiano* 2006 – ISTAT, p.164.

## 7. ADULT EDUCATION AND CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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There are two systems that provide adult education. The first falls under the responsibility of the MPI. The second, which provides continuing vocational training (*Formazione Professionale Continua* – FPC) for adult workers, is organised by the regional authorities.

### 7A ADULT EDUCATION

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#### 7A.1 Specific political and legislative framework

Pursuant to art. 5 of Law No. 53 of 8 March 2000, employees who work for public or private employers and who have worked for at least five years in the same company can request a suspension of the employment contract for training leave. This period cannot exceed 11 months throughout the worker's entire working life. Training leave is defined as training which is undertaken to complete compulsory education, to obtain a level II qualification, to obtain a *laurea* degree or to participate in training activities other than those offered by or financed by the employer. During the period of training leave, the employee keeps his post but is not entitled to receive a salary. The employer can refuse the training leave if he can demonstrate that there are administrative constraints.

Art. 6 of the same law stipulates that workers (employed or otherwise) are entitled to follow training courses throughout their life to upgrade their knowledge and vocational skills. The State, the Regions and the local authorities provide training tailored to the territory under the terms of art. 17 of the Law No. 196 of 24 June 1997. The training offered must include personalised courses which are certified and recognised as giving training credits at national and European level. The type of training can be selected independently by the worker or provided by the company in the form of company-based or territorial training plans agreed with the social partners. The national and decentralised collective sectoral agreement defines the number of hours to be devoted to leave, the criteria for the selection of workers and the arrangements for working hours and salaries connected with participation in the training courses.

Under the terms of Ministerial Orders 455 (Adult education – instruction and training) and 456 (Adult education – instruction and training in primary and lower secondary school) of July 1997, the then Ministry of Education carried out a radical renewal of the structure of services offered by creating permanent territorial centres for adult education which are normally set up in provincial capitals and, in any case, in places where the demand for ongoing adult training exceeds a certain threshold.

The Agreement of 2 March 2000 between the Government, the Regions, the Province, the Municipalities and the mountain communities to reorganise and upgrade ongoing education for adults and the subsequent directive 22 of February 2001 for the implementation of this agreement outlined the priority objectives and defined the forms of intervention.

Law 53/2003 aimed at reforming the system of education and training indicates among the guiding principles and criteria that must inspire its implementing decrees the promotion of lifelong education, which will be regulated through legislation. The debate will once again be opened up once the draft version of the implementing decrees is published and undergoes the judgment of the parliamentary commissions and of the State-region-local autonomy conference.

It should be remembered that the unified State-region conference (28 October 2004) approved an agreement for the certification of skills and the recognition of training credit.

The system is currently undergoing a reorganisation which will involve important changes for the CTP [permanent territorial centres]. A Legislative Decree is being drafted to define the general criteria to confer autonomy on the 'Provincial Centres for Adult Education'.

## 7A.2 Management/Competent authorities

The general adult education system can be subsumed into the following institutional levels:

### a) National level

The functions connected with the integration of the systems are entrusted to a joint committee on which there are representatives of the MPI the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Regional Representation Body, the local authorities and the social partners. This committee must have established links with the National Committee for Higher Technical Education and Training (the IFTS) to ensure the necessary coherence of the system integration initiatives. These functions are aimed primarily at setting strategic priorities, defining general guidelines and the available resources, setting criteria for the allocation of the resources, defining the guidelines for the setting of standards, for monitoring and for assessment and defining the arrangements for the certification and recognition of the credits awarded.

### b) Regional level

The planning and curricula of the integrated training courses offered to adults are the responsibility of the Regions under the terms of art. 138 of the Legislative Decree of 1998. The Regions set up a regional committee made up of regional council members, representatives of the local authorities, the representative of the regional education department and the social partners, according to arrangements similar to those required at national level. This committee decides on the actions to be taken to promote adult education, defines the criteria for the implementation of the actions on its own territory, based on knowledge of the local vocational and training needs, defines the overall framework of available resources for the integrated system of adult education and sets the criteria and arrangements for monitoring and assessment. In addition, the Regions promote the matching of adult education plans with the development and employment policies. In consultation with the local authorities, it defines the criteria for the identification of the territorial scope of the local committees and the deployment of the territorial centres.

### c) Local level

The Province assists the Region in defining the selection of adult education programmes, outlines the guidelines for territorial planning, arranges the supra-municipal information and advertising services and helps monitor the provincial-level system based on information received from the regional level.

The Municipalities and the mountain communities lend support to the Regions and the Province in selecting adult education programmes, arrange for the monitoring and analysis of the training and vocational needs that emerge within the territory, arrange (in consultation with the local committees) the shared use of the available resources, promote initiatives within the framework of adult education, assist in defining pilot projects (based on the territorial priorities), promote the implementation and coordination of all the opportunities present at territorial level (to ensure integrated functioning of the system), organise initiatives geared towards providing information and guidance to users on the different opportunities and, finally, set up the local committees.

The local committees, which are made up of representatives of the municipalities and of the mountain communities, organise the integrated training courses offered to adults. To do this, they take into account the criteria defined at regional level, the activities to be implemented on their own territory (based on an analysis of the local vocational and training needs) and frame proposals for the overall calendar of training courses and proposals concerning the setting-up of territorial centres and the deployment of the centres. The local committees are chaired by representatives of the Municipalities and of the mountain communities and are made up of representatives of the regional education offices, the Province, the Municipalities, the mountain communities and the social partners and representatives of the training agencies operating in the field of non-formal education.

### **7A.3 Financing**

The adult education system is financially supported by resources allocated by the State, the Regions, the local authorities and a number of public and private agencies, possibly with the addition of other resources allocated by the European Union.

### **7A.4 Human resources**

Article 7 of Directive No. 22 of 6 February 2001, which sets out the guidelines for the implementation of the agreement of 2 March 2000, lays down that the human resources to be used for adult education in the education system consist of a basic nucleus of teachers with organisational, relational and methodological-didactic skills in the field of adult education.

In-service training and upgrading of personnel are priority actions which are qualifying for the renewal and development of adult education. Within the framework of the decentralised provincial contracts in this field, arrangements are made for the participation of the personnel, while ensuring compliance with the right/obligation that underpins the need to update the skills of the school personnel in line with the requirements of the users.

### **7A.5 Organisation**

#### **7A.5.1. Types of training establishments**

Adult education within the school system provides for the creation of Permanent Territorial Centres for adult education and training. These centres can be located in schools of any level or type, and the objectives and priorities are set by the regional integrated training plan and coordinated by the local authorities and the social partners. The centres are designed to serve as points where adult education and training can be organised on the basis of needs, planning, consultation and the implementation and management of initiatives and where documentation can be gathered and disseminated.

#### **7A.5.2. Admission requirements**

The activities of the territorial centres are open to all adults who have reached the age of 15 years who do not have a school-leaving certificate and to adults who have a school leaving certificate but intend to enrol for education and training courses.

Priority access to the activities of the centres is guaranteed for those who must obtain the school-leaving certificate.

#### **7A.5.3. Objectives**

Each centre provides a service aimed at combining the right to education with the right to vocational guidance, career advice and training. This includes training and cultural and functional literacy, cultural consolidation and promotion, re-motivation and re-orientation, the acquisition and consolidation of specific knowledge and skills, pre-professionalisation and vocational retraining.

#### **7A.5.4. Time and place**

The activities of the centre are ongoing, but the integrated education and training courses must be guaranteed for at least 200 hours a year. The Teachers' Committee decides on the syllabus and sets the calendar (number of days of attendance per week, number of hours per day and per week and distribution throughout the year).

#### **7A.5.5. The curriculum**

The Teachers' Committee also decides on the organisational models for the various activities and defines the training courses offered according to individual course options which are negotiated and structured according to groups of interest, laboratory/workshop activities, placements and individualised activities.

In cooperation with the other staff members working in the centre, the teachers gather information to identify the resources, needs, expectations and interests of each student enrolled. The personal qualifications include the cultural credits based on the training and work experience of each student. Based on the information gathered, the Teachers' Committee negotiates with each student who enrolls to define an appropriate specific course of education and training. As part of this process, they set the objectives, methods and timescale of the course and the arrangements for adaptation, ongoing testing and assessment. The result of this process is the training agreement which is based on the initial analysis of each student's situation.

#### 7A.5.6. Quality control

A national technical committee has been set up within the Ministry of Education with responsibility for the orientation, monitoring, support and assessment of adult education and training actions. Based on the information supplied by the national technical committee, the Ministry monitors the innovations introduced and ensures the necessary assistance and the dissemination of the documentation.

### 7A.6 Consultancy and guidance services

Directive 455 of 1997 stipulates that the interviewing of students, the analysis of their individual needs and individual tutoring and assessment are the responsibility of the teachers, in cooperation with the other staff of the centre.

### 7A.7 Assessment, certification and recognition

At the end of the activities of the centre, one or more of the following certificates are issued: a primary school certificate, a lower secondary school diploma, a certificate of award of the qualification and the credits that can be used in vocational training or a vocational qualification certificate and certification of the credits that can be used in the school system.

For each adult who takes part in training, a personal *libretto* is kept. This is a record not only of the credits recognised when the student joins the course, but also of the actual activities completed along with the number of hours and the related cultural and vocational field and a summary of the skills, qualifications and certificates obtained.

The certification arrangements for the awarding of certificates connected with initial vocational training are based on the agreements with the public and private agencies which help with the activities, according to the suggestions and guidelines set out by the provincial committee.

For students who have not obtained the final qualification and/or vocational and cultural certificate provided for by the training agreement, any credits they acquire are mentioned in the personal *libretto*. The coordinator of the centre issues a certificate of attendance to these students.

### 7A.8 Statistics

#### Range of training courses offered by permanent territorial centres – 2005/06

Tab. 1 – Courses leading to the final qualification

Cultural literacy courses – primary school with final evaluation	
Number of courses	979
Number of students enrolled	18 516
I grade secondary school courses with state exam	
Number of courses	1 811
Number of students enrolled	40 253

Tab. 2 – Courses for foreign students (linguistic and social integration)

Number of courses	4 070
Number of students enrolled	69 643

Tab. 3 – Short modular courses in functional literacy

Number of courses	13 901
Number of students enrolled	222 580

Source: National survey of training provision for Adults carried out by the CTPs and secondary 2nd grade education establishments Managers of Evening Courses for school year 2005/06 performed to order at the responsibility of the General Direction for General Education for Post secondary education and relations with the Training Systems of the Regions and Local Organisations (statistical data that can be consulted on line on the EdA gate way at [www.indire.it/eda](http://www.indire.it/eda)).

## 7B Continuing training

### 7B.1 Specific legislative and policy framework

Continual training has undergone a phase of significant settling and development over the last few years after a first 'construction' phase which started only half way through the 90s, but still does not adequately answer the requirements of the productive and work world.

Starting from 1993 a significant joint initiative developed between the government and social partners for the modernisation of the training system within a European context. This activity is substantiated in three agreements:

- the tripartite agreement of 23 July 1993 on the cost of work which has among other things defined the institutional aspect of the training system and which has laid the basis for the launch of the Law 236/93;
- the tripartite agreement 25 September 1996, culminating in the Law 196/97 (so called 'Treu package'), which indicated the general objectives of the reform of the training system;
- the agreement of 22 December 1998, specifying the characteristics of the system.

The most widespread intervention for the development of Continuing Training and to reinforce the competences of Italian workers took place with the implementation of the DOCUP of the ESF (European Social Fund) of the Ob. 4 of 1994-99. Examination of the first results of the experiment with the ESF gave rise to an experiment, imposed in 1996, of launching a national policy on continual training using the financial resources as per article 9 (sections 3 and 3 bis) of the Law 236/93. The next step consists in introducing the Law 53/00 which recognises the right to training leave for workers and successively Interprofessional Joint Funds for Continuous Training, instituted with the Law 388/2000 (amended by article 48 of the Law 289/2002). The appearance of new agents in the continual training system, through the institution of the Interprofessional Funds has required and continues to require the introduction of innovations which involve the wider and consolidated system of policy instruments, represented by the European Social Fund and national instruments (Law 236/93 and Law 53/00).

The notion of continual vocational training confirmed in Italy includes all the training activities making up (or permitting) training courses for knowledge and competences after the initial training and which are distinct from it. In these years efforts have been intensified to consider continual training as a fundamental component of lifelong learning policies, connected with learning as a strategy for developing a knowledge-based competitive economy, focusing on people as citizens and workers. There is still not a complete and coherent set of standards. Parliament is currently discussing some proposed legislation which is intended to recognise lifelong learning and is debating, but so far with few results, the definition of a coordinated and integrated intervention strategy

between the various economic and institutional levels concerned (Ministry of Labour, Regions, Provinces, Social partners).

## **7B.2 Management/Competent authorities**

As regards the ESF, Law 236/93 and Law 53/00, the competent authorities are the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (POF –Guidance and Training Policies), the regional administrations and the administrations of the Autonomous Provinces and the provincial administrations (appointed officials).

As regards the Joint Interprofessional Funds for Continuing Training, the system will be managed by the social partners and supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. The Funds are set up as associations under the terms of the interconfederal agreement signed between the social partners.

The Ministry of Labour, with the support of the ISFOL, has competences with regard to the monitoring of initiatives.

## **7B.3 Financing**

The continual training system is financially substituted by resources made available to the State, the Regions, public and private parties, to be integrated if necessary with other resources made available by the European Union.

Above all it should be clarified that most of the interventions which can be classified as continual training are carried out by social and economic agents (mainly, businesses and workers) through private choices: as far as the private sectors are concerned, the public policies in fact cover a percentage that do not reach 15 % of total expenditure on continual training.

The main instruments supporting continual training currently operating in our country are the following:

1. the European Social Fund 2007-2013;
2. national Law 236/93, which set up a fund for vocational training;
3. national Law 53/00;
4. Interprofessional Equal Funds for continual training managed by social parties, set up in 2001 and which became operative starting from 2004.

The public policies for the training of workers in Italy are based on financial transfer instruments. The funds are spent through four instruments: the European Social Fund, the national financing laws (Law 236/93 and Law 53/00) and the Interprofessional Funds.

As for the two national instruments (Law 236/93 and Law 53/00), the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies allocates the resources among the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces and distributes the funds to them, and they in turn issue notices and invitations to tender.

As regards the resources made available by the Joint Interprofessional Funds, they are responsible for directly issuing the notices and invitations to tender. The funds finance company, sectorial, territorial and individual training plans to benefit the member companies. In fact the plans are financed by financial resources deriving from the annual yield of the contribution of 0.30 % of business's contributions to the INPS (national welfare institute) as contribution for obligatory insurance against involuntary unemployment. Each year companies can decide whether to belong to one of the Funds and in this case use such opportunities, or whether to continue paying the INPS contribution.

## **7B.4 Human resources**

Generally speaking there are not any specific regulations aimed at identifying the professional resources to be used for continual training or to ensure the quality of training for the trainers involved in continual training, as minimum qualification requirements.

Law 236/93 has financed training courses for trainers (vocational retraining and reskilling actions for workers in bodies operating under Law 40/87).

The bodies concerned by this financing facility are those which the Ministry of Labour, in the meaning of Law 40/87, provides contributions for the general administrative expenses relating to the needs for operational coordination at national level which are not covered by regional funds. This category includes private national bodies which operate in more than one region and which are set up by the national organisations for salaried workers, the self-employed, entrepreneurs, training and social associations or associations of companies and their consortia or bodies within the cooperative movement. These bodies must also apply the national contract for sectoral workers and publish the annual balance sheet for each centre, and they must not pursue profit-making aims.

## **7B.5 Organisation**

### **7B.5.1. Types of training agencies**

Continuing training activities in Italy are implemented by a variety of agencies and institutions. These can be basically subsumed into three main categories:

- companies and organisations (public and private) which lay on training activities for their own staff, consortia of companies, etc.
- training agencies and bodies (accredited or otherwise as stipulated by Decree 166/2001), consultancy firms, bilateral bodies and other agencies, i.e. the social partners, industrial trade associations operating in categories or sectors, consultancy firms linked to the industrial districts or to the local productive systems or to the territorial agreements, professional associations, professional bodies, technology supply companies, etc.
- institutional-type bodies (universities, job centres, permanent territorial centres, schools, etc.).

### **7B.5.2. Admission requirements**

Generally the intended recipients of continual training interventions financed through support policies are employed workers. Specific criteria relative to other categories identified from time to time (free lance workers, semi subordinates in integration semi-subordinates, in layoff fund, over 50 year olds, small business employees, etc.) are stipulated in the single proclamations and regional notices of the ESF, of the Law 236/93 and 53/00 as well as interprofessional Funds. (For an up to date reading see [www.eformazionecontinua.it](http://www.eformazionecontinua.it))

### **7B.5.3. Objectives**

From a system stand point, since a comprehensive reform has not yet been made, it is currently thought necessary to use the various instruments available to reach different objectives and targets which may be summarised as follows:

- The European Social Fund in the course of programming 2000-2006 intended to sustain the adaptability of workers and processes for anticipating and managing change, mainly through providing training and organisational development interventions of companies, but with particular attention to creating equity type benefits directly for workers, prioritising SMEs. This objective was taken up and subsequently broadened with the 2007-2013 programming.

- In the first ten years of activity the national Law 236/93 financed company training interventions and could try individual training interventions and the training plans agreed by the social partners on a company, sectorial and territorial level. Starting from 2003, the Law 236/93 has undergone a revision of the standards for using financial resources. With the new implementing decrees the support for the bands of workers occupying 'weak' professional positions, generally not favoured by continual training initiatives, which tend to favour the targets of younger workers who are already sufficiently secularised.
- The national Law 53/00 recognises the general right to training throughout life and to this end finances training leave connected with remodelling working timetables.
- The Interprofessional Equal Funds for continual training should directly act in favour of the member companies promoting organisational development in order to increase the companies' competitiveness.

Still, these objectives have been adjusted as the interventions have been put into practice. For example, thanks to the experiments performed with the Law 236/98 starting from 1998 individual training has been introduced in Italy whereby the single individual worker is the direct beneficiary of the financing (supplied through vouchers). Further, starting from 2003, the Law 236/93 has undergone a revision of the criteria for using the financial resources which have reinforced the support for the groups of workers in 'weak' professional positions. In this sense a new Law 236/93, with 'social' type objectives has been discussed in this sense.

#### 7B.5.4. Time and place

As a rule there are no principles for time and place organisation. The available statistical data (Istat-CVTS, Isfol INDACO-businesses) show that in average a worker participates in about 30 hours of training courses and that a large part of training activity is carried out within working contexts. Therefore it is during working time, and is mainly comprised of blended and informal type procedures. One part of the training activities, especially financed activities, is carried out outside the work environment or partly within and partly outside working time.

#### 7B.5.5. The curriculum

The main business training themes (whether financed by public resources or not) are the acquisition of new personal abilities, which are also aimed at better knowledge of the worker's own work context, business management, IT, production techniques and technologies, environmental themes, work health and safety.

Regarding training activities financed by the Law 236/93, the main theme in the last years has been organisational innovation, followed by quality, technological innovation and safety on the work place and in the environment.

#### 7B.5.6. Quality control and the curriculum

For the time being, there is no quality control of the programmes of continuing training courses.

In Italy, the standards used for the assessment of the quality of the training system and the related quality assurance mechanisms are implemented through a special institute for the accreditation of training centres (Decree 166/2001).

The accreditation of vocational training activities is granted according to the following three broad types:

- Compulsory training: this includes courses provided in the vocational training system and in the context of apprenticeships.
- Advanced training: this includes post-compulsory training, advanced technical instruction, high-level training for courses during and after university.
- Continuing training intended for persons who work in CIG schemes (*Cassa Integrazione Guadagni*) and mobility schemes, unemployed persons who require training in preparation for employment and apprentices who have completed compulsory training.

To be accredited, the training centres of public or private bodies must provide certain guarantees based on the following criteria:

- managerial and logistics capacities,
- economic situation,
- vocational skills,
- levels of effectiveness and efficiency in previous activities,
- long-standing relations with the social and productive system in the area.

The accredited training centres must offer services to users of all kinds and must provide the following:

- information on training and job opportunities,
- guidance in the techniques and strategies involved in looking for work, the new forms of work available and the labour market,
- individualised guidance aimed at helping trainees discover their attitudes, interests and motivations with a view to defining their own career plan.

The Regions and the Autonomous Provinces are responsible for accreditation. They must carry out a preliminary investigation to assess the documentation produced. This investigation, which is carried out on site, involves assessing conformity and operability according to the set requirements.

This procedure also involves an annual assessment to verify that the relevant requirements have been maintained. In the event of any unsatisfactory findings, the accreditation can be suspended or withdrawn.

### **7B.6 Consultancy and guidance services**

There are no structured consultancy and guidance services, with the exception of any that may be provided by Job Centres, structures provided in the industrial districts and in some cases, by companies.

### **7B.7 Assessment, certification and recognition**

For the time being, assessment and certification initiatives by agencies or companies that provide training are thin on the ground. In some cases, an attestation of attendance is issued, but this mainly happens in 'external' management courses, meaning they are supplied outside the production context. The need to recognise the competences acquired on the work place is a theme that has been debated for years, but companies have paid it little attention.

This for example is valid for the introduction of the 'citizen's training booklet' (Legislative Decree 10 September 2003 No. 276, implementing the Law No. 30 of 2003) that is the worker's personal booklet which records the competences acquired during apprenticeship training, placement contract specialist training and the continual training performed during working life and carried out by Region accredited agents as well as the competences acquired formally and informally according to the directions of the European Union regarding permanent apprenticeship, as long as they are recognised and certified.

The DM 174 of 31 May 2001 regarding the certification of skills, in receiving the conclusions of the State-Region Agreement 18 February 2000 formalised the Libretto Formativo defining it as a tool to report certifications of skills elaborated based on minimum homogeneity standards used on the whole of the national territory. Various elaborations and agreements have arisen from the provisions of the cited DM and pursuant to the approval of the Constitutional Law No. 3 of 18 October 2001. These include that signed by the Regions and Social Partners on 1 August 2002 on national standards of skills and certification. The objective at the base of this process is to realise a national skills certification system based on identifying homogenous standards to read the various

training courses. While respecting the subsidiarity principle this will provide transparency and transferability of skills in a national and European context.

Still, statistical surveys (e.g. Isfol INDACO-Businesses) reveal that two out of three businesses that offer their employees training do not use an evaluation system. The most frequently used evaluation system is to verify that acquired competences are used at the work place, then to verify the improvement in operational services, tests to verify the acquired competences, the individual exam/interview and balance/analysis of the competences. Only in a few cases are the acquired competences certified.

Interesting experiments can be cited in circumscribed environments (see for example the project 'Investing in people' [www.equalmacerata.it](http://www.equalmacerata.it)).

## 7B.8 Statistics

The training of personnel in Italian businesses according to size, sector of economic activity and geographic area (% incidence of businesses offering training over all businesses – 2005)

	LARGE BUSINESSES	SMES	SMALL BUSINESSES*
	(250 and more employees)	(10-249 employees)	(5-9 employees)
<b>ECONOMIC ACTIVITY SECTORS</b>			
Industry in strict sense	93.5	21.2	7.9
Constructions	1000	19.4	19
Trade	81.8	32.5	21.1
Services	89.3	31.1	22.1
Extraction	-	21.6	5.2
Foodstuffs	89.3	9.3	8.1
Textile and furnishings	900	15.6	5.3
Paper, editorial, printing	1 000	24.8	8.4
Chemical and rubber	88.8	29.4	5.6
Metal engineering, means of transport	95.5	10.6	10.3
Production and distribution of energy	1 000	53.7	47.3
Constructions	1 000	19.4	19
Trade	81.8	32.5	21.1
Hotels and restaurants	71.4	20.2	9.1
Transport and communication	81.3	23.2	12.2
Credit and insurance	1 000	77.5	49
Other business services	89.3	36.8	29.9
Other services	1 000	28.5	41.2
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL AREA</b>			
North West	93.6	26.1	16.6
North East	90.4	29.4	19.6
Centre	92.3	22.8	15.7
South and Islands	75.7	19.5	14.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90.8</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>16.8</b>

Source: Isfol INDACO-Imprese.