



ITALY

INFOPACK - RECOGNITION OF LEARNING PERIODS ABROAD IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

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The information below gives an overview of procedures¹ for the recognition of learning periods abroad in general secondary school. It can be consulted by pupils, as well as their families and teachers, who are or plan to be involved in long-term individual pupil mobility programmes abroad. Please note that this general overview does not include details on different programme types (which may be run by governmental agencies, civil society organisations, private companies or schools themselves) and such information can be obtained directly with the provider of the respective mobility programme.

¹ Based on data gathered in February 2021.

GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM



Education is compulsory until 16 years of age. General upper secondary education is offered in six different areas or pathways by *Licei*.²

1. Arts (*Liceo artistico*)
2. Classical studies (*Liceo classico*)
3. Science (*Liceo scientifico*)
4. Languages (*Liceo linguistico*)
5. Music and dance (*Liceo musicale e coreutico*)
6. Human sciences (*Liceo delle scienze umane*)

Each pathway has a specific educational, cultural and professional profile defined (*Il profilo educativo, culturale e professionale – PECUP*)³ and timetables for each subject vary according to the type of *liceo* and to the grade. The national curriculum prescribes the compulsory subjects, but schools have autonomy to introduce new subjects or increase the time of the subjects of the curriculum while respecting the limits given by national regulations.

Graduation and Certification

By the end of their studies pupils are expected to have fully reached the specific learning objectives related to the pathway chosen as defined in the PECUP. During the last three grades, pupils receive the 'school credit'⁴, which is based on their final mark average. It counts for the final State examination taken at the end of 5th year of *Liceo*.

² Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, Decreto ministeriale n. 89, 15 March 2010, organizzazione degli istituti secondari superiori generali, (Ministry of Education, University and Research, Ministerial Decree on organisation of general upper secondary institutes), p. 1-14.

³ Educational, cultural and professional profile (Profilo educativo, culturale e professionale). Annex A, Decreto Ministeriale n.89, 15 March 2010, op.cit.

⁴ Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Decreto Ministeriale n. 42, 22 May 2007, Modalità di attribuzione del credito scolastico e di recupero dei debiti formativi nei corsi di studio di istruzione secondaria superiore' (Ministry of Education, Ministerial Decree on methods for assigning school credit and recovery of educational debts in upper secondary education courses).

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Pupils are admitted to the final exam if they have obtained a minimum mark of 6/10 in each subject. The final mark of the *diploma*⁵ (i.e., the certification obtained at the end of *Liceo* after passing the end-of-school examination) is the sum of the 'school credit' and the final mark of the exam.

The *diploma* includes a 'pupil's curriculum' which describes the expected profile of the pathway attended, gives information about extra-curricular and transversal competences as well as information about learning mobility⁶.

The *diploma* gives access to higher education, although some specific faculties require an admission exam.

For more information on the structure and features of the different national education systems in Europe please see the Eurydice overview: National Education Systems | Eurydice (europa.eu).

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS GOING ABROAD FROM ITALY

Age and grade

Pupils usually go abroad in the 3rd or 4th year of upper secondary school when they are 16/17 or 17/18 years old. It is not common for pupils to go on an exchange during last year of school as it is discouraged by the Ministry of Education⁷. In addition, as you would be 18/19 years old, it is unlikely you would be accepted as an exchange pupil in any host country. If you were to go abroad during the last year, you would need to withdraw from your home school by 15 March and then take the final exam as an external candidate⁸.

Registration in the sending school

As an exchange pupil, you continue to be enrolled in your school during your period abroad and are considered to be 'on leave' authorised by the school. You are encouraged to sign a 'learning agreement' which calls on you and your teachers to remain in contact during the experience abroad. At the same time, the class council chooses one of the teachers to be your 'tutor' during your mobility. The tutor helps you to remain in contact with your home school and teachers, and also makes contact with your host school abroad.

⁵ Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica n. 323, 23 July 1998, disciplina degli esami di Stato conclusivi dei corsi di studio di istruzione secondaria superiore (Presidential Decree n. 323, final State exam at the end of upper secondary education)

Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica n. 62, art 13, 3 April 2017, valutazione e certificazione delle competenze nel primo ciclo ed esami di Stato (Presidential Decree n.62, assessment and the recognition of competences in the first cycle, and final State exams).

⁶ Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica n. 122, 22 June 2009, coordinamento delle norme vigenti per la valutazione degli alunni (Ministry of Education, University and Research, Presidential Decree n. 122, coordination of the dispositions on the assessment of pupils).

Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, Decreto Ministeriale n. 774, 4th September 2019 (Ministry of Education, University and Research, Ministerial Decree, Guidelines for the development of transversal competences and guidance).

Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, Decreto Ministeriale n.88, 6th August 2020, adozione dei modelli di diploma e curriculum dello studente (Ministerial Decree, adopting the models of the pupil's diploma and curriculum).

⁷ Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, Note 10 April 2013, Linee di indirizzo sulla mobilità studentesca internazionale individuale (Ministry of Education, University and Research, Guidelines on individual international pupil mobility).

⁸ Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica n.62, art 13, 3 April 2017, op.cit.

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Funding for the sending school

Schools are funded according to several parameters, one of them being the total number of pupils enrolled. However, the fact that you are enrolled as being abroad does not have any impact on the funding the school receives.

RECOGNITION OF LEARNING PERIODS ABROAD

The following information addresses learning periods abroad lasting either up to 6 months, or a full school year. According to the analysis conducted, there is no information available on recognition procedures for periods abroad of more than 6 months and shorter than a full school year, or of any duration shorter than a full school year and finishing after the end of the school year in Italy. In fact, mobility programmes foreseeing these timings and durations are not usually offered.

The same procedures are applied, irrespective of which country the learning period is spent in (EU or non-EU).

Please note that in the case of a mobility within a school-to-school partnership⁹ (e.g. Erasmus+) the learning agreement between sending and host school can be used as recognition tool for programmes of any duration up to a full school year.

The current legislation¹⁰ in Italy foresees the recognition of learning periods abroad, provided these are coherent with the learning objectives contained in the National Guidelines for *Lice*¹¹.

The Ministry of Education has officially recognised learning mobilities as a means for pupils to develop transversal competences and as an example of guidance activity.

Prior to departure, your teachers will define a learning plan with you. This plan focuses on both knowledge acquired through the curricula of the host school, and on the development of new competences, attitudes, and transversal skills¹². In addition, the learning plan should ensure that you are able to easily reintegrate on your return while also allowing you to fully benefit from the experience in the school abroad. With regard to the subject knowledge, the agreement focuses on essential content useful for attending the following school year.

Recognition of the learning period abroad is decided by the class council, on the basis of documents provided by the host school stating that you completed the school year abroad. If a transcript of marks is available, this should also be provided. The class council can also interview you for a global assessment of the competences gained while abroad, focusing on your learning strengths.

⁹ within a school-to-school partnership, learning outcomes are usually recognised based on a learning agreement developed between the schools concerned.

¹⁰ Note 10 April 2013, n. 843, op.cit.

¹¹ Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, Decreto Interministeriale n.211, 7 October 2010, indicazioni nazionali riguardanti gli obiettivi specifici di apprendimento concernenti le attività e gli insegnamenti compresi nei piani degli studi previsti per i percorsi liceali (Ministry of Education, University and Research, Interministerial Decree n. 211, national guidelines on learning objectives for general upper secondary schools).

¹² Note 10 April 2013, n. 843, op.cit.

Periods of between 2 and 6 months

If you go abroad for periods of between 2 and 6 months, you are reintegrated in your class and follow the curriculum with your peers. A remedial plan for subjects or topics not covered while abroad may be prepared.

A full school year

Upon return from a full school year abroad, you have the first part of the following school year to focus on the essential parts of the Italian school curriculum that had been defined in the learning plan before departure. Some teachers ask for the curriculum of the subjects studied abroad, and some schools still ask you to pass exams for some specific subjects, although this is not required by the legislation.

Generally, all pupils are admitted to the next year and manage to follow the curriculum together with their peers¹³. The very few pupils whose period abroad is not recognised, repeat the year and do not sit an exam on the overall curriculum (*esame di idoneità*) to be admitted to next grade, as this is not the practice¹⁴.

More information

Fondazione Intercultura provides tools that support schools in implementing the legislation on recognition of learning periods abroad, therefore ensuring a common approach to this matter. More specifically, they provide a guide to support school principals¹⁵, a model learning agreement for sending schools, the 'Intercultura assessment protocol project'¹⁶ to support teachers in assessing intercultural competence, and a monthly newsletter to 'tutors' namely the teachers that have been assigned to supervise the exchange pupils sent abroad.

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS HOSTED IN ITALY

Registration in the host school

Exchange pupils are welcome to attend schools in Italy¹⁷. There are specific provisions for your enrolment, since you do not need to undergo an assessment of your competences which other foreign pupils are required to undergo. The host school only requires documentation from your sending school in relation to your study plan and specific learning needs.

You will be usually placed in classes with pupils of your own age (17 or 18 years old) and not younger¹⁸, and you may not attend the final year of school.

¹³ For example, among the 1 200 pupils sent by Intercultura (AFS Italy) every year on long-term exchanges, only 2 or 3 may have issues with their study abroad being recognised.

¹⁴ In order to take this exam, exchange pupils would need to disenroll from their Italian school before 15 March, but usually they are enrolled in the Italian school and attending school abroad at that time of the exchange year.

¹⁵ Guidelines for school principals <https://www.intercultura.it/download/id:10280/>

¹⁶ Intercultura Assessment Protocol <http://www.fondazioneintercultura.org/en/Studies-and-research/Intercultura-Assessment-Protocol/>

¹⁷ Note 10 April 2013, n. 843, op.cit

¹⁸ Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, Decreto Ministeriale n. 297, 16 April 1994, Testo Unico delle disposizioni legislative in materia di istruzione, art 192, comma 3 (Ministry of Education, University and Research, General regulations on education).

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As a hosted pupil, you are included in the class register, and a tutor is appointed by the school principal to support your integration in the host school. Your tutor and the class council are also responsible for arranging your timetable during the mobility. You can attend both lessons provided in your class and those offered in other classes and grades. This is done especially if you need to catch up on some subjects which you may have never studied in your home country.

You may be advised to attend additional classes in Italian language at *Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti* – CPIA (public adult education centres).

Funding for the host school

Although host schools do not receive funding for hosted pupils, they can decide to allocate monetary compensation to teachers who are appointed as tutors.

Certification for hosted pupils

In principle, you do not have the same obligations as your fellow Italian pupils except from attending lessons and following the learning agreement defined with your tutor. Based on the requirements of your sending school, the host school will provide a report of the subjects you have studied while in Italy and an assessment of your results.

Possibility of graduating in the host country during the exchange

Since it is not possible to attend a mobility in the final year of *Liceo*, you cannot take the end-of-school examination. However, if you are hosted in Italy during 4th grade, you may extend your stay and attend the 5th and final year of *Liceo* provided you pass an entrance exam. However, this is a rare practice.

TESTIMONIAL

Laura from Italy: 6 months in Sweden

"This experience was the beginning of my future."

I participated in the exchange to challenge myself and for a change of scene.

Before leaving I connected my home school with my host school through a learning agreement, I learnt the language, and participated in preparatory weekends. I found it useful also to read about Sweden and to contact my host family in advance.

Sweden and Italy are two very different countries, and so were my two families. Fortunately speaking Swedish with them, doing some volunteer work, and being patient, facilitated the rest of the experience.

Talking about differences, in Swedish schools, students dress more comfortably than fashionably. However, the first days I dressed like a typical Italian student with fancy clothes. One day I was late

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and put on comfortable pants and a sport shirt. A school friend told me: "Finally you dressed well". I thought she was making fun of me...but she was serious!

A hard-earned recognition after a sudden return

I returned earlier due to the pandemic and I had to work hard with my teachers to finish the school year with my class. This would not have happened if I had returned in July as planned. It was difficult for me, I didn't know exactly how to recover everything in a few days, but I was happy that the school recognised the experience.

The exchange was extremely valuable in many ways: I discovered how to be happy by respecting people, cultures and the environment. I realised I am a citizen of the world and this awareness will guide me in dealing with important issues in my future. I think the exchange should be compulsory for everybody! The keys to succeed are asking "why" when you encounter something different and leaving without expectations: it allows you to marvel at every moment you live abroad.

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