



Structures of Education,
Initial Training
and Adult Education
Systems in Europe

ITALY

1999

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If you wish to have more detailed information on education systems in Europe, we warmly recommend that you consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org>) and the CEDEFOP monographs (<http://www.cedefop.gr>)

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INTRODUCTION

Europe is characterized by a very wide variety of education and training systems. In order that this diversity should be fully appreciated, EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) jointly published *Education and Initial Training Systems in the European Union* for the first time in 1990. This book was updated in 1995 and then again in 1999/2000. Given the number of countries it now covers¹ and the amount of data available, this most recent update has been placed for consultation on the EURYDICE Network website (<http://www.eurydice.org>), instead of being distributed in printed paper form. In this way, it may be accessed by a maximum number of readers and updated on a more regular basis.

Descriptions relating to individual countries in turn include basic information on the administration and structure of their systems of education and initial vocational training at all levels, as well as brief accounts of their higher education and systems for initial and in-service teacher training, and of the status of teachers. EURYDICE and CEDEFOP have also used this latest update to add a chapter on adult education, which is an important topic in relation to the development of lifelong learning in Europe.

As in the previous edition, the information is structured with respect to a common table of contents to facilitate inter-country comparisons while ensuring that special features peculiar to each system are duly emphasized.

The first chapter within each country section is devoted to a short presentation of the country concerned, together with the basic principles governing its education and training, the division of responsibilities and then more specific information (relating to administration, inspection, financing, private schooling and advisory bodies). The major reforms of education systems are also considered.

The other chapters deal in turn with pre-primary education, compulsory and post-compulsory education (general, technical and vocational), the initial vocational training of young people and higher education. Here also, the way these chapters are structured depends on each national context. Where pre-primary education is not in reality separate from primary education, or where compulsory education spans different levels, no artificial division has been created. In the case of all countries, a brief description of the aims and structure of the level of education concerned is followed by further headings devoted to the curriculum, assessment, teachers and statistics.

Initial vocational training is the subject of a chapter in its own right, as it is generally provided outside the ordinary education system, whether as part of schemes for apprenticeship, the special training of young people or vocational integration. This is followed by a chapter on higher education, in which a summary description is supplemented by sections on admission, fees, the academic year, courses, qualifications and assessment.

As indicated above, this latest updating also provides for the first time a general description of the way formal systems of general education and vocational training for adults are organized. The legislative framework and financing of this kind of education are also covered.

The situation regarding teachers is dealt with in a specific section for each level of education discussed. Also provided are statistics on the number of pupils, students, teachers and educational institutions and, where figures are available, on pupil or student/teacher ratios, attendance and attainment rates or, yet again, on the choice of branches of study or areas

¹ **The European countries taking part in the Community Programme in Education, Socrates.**

of specialization.

The description for each country is preceded by a diagram of its education system with explanatory notes. Here again, the way the diagrams are presented has, as far as possible, been standardized so that common – and differing – features of the various systems can be more easily identified and compared.

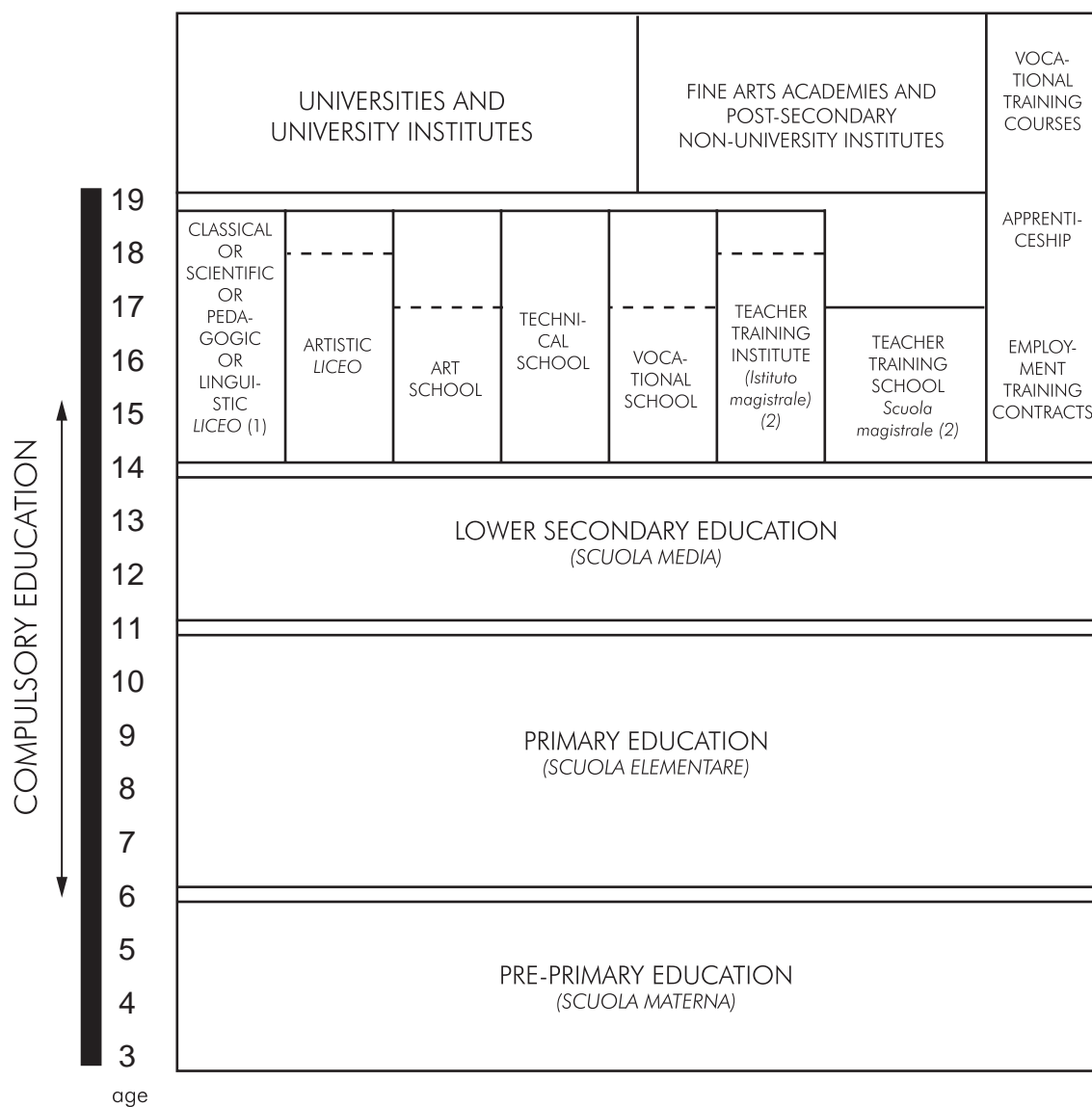
The National Units in the EURYDICE Network have drafted the descriptions for their countries, each using the same proposed outline of content as a common framework. The information on initial vocational training and on adult education has been prepared in close collaboration with members of the documentary information network of CEDEFOP (in the case of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries) and the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation – ETF (as regards the ten countries of central and eastern Europe). We are extremely grateful to them and to all those who were involved in this project, both in the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels and at CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki, for their invaluable contribution to this fundamental source of information which is vital to a better understanding of education and training systems in Europe.

Luce Pépin
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March 2000

ITALY



(1) The *Liceo linguistico* and the *Liceo pedagogico* are still in the experimental phase.

(2) School to be discontinued the final first-level class having been created in the school year 1997/98.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Background

On 1 January 1997, the population of Italy was 57,563,354. The country covers an area of 301,341 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. The executive power belongs to the Government.

For administrative purposes, Italy is divided into 20 autonomous territorial areas, known as Regions. Each of these possesses its own legislative, administrative and financial powers. (Legislative powers are conferred on the Regional Council; the Regional Commission is the executive body). The regions are divided into provinces, each of which consists of a number of communes linked to an urban centre or capital. At both provincial and communal levels, administration is in the hands of elected councils.

Italian is the official language, although in some areas (the Valley of Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia) the use of the local language 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 which is, however, not a state religion.

In 1997, the main employment sectors were agriculture (3.5%), industry and building (36.5%); the other 60% of the working population was employed in other activities.

The unemployment rate was 12.2%.

1.2 Basis of the educational system: principles - legislation

The basic principles relating to education, laid down in the Italian Constitution, 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 and duty of parents to educate their children for at least eight years (corresponding to primary and lower secondary education, which is free of charge in state schools); and the right to education and vocational assistance for those who are incapacitated and handicapped. Furthermore, "those possessing capacity and merit, even if they lack the means, have the right to attain the highest level of studies" (art. 34 of the Italian Constitution).

Application of the basic principles of the Constitution has inspired all subsequent legislation, which has insisted in particular on obligatory schooling, teacher training, allowing pupils to develop their full potential, integration of the handicapped, 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, following delegation from the Parliament or in case of necessity or urgency.

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 organization of services within their area competence.

1.3 Distribution of responsibilities for the organization and administration of the system of education and training

The overall responsibility for education is in the hands of two ministries: the Ministry for Public Education (*MPI*) which covers all pre-primary, primary and secondary education; and the Ministry for Universities and Scientific Research (*MURST*), to which powers over all higher education were transferred from the *MPI* in

1989.

The process of decentralisation, which started in the 1970s, gathered speed with Law no. 59 of 15 March 1997 and the subsequent delegated decrees conferred on the regions, provinces and communes all the functions and administrative responsibilities exercised by any State body, apart from those linked to matters expressly reserved to the State.

In 1998, as a consequence of the new regulations, the MPI authorised forms of experimentation of school autonomy. School autonomy, that will come into force on the 1st of September 2000, is intended to bring the educational establishments to achieve autonomy in the fields of administration, organisation, pedagogy, research, experimentation and development.

All universities and institutes of university level are autonomous bodies, as regards both their administrative and financial management, as well as pedagogy and scientific research.

Since 1975, the regions have had legal and administrative responsibility for vocational training offered to young people outside the educational system. However, in the last few years, the resources of schools, regional authorities and enterprises have co-operated an integrated educational system is being realised with the Ministry of Labour playing a role of guidance and co-ordination.

Ministry of Public Education (Ministerio della Pubblica Istruzione-MPI)

On the national level, the Ministry of Public Education is in charge of policy and government rulings, and of supervising and co-ordinating all teaching activities. It plans and promotes education, and is responsible for the general supervision of all schools. It fixes the general lines of the programmes and the assessment, as well as the calendar and certain contents of the final examinations for the higher secondary and post-secondary non-university levels.

On the local level, the Ministry is represented by peripheral, regional and provincial offices which implement centrally-defined political and administrative directives and establish contact with regional and local authorities in order to harmonise activities and services.

In each of the 20 regions, there is a Regional Education Superintendency (*Sovrintendenza Scolastica Regionale*) managed by a Superintendent; and in each of the provinces a Provincial Directorate of Education (*Provveditorato agli Studi*), managed by a Provincial Director of Education.

The Regional Superintendencies are above all involved in upper secondary school teacher recruitment, through the organisation and administration of competitions for teaching posts (*concorsi*), and setting the dates of the school year.

The main task of the Provincial Directorates is to ensure the enforcement of centrally-issued directives applicable to educational institutions, both private and state, at the primary and secondary levels.

The Provincial Directors of Education consult the Provincial Schools Councils and the Educational District Councils which are concerned with the establishment and/or merging of schools, educational guidance, out-of-school activities, etc.

Law no. 59, voted in 1997, started the process of reform of the administration of schools and colleges.

Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research (MURST)

The Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research was established in May 1989. The Ministry's tasks are to plan and promote scientific and technological research; to draw up the university development plan every three years; to distribute the funds in the Ministry's budget for universities, on the basis of objective criteria defined by law; to co-ordinate Italian participation in international programmes involving universities and/or scientific research; and, with the Ministry of Public Education, to provide co-ordination between university education and the other levels of education.

Schools and Institutes of Higher Education

The law of 15 March 1997, no. 59, broadened the process of decentralisation of the educational system which had already been launched by the 1974 Delegated Decrees. The above-mentioned law (article 21) and the corresponding executive ruling grant schools autonomy as regards pedagogy, organisation and research, experimentation and development.

Autonomy cannot be granted schools with less than 500 pupils. Autonomous schools are also legal entities, and are responsible, in as far as these fall within the remit of the Ministry of Public Education and the Provincial Directorates of Education, for curriculum planning and the relationship with the pupils, with the

management of property and resources, and with the legal and economic status of the staff (with the exception of recruitment and mobility).

In each school, management and direction are exercised by the School Council for secondary schools (*Consiglio d'Istituto*) or by the Circle Council for primary schools and kindergartens (*Consiglio di Circolo*) and the head teacher in secondary schools (*Preside*) or the teaching director in primary schools or kindergartens (*Direttore didattico*).

The School or Circle Council is responsible for budget matters as well as for organising and planning school activities.

The school heads are responsible for the overall management of their establishments. They are their legal representatives, and are responsible for the management of financial and material resources and for the results of the service. They enjoy autonomous powers for directing, ordering and making maximum use of resources and, to this end, they promote initiatives in order to ensure the quality of the training processes and collaboration with the resources of their territory.

Law no. 59 of 15 March 1997 also stipulated that schools with teaching autonomy can fix the curricula within the framework of the national learning objectives, and attain them with autonomous training programmes. With their organisational autonomy, they can organise the timetable in a flexible manner, respecting the annual sum of hours, and they can organise their school in terms of their territory.

The Teachers' Assembly (*Collegio dei docenti*) formulates teaching and educative plans for each school year, taking into account specific local requirements and national learning guidelines. It decides on types of interdisciplinary co-ordination while respecting the freedom of teaching of each teacher. It periodically evaluates the overall teaching activity to check that it conforms to the planned objectives.

The Class Council (*Consiglio di classe*), in secondary schools, and the Interclass Council (*Consiglio di interclasse*), in primary schools, formulate educational and teaching plans for the class, check the progress of teaching and discipline in the class, organise experimental and recycling initiatives, and carry out the periodical 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 made by the Academic Senate (*Senato Accademico*), a collegiate body with decision-making responsibilities as regards educational

and scientific subjects and questions of general interest, and by the Administration Council (*Consiglio di Amministrazione*), the board responsible for the administrative, economic and financial management of the university.

Each university is divided into a certain number of faculties which carry out administrative and scientific and educational activities. The Faculty Council (*Consiglio di Facoltà*) programmes and co-ordinates the teaching activity.

The Departments promote research activities in a set field of study. They have their own structures and financial as well as financial and managerial autonomy. The Department Council (*Consiglio di Dipartimento*) makes decisions regarding research and teaching activities.

Local and territorial authorities (Regions, Provinces and Communes)

All regions have their own legislative and administrative responsibilities within the general guidelines set out in state laws. In collaboration with the local authorities (Provinces and Communes), they plan the establishment and construction of new schools. They organise measures to make it possible for all pupils to complete compulsory education and, if they so desire, to continue their studies (*diritto allo studio*). The regions are responsible for programming training integrated into education and vocational training, for programming the school network on the basis of the provincial plans, and for making financial contributions to non-state schools.

1.4 Inspection

The Technical Inspectorate provides the Ministry of Public Education with technical advice and supervises the educational system as a whole. Inspectors are answerable to the Minister who appoints the Central and Regional Coordinators.

Some inspectors work at the Ministry for Public Education (MPI) and some work at regional level, divided up according to types of schools or subject areas, on the basis of programmes defined annually at the national and regional service conferences. An annual activities report is drawn up by the Central Coordinator. The duties of inspectors include: technical assistance to schools carrying out experimental projects; technical and educational advice to schools on planning, organization and research activities;

collaborating in defining proposals for renewing teaching programmes and examinations; ensuring the implementation of Ministerial Directives and the appropriate use of human and material resources; and collaborating in defining in-service training plans for school staff and giving advice during their implementation.

1.5 Financing

With regard to public education, the state funds the central and peripheral offices of the Ministry of Public Education, the salaries and the initial and in-service training of teaching and non-teaching staff in compulsory education and most upper secondary schools, and the purchase of teaching materials. Most funds are transferred to the provincial offices of the Ministry of Public Education or to individual schools. The School or Circle Council decides on the purchase, renewal and maintenance of school equipment and teaching materials, library endowments and teaching material for the classes. The preliminary budget and final accounts for school expenditure are drawn up by an Executive Board, elected by the School Council and chaired by the head teacher. The school secretary, with clerical assistance, is responsible for accounting matters within the school and is an ex-officio member of the Executive Board.

Technical and vocational schools (see 4.C) use funds allocated directly by the Ministry of Public Education for necessary expenditure and purchases, investment and the collection of funds needed for operating agricultural schools, laboratories and facilities attached to these schools. The School Council and school secretary have additional accounting responsibilities.

Regions have particular financial powers as regards school buildings, education, training and vocational guidance, school transport, school meals and the supply of textbooks free of charge for primary school pupils, but these powers are usually delegated to the provinces and communes. The provincial authorities cover the cost of building primary and lower secondary schools, and technical and scientific upper secondary schools. The communal authorities cover the building costs of classical upper secondary schools (see 4.A).

Modest contributions are asked of the families of the pupils in compulsory education; however, in the upper secondary schools they must pay registration fees, examination fees and contributions for the running of laboratories.

Textbooks are free only for primary school pupils. However, Law no. 448 voted in 1998 introduced the principle that contributions for the purchase of books can also be given to lower secondary school pupils (see 3B), on the basis of certain conditions of merit and results. In upper secondary schools, books may be lent to the pupils free of charge.

The Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research distributes available funds amongst various state universities and those private universities which have conformed to the structure of the public sector and have obtained authorization to issue legally recognized qualifications. Private universities also receive financial resources from local organizations, associations or foundations. In the context of university autonomy, state universities are allowed to accept financing and contributions for research and for other activities. Additional income comes from fees paid by the students.

1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

The National Education Council (*Consiglio Nazionale della Pubblica Istruzione*) is a consultative body that assists the Minister of Public Education with the planning and supervision of education policy. It is made up of 74 members representing teaching staff, head teachers and principals from educational institutions at all levels, both state run and legally recognized, technical inspectors and personnel from central and peripheral education authorities, the world of work (and the economy) and universities. It is chaired by the Minister. It draws up the analytic assessment report on the overall progress of the educational system and gives opinions that are obligatory for experimentation and innovation in teaching methods, and also on conditions of service and the recruitment of teaching staff.

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

The Standing Conference of the Rectors of Italian Universities (*Conferenza Permanente dei Rettori delle Università Italiane: CRUI*) is the consultative body that promotes better

organization of teaching activity and scientific research. Together with the Minister, it defines the objectives of the university system every three years.

On the subject of the right to study, the Minister asks the opinion of the National Council for the Right to University Studies (*Consulta Nazionale per il Diritto agli Studi Universitari*), while the National Council for Research (*Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche: CNR*) is the consultative body through which the scientific community contributes to the definition of policies concerning scientific and technological research.

Students also have a participatory body: the National Council of University Students (*Consiglio Nazionale degli Studenti Universitari*), made up of 28 members. It makes proposals and expresses opinions on proposed laws and regulations concerning the universities.

1.7 Private schools

Article 33 of the Italian Constitution states that bodies and private individuals may institute schools and educational establishments without contribution from the state. The state gives broad scope for the opening and running of private educational establishments, but they must comply with public order, hygiene and health regulations.

According to the Constitution, private schools may also ask for authorized status (*parità*), which gives them entire freedom, while their pupils obtain conditions of schooling equivalent to those in state schools.

There are two categories of non-state primary schools: state authorized schools (*scuole parificate*), those managed by corporations or associations with legal status, established after approval from the Provincial Director of Education, with the authorization of the Ministry of Public Education, and authorized private schools (*scuole private autorizzate*), managed by citizens possessing upper secondary school qualifications and shown to be legally and morally capable, who receive the necessary authorization from the Educational Director.

Establishments of secondary education of this type may be legally recognized schools (*scuole legalmente riconosciute*) or schools recognized by the State with an equivalent status to that of public schools, according to Ministerial Decree. These are known as state authorized schools (*scuole pareggiate*), and may be administered by public bodies or ecclesiastical bodies,

whereas legally recognized schools may be managed by public bodies or individuals.

In legally recognized schools, the curricula, pupil assessment and teachers' qualifications must be similar in every way to those in state schools.

The State rarely provides financial aid to private schools and then only in the form of subsidies or grants to institutions that cater for educational or social needs that state education does not meet.

As concerns higher education, there are two types of non-state institutions:

1) institutions giving non-university higher level degrees for the exercise of highly specialized professions in the artistic field. These institutions are opened and managed by public administrations or by bodies with legal status and, insofar as they are equivalent to the programmes and contents of similar state schools or those considered to be of public interest, obtain legal recognition of the qualifications they give;

2) higher level institutions with university status. Law no. 243, voted in 1991, recognizes that in Italy there have existed for some time non-state universities, qualified as "free", or private, founded by private individuals (who have made available the funding necessary for their functioning) and by local bodies, associations or foundations, which provide the resources necessary for these institutions. In order to give their students legal recognition of their qualifications, private universities must agree to bring their curricula into conformity with those of the state universities, and submit to the supervision of the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research concerning the legitimacy of the administrative management and the organization of the teaching programme.

The State may make contributions to legally recognized non-state universities and higher educational institutions that have obtained the authorization to confer legally valid qualifications. These contributions are based on the number of students enrolled, the number of doctoral courses being followed, and the proportions of the teaching and other staff, including the administration.

1.8 Statistics

	Non-state <i>Scuola materna:</i>	Non-state <i>Scuola elementare:</i>	Non-state <i>Scuola media:</i>
Pupils	688,433	203,500	72,778
Teachers	34,035	17,453	10,083
Schools	12,423	1,982	775
Sections / Classes	27,962	10,667	3,760

Sources: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, *La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati*, 1998.

ISTAT, *Annuario Statistico Italiano*, 1998.

2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION (*Scuola materna*)

The present system of state nursery schools (*Scuola materna*) was established by Law no. 44, voted in 1968; this provides, amongst other things, funding for non-state (local or private) nursery schools. Before 1968, nursery schools were established and run only by Communes and by private or religious bodies.

According to the Guidelines for Educational Activity in State Nursery Schools, published by the Ministry of Public Education in its decree of June 1991, although pre-primary education is not compulsory it has been recognized as an initial stage in the educational process. The aims of pre-primary education, set out in the Guidelines, are to strengthen children's physical, intellectual and psychodynamic characteristics, to help them gradually to achieve independence and to develop their sensorial, perceptive, motor, linguistic and intellectual abilities.

On an average, 97.8% of children aged between 3 and 6 years attend nursery schools (statistics for 1997/98), with a slender majority of enrolments in state schools. Schools are coeducational.

Nursery schools may be situated on the same premises as primary schools, or else separately.

2.1 Organization

The responsibility for state pre-primary educational establishments, for children aged 3 to 6 years, lies with the Ministry of Public Education, with the administration of the majority of nursery schools delegated to local education authorities. The establishment of state nursery schools has led to an expansion in provision for staff which has not, however, succeeded in covering the whole of the demand. For this reason, non-state schools receive funding from the State provided that certain conditions, considered essential, are observed.

Private pre-primary establishments usually charge fees; other do not, but parents may contribute to the cost of transport and school meals provided by the communes, as is the case for state nursery schools.

Nursery schools are under the administrative responsibility of an Educational Directorate (*Direzione Didattica*).

School activities normally last a minimum of 7 hours a day, 4 hours in the morning and 3 hours in the afternoon, but can be increased to 9 or 10 hours, usually on 5 or sometimes 6 (including Saturdays) days a week, depending on the needs of the families concerned.

Under the prevailing system of organizational and teaching autonomy, nursery schools may organize their school activities in a flexible manner.

The school year starts in September, on a date varying according to the region, and ends on 30 June, with holiday periods at Christmas, Easter, and in summer. Teaching must be provided for at least 10 months and may be extended to 11 months at parents' request. In July and August, communes may run educational and recreational services with different staff.

Schools are structured into groups or sections. Typically, a school has three sections comprising 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 be composed of only one mixed-age section.

Normally, each section of a nursery school must have a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 25 children, with two teachers per section; it must have no more than 20 children when there are children with handicaps.

2.2 Curriculum/Assessment

The Ministerial Guidelines of 1991 suggest that teachers organize activities in accordance with the age, maturity and environment of the pupils, to incorporate the following "areas of experience": body and movement; speech and words; space, order and measure; objects, time and nature; messages, forms and media; the self and others. The timetable, which is the responsibility of the teachers' educational and teaching programme, is composed of the themes involved in these areas of experience.

The teaching method is focused on the development of play, on exploration and research and on the relational aspect of life, and the activities, whether organized or free, must be varied, progressive, and explained. The choice of teaching method and materials are left to the free discretion of the teacher.

As concerns assessment, the Guidelines prescribe that the teacher's initial assessment of the child's ability on admission be followed by other checks throughout the school year, making it possible continually to adjust educational methods and content to the child's abilities. A final assessment of skills is made before the child enters primary school. Specific programmes to prepare pupils for the transition

to primary school are frequently organized, as well as information meetings for parents to discuss the transition procedure.

2.3 Teachers

Two teachers are appointed for each section. Although there are no rules to this effect, it is common practice for the same teachers to remain with the same section throughout the three years of the cycle.

Until the academic year 1997/98, nursery school teachers were trained at upper secondary school level (*Scuola magistrale*) through a three-year concurrent academic and teacher training course, including teaching practice. Under the legislation of November 1990 and the subsequent executive decrees of 1997, nursery school teachers are trained through a four-year concurrent university course of academic and teacher training. After gaining a qualification, teachers must pass the competitive examination (*concorso*) to acquire permanent teacher status.

Nursery school teachers do not specialize in specific subjects. They may work full-time or part-time and those in state schools have civil servant status. Those in legally recognized private schools must also have the qualifications stipulated for state pre-primary teachers.

Teachers are not legally required to follow in-service training, although it is considered to be their right and their duty to do so.

2.4 Statistics

1997/98 school year	
State schools:	
Number of pupils per teacher:	11.7
Number of pupils per section:	23.4
Pupils	917,881
Teachers	81,273
Schools	13,624
Sections	39,283

Sources: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, *La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati*, 1998. ISTAT, *Annuario Statistico Italiano*, 1998.

3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION/TRAINING

Article no. 34 of the Constitution stipulates that "lower education dispensed for at least eight years is compulsory and free of charge". The law of 20 January 1999, no. 9 increased the duration of compulsory education to nine years, with effect from school year 1999/2000. In this way, compulsory education begins at the age of six years and continues up to the age of 15, including five years of primary, three years of lower secondary and one year of upper secondary education. There is a long-standing proposal to make an overall reform of the school system and to extend compulsory training until the age of 18 years.

The national laws and rulings on compulsory education, valid throughout the country, concern both state schools and legally recognized private schools. The latter may receive State grants if the services they offer replace or complete those offered by the State.

Compulsory education may be completed by attending state or non-state schools or through education at home (although the latter case is very rare).

3A Primary Education (*Scuola elementare*)

Between 1985 and 1990 primary education, which is dispensed only in primary schools, underwent a major process of renewal with new curricula and a new structure set out in legislation. The educational aims and curricula of primary schools are defined and set out on a national basis.

The principal aim of primary school education is to train human beings and citizens according to the principles set out in the Italian Constitution. It must promote initial cultural literacy, it is one of the basic forms of social training for children's personalities, and gives the essential elements for participation in social life.

Law no. 148 of 1990 reforming the structure of primary education also requires there to be continuity in the education process with nursery school and lower secondary education.

Primary education is provided in state and

officially recognized private schools.

Children spend 5 years, from ages 6 to 11, in primary education, which is coeducational. Children may enter the first year if they have completed their sixth year of age or will do so by the 31 December following the beginning of the academic year.

Attendance is compulsory, and all children receive primary education.

Primary education is free of charge, but parents must contribute to transportation costs and to the cost of school meals provided by the Commune. In most non-state schools parents must also pay fees.

Comprehensive establishments comprising nursery, primary and lower secondary schools may be created and directed by a single principal.

3A.1 Organization of the school

Generally, the pupils are divided into classes of the same age-group. In smaller schools, children of all ages and all levels and capacities may be grouped together in a single class.

Normally, classes comprise no more than 25 pupils, no more than 20 if there is a handicapped child requiring special education, and no less than 15 pupils.

The school year starts in September, at different dates according to the regions, and ends in mid-June, with holidays at Christmas, at Easter and in the summer. It covers a minimum of 200 school days per year.

Primary school education is divided into two cycles, one of which lasts two years (cycle 1), and the other of which lasts three years (cycle 2). The pupils progress automatically from cycle 1 to cycle 2.

In the first year, the timetable covers 27 hours a week; this increases to 30 hours in the following years. Schools may decide to organize the weekly timetable in a flexible manner, depending on local requirements; generally the timetable is spread over five or six mornings and one, two or three afternoons a week. The new autonomy in organization and teaching has led

to greater flexibility.

Based on parents' choices and local availability, children may go to school on a full-time basis, generally for 40 hours a week spread over 5 school days.

The choice of textbooks is left to the individual teachers, following the advice of the Interclass Council (*Consiglio di interclasse*). The books chosen are officially approved by the Teachers' Assembly (*Consiglio dei docenti*).

3A.2 Curriculum

Law no. 148 of June 1990 reformed the primary school system and allowed the new curricula in their entirety, as approved by Presidential Decree no. 104 of February 1985. Subjects set out in the ministerial curricula are: Italian language, foreign language (introduced from the second year), mathematics, sciences, history, geography, social studies, art education, education in sound and music, physical education and Catholic religion (optional).

For each of the above-mentioned subjects, the programmes give indications on the contents, guidelines on the learning process to be followed, and on possible links between the various fields involved; however, they give no indication on the duration of the lessons. This is because the instruction for the first two years is based on an overall approach not yet divided into subjects. In the second cycle, teaching is divided into subjects which must, nonetheless, be inter-connected and taught in an overall context.

Teaching methods are left to the free choice of the teachers, but they must be related to the teaching programme that is drawn up collegially and which defines the learning processes, the procedures and the methods to be employed in order to obtain the objectives.

Teaching is divided into modules comprising three areas where subjects are grouped together (linguistic-expressive, scientific-logical-mathematical and historical-geographical-social).

A second foreign language may be taught optionally, during additional hours.

Teachers are responsible for one of the three areas and coordinate their own teaching activities with those of the other teachers in the module to ensure coherence and uniformity of teaching.

The timetable may reserve a certain number of

hours for individual catching-up or for small groups of slow learners, which may include foreign pupils, particularly those from non-EEC countries, or else for integrational school activities organized by groups of pupils.

3A.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

Pupils' progress and maturity are assessed throughout the school year, on the basis of individual teachers' observations of written and oral classwork and homework, by the Inter-class Council (*Consiglio d'interclasse*), an assembly of teachers of all the parallel classes.

For the purposes of assessment, the school year is divided into periods of three or four months and a report is sent to parents at the end of each period. Assessments are not expressed in the form of numerical marks; the reports show an assessment according to subject and globally of the development and formation of the pupil's personality and his or her commitment to learn. The evaluations are expressed on five levels: "excellent" (*ottimo*), "very good" (*distinto*), "good" (*buono*), "sufficient" (*sufficiente*) or "insufficient" (*non sufficiente*). "Excellent" (*ottimo*) means all the objectives have been attained, whereas "insufficient" (*non sufficiente*) means they have not. Parents may meet teachers for an explanation of the reports.

There is a final assessment, based on the year's work, at the end of the year for admission to the following year; non-admission occurs only in exceptional cases at the recommendation of the Inter-class Council.

In any event, within the autonomy granted to the school, the organization of the assessment process is the responsibility of the Teachers' Assembly which must select, vote or create its own parameters suitable for the quality of the education and based on the criteria behind the procedures of programming and assessment.

At the end of the fifth year, pupils take the primary school leaving certificate examinations (*Licenza elementare*) to gain access to lower secondary school (*scuola media*). This consists of two written papers, relating respectively to language and expression and to logic and mathematics, and one oral examination covering all subjects together. The examiners are the class teachers and two teachers appointed by the Teachers' Assembly. Should a pupil fail this examination, which is extremely unusual, he or she may repeat the year and retake it.

3A.4 Teachers

Since 1990, teachers have no longer been allocated to a class but to 'modules' which may comprise two classes with three teachers or three classes with four teachers. Teachers are not subject specialists, but on the basis of their specific competencies they are responsible for one of the three subject areas covered by each module (see para. 3A.2. Curriculum). Teachers remain in the same module for all five classes.

Until school year 1997/98, primary school teachers were trained at upper secondary school level (*Istituto magistrale*), through four-year concurrent academic and teacher training courses, including teaching practice. Under the legislation of November 1990 and the subsequent executive degrees issued in 1997, primary school teachers are trained through a four-year university course covering both theoretical and practical aspects. After gaining a qualification, teachers must pass the competitive examination (*concorso*) to acquire permanent teacher status.

Primary school teachers may work full-time or part-time and those in state schools have civil servant status. Those teaching in officially recognized private schools must have the same qualifications as those in state schools.

Teachers are not legally required to follow in-service training, but in-service up-dating is considered to be their right and their duty.

3A.5 Statistics

1997/98 school year	
State schools:	
Number of pupils per teacher:	10.5
Number of pupils per class:	17.7
Pupils	2,618,077
Teachers	269,018
Schools	17,544
Classes	148,036

Source: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, *La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati*, 1998. ISTAT, *Annuario Statistico Italiano*, 1998.

3B Compulsory Secondary Education (*Scuola media*)

The next three years of compulsory schooling, for pupils aged 11 to 14, take place in lower secondary schools (*scuola media*). These schools, which follow the same programme for all, were instituted by Law no. 1859 of 1962. The programmes and timetables at present in effect were established in 1979.

Access to this level of education is dependent on passing the primary school leaving certificate examinations (*certificato di licenza elementare*).

Lower secondary schools are fully comprehensive and provide free education (to a common curriculum) for all children in the appropriate age range. The main aim of this level of education is to promote the training of human beings and citizens, according to the principles stipulated by the Constitution, and to help guide young people towards the choice of their subsequent activity, by enhancing their capacity to share and develop the values of culture, civilization and sociability.

During this final compulsory year, which is spent in an upper secondary educational establishment (see 4. Post-Compulsory Secondary Education), schools provide both training on major subjects of culture, society and contemporary science, and guidance designed to combat dispersion of time and effort, to ensure the right to education and training, to permit pupils to make the choices that best correspond to their personality and their own plans for their life and, where appropriate, to help the pupil to pass from one specialized area to another of upper secondary education.

3B.1 Organization of the school

Pupils are divided into classes on the basis of their age. No class may contain more than 25 pupils (no more than 20 if one or more of the children is handicapped) and no less than 15.

The school year starts in September, at different dates depending on the Regions, and ends in mid-June, with holidays at Christmas, at Easter and in summer, covering a minimum of 200 school days per year.

The weekly timetable consists of 30 hours of lessons. Organizational and teaching autonomy entails that the timetable may cover five or six days a week, usually restricted to

mornings. Variations may be introduced in the number of lessons and in the weekly timetable on the basis of local requirements and the educational programme.

If a sufficient number of families so requests (enough to allow for the formation of one or more classes), a school may decide to extend the school timetable to 36-40 hours a week (plus school lunch breaks). These additional hours are used for extra-curricular or subsidiary studies as well as for various forms of catching-up, etc.

There are no prescribed textbooks or teaching materials; the subject teachers may choose them freely after consulting the Class Council. The books selected are officially approved by the Teachers' Assembly.

3B.2 Curriculum

The general outline of the curriculum is laid down by the Ministry of Public Education by Ministerial Decree of February 1979. Each school then adapts this to local and environmental circumstances in the form of educational and teaching plans, which include all initiatives to support educational activities for the coming school year.

The subjects taught and the weekly timetable are the following:

SUBJECT	hours per week			
	Class I	Class II	Class III	Examinations
Religion	1	1	1	--
Italian	7	7	6	W.○
History, civics and geography	4	4	5	○.
Foreign language	3	3	3	W.○
Mathematics				
chemistry, physics, natural science	6	6	6	W.(1)
Technical education	3	3	3	○.
Art	2	2	2	○.
Music	2	2	2	○.
Physical education	2	2	2	○.
	30	30	30	

(1) The written examination concerns only mathematics.

(2) Abbreviations: W. = written; ○ = oral.

Religious education is optional.

A second foreign language may be taught optionally, during extra hours.

Each teacher is free to use the teaching methods he or she considers to be the most effective in order to attain the objectives defined collegially and checked in the educational programme.

The programme may also provide for flexibly structured and inter-related teaching activities (interdisciplinary activities, individualized interventions, and variable groupings of pupils, even from different classes, and the use of teachers specialising in the special education sector).

3B.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

For the purposes of assessment, the school year is divided into three or four-month periods. At the end of each period, an analytical written assessment based on the information in the personal record is submitted by each subject teacher using the criteria "excellent" (*ottimo*), "very good" (*distinto*), "good" (*buono*), "sufficient" (*sufficiente*) and "insufficient" (*non sufficiente*) to the Class Council (*Consiglio di Classe*), which then formulates an overall written assessment. The written assessments and the personal record are sent to parents with explanatory notes. At its final overall assessment meeting of the year, the Class Council decides whether pupils should move up to the following year.

In all cases, the organization of the assessment process, which is realized autonomously, is the responsibility of the Teacher's Assembly which must select, vote or create its own valuation parameters, adapted to the area of instruction and based on the criteria which have guided the programming and assessment processes.

Pupils who repeat the year may remain longer than the three years comprising the cycle (but no longer than 6 years). Certain pupils leave school without obtaining the lower secondary school leaving certificate (*Diploma di Licenza Media*) once they have completed the number of years of compulsory education.

At the end of the third year, pupils take the examination for the lower secondary school leaving certificate (*Diploma di Licenza Media*), which is necessary for entry to upper secondary schools. This is administered by the teachers and an outside chairman. The examination consists of three written tests (Italian, mathematics and a foreign language) and a multidisciplinary oral test. The marks for each test are used as a basis for determining an overall mark of "excellent" (*ottimo*), "very good"

(*distinto*), "good" (*buono*), "sufficient" (*sufficiente*) or "fail" (*non licenziato*). For pupils passing the examination, advice and suggestions regarding further education are appended to the certificate.

This form that this examination takes is not institutionalized, and each Class Council may conduct it as it sees fit.

Each pupil receives an attestation of completion of compulsory education, which contains the final overall assessment of the Class Council; it is attached to the personal record.

Under the general reorganization from the school year 1999/2000, at the end of the period of compulsory education, pupils are tested on their level of learning, training and maturity and receive a certificate stating they have fulfilled their educational obligations or have completed its compulsory duration. This certificate is a training diploma which mentions the pupil's educational history and the skills he or she has acquired.

3B.4 Teachers

Teachers are specialized in a subject, but they interact with the other teachers to produce an interdisciplinary approach. Each teacher is allocated to one or more classes. They generally remain with the same class for the duration of the cycle.

Normally, teachers are required to have a university degree or a diploma from an institution of higher education or of upper secondary education in their specialist subject.

University courses for teachers of this level last between four and six years.

After obtaining their qualifications, future teachers must then pass the examination (*concorso*) to gain access to a trial year of teaching, during which the teacher must attend training seminars.

Under the Law of November 1990 and its subsequent executive decrees of 1997 and 1998, starting in school year 1999/2000 specialization courses will be organized for prospective secondary school teachers at post-graduate specialization schools. These will lead to a diploma qualifying for admission to examinations for permanent posts in secondary schools.

Teachers in state schools have civil servant status, and may work full-time or part-time.

Teachers are not legally required to follow in-service training, but in-service updating is considered to be their right and duty.

3B.5 Statistics

1997/98 school year	
State schools:	
Number of pupils per teacher:	9.2
Number of pupils per class:	20.2
Pupils	1,740,355
Teachers	204,442
Schools	8,049
Classes	86,320

Source: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, *La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati*, 1998. ISTAT, *Annuario Statistico Italiano*, 1998.

4. POST-COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION

Upper secondary education is the only level of education with a structure that has remained unchanged over a period of several decades, based on the framework law of the Gentile reform in 1923. However, a Presidential Decree of 1974 allows schools to experiment

with the overall curriculum structure and with contents and methods. A large proportion of schools have adopted these experimental projects.

Furthermore, in 1994 the timetables and programmes of the Technical (*Istituti tecnici*) and

Vocational Institutes (*Istituti professionali*) were reformed.

The aims that inspired the law that instituted these schools were based on the principle that the Classical *Liceo* and the Scientific *Liceo* provided the general cultural preparation for higher studies, whereas the Technical and Professional Institutes gave a professional specialization for the purposes of access to the world of work. Law no. 910 of 1969 stipulated that all candidates holding upper secondary school certificates could gain access to higher education, and thus this distinction has become much less clear.

All post-compulsory schools belong to upper secondary education which consists of the following categories:

- classical and scientific type: *Liceo classico*, *Liceo scientifico*(2);
- artistic type: *Liceo artistico*, *Istituto d'arte*;
- technical type: *Istituto tecnico*;
- vocational type: *Istituto professionale*.

These types of higher secondary schools cater for pupils aged between 14 and 19 years.

The classes are generally composed on the basis of age and are coeducational.

81% of the young people of this age bracket attend these schools.

In order to gain access to upper secondary schools, pupils must hold the lower secondary school leaving certificate (*diploma di licenza media*).

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 academic results at the end of the year. Generally speaking, pupils pay for their textbooks (see 1.5).

4A General Secondary Schools (*Liceo classico* and *Liceo scientifico*)

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

2 They will belong to the same category as the *Liceo linguistico* and the *Liceo pedagogico*, which have already been introduced on an experimental level and will become part of the school system in the next few years.

4A.1 Organization of the school

The Classical and Scientific *Licei* have a cycle lasting five years.

In the Classical *Liceo*, the dominant character of the teaching is 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 Regions, 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, at Christmas and at Easter.

Now that schools are autonomous, each establishment is free to organize 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, following the decision of the Teachers' Assembly.

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' Assembly.

4A.2 Curriculum

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

SUBJECT	Ginnasio		Classical Liceo		
	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
Drawing	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.

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 attributed autonomy to schools, the latter may - within the limits of the national learning objectives to be attained by means of autonomous training programmes which replace the national programmes - establish their own curricula, 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 contents and methods that are best adapted to the class and to the individual pupils, providing they remain within the individually and jointly established teaching programmes.

The classical type of school also includes the Teacher Training Institutes and Schools (*Istituto Magistrale* and *Scuola Magistrale*), but with the application of the Law of 1990 on the university training of nursery and primary school teachers, the Teacher Training Institutes and Schools, the purpose of which was to train these teachers, are now obsolescent, with the last entrants beginning studies in the 1997/98 school year.

4A.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

For the purposes of assessment, the school year is again divided into periods of three or four months, depending on the Teachers' Assembly of each school. At the end of each period, the Class Council discusses and assesses each

pupil's work. This is based on the grades received by the pupil in oral and written tests taken in all subjects during the year, and 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. Pupils must achieve at least 6 out of 10 for each subject in order to pass.

Each school is autonomous in defining 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).

At the end of the upper secondary school, pupils take the examination for the upper secondary school leaving certificate: the State Examination (*Esame di Stato*). Only those with a positive assessment for the previous year are admitted to this examination; in fact, nearly 100% of pupils take it. The examination comprises two written tests, set by the Ministry of Public Education, a third test, set by an examination board set up by the school, and a viva. The papers are examined by an ad hoc committee. 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. Successful candidates receive a certificate mentioning the branch and duration of their studies, the subjects and courses included in the curriculum, the overall mark and a breakdown of the results obtained for each test, any extra points awarded, their school credit and documentation of training credits. The training credit refers to the pupil's practical experience outside of school in contexts and sectors of public life. The Class Council fixes the criteria for assessing these credits.

The individual Class Councils also establish what kind of academic and vocational guidance is to be given.

At the end of their upper secondary studies, students may choose freely the type of higher institution in which to enrol, within the limits established nationally or by each individual institution (see 6.A.1 and 6.B.1)

4A.4 Teachers

For upper secondary school teachers the same information applies as for lower secondary

school teachers, see 3B.4.

4B Artistic Secondary Schools

This category includes the *Liceo artistico* and the *Istituto d'Arte*. Both of these types of schools have as their main aim the preparation of pupils specialized in artistic branches.

4B.1 Organization of the school

The *Liceo artistico* offers pupils a specialized artistic education, particularly in the field of painting, sculpture, stage design and architecture.

The studies last for four years, and are divided into two sections: one for the study of figurative arts and stage design, and the other for the study of architecture. The initial two-year cycle is the same for both sections; in the second cycle, the number of hours attributed to the different branches of art varies. The first section gives access to the Academy of Fine Arts (*Accademia di Belle Arti*), and the second to the university architecture faculties. Pupils taking the additional fifth year obtain a certificate of completion of studies in upper secondary artistic education, which gives them access to all university faculties.

There are also numerous establishments with an experimental five-year cycle composed of a common two-year section followed by three years of specialization.

The aim of the Art Schools (*Istituto d'arte*) is to prepare pupils for traditional types of work and artistic output in industry, using the raw materials of the region. The study programmes of these schools cover a total of 34 sections (ceramics, gold, textiles, coral, alabaster, printing, wood, mosaics, glass, etc.).

Courses last three years and lead to the final examination for obtaining the master of applied art diploma (*Diploma di Maestro d'arte applicata*). A further two-year course has been established experimentally in some schools, making it possible for pupils to obtain the applied arts upper secondary school leaving certificate, which allows them to continue studying at higher-level art schools.

Several art schools have experimental five-year

cycles composed of a common section lasting two years followed by three years of specialization.

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

Courses start in September, at different dates according to the Regions, and finish in mid-June, with no less than 200 teaching days a year, with the exception of the final State Examination for the Artistic *Liceo* and the five-year experimental cycles, which may continue into July. There are holidays in summer, at Christmas and at Easter.

The schools may organize their timetables autonomously to cover 5 or 6 days and may vary the number of lessons.

4B.2 Curriculum

For the *Liceo artistico*, the compulsory subjects are divided into general and artistic subjects, with the following timetable:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		Year 4	
			Sect. I	Sect. II	Sect. I	Sect. II
Artistic subjects						
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
Cultural subjects						
Literature and history	3	3	4		4	
History of art	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

Religious education is optional.

Within the same class, the subjects are taught to all at the same level. In Art Schools, the subjects are also divided into compulsory general

subjects (general and artistic subjects) and artistic subjects which are optional, depending on the branch chosen.

Compulsory subjects:

- general subjects: Italian language and literature, history, civics, history of art and of applied arts, mathematics and physics, natural sciences, chemistry and geography.
- artistic subjects: Geometric and architectural drawing, life drawing, plastic arts.

Religious education is optional.

These basic subjects, common to all options, are supplemented by different technologies and practical work depending on the artistic branch chosen.

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

The educational autonomy granted schools entails that they may - within the limits of the national learning objectives to be achieved by means of autonomous training programmes in place of national programmes – set the curricula so as to contain the basic disciplines, those that are a compulsory part of the curriculum and additional, optional subjects.

Methods are chosen by individual teachers in relation to individual and group planning. In these schools, they are mostly based on laboratory/workshop activities.

4B.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

See 4A.3.

4B.4 Teachers

For upper secondary school teachers the same information applies as for lower secondary school teachers, see 3B.4.

4C Technical and Vocational Secondary Schools

The main purpose of technical education is to

give pupils between the age of 14 and 19 years specific theoretical and practical preparation for qualified work in various sectors, with particular attention to the requirements of the local labour market.

This education is given in Technical and Vocational Schools.

4C.1 Organization of the School

There are different types of Technical Schools (*Istituti Tecnici*): agricultural, commercial, turistic, surveying, industrial, naval. Each of these offers several branches and specializations. The courses are divided into two cycles, one of two years and one of three years. However, there is no examination between these two cycles.

The lessons cover five or six days a week. Their number varies according to the branch chosen, but there are generally 31 to 36 per week.

Vocational Schools (*Istituti professionali*) cover four sectors: agriculture, industry and crafts, services and special sectors (household linen, patisserie, musical instrument making, etc.). Each sector offers a number of branches which correspond to major vocational areas. Each branch leads to professional qualifications in a specialized area as a worker (after three years) or a technician (after the last two years).

These schools may organize evening courses.

Vocational schools offer three-year courses (*triennio di qualifica*) for pupils aged between 14 and 17, after which there is a two-year cycle (*biennio post-qualifica*), for pupils aged between 18 and 19.

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 organize the teaching and local demands.

4C.2 Curriculum

During the initial two-year cycle, the curriculum of the technical schools includes the following subjects, common to all specializations: Italian, history, geography, foreign language, mathematics, physics, earth sciences, biology, law and economics, physical education and religious education (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 specializations; the other subjects vary according to the branch chosen. A considerable part of the curriculum is reserved for practical exercises in specialized fields.

Both cycles include project time devoted to an interdisciplinary activity occupying 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 Schools, during the first cycle of three years (*triennio di qualifica*) 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 occupy a total of 22 hours per 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, earth sciences and biology, physical education and religious education (optional). There are also specific subjects for each specialization with their respective technologies, covering 14 hours a week during the first two years and 21 to 24 in the third year. 4 hours are also available for autonomous programming (detailed study) for reception and guidance activities, and for extra coaching and catching-up work in the case of disadvantaged students.

During the following two years (*biennio di post-qualifica*), the common subjects (covering 15 hours a week) and those proper to the branch chosen (15 hours a week) are supplemented by an intensive module of vocational training (field of vocational training) provided by the Region, totalling 300 to 450 hours a year. Lessons are mostly given by experts from the world of work, and a large portion of the timetable is reserved for work experience (placements).

The two-year study course ends with the upper secondary education leaving examination (*Esame di Stato*). The resulting diploma gives access to university courses, regional specialization courses and other post-secondary programmes.

Many Vocational Schools also organize post-diploma courses, in collaboration with regional vocational training programmes, leading to specializations or high level qualifications. The length of courses vary, but the average is 700 hours a year. These courses end with an examination.

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

The educational autonomy granted to schools means that they may - within the limits of the national learning objectives to be achieved by means of autonomous training programmes in place of national programmes – set the curricula so as to contain the basic disciplines, those that are a compulsory part of the curriculum and additional, optional subjects.

Methods are adapted to the objectives proper to each specialized branch and to local economic and social requirements, always seeking to create polyvalent professionalism, which will be the basis for any subsequent specialization.

Practical activity must give experience which will allow the pupil to follow the production processes that are typical of the sector concerned.

4C.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

When it comes to assessment criteria and methods of assessment, the information given in para. 4A.3. also applies to Technical and Vocational Schools.

In particular, in Vocational Schools, pupils sit the qualifying examination at the end of the three-year period. The corresponding diploma gives them direct access to the world of work, to regionally organized vocational training courses and to further study in post-qualification courses organized by Vocational Schools.

The certificate granted following the vocational training courses organized by the Regions (see 4C.2.) gives access to the world of work or to further specialization courses.

4C.4 Teachers

For upper secondary school teachers the same information applies as for lower secondary school teachers, see 3B.4.

Statistics

State Schools:	1997/98 school year
Proportion of young people attending	81.4%
Number of pupils per teacher	10.1
Number of pupils per class	21.8
Successful students (a)	430,238 (94.8%)

including those obtaining diplomas for the three-year cycles of Vocational and Artistic Schools.

	Pupils	Teachers*	Schools	Classes
<i>Liceo classico:</i>	232.427	15.921	470	10.175
<i>Liceo scientifico:</i>	467.335	31.427	778	19.881
<i>Istituto e scuola magistrale</i>	170.880	12.804	265	7.503
<i>Istituto professionale</i>	488.180	44.282	1.348	24.026
<i>Istituto tecnico</i>	983.558	94.788	1.737	45.352
<i>Istituto d'arte</i>	58.874	6.199	157	2.944
<i>Liceo artistico</i>	30.370	3.110	80	1.519
Totale	2.431.624	208.531	4.835	111.400
Total	2,431,624	208,531	4,835	111,400

* Teachers with permanent status

Source: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, *La scuola statale: sintesi dei dati*, 1998.

ISTAT, *Annuario Statistico Italiano*, 1998.

5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In Italy there are basically three forms of initial vocational training: employment-training contracts (*contratti di formazione-lavoro*, also known as "mixed contracts" [*contratti "a causa mista"*]), apprenticeship (*apprendistato*) and placements (*firocinio*). In recent months, initial vocational training provided on an alternance basis has been greatly promoted by the innovations introduced by Law no. 196 of 1997, which concern primarily apprenticeship and training placements.

5A Employment-Training Contracts

5A.1 Organization

Employment-Training Contracts were introduced in 1984 under Law no. 863. This law has since been considerably amended.

Young people aged between 16 and 32 years may be hired on employment-training contracts. Present legislation provides for two types of contract which differ in their aim, duration, the system of employment incentive and the minimum number of hours devoted to training.

Contract A is aimed at employees/trainees looking to acquire a high or medium degree of professional skill. It lasts for up to 24 months.

Contract B aims at facilitating vocational integration by giving the employee/trainee the working experience needed in order to adapt his or her professional capacities to the given production and organizational context. This contract may last up to 12 months.

Before a company can establish a contract, it must propose a "training project" mentioning the "times and forms of training and working activities", which must be approved by the approval of the Regional Employment Committees. This approval is not required for training projects covered by agreements between the social partners.

At the end of the contract the firm decides whether to continue employing the employee/trainee or to terminate the relationship.

In any case, the company must go on to sign permanent labour contracts with at least 60% of these employees/trainees in order to obtain further authorizations to take on labour under these conditions.

5A.2 Education/training establishments

No training is provided outside the firm.

5A.3 Financing

Training must take place at the firm's expense "at the place of work". This therefore excludes any kind of training by accompaniment, i.e. "on the job".

Firms providing this kind of training benefit from reductions in social security contributions and in taxation.

For type A contracts, the social security reductions granted to the firm continue throughout the employment-training contract. They differ greatly according to the geographical area, the type of undertaking and the economic sector, ranging from a 25% reduction to almost complete exoneration of pension and social security contributions.

For type B contracts, tax relief on employment-training contracts is conditional on the worker being employed subsequently on a permanent contract for at least the same period as the length of the employment-training contract itself.

5A.4 Curriculum

Type A contracts last for a maximum of 24 months. The theoretical and practical training must total at least 130 hours for highly qualified professions and 80 hours for medium qualified professions.

Type B contracts may last up to 12 months. The minimum number of hours to be reserved for training is 20.

5A.5 Assessment/Qualification/Guidance

At the end of the contract, the employer transmits to the authorities a certified report of the results obtained by the worker (type A contract), or else delivers to the worker him- or herself an attestation concerning the experience gained (type B contract).

5A.6 Teachers/trainers

In the case of employment-training contracts, the teachers are qualified workers belong to the firm employing young people.

5B Apprenticeship

5B.1 Organization

Apprenticeship is the type of alternance vocational training that provides the broadest integration between training and professional work experience. It was introduced in Italy during the 1950s in order to complete young people's vocational training while also facilitating their integration into the world of work. At present, it continues to try to bridge the gap between school and production systems.

The first legal texts regulating apprenticeship are found in Law no. 25 of 19 January 1955,

partially modified by Laws 424/68 and 56/87. In these texts, it is defined as "a special work relationship" in which the firm undertakes to provide the apprentice with sufficient training in his work through association with qualified staff. At the same time the apprentice is obliged to follow (free) training courses outside the firm.

Responsibility for setting up training programmes for apprentices lies with the Regions. This training consists of "theoretical, technical and practical activities". The time spent in training outside the firm is considered as work hours in every way.

Law no. 196 of 1997 has given new impetus to apprenticeship by valorizing the training element, with the aim of giving this institution a central role in training policies and in policies for the integration of young people into the labour market.

The modifications to the legal dispositions governing apprenticeship are so far-reaching to elicit reference to a "new model of apprenticeship". The main modifications are:

- broadening of the age bracket: the maximum age for apprentices has been raised to 24 years, which may be increased to 26 in the regions covered by Objectives 1 and 2 of the European Social Fund (the Mezzogiorno and industrially declining areas). The limit of 29 years for artisan apprentices has not been changed. For young people who are handicapped, all the age limits have been increased by two years;
- the extension of apprenticeship to young people holding diplomas and other qualifications: young people already in possession of professional qualifications may be eligible for an apprentice's contract;
- modification of the duration of the contract: the maximum duration of the contract has been reduced from 5 to 4 years, while a minimum limit of 18 months has been introduced;
- introduction of a minimum number of hours to be reserved for training outside the firm: a minimum average of 120 hours per year must be set aside for training courses outside the firm.

5B.2 Education/training establishments

The Regions are responsible for putting into practice training projects for apprentices, consisting of "theoretical, technical and practical activities". Time spent in training outside the

firm is considered as work hours in every way.

5B.3 Financing

The Region pays for training outside the firm.

The firm training an apprentice pays him or her a salary that is a proportion, calculated by collective work contracts, of the salary of a worker of comparable status. However, the firm benefits from considerable relief on social security contributions on apprenticeship contracts.

5B.4 Curriculum

Apprentices must spend at least 120 hours a year on training courses outside the firm.

5B.5 Assessment/Qualification/Guidance

Training activity for apprentices should end with an examination and the attribution of a qualification certificate; in practice, at the end of the apprenticeship, the employer records the qualification obtained in the apprentice's work book.

5B.6 Teachers/trainers

In apprenticeships, the teachers/trainers vary according to the particular training project undertaken by the Region.

5C Placements (*Tirocinio*)

5C.1 Organization

The growing demand for organized alternance activities linking school or training courses with integration into the world of production, as a means for providing guidance for future vocational choices, for practical application of knowledge acquired during training and for supporting integration into work has elicited regulations to govern placements or vocational courses.

These are of two types:

- training placements, promoted by training establishments for providing alternance between study and work (in every type of higher education, including university);

- vocational guidance placements, promoted by institutions and organisations active in the field of labour policies to make it easier for young people to make vocational choices through direct acquaintance with the world of work.

Promoters of vocational experience courses may be universities and schools, directors of education, training and guidance centres, employment bureaux and labour offices, as well as joint bodies and employers' and trade union associations, therapeutic communities, social cooperatives and organizations for integrating the disabled into the world of work.

In particular, it should be pointed out that the new ruling for Vocational Schools (*Istituti professionali*), issued in 1994 (see 4.C.2) has imposed a 300 hour placement for pupils in the two-year post-qualification cycle. Universities are also showing increasing interest in this system: many of them have created placement offices for this purpose, directed at degree (*laurea*) students and those holding a *laurea* within "framework conventions" concluded with Employers' Associations.

Firms receiving these students may be privately or publicly owned.

Also eligible are EU citizens gaining vocational experience in Italy, including those involved in specific programmes; in the future, this opportunity may also be offered to other foreign citizens according to rulings which have still to be drawn up.

The maximum duration of these placements is variable: no more than 4 months for guidance placements for students in upper secondary education, more than 12 months for university students and for those following higher training courses; a longer period (24 months) applies only for underprivileged candidates.

5C.2 Education/training establishments

Education or training dispensed outside the firm may take place in an upper secondary school, a university, a training and guidance centre, an employment bureau, a centre for integration into the world of work for the disabled, etc.

5C.3 Financing

No payment is offered to those undertaking work placements but the promoters of placements must insure trainees against accidents at work and for civil liability. Companies benefit from a full or partial refund of the financial costs associated with the realisation of work placement projects oriented towards young people from the south of Italy.

5C.4 Curriculum

The training value of these courses consists of the creation of a project linked to the placement. This forms part of the written agreement between the promoter and the host firm, which defines the objects and methods, "ensuring, for the students, the link with the training programmes undertaken at the establishments that they come from".

5C.5 Assessment/Qualification/Guidance

The activities undertaken in training and guidance placements may have the value of training credits. Where certified by the promoter, they may be included in the student's or worker's curriculum and used as an asset in seeking employment.

5C.6 Teachers/trainers

In placements, the placement project involves a teaching/organizing tutor employed by the promoter, assisted by the responsible person in the firm.

Statistics

Employment-Training Contracts

During 1997, 264,405 young people entered the world of work on employment-training contracts. The development of employment-training contracts during the 1990s is fairly stable: minor annual variations in the number of workers involved directly reflect the economic situation, without major differences with respect to geographic area.

Employment-training contracts are used by preference for young people over the age of 20; most of them are aged between 21 and 24 (41.8%). There are also a significant number of people aged over 30.

Apprenticeship

During 1997, 393,138 apprenticeship contracts were signed in Italy. This is 20,000 contracts fewer than the previous years, and confirms the negative trend observed over the 1990s.

Apprenticeship is the principal path to employment in the arts and crafts, and is mainly aimed at very young people: most apprentices are aged 14 to 20 (71.5%), whereas there are far fewer more "mature" apprentices, despite the tax relief offered to artisans employing young people under 30 years old.

Nevertheless, the most recent data do not show whether the modified legal norms will increase or widen the use of this instrument.

6. HIGHER EDUCATION

The legal foundations for the present-day higher education system in Italy are set out in Article 33 of the Italian Constitution, which recognizes the right of universities and academies to act autonomously within the limits set by the law. Both public and private organizations have the right to establish schools and educational institutes; therefore higher education is divided into state and non-state establishments. There is also a distinction between universities and non-university higher education, the latter mainly comprising establishments offering education in the arts (governed by special statutes).

6A Non-University Higher Education

Non-university higher education is dispensed in establishments having their own structures, statutes and organizations. Generally speaking, these can be divided into:

- establishments offering artistic education, which have special statutes and where the teaching, administration and general running are organized differently from other types of schools;
- establishments providing non-university higher education.

The first group includes Academies of Fine Arts (*Accademia di Belle Arti*), Higher Institutes for Art Industries (*Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche: ISIA*), National Academy of Dramatic Art (*Accademia Nazionale di Arte Drammatica*), National Academy of Dance (*Accademia Nazionale di Danza*) and Academies of Music (*Conservatori di Musica*).

The second group includes the Experimental Cinema Centre (*Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia*), the Central Restoration Institute (*Istituto Centrale del Restauro*), the Precious Stones Manufactory (*Opificio delle Pietre Dure*), the Archive Schools (*Scuola di Archivistica*), Palaeography and Diplomatic Schools (*Scuole di Paleografia e Diplomatica*), the Higher Schools for Interpreters and Translators (*Scuole Superiori per Interpreti e Traduttori*), the Military Academies (*Accademia*

Militare) and the Police Institute (*Istituto di Polizia*).

The duration of the courses offered by these institutes varies from the two-year preparatory cycle of the School for Interpreters and Translators to the eight years attendance required for the National Academy of Dance and the Academies of Music.

6A.1 Admission requirements

Generally speaking, candidates for entry to these establishments must possess an upper secondary leaving certificate and have passed the entrance examinations, inasmuch as the number of places available is limited and is fixed each year. In certain cases, it is not required to sit the entrance examination if the requirements are already fulfilled by previous training.

6A.2 Fees/Financial support for students

Generally speaking, fees must be paid by all students. These are fixed by each establishment. Exceptions to this rule are the Military Academies and the Police Institute.

The State provides financial aid in the form of student grants, which are very limited in number. Certain "weak" (*debole*) categories are also exonerated from payment of fees.

6A.3 Academic Year

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

6A.4 Courses

The 19 Fine Arts Academies train students as artists. All courses last four years and are specialized in painting, sculpture, decoration or stage design. Attendance is compulsory.

The Higher Institutes for Art Industries offer five-year courses in industrial design and graphic design. Attendance is compulsory.

The National Academy of Dramatic Art offers two three-year courses, one specializing in acting, the other in directing. Applicants must have an upper secondary school leaving certificate. Admission to the acting course, open to students between 18 and 23 years of age, is by means of practical and written tests. For the directing course, open to students between 18 and 28 years of age, there are similar entrance tests, with a more detailed interview covering art, literature and culture. Attendance is compulsory. The academic year lasts from November to June, with examinations in June and October. At the end of the third year students sit the final diploma examination.

The National Academy of Dance offers a normal eight-year course, entered on completion of primary school, divided into two three-year periods and a final two year period, and a subsequent three-year advanced course for soloists, choreographers or teachers.

In the Music Academies, teaching is structured in sections, depending on the type of studies being followed: composition, conducting, singing or instrumental. The curriculum is divided into two or three periods: lower and upper, or lower, intermediate and upper. Studies last for five or ten years from the end of primary education, depending on the section. In addition to their chosen subject students study solfège and specific academic subjects. Attendance is compulsory.

Establishments of non-university higher education offer specialized education in very diverse fields, ranging from restoration to the cinema, archives, to training interpreters and translators, as well as officers of the armed forces and those of public security. The study programmes concentrate on the respective specializations, although a considerable part of them is reserved for general culture. The average duration of these courses is three years.

In all these establishments, traditional formal lectures are combined, according to systems and timetables proper to each establishment, with practical and laboratory exercises, which represent the special features of the curricula of these establishments.

Generally it is the students who pay for their textbooks, but the cost of the material used for the exercises and performances is supported by the budget of the establishment.

6A.5 Assessment/qualifications

Fine Arts Academy students must pass examinations at the end of each year in order to be admitted to the next year. These examinations cover the academic subjects; the marks for the artistic subjects are based on the work completed throughout the academic year. At the end of the course, students undergo an oral examination on art history and examinations on all the other subjects. They must also present the best work they have produced throughout the course. An examining board questions the students on the techniques they have employed and the spirit of the work they have presented. They then receive a diploma specifying their specialization.

The students of the Higher Institutes for Art Industries sit annual examinations for promotion to the following year. At the end of the course, they sit an examination consisting of the presentation and discussion of a work project, and are awarded a diploma on a par with that obtained at the Academy of Fine Arts.

The students of the National Academy of Dramatic Art must sit annual examinations for promotion to the following year. If they do not pass the autumn promotion examination, they may repeat the year. However, they may not repeat more than one year throughout the course. At the end of the third year, students of the acting course sit the *licenza* examinations; at the end of the fourth year, the students of the directing course sit the diploma examinations.

The students of the National Academy of Dance, during the normal course, sit written, oral and practical examinations at the end of each year and may obtain an initial certificate after the final period. Holders of this certificate and the diploma awarded at the end of upper secondary education for the state examination (*esame di Stato*) may obtain access to the advanced course, in which they must sit annual examinations for promotion to the following year. The examinations for the advanced diploma consists of written, oral and practical tests covering the various subjects contained in the study plan and in the specialization chosen by each student.

Students of the Music Academies sit annual examinations for promotion to the following year. They receive a certificate at the end of the

low and intermediary periods, and at the end of the upper period they receive a diploma in the branch they have chosen.

In non-university establishments of higher education students must pass examinations once or twice a year and, at the end of each course, a final examination leading to a diploma giving qualification for the various professions. These diplomas are generally state-recognized, according to the statutes of the individual institutions.

6A.6 Teachers

There is a special system of recruitment for permanent and temporary staff, since particularly vocational education is dispensed by well-known figures. At the same time, the staff enjoys a legal status which is different from that in education below to university level.

6B University Higher Education

University higher education is dispensed in various types of public and private establishments. State universities, state polytechnic institutes, university institutes, higher schools, and universities for foreigners belong to the public sector; whereas the "libere" universities and the "libere" university institutes belong to the private sector. There are also ecclesiastical universities and theological faculties which are recognized by the competent state authorities.

At this level of education three different types of courses may be followed, awarding three different diplomas: university diploma courses (which also include all the courses of the so-called special purpose schools [*scuole dirette a fini speciali*]); degree courses, leading to the degree (*laurea*) diploma; and postgraduate (*post-laurea*) courses, including in particular research doctorates and specialization schools.

The duration of the studies corresponds to the level of the diploma obtained, and may vary from 2 to 3 years for first level courses; from 4 to 6 years for the second level courses; and from 1 to 4 years for postgraduate courses.

6B.1 Admission requirements

In order to gain access to university diploma courses, to those of special purpose schools and to degree courses, applicants must hold a five-year upper secondary education diploma. Students may freely choose the university establishment and the faculty, with the following restrictions: in order to gain access to the university courses of the faculties of medicine and surgery, of veterinary science and architecture, to diploma courses including compulsory vocational placements, and to specialization courses, applicants must pass an entrance examination, since there are limited numbers of places available for these courses. For these examinations, the marks obtained for the upper secondary school leaving diploma are taken into consideration, along with the result of an "ad hoc" test.

6B.2 Fees/Financial support for students

All students must pay registration fees, calculated proportionally to the family income and assets, and also the regional tax for the right to study. Each university may establish autonomously the number of students to be exempted from paying these fees, on the basis of 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 Academic Year

The academic year normally starts in September or October, according to the faculties, and ends at the end of May. The examinations are held at various times during June/July, September/October, and January/February. Depending on the faculties, the academic year may be divided into two halves.

6B.4 Courses

These cover 5 major areas: health; science and technology; humanities; law, economics, and political and social sciences; engineering and architecture.

For each degree course there is a study plan, established by each faculty in its own Statute, setting out the compulsory and the optional 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 own study plans. Within clearly defined limits, students, especially those in the humanistic faculties, may compose a personal study plan which must be approved by the Degree Course Council (*Consiglio di corso di laurea*).

Each course of lectures 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 taught by more than one teacher.

Students finish their study course when they have passed all the examinations listed on the study plan and have presented and discussed their final thesis during an examination, irrespective of the legal length of the study course.

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

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

6B.5 Assessment/qualifications

Every course of lectures listed in the study plan entails passing a so-called "profit examination" (*esame di profitto*). This examination may consist of written and practical tests, and well as oral ones.

An examining board, composed of three members appointed by the head of the faculty, awards marks out of 30. Marks of 0 to 10 are awarded by each board member, with 6 as the pass mark. Hence the minimum mark for passing the examination is 18 out of 30.

To a certain extent, students may take

examinations when they wish and may resit at any number of further examination sessions if they fail. This means that the total length of studies is usually prolonged.

For the final degree assessment students also have to carry out research under the supervision of a professor, which is then written up into a degree thesis. This is then discussed with an eleven-member examining board. The final mark takes account of the average of the marks awarded for preceding examinations and the quality of the thesis. The minimum pass mark is 66 out of 110. The maximum mark is 110 (*e laude*).

The diplomas obtained at the end of the courses - university diplomas, degree diplomas (*diploma di laurea*) and specialization diplomas - are academic and not vocational qualifications. They give access to vocational qualification examinations (*esame di abilitazione professionale*), which are state examinations (*esame di Stato*), giving access to the professions in question.

6B.6 Teachers

The teaching staff in higher education is divided into the following categories: permanent teachers, subdivided into first band teachers (*professori di prima fascia*), also called "ordinaries" (*ordinari*), and second band teachers (*professori disecunda fascia*), also called "associates" (*associati*), researchers, contract teachers (*professory a contratto*), and linguistic experts teaching their mother tongue (lectors [*lettori*] employed under private law contracts). The different rungs of this professional ladder are reached through examinations (*concorsi*), organized according to criteria which may differ according to the different categories.

University teachers, 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 posts, and have very broad academic freedom and scope for research.

After three years' teaching, they must undergo assessment in order to be confirmed in their post.

Each teacher and researcher may choose between full-time and part-time status. The former cannot be combined with any liberal professional activity, but makes it possible to accede to internal university posts such as the Rectorate. The latter status permits the holder to

exercise professional activities but cannot be combined with positions of responsibility within the university.

No in-service training is required for university teachers.

6B.7 Statistics

Teaching staff in degree (<i>laurea</i>) courses per faculty	1995-96 academic year
Mathematical, physical, natural sciences	8,834
Pharmacy	1,521
Medicine and Surgery	13,425
Engineering	7,099
Architecture	1,988
Agriculture	2,258
Veterinary science	902
Economics	4,982
Political Science	2,011
Law	3,017
Literature and philosophy	7,171
Teaching	2,133
Other faculties	2,739
Total	58,113

Source: ISTAT, *Statistiche dell'Istruzione Universitaria*.

7. ADULT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

There are two structures providing adult education. The first of them falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Education (MPI). The second, providing continuing vocational training (*Formazione Professionale Continua: FPC*) for adult workers, is organized by regional authorities.

7.1 Specific legislative framework

With the Ministerial Rulings no. 455, "Adult Education - Teaching and Training", and no. 456, "Adult Education - Teaching and Training in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools", issued in July 1997, the Ministry of Public Education thoroughly reformed the adult education structure by creating Local Adult Education Centres. These are to be established, generally, in provincial capitals and wherever the demand for permanent adult training reaches a certain level.

Continuing vocational training (*Formazione Professionale Continua: FPC*), which is organized by regional authorities, has had its specific legislation modified significantly at four dates:

- Law no. 236 voted in July 1993, allows the Ministry of Labour and the Regions or the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano to fund updating and qualification programmes for a) employees of national vocational training bodies, b) employees of firms contributing at least 20% of the training costs, c) employees of undertakings concerned by the Fund for the Integration of Special Income (*Cassa Integrazione Guadagni Straordinaria: CIGS*), d) workers registered on the mobility lists and e) unemployed persons having taken part in "work of public utility" (*Lavori di Utilità Sociale: LSU*);
- July-December 1994, approval of the Operational Programmes (*Programmi Operativi: PO*) of the Community Support Framework for Objective 1 Regions (*Quadro Comunitario di Sostegno dell'Obiettivo 1: QCS*) and of the Single Programming Document (*Documento Unico di Programmazione: DOCUP*) for the

Central Northern Regions (Objective 4) enabling Regions and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to set up training programmes for employed or unemployed adult workers, with priority given to less qualified workers and those working in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);

- Law no. 196 of May 1997, which provides support for continuing vocational training through the creation of a privately run management instrument, directly involving the social partners, to promote the training of workers in employment, of mobile workers and of unemployed persons in preparation for future employment;

- The Presidential Decree of December 1998 instituting: a) the establishment of an Interprofessional Fund for Continuing Training, divided into four autonomous sections (industry, artisans, services and agriculture); b) a private law foundation to be managed autonomously by workers' and employers' representatives; c) the availability of a quota (20% by 2000) of the resources paid to the National Institute for Social Protection (*Istituto Nazionale di Previdenza Sociale: INPS*) by companies and workers in order to finance public training, and by access to the European Social Fund (0.30% of wages).

7.2 Administration

The central government, via the Ministry of Public Education, is in charge of **adult education**; the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (*MLPS*) is in charge of the **continuing training** activities under Law 236/93 and of the multiregional work programmes (*Programmi Operativi: PO*), while the Regions are responsible for all the activities planned in most of the work programmes and the sub-programmes of the Objective 4 Single Programming Document.

Even where a single national model exists, like the work of continuing vocational training, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security distributes resources to the Regions, which are responsible

for implementing the programmes.

The creation of the Interprofessional Fund for In-Service Training and the new Foundation for Continuing Training have produced a new kind of programming and management of activities conducted under the sole responsibility of the social partners. In this case the foundation, which is a private agent, plays a prime role in defining users and types of activities and in managing resources.

7.3 Financing

Action in support of **adult education** is funded out of the budget of the Ministry of Public Education, to the amount of around 15,000,000 euros per year. These funds are distributed to the Directorates of Education who manage them.

The entire **continuing training** programme is funded by a portion of the 0.30% levy on wages, paid to the National Institute for Social Security (*Istituto Nazionale per la Previdenza Sociale: INPS*).

The activities programmed in concertation with the European Social Fund under the Objective 4 DOCUP and Measure 7 of the Objective 1 QCS are funded both by the Social Fund and by two-thirds of the proceeds of the 0.30% levy (equivalent to around 303,000,000 euros per year), made available to the General Exchequer of the Ministry of Finance, to contribute in part to the rotating fund for Italy's access to the EU Structural Funds.

Following the creation of the Interprofessional Fund for Continuing Training, managed directly by the social partners, from 1999 onwards the INPS will be making available around 45,000,000 euros for the first year and subsequently at least 90,000,000 euros a year to finance company, inter-company and individual projects.

In every case, all training for employed workers will require a contribution of at least 20% of the training costs by the companies involved.

7.4 Organization

As concerns the former structure (**adult education**), the Ministry of Public Education runs literacy classes, leading to the elementary school leaving certificate, and courses for

workers, leading to the lower secondary school leaving certificate, which more than one third of workers aged over 40 do not hold. These workers are employed in the lowest levels of industry and the service industries. The lower secondary school leaving certificate is a necessary qualification for employment in public services. These courses, also known as "150 hours" courses, were initially followed by employed workers, but over the years they have increasingly been being followed by adults looking for a first job or returning to the labour market and by others, such as foreigners from countries outside the European Union, who have too little knowledge of Italian to be able to operate in the country.

These centres receive, listen to the needs of and provide guidance to adults. At the same time they teach elementary functional literacy or literacy recovery courses, basic communication and languages, and provide for the development and consolidation of basic skills and specific kinds of knowledge, acquisition and development of initial training or vocational requalification, re-entry into the educational system and training of marginalized adults.

In response to demand in the adult education sector, the Ministry of Public Education has instituted its own Permanent Local Centres, employing compulsory education teachers (primary and lower secondary schools). On the local level, these are assisted by experts and organisations with specific competencies. These centres are open to all adults above 14 years of age, without the compulsory school leaving certificate, as well as to adults who hold this certificate but who wish to return to the education and training structures.

These centres interpret needs, and plan, create and manage initiatives in the area of adult education and training.

Through the work of their coordinators, these centres are in contact with public and private actors involved in education and training.

The Teachers' Assembly, in which the local centre works, defines models for organization, fixes the calendar for at least 200 teaching days and defines the training to be made available, according to individual programmes that are negotiated and then structured into groups of different levels and interests, into workshop activities, etc.

For **continuing vocational training**, there are the Vocational Training Centres at the regional level. These have already been partially reorganized to respond to the adult public.

Furthermore, over the last few years, a large number of training consultancy firms have been founded, joining the free-lance experts already

on the market proposing their services to SMEs. In this way, continuing vocational training integrates and completes the range of services offered directly to entrepreneurs and to those in charge of areas of work, as well as to workmen's and tradesmen's corporations.

SME and artisan associations also at times take a direct part in vocational training through their own training bodies which emanate directly from the national or regional employers' associations.

In business enterprises we encounter a great diversity of behaviour, depending on the size of the production units and the degree of technological and organizational innovation in different economic sectors and regions. Large and medium-sized enterprises are still the most innovative, and those belonging to groups and holding companies usually have their own internal training departments, with employees working full time in this field.

In other companies, training is organized only when this is legally obligatory (under European or national laws), or where incentives exist in the form of public funding. In these companies, full-time trainers are replaced by part-time trainers and tutors.

funding from the 1998 budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection;

- The average cost of these training programmes financed under Law 236/93 is slightly less than 1,000,000 Italian lire, and the courses last for about 50 hours.

The statistics produced by the Institute for the Development of Workers' Vocational Training (*Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori: ISFOL*) based on the monitoring of data on initiatives co-financed by the European Social Fund in the Central Northern regions concerned by Objective 4, with reference to the first three years of programming (1994-1996), show that almost 110,000 workers received training. These figures are based on the courses already started or completed. They increase to over 200,000 when extended to include all the courses approved by the Regions and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The training programmes approved over the same period numbered about 9,000, 5,000 of which had begun by 31 December 1996.

In the Mezzogiorno, the trainees also include civil servants, adding around 30% more trainees than in the Central Northern regions.

Source: ISFOL.

7.5 Statistics

Adult Education 1997-1998				
Literacy courses (primary school):	412 courses	6,032 participants		
Lower secondary school courses for workers:	2,352 courses	36,948 participants		

Source: ISTAT, *Annuario Statistico Italiano*, 1998

Vocational Training

For continuing training initiatives funded by Law 236/93 it is not yet possible to give confirmed statistics. However, it is possible to produce estimates on the basis of regional data:

- slightly more than 90,000 people received training (most of them in initiatives promoted by SMEs) with the funding made available by Circular 174/96;
- over 130,000 workers received training with funding from the 1997 budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection;
- around 190,000 workers will receive training, most of them from SMEs, with