

Education system

Italy

described and compared with
the Dutch system

This document contains information on the education system of Italy. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Italy for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

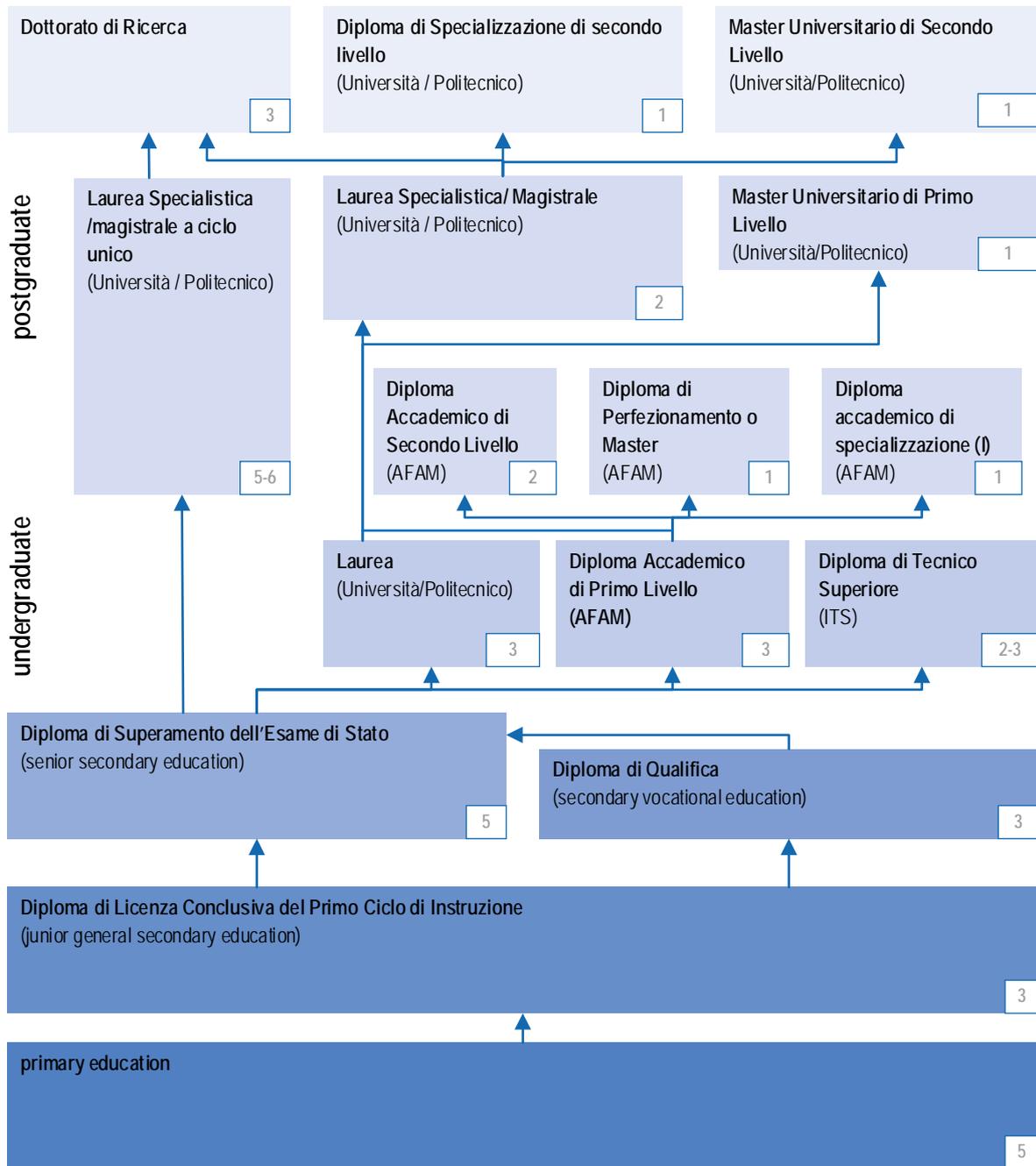
Disclaimer

We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.



With the exception of images and illustrations, the content of this publication is subject to the Creative Commons Name NonCommercial 3.0 Unported licence. Visit www.nuffic.nl/en/home/copyright for more information on the reuse of this publication.

Education system Italy



0 Duration of education

■ Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the most common foreign qualifications with corresponding levels in the national and European qualification frameworks. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the corresponding levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

Degree or qualification and EHEA-QF level		Dutch equivalent and NLQF level		EQF level
<i>Diploma di Qualifica</i>		MBO diploma (at qualification levels 2-4)	2-4	2-4
<i>Diploma di Superamento dell'Esame di Stato Conclusivo dei Corsi di Istruzione Secondario Superiore (liceo classico/scientifico / linguistico/scienze umane)</i>		VWO diploma	4+	4
<i>Laurea</i>	1st	WO bachelor's degree	6	6
<i>Diploma Accademico di primo livello</i>	1st	HBO bachelor's degree in the arts	6	6
<i>Laurea Specialistica/Magistrale</i>	2nd	WO master's degree	7	7
<i>Diploma Accademico di secondo livello</i>	2nd	HBO master's degree in the arts	7	7
<i>Master Universitario di primo livello</i>	2nd	HBO or WO master's degree	7	7
<i>Diploma Accademico di Specializzazione</i>	2nd	HBO master's degree in the arts	7	7
<i>Diploma di Perfezionamento o Master</i>	2nd	HBO master's degree in the arts	7	7

NB

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Dutch Qualifications Framework. EQF = European Qualifications Framework.

Education system Italy

- The EQF/[NLOF level](#) is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person's knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.
- Information about Dutch equivalent qualifications can be found on our website: [the Dutch education system](#).
- [The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market \(SBB\)](#), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or the labour market in the Netherlands.

■ Introduction

Italy is a democratic republic, with an elected president as head of state. It has a bicameral parliamentary system, consisting of the *Senato della Repubblica* (Senate) and the *Camera dei Deputati* (House of Representatives). The country is divided into 20 regions, 5 of which have autonomous status.

The legal framework for education is rooted in a number of sections of the Italian constitution, concerning matters such as: freedom of education; the state's obligation to provide a network of educational institutions of every type and level; the rights of universities, academies and higher cultural institutions to create their own independent guidelines; and the right and responsibility of parents to make education available to their children.

The *Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca* (the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, MIUR) is responsible for university education. This includes the planning of research institutes, coordination, general guidelines for funding, harmonization with the European system (the Bologna process) and university entrance requirements. Universities are very autonomous as regards management, finances and the manner in which education is provided.

Since 1998, many of the MIUR's responsibilities regarding non-university education have been delegated to regional and local authorities. The ministry is still responsible for the criteria relating to the organization of the school system and its evaluation, tasks related to the determination and assignment of financial resources, and for the allocation of school staff. The various regions are responsible for tasks such as planning the range of educational programmes offered, the set-up of school programmes, determining the school calendar and organizing professional education.

Since 1999 a number of important reforms have taken place, particularly in higher education. The binary system was introduced, with the 3 degrees of university education on one side, and post-secondary professional education on the other. Another reform was the introduction of a credit system, adapted to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and with the aim of making the individual curricula more flexible and facilitating the continuity of education programmes. A third innovation was the introduction of a quality assurance system with an evaluation unit at every university.

In 2000, compulsory education was extended from 8 to 9 years, for children aged 6-15. The language of education is Italian, and in some cases German (in some of the country's northern regions, where the majority of the population is German-speaking).

The school year for primary and secondary education runs from September 1st until August 31st. The academic year for higher education runs from either October 1st until September 31st or November 1st until October 31st.

■ Primary and secondary education

Pre-school education in Italy is for children aged 3 until 5. This type of education is not compulsory.

Since 2003 primary and secondary education are divided into 2 cycles. The first cycle includes primary education (*scuola primaria*) and junior secondary education (*scuola secondaria di primo grado*). The *scuola primaria* lasts 5 years (age 6-11) and gives automatic access to junior secondary education which lasts 3 years. At the end of the third year pupils sit the national exams: *esame di stato conclusivo di primo ciclo di istruzione*. When they've passed the exam, the *Diploma di Licenza Conclusiva del Primo Ciclo di Istruzione* (formerly known as *Diploma di Licenza della Scuola Media*) is awarded. The diploma is comparable to several years of general secondary education in the Netherlands. It is not possible to give a more accurate assessment without testing the student's knowledge directly.

The second cycle is senior secondary education which lasts 5 years. A pupil can choose to follow education at 3 types of schools: a lyceum (*liceo*), a technical institute (*istituto tecnico*) or a vocational institute (*istituto professionale*). A reform has been introduced in the second cycle in 2010 (*Riforma Gelmini*). The most notable changes made to the system are the reduction of the numerous types of lyceum and the number of specializations possible within each type of institution.

Licei

As of school year 2010-2011 there are 6 types of lyceum:

1. *Liceo Scientifico* (scientific programmes). This type of lyceum offers also a programme in applied sciences (*science applicate*).
2. *Liceo Classico* (humanities and classical languages).
3. *Liceo Linguistico* (modern languages, Latin and Italian).
4. *Liceo Artistico* (arts, formerly known as the *Istituto d'Arte*). This type of lyceum offers pupils 6 specializations: *arti figurative, architettura e ambiente, design, audiovisivo e multimediale, grafica, scenografia*.
5. *Liceo musicale e coreutico* (music and dance).
6. *Liceo delle scienze umane* (human sciences). This type of lyceum offers also a programme in social-economics (*economico-sociale*).

Istituto Tecnico

At the *istituto tecnico* a pupil can choose either an economic programme or a technical programme, which have respectively 2 and 9 specializations.

The types of secondary education listed above all lead to the *Diploma di Superamento dell'Esame di Stato conclusivo dei Corsi di Istruzione Secondaria Superiore*.

In terms of level, the *Diploma di Superamento dell'Esame di Stato conclusivo dei Corsi di Istruzione Secondaria Superiore*, obtained at a *liceo scientifico/classico/linguistico/scienze umane* is comparable to a VWO diploma.

The curricula offered by the other lyceums and technical institutes differ from those offered by a *liceo scientifico / classico / linguistico / scienze umane* with respect to the scope of the general education component. Accordingly, the evaluation of the above named diploma, as issued by a *liceo artistico, musicale e coreutico* or *istituto tecnico*, may vary depending on the programme content and can be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Secondary vocational education

The *Istituto Professionale* lasts 5 years. After 3 or 4 years, pupils can choose to round off the programme with an examination enter the labour market. The diploma awarded after 3 years is called the *Diploma di Qualifica*. When the pupils however follow the 5 year curriculum and sit the state exams at the end of the fifth year, they can also obtain the *Diploma di Superamento dell'Esame di Stato conclusivo dei Corsi di Istruzione Secondaria Superiore*. This diploma gives them access to higher education.

In terms of level, the *Diploma di Qualifica* is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification levels 2, 3 or 4, depending on the duration and specialization of the programme.

■ Admission to higher education

At the end of general secondary education and secondary vocational education (5 years), pupils sit the *Esame di Stato*. If they pass, they are awarded the *Diploma di Superamento dell'Esame di Stato conclusivo*, with the name of the relevant specialization added (e.g. *del corso di studio di Liceo Classico*). Only this certificate grants entry to higher education.

■ Higher education

Higher education is provided at universities and polytechnics (*politecnici*). There are also educational institutions for programmes in music and the arts (*Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale, AFAM*), higher technical education (*Istituti Tecnici Superiori, ITS*), higher professional programmes in areas such as commerce, agriculture and the service sector, military academies, centralized institutions for cultural heritage, and higher education institutions for translators/interpreters.

■ University education

University candidates require a *Diploma di Superamento dell'Esame di Stato*. Some specializations have additional requirements, particularly programmes with a quota. A national competitive examination is held for specializations such as dentistry, medicine and architecture, which tests subject knowledge.

Restructuring of higher education commenced at the start of the 2001/2002 academic year, with the introduction of the bachelor's-master's degree structure. All students that had started their studies in 2000/2001 were able to complete their programme in the 'old' system, and obtain their *Laurea di Dottore* or *Diploma Universitario*.

In the new system, initial programmes are titled *Corsi di Laurea* and aim to train competency in academic methods and techniques. They last 3 years (180 ECTS *credits*), and graduates are awarded the *Laurea*.

In terms of level, the *Laurea* (EHEA-QF 1st cycle/EQF level 6) is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree. Full [description](#) of learning outcomes for all EQF levels.

The following programmes are available at post-graduate level:

1. *Corsi di Laurea Specialistica/Magistrale*: These are academic programmes that last 2 years (following the *Laurea*). Graduates are awarded the *Laurea Specialistica* (LS), issued upon completion of 300 (180 plus 120) *credits* and a final paper.
In some specializations the initial and post-graduate programmes are offered as one, for example in architecture, construction engineering, medicine, veterinary science and dentistry. These programmes are indicated as *Laurea Magistrale/ Specialistica a ciclo unico*.

In terms of level, the *Laurea Specialistica/Laurea Magistrale* (EHEA-QF 2nd cycle/EQF 7) is comparable to a WO master's degree.

Full [description](#) of learning outcomes for all EQF levels.

2. *Corsi di Master Universitario di primo livello* (MU1). Academic or professionally-oriented programmes with a maximum duration of 1 year (60 credits). The entrance requirement is a *Laurea*; other criteria may apply. The qualification does not allow access to PhD since this type of programme is offered under the autonomous responsibility of each university.

In terms of level, the *Master Universitario di primo livello* (EHEA-QF 2nd cycle/EQF level 7) is comparable to an HBO or WO master's degree, depending on the type of study programme.

Full [description](#) of learning outcomes for all EQF levels.

The following programmes are available at the third level:

1. *Corsi di Dottore di Ricerca*: programmes focusing on academic research. Admission is granted based on a second level degree (for example, a *Laurea Specialistica*) and passing a very competitive examination. The minimum duration is 3 years, concluding with a dissertation. Graduates are awarded a *Dottorato di Ricerca*.
2. *Corsi di Specializzazione*: these are specialized professional advanced programmes leading to the *Diploma di Specializzazione*. Successful candidates must have a *Laurea Specialistica* and pass a competitive entrance examination. Programmes take between 2 and 6 years to complete.
3. *Corsi di Master Universitario di secondo livello*: these are advanced academic or professional programmes. The entrance requirement is a *Laurea Specialistica* (LS), yet other criteria may also apply. The *Master Universitario di secondo livello* is awarded after the completion of at least 60 credits. This qualification does not allow access to PhD since this type of programme is offered under the autonomous responsibility of each university.

■ Higher professional education

Higher education in engineering and technology

Since 2008 a new type of institution has been established, the *Istituto Tecnico Superiore* (ITS). The *Diploma di Superamento dell'esame di Stato* grants entry to the ITS.

Programmes of study lasts 4 semesters (1800/2000 hours), although programmes of 6 semester are not uncommon. In this last case a programme of study is established in cooperation with a university. Work experience is an important part of the programme: an internship of at least 30% of the total period of study is compulsory. After completing the programme, students are granted the *Diploma di Tecnico Superiore*. The programme is primarily intended for entry to the labour market, but also qualifies graduates for admission to university.

Higher technical education is also offered within the *Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore* (IFTS). The programme is primarily intended for entry to the labour market. It offers people with acquired work experience the possibility to gain a diploma. There are 2 types of programmes that last either 1200/2400 hours (2-4 semesters) or 800/1000 hours (2 semesters). Admission to programmes that last 800/1000 hours requires the *Diploma di superamento dell'esame di stato*, or a *diploma professionale di tecnico*. Admission to programmes that last 1200/2400 hours do not require a specific diploma, also work experience is taken into consideration. At the end of both programmes students are awarded the *Certificato di Specializzazione Tecnica Superiore*.

Higher education in the arts and in music

The minimum entrance requirement for programmes in the fields of Fine Arts, Music, Theatre and Dance (*Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale – AFAM*) is the *Diploma di Superamento dell'Esame di Stato*. An entrance examination is usually required. The programmes have been upgraded to university level, and are offered by the *Accademie di Belli Arti*, *Accademia Nazionale di Arte Drammatica*, *Conservatori di Musica* and the *Accademia Nazionale di Danza*. Like university programmes, the AFAM programmes are divided into 3 stages.

In the first level programmes, students complete a 3-year programme of 180 credits, after which they are awarded the *Diploma Accademico di Primo Livello*.

In terms of level, the *Diploma Accademico di Primo Livello* (EHEA-QF 1st cycle/ EQF level 6) is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree in the arts. Full [description](#) of learning outcomes for all EQF levels.

The following programmes are available at the second level:

1. A 2-year programme of 120 credits, after which the *Diploma Accademico di Secondo Livello* is awarded. Admission is granted to holders of a *Laurea* or a *Diploma Accademico di Primo Livello*. The programme trains students to a higher general level of knowledge and technique.

The diploma grants access to the *Diploma di Formazione alla Ricerca*, a 3-year research programme, belonging to the third level within the AFAM system.

In terms of level, the *Diploma Accademico di Secondo Livello* (EHEA-QF 2nd cycle/EQF level 7) is comparable to a HBO master's degree in the arts. Full [description](#) of learning outcomes for all EQF levels.

2. The *Diploma di Perfezionamento o Master (I)* is a 1-year programme worth a minimum of 60 credits. The diploma grants access to the *Diploma di Perfezionamento o Master (II)*, with a minimum duration of 1 year, belonging to the third level.

In terms of level, the *Diploma di Perfezionamento o Master* (EHEA-QF 2nd cycle/EQF level 7) is comparable to an HBO master's degree in the arts. Full [description](#) of learning outcomes for all EQF levels.

3. The *Diploma Accademico di Specializzazione (I)* is a 2-year programme worth 120 credits. The diploma grants access to the *Diploma Accademico di Specializzazione (II)*, with a minimum duration of 2 years, belonging to the third level.

In terms of level, the *Diploma Accademico di Specializzazione* (EHEA-QF 2nd cycle/EQF level 7) is comparable to an HBO master's degree in the arts. Full [description](#) of learning outcomes for all EQF levels.

Other non-university higher education institutions

See below for some of the most well-known programmes.

- *Scuole di Archivistica, Paleografia e Diplomatica* (Schools for Archiving, Palaeography and Diplomacy).
The *Esame di Stato* grants admission to this 2-year programme. Graduates are awarded the *Diploma di archivistica, paleografia e diplomatica*.
- *Scuole Superiori per Mediatori Linguistici* (Institutes for Translators and Interpreters). The institutes for translators and interpreters offer a wide range of 3-year programmes which lead to the *Diploma di Mediatore Linguistico*. The diploma grants entry to relevant programmes within the second cycle (*lauree specialistiche*)

■ Assessment systems

Secondary education

Numerical grade	Description	Meaning
10	<i>Ottimo</i>	Outstanding
9-8	<i>Distinto</i>	Very good
7	<i>Bene</i>	Good
6	<i>Sufficiente</i>	Satisfactory
5-0	<i>Insufficiente</i>	Unsatisfactory

For the state exam (*Esame di Stato*) a grading system with a 0-100 scale is used. Grade 60 is considered as sufficient and 100 lode (with honours) is the maximum score.

More information about the value of foreign grades can be found on our [website](#) (Dutch only).

University education

For interim examinations a scale from 0-30 is used, with a minimum pass mark of 18. For final examinations a scale from 0-110 is used, with a minimum pass mark of 66 and a maximum score of 110, sometimes with the addition of *lode* (with honours).

Non-university education

In this type of education, every institution uses its own assessment criteria, and there is an examination at the end of the programme.

Higher education makes use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS): 1 credit is worth 25 hours of work, with the annual load being equal to 60 credits. More information on ECTS is available in the [ECTS User's Guide](#) issued by the European Commission.

■ Bologna process

In the 2001 academic year, higher education institutions started providing education in 2 stages: the initial 3-year stage was introduced in 2001/2002, with the second stage following in 2002/2003.

Information on the current situation can be found on the [website](#) of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

■ Qualification frameworks

The Italian Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (QTI), first published in 2010, was developed as a tool describing the qualifications awarded by Italian Higher Education institutions, in terms of expected competences and learning outcomes. The QTI comprises the 3 Bologna cycles and is modelled on the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF for EHEA).

More information on the QTI can be found on the [website](#) of the Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (QTI).

Italy has not yet established a National Qualification Framework (NQF). More information about the progress of the framework and the referencing to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) can be found in the 2014 [report](#) issued by Cedefop.

■ Quality assurance and accreditation

The *Agenzia nazionale di valutazione del sistema universitario e della ricerca* (ANVUR) is a public institution under supervision of the Ministry of Education, University and Research.

ANVUR has 3 main responsibilities:

- 1) Organisation of the external evaluation programmes to measure the quality of activities of universities, public and private entities.
- 2) Focus on activities of internal evaluation bodies of universities and research institutions.
- 3) Evaluation of the efficiency of public financing programs, and support research and renewal activities.

To find out whether a programme is recognized on a national level, go to University [website](#), and search by entering the study level (first or second level studies) and the name of the institution. A list of recognized study programmes offered by that institution will appear.

Information on the recognition of higher education programmes in the arts is also available on the website of University. To see whether a higher education programme in the arts or music is recognized, go to this [page](#) and search by entering the name of the institution.

■ International treaties

Italy signed the Lisbon Convention in 1997. Italy has also signed a number of multilateral agreements, primarily at European level, regarding the recognition of

study programmes and qualifications, the length of periods of study, and the equality of certificates for university entry. The bilateral agreements are those with the Holy See, San Marino, Spain, Switzerland, Slovenia, Austria, Germany and Australia.

■ Diploma Supplement

Italian higher education institutions are legally required to issue a Diploma Supplement, which are now provided for first and second-level programmes in higher education.

More information on the Diploma Supplement is available on the [website](#) of the European Commission.

■ Composition of file

Admission to higher education in Italy requires the so called document *Allegato del diploma*. This document, issued by the Ministry of Education, University and Research certifies the accomplishment of the state exam. It also provides information about the programme of study, grades and subjects taken by the pupil. The actual *Diploma di Superamento dell'Esame di Stato Conclusivo* can be issued months later.

■ Overview of higher education institutions

- An overview with university institutions can be found on the [website](#) of the Ministry of Education, University and Research in collaboration with CINECA.
- MIUR [database](#) of nationally recognized university programmes.

■ Useful links

- [Website](#) of the *Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca* (MIUR), the most important body for international collaboration and exchange in higher education.
- [Website](#) of the *Centro di Informazione sulla Mobilità e le Equivalenze Accademiche* (CIMEA), also the NARIC centre including information on the recognition of foreign study programmes and qualifications.
- MIUR [database](#) of nationally recognized university programmes.
- [Website](#) of the Italian Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (QTI).
- [Website](#) of the *Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca* (MIUR), with information on higher education programmes and qualifications in the arts (*Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale*).
- MIUR [database](#) of nationally recognized AFAM-programmes.