K12 ACADEMICS — INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERIES

Studying in Italy

A guide for international students & families — how Italian higher education works, the Universitaly pre-enrollment, the Type D visa, the residence permit, low public tuition, and work rights.

K12 ACADEMICS

Find Your Community

2026 EDITION

ABOUT K12 ACADEMICS

The world's largest education resource.

Online since 2004, K12 Academics has helped millions of families, students and educators **find the right school, college, camp, business and program in their community** — for every kind of learner.

THE OLDEST UNIVERSITIES, AND AFFORDABLE

Italy is home to the **world's oldest university tradition** (Bologna, founded 1088), remarkably **affordable public tuition**, and global leadership in art, design, and fashion. The process is well-defined: non-EU students complete **Universitaly pre-enrollment**, get a **Type D visa**, and apply for a residence permit on arrival. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Italian visa rules, funds requirements, and tuition change. The figures here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with the Italian consulate, Universitaly, and your university**.

1

STEP 01 OF 10

Understand Why Students Choose Italy

WHAT TO KNOW

Italy offers the **world's oldest universities, low public tuition, world-leading art/design/fashion programs, and an exceptional quality of life** — historic cities, food, and culture — plus a central location for exploring Europe.

BY THE NUMBERS

Oldest tradition	Affordable	Art & design
Bologna, 1088	low public tuition	global leader

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Italy's **affordable public tuition and cultural richness** against the bureaucracy and the language — for many, it's elite European study at a low price.

GOOD TO KNOW

Public tuition in Italy is often **income-based (ISEE)** and low — genuinely affordable compared to English-speaking destinations.

2

STEP 02 OF 10

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

Italian higher education includes **state and private universities, plus specialized institutions (AFAM)** for art, music, and design. Degrees follow the European structure: **Laurea (3-year bachelor's), Laurea Magistrale (2-year master's), and doctorate**.

BY THE NUMBERS

Universities	AFAM	3+2
state & private	art, music, design	bachelor's + master's

HOW TO HELP

Choose among **state universities, private universities, and AFAM institutions** — the AFAM sector is a global draw for art, design, music, and fashion.

GOOD TO KNOW

For art, design, music, and fashion, Italy's **AFAM** institutions are world-renowned — don't overlook them.

3

STEP 03 OF 10

Complete Universitaly Pre-Enrollment

WHAT TO KNOW

For virtually all non-EU degree students, **pre-enrollment on Universitaly** (the Ministry's official portal) is **mandatory before the visa** — it verifies eligibility and transmits your application. Deadlines typically fall **January–July**. Miss it and you cannot get a visa that year.

BY THE NUMBERS

Universitaly	Mandatory	Jan–July
the official portal	before the visa	typical deadlines

HOW TO HELP

Complete **Universitaly pre-enrollment** as soon as you have your admission, before the deadline — it's the non-negotiable gateway to the Type D visa.

WATCH OUT

Without validated **Universitaly pre-enrollment**, the consulate will not issue a student visa — there's no workaround.

4

STEP 04 OF 10

Get the Type D Visa

WHAT TO KNOW

Non-EU students need a **Type D national visa**, applied for in person at an Italian consulate (with financial proof, insurance, and your pre-enrollment). Since January 2025, **biometrics are required** for most (US, Canada, Japan, and UK citizens are exempt from biometrics).

BY THE NUMBERS

Type D visa	Biometrics	*Exempt
non-EU, in person	from Jan 2025*	US/CA/JP/UK citizens

HOW TO HELP

Book your consulate appointment early, bring **pre-enrollment, funds proof, and insurance**, and complete biometrics — processing can take 4–12 weeks in peak season.

GOOD TO KNOW

Apply **early** — peak-season visa waits are long, and the appointment requires all documents (including credential recognition) ready.

5

STEP 05 OF 10

Apply for the Permesso di Soggiorno

WHAT TO KNOW

Within **8 working days of arriving**, every non-EU student must apply for the **permesso di soggiorno (residence permit)** — using the postal "kit" at a Poste Italiane office, then attending a Questura appointment. It replaces the visa as your legal stay document.

BY THE NUMBERS

Within 8 days	Postal kit	Then Questura
of arrival	at the post office	for verification

HOW TO HELP

Get the **permesso di soggiorno process started within 8 days** of arrival (postal kit, then Questura) — it's the most important bureaucratic step, and it's time-sensitive.

WATCH OUT

The 8-day deadline for the **permesso** is strict — handle it immediately on arrival to keep your status clean.

6

STEP 06 OF 10

Handle Admissions & Credentials

WHAT TO KNOW

Beyond Universitaly, you apply to your chosen university and get your **qualifications recognized** — via **CIMEA** and, historically, a **Dichiarazione di Valore** (value declaration). Requirements are set per program.

BY THE NUMBERS

CIMEA	Dichiarazione di Valore	Per program
credential recognition	value declaration	requirements vary

HOW TO HELP

Get your **credentials recognized (CIMEA / Dichiarazione di Valore)** and meet each program's requirements — start early, as recognition takes time.

GOOD TO KNOW

Credential recognition (CIMEA) can take weeks — begin as soon as you're admitted.

7

STEP 07 OF 10

Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

Programs are taught in **Italian** (requiring an Italian certificate) or, increasingly, in **English** (requiring IELTS/TOEFL). Even in English programs, learning Italian greatly helps daily life and the bureaucracy.

BY THE NUMBERS

Italian-taught	English-taught	Some Italian
Italian certificate	IELTS/TOEFL	eases daily life

HOW TO HELP

Take the **right test for your program's language**, and learn some Italian regardless — daily life and Italian bureaucracy run in Italian.

GOOD TO KNOW

English-taught programs are growing, but **some Italian** makes living and dealing with paperwork far easier.

8

STEP 08 OF 10

Plan for Costs & Funding

WHAT TO KNOW

Public tuition is **low and often income-based (ISEE)** — roughly **€900–4,000/year**, with many exemptions for lower incomes. Private universities cost more. **DSU regional scholarships** and university awards can cover fees, meals, and housing.

BY THE NUMBERS

Public tuition	ISEE	DSU
~€900–4,000/yr	income-based	regional scholarships

HOW TO HELP

Budget the **low public tuition (often ISEE-reduced) plus living costs**, and apply for **DSU regional scholarships**, which can be very generous.

GOOD TO KNOW

DSU scholarships can cover **tuition, meals, and housing** — apply early, as they're means-tested and competitive.

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STEP 09 OF 10

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the visa you must prove funds — recently about **€534/month (€6,947/year)** for living costs (tuition is separate). You'll also need **health insurance** valid in Italy and a **codice fiscale** (tax ID) after arrival.

BY THE NUMBERS

Funds	Health insurance	Codice fiscale
~€6,947/year	required	tax ID on arrival

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds** at the current amount (dated within 30 days), arrange **health insurance**, and get your **codice fiscale** — all essential for the visa and enrollment.

WATCH OUT

The funds figure varies slightly by consulate — confirm the exact current amount before your appointment.

10 STEP 10 OF 10

Thrive & Work

WHAT TO KNOW

Students can work **up to 20 hours per week (1,040 hours/year)**. After graduating, you may be able to **convert your student permit into a work or job-search permit** if you meet the requirements — a route to staying on in Italy.

BY THE NUMBERS

Work	After	Community
20 hrs/week (1,040/yr)	convert to work permit	find your people

HOW TO HELP

Use your **work rights** during study, and explore **converting to a work or job-search permit** after graduating if you want to stay — confirming current rules.

GOOD TO KNOW

Post-study, Italy allows conversion to a **work or job-search permit** under conditions — plan ahead and verify the current pathway.

QUICK REFERENCE

Studying in Italy: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures change, so confirm everything with the Italian consulate, Universitaly, and your university.

The system

State and private universities plus AFAM (art/music/design) institutions; Laurea (3-yr) + Laurea Magistrale (2-yr) + doctorate; world's oldest tradition.

Universitaly & visa

Non-EU degree students must pre-enroll on Universitaly (Jan–July deadlines) before applying for a Type D national visa (biometrics since Jan 2025; US/CA/JP/UK exempt).

On arrival

Apply for the permesso di soggiorno within 8 working days (postal kit + Questura); get a codice fiscale; recognize credentials via CIMEA.

Language & money

Italian-taught (Italian certificate) or English-taught (IELTS/TOEFL); low public tuition (~€900–4,000, income-based ISEE); prove ~€6,947/year plus health insurance; DSU scholarships.

Work & after

Work up to 20 hrs/week (1,040/year); post-study conversion to a work or job-search permit may be possible under conditions.

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