

International Conference

4 - 6 November 2004, Warsaw, Poland

New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for Higher Education: Their Thrust in the Context of the Bologna Process



The Italian University System

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Warsaw, 2004
5 November

Higher education in Italy

The university sector:

- 77 universities; 1,700,000 students, 55,000 academics with tenure



The non-university sector:

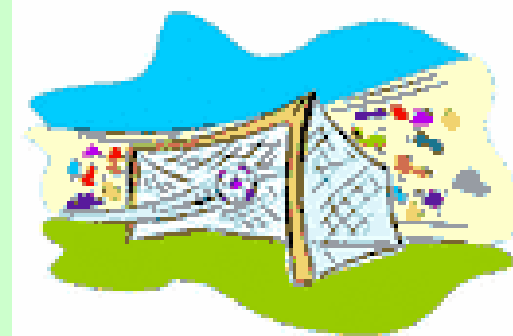


- ◆ Higher education in the art and music
- ◆ Higher technical education and post-secondary professional education and training
- ◆ Higher schools for linguistic mediators (interpreters and translators)
- ◆ Institutes for conservation and restoration

The university reform (1999)

5 goals:

- new degree structure (*Bologna model*)
- university autonomy in curriculum design
- student-centred approach
- employability
- internationalisation



The reform: the new degree structure

1st cycle **Laurea** (180 credits - 3 years)

Objective: provide undergraduates with adequate knowledge of general scientific principles, mastery of methods, and professional skills



2nd cycle **Laurea Specialistica** (120 credits - 2 years)

Objective: provide graduates with advanced education and training for highly qualified professions in specific sectors

The reform: the new degree structure

3rd cycle

- **Dottorato di Ricerca** (3-4 years)
Objective: provide postgraduates with training (including study periods abroad and training periods at public or private research bodies) for highly specialised research
- **Diploma Specializzazione** (120-300 credits - 2-5 years)
Objective: provide knowledge and skills for specific professions on the basis of national laws or EU directives (medical specialities, secondary school teacher education, legal professions)

The reform: the new degree structure

Other post-graduate degrees

➤ **Master Universitario** (60 credits - 1 year)

Objective: provide a higher level of specialisation and continuing education in specific fields

The reform: teaching autonomy

- Universities are free to determine names, contents, learning outcomes of degree programmes
- Credits are distributed over six main typologies of teaching/learning activities (a. basic subjects; b. specific subjects related to the degree programme; c. subjects in similar or supplementary subject fields; d. elective courses; e. preparation for the final examination; f. skills in foreign languages, computer science, telematics, interpersonal communication, orientation to the labour market, internships)
- First degrees are grouped in 47 classes; second degrees are grouped in 109 classes (a class includes a number of degrees covering similar subject fields and sharing the same learning outcomes and typologies of teaching/learning activities)

The reform: student-centred approach

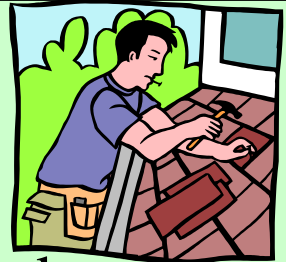
The credit system:

- university credits represent the total student workload (class time, individual study, exam preparation, practical work, etc.); one credit is equivalent to 25 hours
- the average full time workload for one academic year is 60 credits which is equivalent to 1500 hours
- credits are earned once the student has passed the assessment for each course or activity

The credit system is also aimed at reducing the gap between official and real length of courses and lowering the drop out rate.

The reform: employability

The reform aims at improving graduate employability conditions



- ◆ defining the **professional skills** and related work opportunities each degree course provides
- ◆ consulting **labour market partners** in the design phase of the curriculum
- ◆ including **labour market related activities** and work experience opportunities in the curriculum
- ◆ allocating credits for **professional experience** and skills acquired outside university education
- ◆ setting up **orientation, tutoring and placement services** in the universities

Evaluation and quality assurance

Monitoring and assessment are carried out at three levels:



- **At national level:** the Committee for the Assessment of the University System. *Its tasks include promoting experimentation, application and dissemination of assessment methods as well as fixing the general criteria for the assessment of university activities*
- **At university level:** the University Evaluation Unit. *It collects information and data on the university and presents its results to the academic authorities*
- **At national/university level:** the database for course offerings

Evaluation and quality assurance

- The Ministry has created a **national database** (DB) describing 4,600 first and second degrees currently offered
- The DB allows the regular **monitoring** of all degree programmes to check their conformity to national standards
- A set of minimum **structural requirements** has been defined by the Committee for the Assessment of the University System for a course to be approved
- A first set of **quality indicators** related to all programmes have been determined
- An on-going process has been started to move from pre- to full **accreditation** of all degree programmes

The reform: positive outcomes

- ✿ A substantial **increase in enrolment** numbers shows that university studies are now regarded as more attractive
- ✿ According to a recent survey most university decision making bodies consider **the reform** as time and resource consuming but **effective** and **successful**
- ✿ Recent statistics show a remarkable **reduction in the drop-out rate**



The reform:

new tools to promote and support the international dimension in Universities

- ✗ the possibility to award **joint degrees** with foreign universities
- ✗ **recognition of study periods**, credits and qualifications obtained abroad for the continuation of studies
- ✗ compulsory study, expressed in credits, of at least one **European Union language** other than Italian
- ✗ the possibility to take the final exam of a degree course in a **foreign language**
- ✗ introduction of the **diploma supplement**

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