Chapter 10

Entry and stay for study reasons

What is a student visa?

A student visa allows foreign citizens to enter Italy for fixed-term stays in order to follow university courses, educational courses or vocational training at recognised institutes or anyway qualified. It is also addressed to foreign citizens who intend to carry out cultural and research activities.

Besides, a student visa is granted, for the period strictly necessary, to foreign citizens who, having graduated at an Italian university, have to undergo professional qualifying examinations. Foreign citizens residing abroad who want to attend any whatsoever educational course in Italy can apply for a student visa to the Italian Embassy or Consulate in their country of residence.

The visa is issued within 90 days and has the same duration of the course to be attended, but in any case, it does not last more than one year.

What requirements must be met to be granted a student visa?

In order to be granted a student visa, foreign citizens must meet the following requirements:

- they must be 14 years old and over (children under 14 years old can be granted a student visa only in exceptional cases for not more than 45 days, in order to attend brief cultural-language courses, organised by Associations or institutes of proven and known reliability);
- they must have documented guarantees concerning their attendance of a higher course of study, a vocational training course or a course financed by the Italian government, or the research activity to be carried out;
- they must be covered by an insurance policy for medical treatments and hospitalisations, with a validity equal to the duration of the stay, if they do not have right to healthcare in Italy on the basis of agreements in force with the Country of origin;
- they must submit documents proving the availability of means of support which cannot be less than half of the annual amount of the social allowance (for year 2018, the annual amount of the social allowance is equal to € 5,889.00);
- they must submit documents proving the availability of the amount necessary
to return to their Country after following the course of study;
• they must prove the availability of an accommodation through a hotel booking or a hospitality statement, provided by an Italian citizen or by a foreign citizen regularly residing in Italy.

Where to apply in order to enrol in University or any other course of study?

Applications for following a course of study must be submitted through the Italian Embassy or Consulate. With regard to university courses, applications must be submitted in the period indicated with ministerial decree issued every year.

What documents must be annexed to the application?

• To enrol in university: original copy of an upper secondary education diploma (or substitutive certificate by all effects of law with a translation carried out and confirmed (legalised) by the Italian Embassy or Consulate in the Country of residence). Foreign degrees are valid for enrolment if they allow to access the Universities of the Country where they were issued and if they were achieved after at least 12 years of school: if the period of study is inferior, it is necessary to submit a university document certifying the passing of all the exams established for the years of study necessary to achieve the compulsory twelve years of schooling, or the achievement, in the event of foreign citizens residing in Italy, of an Italian high school diploma. Foreign citizens coming from a Country where it is necessary to pass a specific exam to enrol in University must also submit the document certifying the passing of said exam;
• To enrol in other courses of study: a qualification that allows to continue studies (e.g. I level university degree if applying to enrol in an II level course, a university degree if applying to a Master’s degree or a PhD, etc.) always translated and legalised;
• 2 photos of which one authenticated;
• Possible certificate qualifying the competence in Italian language;
• Possible other documents required for the chosen course of study.

What to do if an admission test must be passed to enrol in university?

If an admission test is required, each University examines relevant applications and prepares a list of the foreign citizens residing abroad admitted to the admission test, sending said list to the Italian Embassies and Consulates in the various Countries of provenance, together with the indications concerning premises, date and hour of the test.
Within a date that can vary from year to year (generally speaking, at the beginning of August), the Italian Embassies and Consulates abroad publish the lists of students admitted to the tests. The lists can be consulted also on the website of the Ministry of University and Scientific Research. Starting from the date of publication, the students that passed the test can apply for a student visa to the Italian Embassy or Consulate in the country of provenance.
How to prove the availability of means of support and the money necessary to return to the Country of provenance?

The availability of said resources can be proven by:

- Showing cash, travel cheques, credit cards;
- submitting a credit letter provided by the foreign bank ensuring that said amount is available;
- submitting a certificate proving that said amount is already available at an Italian bank, through bank transfer or payment from abroad;
- documentation proving the granting of scholarships, honour loans or accommodations provided by public administrations or by other public or private Italian subjects; if the amount proven is below the threshold established as “means of support,” further documentation can be used to integrate the above, proving the availability of income, up to reaching the amount required; the mere candidature for a scholarship is not sufficient;
- with regard to the amount necessary to return the Country of provenance, it is sufficient to show the return ticket.

How to prove insurance cover for medical treatments?

The availability of an insurance cover for medical treatments and hospitalisations can be proven through:

- the availability of the amount necessary to register voluntary with the National Health Service (SSN);
- the insurance policy contract with a foreign or Italian insurance company.

What is a residence permit for study reasons?

Residence permits for study reasons are issued to foreign citizens who have been granted a student visa. Applications must be submitted within 8 working days from the entry in Italy to the Questura in the place of residence.

In addition to passport-size photographs, a revenue stamp and a document certifying to have paid the issue of the electronic permit, applications must be completed with:

- a copy of the passport and of the entry visa (showing the original copy);
- a copy of the enrolment in a course of study (showing the original copy);
- a certificate proving the insurance cover or the registration with the National Health Service (SSN);
- a certificate proving domicile: lease contract or hospitality statement. The hospitality statement must be accompanied with the photocopy of the lease contract or purchase document, and a copy of an identity document of the renter or owner;
- a guaranty policy or other documents proving the availability of the economic means of support.

Residence permits for study reasons are issued also, when turning 18 years old, to youngsters already holders of a permit for family reasons, foster care or for being under age. In such case,
it is not necessary to apply for a visa, because it involves individuals already legally present in Italy, nor to prove the insurance cover for healthcare expenses, because the registration with the National Health Service (SSN) is maintained. Accommodation and the economic means of support can be provided by parents or foster care parents.

**How long does a residence permit for study reasons last?**

The duration is equal to that of the course which the foreign citizen intends to follow. In the event of enrolment in a multiannual course, the permit lasts one year and is renewable.

With regard to university students, the permit can be renewed up to a maximum of 3 years beyond the legal duration of the University course chosen.

It is possible to renew the residence permit also if changing the university course for which the foreign citizen entered Italy and thus passing to another one.

In any case, it is necessary to pass at least one profit test (exam) during the first year, and at least 2 exams in the following years.

For serious reasons connected to health conditions or force majeure, duly documented, the residence permit can be renewed also if students passed only one profit test during the year, notwithstanding the total amount of renewals.

**Is it possible to work with a residence permit for study reasons?**

Residence permits for study reasons allow to carry out a subordinate work for not more than 20 hours a week, also accumulable for 52 weeks, notwithstanding the annual limit of 1,040 hours.

**Is it possible to convert a residence permit for study reasons?**

If the course of study is still ongoing, the residence permit for study reasons can be converted into a residence permit for work reasons only within the limits of the annual quotas established pursuant to the “Flows Decree.”

Applications for a conversion must be submitted when the permit for study reasons is still valid. Besides, it is necessary to obtain a clearance document from the Single Desk at the Immigration Office of competence.

The same procedure is applied to foreign citizens admitted to attend training courses, or to carry out training apprenticeships in Italy. In said case, the conversion is possible only after the conclusion of the training course attended or of the apprenticeship carried out. If instead the foreign citizen has ended the course of study and has achieved in Italy a PhD or a Master’s degree or a three-year degree or a five-year degree, it is possible to apply for a conversion into work reasons, without having to fall within the quotas established by the “Flows Decree.” In alternative, it is possible to register with the Employment Centre and obtain a residence permit while awaiting employment and then, within a year, apply for the conversion into work reasons without having to fall within the quotas set by the “Flows Decree.” Foreign citizens who are granted a residence permit for study reasons and who used to hold, when under-age, a residence permit for family reasons, foster care or for under-age, can apply for a conversion in any moment without the need to fall within the quotas established by the flows decree.