



## Chapter 11

# Recognition of educational qualifications, professional qualifications and competences





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# RECOGNITION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCES

### How can a foreign citizen enhance in Italy the educational and vocational paths carried out abroad?

There are different educational and vocational paths in Italy that allow to enhance what acquired in another Country. Said paths depend on the specific purposes:

- **formal recognition of educational or professional qualifications:** it is necessary to submit application for the recognition of the educational qualification achieved, annexing the documentation required, to the Italian body of competence. In case of acceptance, the foreign qualification acquires in Italy the same legal value of the corresponding Italian one. The competent body can accept the request, reject it or require the passing of compensative measures;
- **recognition of educational qualifications and training credits, to continue an educational path in Italy** (education, vocational training, higher technical education, universities or AFAM institutes [Higher Training in Arts, Music and Dance], Academy of Art and Academy of Music: it is necessary to apply for enrolment with the body in charge of the educational path of interest, annexing the necessary documentation. This allows the foreign citizens' educational path to be evaluated in order to access the one of interest and/or to obtain a shortening of the career. If the application is accepted, foreign citizens can enrol and complete their educational path;
- **recognition to access public competitions and public employment, other types of courses or competitions for employment, specific training and apprenticeships:** foreign citizens can request the competent body to assess their educational qualification as equivalent to the Italian one, requested for that specific purpose;



- validation and certification paths of formal and informal competences at regional level: these paths are totally or in part recognised by the Region. In Piedmont it is currently possible to access said paths by entering projects that provide for experimentation (it is a system recently launched).

### **Is it important to know Italian?**

In almost all paths, the knowledge of Italian is very important. Sometimes, it is required to hold a relevant certification.

The territorial Educational Centres for Adults (Centri per l'Istruzione degli Adulti - CPIA) organise courses aimed at the diffusion of literacy, at preparing for certifications and in-depth studies of the Italian language. Besides, it is possible to ask for information concerning other language training possibilities at the offices that provide orientation (Employment Centres, Informagiovani, etc.).

### **Is it always necessary to acquire the recognition of qualifications in order to exercise in Italy the profession for which one prepared and in which one has experience?**

In order to work in Italy, it is not always necessary to initiate a recognition path. Non-regulated professions in Italy, that is those that do not have specific access requirements defined by law, can be freely accessed (never in the case of healthcare professions).

### **What to know before starting a recognition path?**

Recognition paths require:

- to activate the path in the country in which one studied;
- to plan costs (different for each country) related to legalisation and translation, revenue stamps, any integrative measures (called "compensative measures," that is an exam, a training-evaluative apprenticeship, acquisition of credits or years of study);
- to be aware that the duration of the paths depends on various factors (for example, the possibility to start the path swiftly, the timeframe of the public administrations, the time necessary to pass any compensative measures, temporal windows for submitting requests).



## What is a recognition path and how does it work?

There are different types of recognition:

- 1) Recognition with the logic of equivalence, means to confer to an educational or professional qualification the same legal value of the corresponding Italian qualification; the evaluation carried out by the competent body takes place according to a comparative logic (the study programmes carried out abroad and those provided for in the analogous path in Italy are compared in detail) and on the basis of the applicant's personal situation.

A positive outcome can involve immediate recognition or recognition subject to integrative measures, called "compensative measures," that is an exam, a training-evaluative apprenticeship or the acquisition of credits or years of study; if the requirements are not sufficiently met, the outcome will involve rejection (negative outcome).

**With regard to educational qualifications** (lower and upper secondary school diplomas and academic degrees): recognition is granted through the issue of a statement of equivalence, provided by the Italian body competent for the analogous path.

**With regard to professional qualifications** (degrees necessary to exercise a profession regulated by the national legislation, which establishes the educational qualifications indispensable to access a profession and the following requirements for exercising it, from apprenticeship, to State examination, to rules on professional deontology): recognition is granted through the publication of a decree on the recognition of the professional qualifications, carried out by the Italian Ministry competent for said profession;

- 2) Recognition with the logic of equivalence, means to provide forms of recognition aimed at specific purposes, providing for a more general evaluation with regard to the foreign educational system and the characteristics of the foreign qualification; the legal effects of equivalence are produced for the specific purpose for which it is requested. Therefore, it is a valid request only for a single occasion, which can be re-applied for in a following occasion.

The outcome can be negative or positive.

Recognition paths of educational qualifications allow to continue in Italy an educational path followed in the Country of provenance, to access public competitions and public employment or other forms of courses or competitions for employment, specific training apprenticeships and apprenticeship and registration with Employment Centres.



## Where can the list of professions regulated in Italy be found?

On the website <https://qualifyme.it/ministeri/>

## How are recognition paths (equivalence) carried out and what is the timeframe for the recognition of educational or professional qualifications?

When receiving applications, the administration of competence analyses the documentation. If it is complete, it submits it to the evaluation of the competent body, which establishes the relevant outcome.

The possible outcomes are as follows:

- **Recognition/Equivalence**

The request is accepted and the competent body issues relevant formal document (Recognition Decree and Equivalence Statement), which has immediate value. If a qualification is recognised, it may be necessary to meet further requirements to be able to actually exercise the profession (for example, the deposit of the decree at the Chamber of Commerce, admission to a register/roll, exercise of the profession within a defined term, etc.).

- **Recognition subject to passing compensative measures**

The request is accepted, but the content of the training and/or educational experience is evaluated as incomplete. The actual recognition is subject to the passing of compensative measures, that is further verifications on several matters.

With regard to recognitions of professional qualifications, applicants will have to undergo a theoretical-practical exam (aptitude test) or a period of specific apprenticeship that lasts less than three years (adaptation apprenticeship).

In most cases, EU citizens are given the possibility to choose which compensative measure to activate; in other cases, instead, it is defined by the competent body.

For the recognition of educational qualifications, the compensative measures consist in undergoing specific parts of the paths (for example, several exams or other credits or annualities).

Once the foreign citizen passes the mentioned measures, recognition becomes effective.

- **Rejection**

The request is not accepted. The negative outcome must also mention the reasons, which may involve the characteristics of the training qualification.



## How are recognition paths (equivalence) carried out and what is the timeframes for the recognition of educational qualifications?

When receiving applications, the administration of competence analyses the documentation. The relevant answer should be provided within the date of the selection. In case of delay, foreign citizens are authorised to participate in the selection “upon condition,” that is awaiting an answer.

The possible outcomes are as follows:

The request of equivalence can be:

- **accepted**, in this case the possibility to access the requested path will be confirmed;
- **rejected**, in this case the path started will be invalidated (a negative answer arriving after carrying out the selection, under condition, determines the exclusion from the same, regardless of the relevant ranking in the classification).

## What documents must be submitted?

The documents requested vary depending on the path chosen. In order to start most of the paths, it is necessary to provide:

- documentation in original: referring to the degree to be recognised (usually translated and legalised),
- relevant informative documentation: documents that provide information on the foreign qualification to which they refer; said documents are issued in the Country where the educational qualification was acquired or in Italy,
- any other documents: for example, for many paths it is necessary to submit report cards or certificates relating to the exams undergone. In equivalence paths, the training paths of the studies carried out are often requested, distinguished by subject.

International protection holders are equalled to EU citizens in all the procedures carried out. It is possible to agree with the competent bodies on derogations to the provision that requires foreign citizens to be in possession of the original document legalised; some procedures are not requested, and the informative documents can be requested through specific services.





## What are informative documents required to be annexed to the educational or professional qualification?

Informative documents are those documents that provide information on the foreign qualification to which they are annexed. They are issued in the Country where the qualification was acquired or in Italy; in particular, they provide information on:

- the level of education in the educational system
- the issuing institute and the truthfulness of the document
- nature (educational or professional).

The main informative documents are as follows:

- 1) Statement of value in loco:** it is issued by the Italian Embassy or Consulate abroad competent per territory, that has the duty to ascertain the authenticity of the qualifications and their characteristics. It is possible to request the Statement of Value for study reasons (information concerning exclusively the characteristics of the educational qualifications) or for professional reasons (information also concerning other requirements, the meeting of which is necessary to exercise a profession).
- 2) Statement of compliance with the European regulations** (or also Compliance Certificate): it certifies that a professional qualification is compliant with what provided for by Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. It is a document issued by the competent authority in the country of provenance for a given regulated profession and it is valid only for qualifications acquired in EU countries.
- 3) Certificate of comparability with the foreign qualification:** it is issued by CIMEA (Information Centre on Mobility and Academic Equivalence). Applications are carried out online.

It is an informative document that provides the general information concerning the foreign qualification. It also provides an opinion on the correspondence in the Italian educational system. It is accepted by most universities with regard to the procedures for recognising an educational qualification or for the admission to academic courses.

## How to exercise the profession developed in another country?

In order to carry out in Italy a profession studied or exercised in a foreign country, it is necessary to request the recognition of the professional qualification to the Italian Ministry competent for that profession, if it is a profession regulated in Italy (that is a profession for which specific access requirements are defined by law).



If, instead, it is a profession not regulated in Italy (a profession for which specific access requirements are not provided, that is a profession with free access), it is possible to exercise said profession without any limitations (with the acceptance of healthcare professions).

### **Where can further information be found on the recognition of professional qualifications, on the list of regulated professions and competent ministries?**

Further information is provided on the website <https://qualifyme.it/> on the page devoted to the Recognition of educational or professional qualifications.

### **How to participate in a public competition or in other forms that grant access to public employment with a foreign educational qualification?**

It is possible to participate in a public competition or in other forms that grant access to public employment by following the equivalence path of foreign educational qualifications, if participating in a selection that has, as requirement, the holding of an educational qualification. **The equivalence provision is valid only for the competition of reference** for which the application was submitted; for any other public competition, it will therefore be necessary to submit a new equivalence application.

The documentation necessary in order to submit application for an equivalence path is as follows:

- foreign educational qualification translated and legalised, with annexed Value Statement
- plan of studies /certificate of exams translated and legalised (not required for lower secondary schools),
- public notice of the public competition /selection in which the foreign citizen intends to participate.

Further information on equivalence paths is available on the website [qualifyme.it](https://qualifyme.it/), under the page devoted to paths for Specific purposes.

### **Can Third-Country Nationals participate in public competitions and have access to public employment?**

To date, participation in public competitions or other forms that provide access to public employment is granted only to EU citizens and to Non-EU citizens with a long-term residence permit and their family members, as well as international protection holders (equivalent to EU citizens).





## **How to continue studying in Italy once the foreign path has been recognised?**

Generally speaking, it is necessary to hold an educational qualification equivalent to the Italian qualification requested in order to access the educational and training path chosen, which allows to access an analogous path in the country where it is achieved. The documents required can vary sensibly depending on the type of path chosen:

- lower secondary education,
- upper secondary education,
- regional Vocational Training (qualification, specialisation, job patents and qualifications, long-life training),
- Higher Technical Education and Training (Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore - IFTS),
- Higher Technical Education (Istruzione Tecnica Superiore - ITS),
- Academic Education or AFAM (University Degree, Five-year degree, Master's degree, specialisation, PhD).

Foreign citizens up to 29 years of age can acquire educational qualifications also through apprenticeship paths (training and employment contracts).

Further information on the documents required and on the competent bodies for the single paths is available on the portal [qualifyme.it](http://qualifyme.it), under the section Enrolling in a training path.

## **Is there any form of support for attending educational paths (support to the right to study)?**

The right to study is everybody's right to access and achieve educational results regardless of individual socioeconomic conditions. The support to the right to study is realised through various interventions, that vary depending on the type of education. They are implemented both at national and local level, and allow to guarantee the right to education to everybody. Said support is provided, for example, through: scholarships, accommodation, total or partial exemptions of enrolment fees, free books and other benefits.

Where to apply:

- Regional body for the Right to Study, EDISU Piemonte (for university paths), providing scholarships and accommodation and provides also other services (canteens, extraordinary aids, orientation, study rooms, cultural/recreational/sport spaces) addressed to all students;
- Universities (for university paths) providing directly several benefits, addressed to students who are worthy but lack means, who do not have access to the resources offered by the regional bodies for the Right to Study;



- Other public and private bodies (for all paths), providing benefits supporting studies (public notices for scholarships open to private funding) and microcredit opportunities (easy financing terms to support projects).

## **Where can foreign citizens find orientation and information?**

There are services active at national level that offer support to foreign citizens interested in having their educational or professional qualifications recognised, or interested in resuming studies on the basis of the qualifications achieved abroad.

Further information is provided by:

- CIMEA - Centro di Informazione sulla Mobilità e le Equivalenze Accademiche (Information Centre on Mobility and Academic Equivalence), which can provide information on all recognition paths,
- Punto di contatto nazionale sulle qualifiche (National point of contact for qualifications), which can provide information on recognition paths of educational and professional qualifications.

There are also services and projects active in various regional territories providing orientation on educational and professional qualifications.

In Piedmont it is possible to have specific information, orientation and consultancy on these themes at the desk Extra-Titoli (active in Turin and in other cities of Piedmont).

For further information on the paths available in Italy for educational and professional qualifications, on the documents required and competent bodies, it is possible to refer to the portal [qualifyme.it](http://qualifyme.it).