

Italian Language & Culture Courses for Foreigners

ITALY Language Training



Good Practice Executive Summary

Founded in the early 1920's with the aim of teaching Italian civilisation and artistic heritage to foreigners, the University for Foreigners of Perugia has distinguished itself from the beginning as a meeting point for people of different cultures as well as a real "laboratory" of intercultural education. The University specialises in the teaching of Italian as a second language including related subjects such as art, literature and economy. Its principal aim is to help promote the Italian language and culture worldwide thereby increasing awareness of cultural diversities. Since the 1990's, the University's unique curriculum has been expanded to include degree and post-graduate programmes for Italian and foreign students.

In particular, the Faculty of Italian Language and Culture offers Italian Language and Culture Courses for Foreigners. The courses refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) and are divided into:

- Beginners Course (A1/A2)
- Intermediate Course (B1/B2)
- Advanced Course (C1/C1+/C2)

The University of Perugia adopted the CELI (Certification of -- knowledge of the -- Italian Language): CELI Absolute Beginners (A1)–CELI 1 (A2)–CELI 2 (B1)–CELI 3 (B2)–CELI 4 (C1)–CELI 5 (C2)

The CELI certifies general knowledge of Italian and attests the level of competence and fluency of the language demonstrated by the student and it is utilizable on professional and academic requirements. Three exam sessions are held during the course of the year: in March, June and November.

Different requisites and admission procedures are required according to the different levels, stemming from a simple interview to be admitted to the first beginners level course (A1) and arriving to the most binding requisites in terms of language skills and certifications to be admitted to the 2nd level advanced course.

Learning methodology and materials are often borrowed from everyday life: the train ticket rather than the electricity bill or the job offers on the internet, etc..The objective is to guarantee to the foreigners the basic Italian language skills necessary for the day by day life. Grammar is taught inductively and is often taught at a later time.

Duration of the courses and number of students involved in each class (maximum 20 per each class) ensure realistic and reachable training objectives.

The learning materials adopted for all the different courses are decided centrally by the Faculty of Italian Language and Culture. For more advanced courses existing text books are used. For the beginners and intermediate levels courses *ad hoc* learning materials are prepared. "Learning materials" borrowed by day by day life are often used: train tickets, bills, job offers, etc.

Teachers have many years of experience in teaching Italian to foreigners and are often involved in refresher courses – organised by the University for Foreigners of Perugia -- aimed at qualified teachers and future teachers of Italian as a second language (L2), both Italian nationals and non-Italians.

Tutors support foreign students in order to verify if particular needs or specific difficulties arise

The courses require a mandatory frequency (equal to 70% of the total hours) and students are fully informed about this obligation because the certification is completely paid by Umbria Region (Public funds).

There is not still evidence of transfer. Nevertheless, the learning methodology adopted is fully transferable because it is based on the idea to learn a language in order to tackle with all the situations of the day by day life. The language is the tool to act, to move and to survive. It's important to know where to find the necessary information and to be able to understand and to use the information. Methodology and contents are therefore transferable but they need to be adapted to the language and culture of the country in which the model is going to be adopted.

Combining language learning with everyday life to facilitate the ability to collect and use information in real life every day these courses are quite innovative

The political context is important in order to allow immigrants to learn the language of the hosting country and therefore to enter in the labour market, to increase their level of education and, more in general, to be socially included.

Model and methodology are highly flexible given that often "not formal" learning materials are adopted. Having an operating dimension, they can be easily transferred around the world: multiculturalism is the main focus.

1. The needs analysis is based on a complete, up-to-date conceptual framework.

The University for Foreigners of Perugia provides Italian language and culture Courses (for Foreigners)

The Italian language and culture courses, open to foreign citizens and Italians living abroad, as required by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages, are divided into Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced courses.

LEVELS	CEFR	ECTS credits	BASIC COURSES	SUPPLEMENTARY COURSES
Beginners 1 st level	A1	6	1 month	-
Beginners 2 nd level	A2	6-12-20	3 months	1 month
Intermediate 1 st level	B1	6-12-20	3 months	1 month
Intermediate 2 nd level	B2	6-12-20	3 months	1 month
Advanced 1 st level	C1	30	3 months	1 month (*)
Advanced 2 nd level	C1+	30	3 months	1 month (*)
Advanced 2 nd level	C2	60	6 months	1 month (*)

(*) During the summer semester only:

(Summer) intensive courses are provided, too. The summer intensive 1-month courses include all levels. These courses offer wider content and more classroom hours than the other courses. There must be at least 10 students registered for each level for the courses to be held.

- The objective of the 1st Level Beginners Course (A1) is to provide students with the abilities and skills for simple and essential conversation in the most common and familiar situations. Special attention is given to pronunciation and writing. The 1st Level Beginners Course provides students with linguistic competences equivalent to the CELI Beginners Certificate. This course leads up to the 2nd Level Beginners Course (A2) and is for students whose native languages are very distant from Italian. *Access to the course is by interview.*
- The objective of the 2nd Level Beginners Course (A2) is to train students to understand and form frequently used sentences and expressions commonly used (for example - basic information on people, families, study and work), to be capable of communicating in routine situations by forming simple descriptions relating to their personal experience and environment. The 2nd Level Beginners Course provides students with linguistic competences equivalent to the CELI 1 Certificate. *All students who have*

never studied Italian before or who have only a vague knowledge of Italian may enter the 2nd Level Beginners Course after a placement interview.

- The objective of the 1st Level Intermediate Course (B1) is to create the conditions for students to begin, maintain and conclude short conversations, to easily understand simple routine exchanges, to make themselves understood and to exchange ideas and information on familiar topics, to describe experiences, to give reasons and to express opinions, projects and intentions. The 1st Level Intermediate Course provides students with linguistic competences equivalent to the CELI 2 Certificate. *Admission to the 1st Level Intermediate Course is granted to:*
 - *Students who have attended the 2nd Level Beginners Course.*
 - *Students who have been admitted to the 1st Level Intermediate Course by the entrance exam.*
 - *Students who have a CELI 1 or equivalent Italian Language Certificate issued by another institution similar to the University for Foreigners Perugia.*

- The objective of the 2nd Level Intermediate Course (B2) is to allow students to interact with a native speaker without great difficulty in formal and informal situations and to understand the fundamental ideas of complex texts in concrete and abstract, as well as technical and literary topics. They must be able to write clear articles on several topics and express their opinions on current events, indicating the advantages and disadvantages of the various sides. The 2nd Level Intermediate Course provides students with linguistic competences equivalent to the CELI 3 Certificate. *Admission to the 2nd Level Intermediate Course is granted to:*
 - *Students who have attended the 1st Level Intermediate Course.*
 - *Students who have been admitted to the 2nd Level Intermediate Course by the entrance exam.*
 - *Students who have a CELI 2 or equivalent Italian Language Certificate issued by another institution similar to the University for Foreigners Perugia*

- The objective of the 1st Level Advanced Course (C1) is to train students to speak and write the language in a natural manner. They must be able to make themselves easily understood, to have good mastery of a broad lexical repertory in different areas sufficient to allow them to understand specialised articles in newspapers and magazines. In terms of communication they must be able to choose the most suitable language functions in order to speak and hold a conversation, to express their points of view using the language in an appropriate and efficient manner. They must be able to write clear and well-structured texts, even on complicated topics. The 1st Level Advanced Course provides students with linguistic competences equivalent to the CELI 4 Certificate. *Admission to the 1st Level Advanced Course is granted to:*

- *Students who have obtained the Italian Language Certificate of the 2nd Level Intermediate Course or have passed the written Italian language exam.*
 - *Students who have been admitted to the 1st Level Advanced Course by the entrance exam.*
 - *Students who have a CELI 3 or equivalent Italian Language Certificate issued by another institution similar to the University for Foreigners Perugia.*
- **The 2nd Level Advanced Technical/Business Course (C1+)** is the natural progression of the 1st Level Advanced Course. The course seeks to give students linguistic competence in economic sciences and as well as acquaint them with the historical, legal and operative facets of the economy. The course is aimed at foreign students who work, or intend to work, in those sectors of the economy or commerce that handle communications and exchanges with Italian companies and institutions and who want to feel secure with a wide vocabulary and thorough understanding of the technical aspects of the Italian economy. The 2nd Level Advanced Course (C1+) provides students with linguistic competences equivalent to the CELI 5 Certificate.
Admission to the 2nd Level Advanced Course C1+ is granted to:
 - *Students who have obtained the Italian Language Certificate of the 1st Level Advanced Course or have passed the written Italian language exam.*
 - *Students who have been admitted to the 2nd Level Advanced Course by the entrance exam.*
 - *Students who have a CELI 4 or equivalent Italian Language Certificate issued by another institution similar to the University for Foreigners Perugia.*
 - **The 2nd Level Advanced Course (C2)** focuses only on language/culture subjects. The objective of the course is to make students experts in both the written and spoken aspects of the Italian language. They should know how to use the language with precision, expertise and fluency. At the end of the course students must prove that they not only have good linguistic skills but are also competent in the most important aspects of the morphology and syntax of contemporary Italian in all of its varieties. They must demonstrate their ability to apply the pragmatic rules in both oral and written communication as well as the rules of style indispensable for a creative and poetic use of the language. For this reason students who wish to attend this course must already be highly competent in their use of the language. The 2nd Level Advanced Course (C2) provides students with linguistic competences equivalent to the CELI 5 Certificate.
Admission to the 2nd Level Advanced Course is granted to:
 - *Students who have obtained the Italian Language Certificate of the 1st Level Advanced Course or who have passed the written Italian language exam.*

- *Students who have been admitted to the 2nd Level Advanced Course by the entrance exam.*
- *Students who have a CELI 4 or equivalent Italian Language Certificate issued by another institution similar to the University for Foreigners Perugia.*

To be noted that, in particular, for what regards the 1st and 2nd levels beginners courses (A1 and A2) as well as for the 1st level intermediate course (B1), the entry test is not aimed to verify (Italian) speaking skills but is essentially a socio-linguistic test. Furthermore, for students with very poor Italian language skills, grammar is not considered the most relevant aspect.

2. Training is focused on the acquisition of the needed competencies identified through the needs analysis.

The adopted programs are very flexible. The teaching strategy has a multi-directional approach. (In particular, in case of the 1st and 2nd levels beginners courses as well as for the 1st level Intermediate Course), The language is not the goal but the means to allow to the foreigners to move easily in the territory to meet their own needs, to access the necessary services, to search for a job, to understand their role in the hosting society. The language is nearly always an operational tool. The methodology is based on communication skills but also on learning the critical cultural dimension (learning the rules, etc..)

The courses are based on books and tools that, within the educational path, have as relevant issues the acquisition of the Italian citizenship, the knowledge of Italian society (health care, accident prevention, etc.), the deepening of the legal and administrative aspects.

At the end of each basic course, after passing the final exam, students will receive an Italian Language Certificate, corresponding to the equivalent Level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages, acquiring the ECTS credits necessary to advance to the next level.

At the end of the 1st Level Advanced Course (C1), after passing the Italian language exam, students will receive an Italian Language Certificate, corresponding to the C1 level of the CEFR required to advance to the next level.

Students who have successfully passed all the exams in their study course will receive the Italian Language and Culture Certificate showing their personal study course and achieved level of Italian language corresponding to C1 level of the CEFR, equivalent to 30 ECTS credits.

At the end of the Business-oriented 2nd Level Advanced Course (C1+) students who have passed all the exams will receive the Business-oriented Italian Language Certificate showing their achieved level of Italian as

corresponding to a C1+ level (or enhanced) of the CEFR, equivalent to 30 ECTS credits.

At the end of the 2nd Level Advanced Course (C2), students who have passed all the exams will receive the Italian Language Certificate, corresponding to the C2 level of the CEFR.

Students who have successfully passed all the exams in their study course will receive the Italian Language and Culture Diploma showing their achieved level of Italian Language as corresponding to C2 level of the CEFR, equivalent to 60 ECTS credits.

At the end of each course a Certificate of Attendance may be obtained on request of the student.

Students who attend the course regularly and pass the final exam of the supplementary courses, or the exam of the basic course, may request a certificate for the ECTS credits acquired along with the Certificate/Italian Language Diploma.

3. Training objectives are realistic within the timeframe.

This takes into account that both the initial and the target level of trainees in the language/culture be considered along with the number and frequency of training sessions. Some competencies, especially at higher levels, may take time to acquire. Objectives must be attainable within the specified timeframe.

1ST LEVEL BEGINNERS COURSE [A1]

- **DURATION:** The 1-month course calls for 20 classroom hours per week.

WEEKLY SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS	[A1] Hours	Intensive Hours
Italian Language	12	12
Speaking Practice	6	9
Writing Practice	-	4
Pronunciation and Orthography Practice	2	2
Total classroom hours per week	20	27

2ND LEVEL BEGINNERS COURSE [A2]

- **DURATION:** The 3-month basic course calls for 20 classroom hours per week. The supplementary course has a duration of 1 month.

WEEKLY SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS	[A2] Hours	Intensive Hours
Italian Language	12	12
Speaking Practice	6	9
Writing Practice	-	4
Pronunciation and Orthography Practice	2	2
Total classroom hours per week	20	27

1ST LEVEL INTERMEDIATE COURSE [B1]

- **DURATION:** The basic course lasts three months and calls for 20 classroom hours per week. The supplementary course has a duration of 1 month.

WEEKLY SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS	[B1] Hours	Intensive Hours
Italian Language	12	12
Speaking Practice	6	9
Writing Practice	-	4
Pronunciation and Orthography Practice	2	2
Total classroom hours per week	20	27

2ND LEVEL INTERMEDIATE COURSE [B2]

- **DURATION:** The basic course lasts three months and calls for 20 classroom hours per week. The supplementary course has a duration of 1 month.

WEEKLY SUBJECTS (*)

SUBJECTS	[B2] Hours	Intensive Hours
Italian Language	9	12
Aspects of Italian Culture	3	6
Speaking Practice	6	9
Pronunciation	2	2
Total classroom hours per week	20	29

(*) 2nd Level Intermediate Course students can choose one of the following subjects from the 1st Level Advanced Course syllabus (3 hours per week) and sit for the exam: History of the Cinema, History of Music, History of the Theatre and Art Terminology and Techniques.

1ST LEVEL ADVANCED COURSE [C1]

DURATION: The basic course lasts three months and calls for 24 classroom hours per week. One-month supplementary courses are held in the summer (July, August, and September).

The 1st Level Advanced Course consists of 3 study courses:

- Language
- Culture
- Technical/Business

Apart from the mandatory subjects, students must also choose one subject common to all three study courses, or one of the mandatory subjects of the other two study courses.

The free-choice subjects are common to all study courses and include three classroom hours per week

1st level one-month supplementary advanced courses may be held in the summer months.

Apart from the mandatory subjects, students must also choose two subjects from among the other subjects of the basic course for a total of 24 hours per week. Students who attend the supplementary courses for two months of the C1 level may automatically enroll in the third month of the basic course of the same level and sit the final exam.

One-month intensive courses are held in the summer months.

Apart from the mandatory subjects, students must take three free-choice subjects for a total of 30 hours per week.

2ND LEVEL ADVANCED COURSE [C1+]

The course lasts three months and calls for 30 classroom hours per week. It consists of mandatory subjects for a total of 27 hours per week and free-choice subjects for a total of 3 hours per week.

2ND LEVEL ADVANCED COURSE [C2]

The basic course is a six-month course divided into two terms. It calls for 30 mandatory classroom hours per week. The student is also free to follow other courses without having to sit for the final exams of those courses.

Supplementary one-month courses are held in the summer (July, August and September).

The course consists of mandatory subjects for a total of 24 hours per week and free-choice subjects for a total of 6 hours per week.

2nd level one-month supplementary advanced courses are held in the summer months.

Students must take the mandatory subjects and six free-choice subjects from those listed in the two syllabi of the analogous basic course for a total of 30 classroom hours per week.

One-month intensive courses are held in the summer months.

Apart from the mandatory subjects, students must take three free-choice subjects for a total of 30 hours per week.

4. Training is based on an updated didactic framework.

The skills that these courses (in particular those for beginners and intermediate levels) are designed to provide to the foreigners are those related to the day by day survival. Grammatical language skills are not the primary objective (especially for the less language skilled which often have not even developed language skills in their mother tongue). For this purpose, it is important to have a manual to develop skills and abilities to be used in other contexts (i.e. social, legal and cultural ones).

The Italian language is offered as a code of interpersonal communication, a tool to find and collect information as well as a vehicle to access to the Italian citizenship.

The learning materials adopted for all the different courses are decided centrally by the Faculty of Italian Language and Culture. For more advanced courses existing text books are used. For the beginners and intermediate levels courses learning ad hoc materials are prepared. "Learning materials" are often borrowed from everyday life: the train ticket rather than the electricity bill or the job offers on the internet, etc..

Teachers have many years of experience in teaching Italian to foreigners and are trained on the basis of materials and information (also video) posted on the website of the Umbria Region. They are supported by two coordinators. Teachers often attend refresher courses – organised by the University for Foreigners of Perugia -- aimed at qualified teachers and future teachers of Italian as a second language (L2), both Italian nationals and non-Italians. In addition, many teachers have taken the teaching certification DILS-PG (Certificate in Teaching Methodology of Italian as a Foreign Language) by participating in courses at the University for Foreigners of Perugia. The DILS-PG is a Teaching Methodology Certificate, which attests to the teacher's basic training and certifies his/her primary level educational competence, essential

for those who wish to become professional teachers and/or for evaluative purposes. Both Italian and non-Italian candidates, with certain prerequisites, may apply.

5. Training incorporates some element of retroaction.

There are tutors to support foreign students in order to verify if particular needs or specific difficulties arise.

If some learning difficulties are detected, teachers are available (on a voluntary basis) to start the lessons one hour before just for those students with less skills, in order to reinforce basic literacy, pronunciation as well as basic skills in writing.

Many students -- after the end of the courses -- require an additional course (on payment) to deepen their knowledge of Italian language and culture giving evidence of their satisfaction.

6. Training takes into account a maximal number of constraints: absence, diversity, time and place.

The courses require a mandatory frequency (equal to 70%) and students are fully informed about this obligation because the certification is completely paid by Umbria Region.

It is found that the diversity of origin countries is very motivating: for example, the South Americans learn Italian faster than the others and they help the other students to improve their language skills. Moreover, these students are highly motivated adults combining study and work. However, teachers and tutors are still a constant point of reference for the various problems that may be encountered.

7. Transferability assessment

7.1. Evidence of transfer

There is not still evidence of transfer. Nevertheless, the learning methodology adopted is fully transferable because it is based on the idea to learn a language in order to tackle with all the situations of the day by day life. The language is the tool to act, to move and to survive. It's not relevant to write or speak a perfect foreign language, but it's important to know where to find the necessary information and to be able to understand and to use the information. Hence, methodology and contents are transferable but they need to be adapted to the language and culture of the country in which the model is

going to be adopted: needs of the foreign people may vary from country to country.

7.2. Innovation

Innovative is the fact that they combine language learning with everyday life to facilitate the ability to collect and use information in real life every day.

7.3. Dependence on political context

The political context is important when it allows the immigrants to integrate themselves in the hosting society. Learning the language of the hosting country is fundamental to allow foreigners to enter in the labor market, to increase their level of education and, more generally, to grow, thus promoting social inclusion.

7.4. Flexibility

Highly flexible. Often using “learning materials” borrowed from everyday life: the train ticket rather than the electricity bill or the job offers on the internet, etc.. Grammar is taught inductively and is often taught at a later time.

7.5. Multi-region transfer

Having an operating dimension, model and methodology can be transferred around the world. Multiculturalism in the focus of the methodology.