



# Foundation Course Programme Guidelines

These Guidelines apply for students enrolled in the Foundation Course  
from the academic year 2024-2025.

## Introduction

The Foundation Course (FC) is a pre-university course activated as of 2016 and is aimed at students with a foreign secondary school leaving certificate that does not allow them to enrol in an Italian university course. In particular, it is aimed at students with a qualification awarded after 11 years of schooling, or a US High School Diploma (HSD) without the additional requirements for access to a first or single-cycle degree course, as specified in the ministerial guidelines.

The aim of the FC is both to make up for the lack of schooling (or the additional requirements for the HSD) and to enable students to reach a level of Italian language at least equal to B1, which is the minimum language requirement for enrolment in a first or single-cycle degree course at the University of Pisa.

The Foundation Course cannot in any way make up for the absence of an "Upper Secondary School Diploma or other qualification obtained abroad and recognised as equivalent (DM 270/2004 and Presidential Decree 212/2005)".

From the academic year 2021-22, the Foundation Course has been activated in both online and face-to-face modes. These guidelines regulate the management of Foundation Courses activated at the University of Pisa.

## Admission requirements

- Knowledge of the English language at B2 level.
- Upper secondary school leaving certificate awarded after 11 years of schooling and giving access to the higher education system of the country in which it was awarded and/or to which it refers.

## Special cases:

- 1) US qualifications: a High School Diploma is required as a minimum.
- 2) UK qualifications: you must hold a General Certificate of Education (GCE) or International General Certificate of Education (IGCE) with at least 1 A- level pass.

## Required documentation

In order to be admitted to the Foundation Course, the student must submit the following documents:

- Copy of passport (or identity card in case of EU citizen)

- Upper Secondary school qualification in original accompanied by one (or more) of the following documents: Dichiarazione di Valore (DV) issued by the Italian Diplomatic Representation of the country where the qualification was awarded, Attestato di Comparabilità and/or Attestato di Verifica issued by CIMEA.

Holders of qualifications from the 55 countries that are signatories to the Lisbon Convention may request the Statement of Correspondence in lieu of the DV or the Cimea Certificate of Comparability. In these cases, the Certificate of Verification is still required.

- Last year's transcript of records
- Completed and signed application form in its entirety
- A passport-sized photo
- Proof of English language proficiency at B2 level<sup>1</sup>

Teaching languages  
English and Italian.

Available courses

- 1) Foundation Course Humanities (FCH)
- 2) Foundation Course Science subjects (FCS)
- 3) Foundation Course for advanced Italian level
- 4) Foundation Course free choice modules

Organisational Management

The scientific and strategic coordination of the Foundation Course is entrusted to two Presidents: one for the Humanities course and one for the Science course, in consultation with the Pro-Rector for Cooperation and International Relations.

The following activities are also the responsibility of the two Presidents:

- Coordinating teaching activities with regard to content, aims, and examination methods
- Organising class timetables and examination sessions in agreement with the teachers of the respective programmes
- Resolving disputes between teachers and students
- Nominating the best students at the end of each edition of the programme

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<sup>1</sup> Knowledge of the language can be verified in one or more of the following ways: interview, documentation of attendance of at least one year of secondary school in English, international language certification (e.g. IELTS Academic, TOEFL, FCE).

The two Presidents are appointed by Rectoral Decree and hold office for two years. Their term of office is renewable.

The University Language Centre (CLI) is responsible for the Italian courses and their teaching and administrative organisation.

The organisation and management of the teaching of courses taught in English are the responsibility of the Department of Civilisations and Forms of Knowledge for the Humanities pathway and the Department of Physics for the Science pathway.

They include:

- Defining and managing the annual educational plan
- Recruiting teachers and providing them with technical and administrative support
- Reserving classrooms for lessons taught in English
- Administrative management of examination sessions (*Valutami porta*)

The general administrative management of the Foundation Course is the responsibility of the International Cooperation Unit.

It includes:

- Application management and evaluation
- Student enrolment and career management
- Pre-departure and post-arrival logistical and administrative support in Italy
- Welcome activities - Welcome week and entry orientation
- Organisation of guided tours, events and cultural activities in agreement with the programme directors
- Educational orientation activities (presentation of the educational offer and visits to departments and degree courses of interest)
- Activities related to the international promotion of the programme
- Coordination of ordinary part-time collaborations
- Co-ordination in agreement with the CLI of the tutoring collaboration of Italian language courses
- Defining and modifying the administrative procedures and regulations relating to the programme, in consultation with the CLI, the two Science and Humanities chairs and the teaching coordinators of the Departments of Civilisations and Forms of Knowledge and the Department of Physics

FC structure

The Foundation Courses in Humanities and Science subjects are one-year academic courses that provide for the acquisition of 60 Foundation Course Credits (CFC) divided as follows:

- 288 lesson hours in English (36 CFC)
- 320 hours of Italian language and culture (24 CFC+ 128 hours of tutoring)

- 80 additional hours of conversation with Italian students who can be recruited through the University's part-time collaboration calls or ad hoc collaboration agreements with the Department of Philology, Literature and Linguistics.

In addition, an intensive preparatory course in Italian offered through the ICoN platform (organised and managed by ICoN - Italian Culture on the Net, a consortium formed by several Italian universities), lasting approximately two months, can be activated and available each year before the start of the programme (usually in July and August).

## 1) Foundation Course Humanities (FCH)

This course consists of the following educational activities:

Compulsory:

Italian Literature: an introduction I (6CFC) Italian Literature: an introduction IIA (3CFC) Greek and Roman Archaeology (6 CFC) Modern European History (6 CFC)  
History of Art: an introduction (6 CFC) Italian Language and Culture (24 CFC)

Optional:

Free-choice educational activities for a total of 9 CFC during the academic year.

## 2) Foundation Course Science subjects (FCS)

This course consists of the following educational activities:

Compulsory:

Basic Mathematical Language (6 CFC) Physics (9 CFC)  
Chemistry (6 CFC)  
Biology (6 CFC)  
Italian Language and Culture (24 CFC)

Before the start of the courses, all science subjects' students must take a Mathematics Admission Test (MAT) to assess their basic preparation. An introductory course called "Math0" is available for students with gaps in previous education.

Optional:

Free-choice educational activities for a total of 9 CFC during the academic year.

Optional educational activities within the FCS and FCH

The list of optional courses that students can freely choose from in semesters I and II is available at <https://foundationcourse.unipi.it/>. In addition, each year further courses (of 3 or 6 CFC) may be offered in addition to those already on the above list.

All optional courses may be activated subject to a minimum number of 5 interested students and may be included in the individual study plans proposed by the students.

### 3) Foundation Course for advanced Italian level

The course is aimed at students with an upper secondary school qualification awarded after 11 years of secondary education (or High School Diploma), who are native speakers of Italian or who have a certificate of Italian language proficiency of at least C1 level.<sup>2</sup>

It consists of 60 credits to be chosen from the Humanities (FCH) and Science subject (FCS) courses.

### 4) Foundation Course free-choice modules

Single courses to be chosen from those offered in the FCH and FCS path.

This option is primarily aimed at students who already fulfil the minimum educational requirements for enrolment in a bachelor's degree course and is designed to study specific subjects for an in-depth recognition, both for personal interest and with a view to university enrolment.

Examinations and profit tests

The examinations of the FC courses are held at the end of each of the two semesters: in January and June and may be written and/or oral.

In January and June, each teacher must schedule two dates for the examination, from which the student may choose.

Each lecturer may also schedule intermediate tests to be given during the course.

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<sup>2</sup> The level of Italian language can be verified either by interview or by submitting a CLIQ certificate, or by passing a special test organised by the CLI.

In addition to the two above-mentioned sessions, there will be a recovery session in both July and September.

If a student still has credits to be recovered after this session, he/she may re-enrol in single courses of interest in the following academic year and will be able to retake the examinations according to the timetable and procedures for new enrolled students in the FC programme.

An examination is considered passed with a minimum mark of 18/30, the maximum mark being 30 cum laude.

Italian language proficiency tests are held at the end of each language module in the academic calendar. Classes run from September to June.

If a student fails a test in the first semester, he/she has the possibility of repeating the module. In the second semester, since there is no guarantee that the modules of the basic levels (A1/A2) will be permanently activated, a module can only be repeated if the minimum number of participants for the formation of the class is reached (9 people). If this not the case, the student will be able to follow the module on the ICON platform and may be included in the standard Italian modules, that CLI will activate in the second semester. At the end of the sessions scheduled in the academic calendar, CLI will offer two more opportunities to reach the B1 or B2 level: one at the end of July and one at the end of September.

If one of these two levels is not reached within the last scheduled session, the student will have two options: either enrol in a CLI course at his or her own expense and take the exam within the conditions and timeframe established by the course regulations or take one of the Certificazione di Lingua Italiana di Qualità (CLIQ) exams<sup>3</sup> depending on the level of interest.

#### Obtaining the final certification

The final certificate of completion of the Foundation Course is awarded by a committee which assesses the student's overall performance in the chosen educational course and the achievement of at least B1 level of Italian language<sup>4</sup>.

Course attendance is compulsory. At the end of course, the student receives a certificate of completion of studies signed by the Rector.

A transcript of records is also available, which can be downloaded by the student via the Alice portal (as a self-declaration) or can be requested from the International Cooperation Unit as a certificate for use abroad, on payment of the relevant administrative fee.

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<sup>3</sup> The list of CLIQ examinations is as follows: 1) University of Roma Tre - cert.it (<http://www.certificazioneitaliano.uniroma3.it/>); 2) University for Foreigners of Perugia - CELI (<https://www.cvcl.it/>); 3) University for Foreigners of Siena - CILS (<https://cils.unistrasi.it/>); 4) Dante Alighieri Society - PLIDA (<https://plida.it/>).

<sup>4</sup> Achievement of the B1 level of Italian language is not necessary in the case of the Foundation course for advanced Italian level.

## Enrolment in a Bachelor's or Master's degree course at the University of Pisa

Obtaining the final certification gives students, legally residing in Italy, the opportunity to apply for enrolment in any first-cycle or single-cycle degree course at the University of Pisa.

For non-EU students applying for a visa, the rules set out in the "Procedures for entry, stay, enrolment of foreign students and recognition of qualifications for higher education courses in Italy" apply.

The final certification does not exempt students from having to pass admission tests for access to courses with limited enrolment or any other form of assessment for access to a degree course, where applicable.

Enrolment at another University: if a student wishes to enrol at another university, he/she must contact that university in good time to ensure that he/she can apply with his/her highest academic qualification and final Foundation Course certificate.

If the student does not have a Foundation Course certificate of completion or an upper secondary school diploma that allows enrolment in a Bachelor's degree programme, the student may not be able to enrol, even under certain conditions.

## Under-age students applying for a visa

Non-EU students under the age of 18 applying for a visa, must be accompanied by a legal guardian in Italy until they reach the age of majority.

It will be the Italian Diplomatic Representation of reference that will decide on the requirements and modalities for obtaining a guardian, when assessing the application for a Study Visa.

It is important to note that, even if the Diplomatic Representation issues a long-stay Visa (Type D) to a under-age student without the presence of a legal guardian (e.g. upon written declaration by the parents), the student in question will still not be entitled to enrol at the FC once he/she arrives in Italy, as he/she will not be able to benefit from essential services such as: the issue of a residence permit, enrolment in the National Health Service, the conclusion of a rental contract and the opening of a bank account.

## Recognition of CFC credits

Foundation Course Credits (CFC) are not university credits; therefore, you cannot apply for them to be recognised for shortening a university course.

## Foundation Course tuition fees and benefits for students

The amount of the Foundation Course fees, as well as the procedures for fee refunds, overdue fees and deadlines, are published annually in the Student Fees Regulations.

At the end of each FC, FCH and FCS Presidents nominate the best students in their course (who may also be enrolled in the FC Native Italians), on the basis of student's overall performance during the academic year. The two best students will be entitled to the following benefits:

- Exemption from payment of tuition fees (with the exception of the regional tax and stamp duty) for the first year of enrolment in Bachelor's or Master's degree programme at the University of Pisa;
- A scholarship of €1,000 gross if these students decide to enrol at the University of Pisa. Students enrolled in the Foundation Course cannot apply for the benefits provided by the

DSU Toscana. They can only apply once they have awarded the FC certificate of completion, if they decide to enrol at the University of Pisa.