

Foundation Course Guidelines

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Preamble

The Foundation Course (FC) is a pre-university programme established in 2016 and designed for students holding a foreign secondary school qualification that does not grant direct eligibility for enrollment in a degree programme at an Italian university. In particular, it is aimed at students who hold a qualification obtained after 11 years of schooling, or a US High School Diploma (HSD) without the additional requirements necessary for access to first-cycle or single-cycle degree programmes, as specified in the ministerial guidelines.

The purpose of the FC is both to bridge the missing years of schooling (or the additional requirements requested for the HSD) and to enable students to achieve at least a B1 level of Italian language proficiency.

The Foundation Course cannot under any circumstances remedy the lack of a "Upper secondary school diploma or other qualification obtained abroad, recognized as suitable (DM 270/2004 and DPR 212/2005)".

These guidelines regulate the management of the Foundation Course programmes activated at the University of Pisa.

Admission Requirements

- English language proficiency at B2 level.
- Final secondary school qualification obtained after 11 years of schooling that grants access to the higher education system in the country where it was issued and/or the country to which the qualification refers.

Special cases:

US qualifications: a High School Diploma is required as a minimum.

UK qualifications: a General Certificate of Education (GCE) or International General Certificate of Education (IGCE) with a passing grade in at least 1 A-level is required.

Required Documentation

For the purposes of admission to the Foundation Course, the following documentation is required:

- Copy of passport (or identity card in the case of an EU citizen).
- Original final qualification accompanied by one (or more) of the following documents: Declaration of Value (DV), issued by the Italian Diplomatic Representation of the country where the qualification was obtained, Statement of Comparability and/or Statement of Verification issued by CIMEA.

Holders of qualifications from the 55 signatory Countries of the Lisbon Convention may request the Statement of Verification instead of the DV or the Statement of Comparability.

In the event that the University is able to autonomously verify the authenticity and suitability of the qualification for access to the FC, neither the DV nor the CIMEA statements will be required.

- Transcript of records for the final year of school.
- Application form completed and signed in all its parts.
- One passport-sized photo.
- Proof of English language proficiency at B2 level.

Languages of Instruction

English and Italian.

Available Tracks

Foundation Course Humanities (FCH)
 Foundation Course Science (FCS)
 Foundation Course Social Science (FCSS)
 Foundation Course Social Science (FCSS)
 Foundation Course free choice modules

Organizational Management

The scientific and strategic coordination of the Foundation Course is entrusted to the Presidents of FCH, FCS, and FCSS, in agreement with the Vice-Rector for International Cooperation and Relations.

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

- Coordination of the teaching activities of the faculty with regard to content, objectives, and examination procedures.
- Organization of the lecture timetable and exam sessions in agreement with the professors of the respective programmes.
- Resolution of disputes between faculty and students.
- Nomination of the best students at the end of each edition of the programme.

The three Presidents are appointed by Rectoral Decree and remain in office for two years. The mandate is renewable.

The Interdepartmental Language Centre (CLI) is responsible for the Italian language courses and their educational and administrative organization.

The organization and management of the teaching activities for courses held in English are the responsibility of the Department of Civilizations and Forms of Knowledge for the FCH, the Department of Physics for the FCS, and the Department of Political Sciences for the FCSS.

These include:

- definition and management of the annual academic planning;
- recruitment of professors and technical/administrative support for them;
- room booking for courses held in English;
- administrative management of examination sessions (via the Valutami portal).

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

It includes:

- management and evaluation of applications;
- student enrollment and career management;
- pre-departure and post-arrival logistical and administrative support in Italy;
- welcome activities – Welcome week and incoming orientation;

- organization of guided tours, events, and cultural activities in concert with the Chairpersons of the respective programmes;
- academic orientation activities (presentation of the Unipi educational offer and visits to departments and degree programmes of interest);
- activities related to the international promotion of the programme;
- coordination of standard student part-time collaborations;
- coordination, in concert with the CLI, of tutoring collaborations for Italian language courses;
- definition and modification of administrative procedures and regulations relating to the programme, in concert with the CLI, the Chairpersons of FCS, FCH, and FCSS, and the academic coordinators of the respective departments.

Structure of the FC

The Foundation Course Humanities, Science, and Social Science are programmes lasting one academic year and require the acquisition of 60 Foundation Course Credits (CFC), structured as follows:

- 288 hours of teaching activities in English (36 CFC)
- 320 hours of Italian language and culture (24 CFC)

Furthermore, an intensive preparatory Italian course lasting approximately two months may be activated each year, available before the start of the programme (usually in the months of July and August).

Attendance of the courses is compulsory.

1. Foundation Course Humanities

The track is delivered in-person and consists of the following courses:

Compulsory:

- Italian Literature: an introduction I (6 CFC)
- Italian Literature: an introduction II (3 CFC)
- 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 courses for a total of 9 CFC throughout the academic year.

An introductory course called “Textology”, which aims to provide students with the basic tools for the critical reading of academic texts.

2. Foundation Course Science

The track is delivered in-person and consists of the following courses:

Compulsory:

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

Before the start of the courses, all Science students must participate in a Mathematics placement test to assess their foundational knowledge. For students showing educational gaps, an introductory course called “Math0” is organized.

Optional:

Free-choice courses for a total of 9 CFC throughout the academic year.

3. Foundation Course Social Science (FCSS)

The track is delivered online and consists of the following courses:

Compulsory:

- Sociology and Contemporary Society (9 CFC)
- Media, Technology and Society (6 CFC)
- History of Citizenship (6 CFC)
- Introduction to Political Science (6 CFC)
- Italian Language and Culture (24 CFC)

Optional

Free-choice courses for a total of 9 CFC throughout the academic year.

Optional Courses within FCS, FCH, and FCSS

The list of optional courses that students can freely choose in the first and second semesters is available on the webpage <https://foundationcourse.unipi.it/>.

Furthermore, additional courses (of 3 or 6 CFC) may be offered each year, in addition to those already included in the aforementioned list.

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

4. Foundation Course free-choice modules

Single courses to be chosen among those offered in the FCH, FCS, and FCSS tracks.

This option is primarily aimed at students who already possess the minimum school requirements for enrollment in a first-cycle degree course and is intended to deepen specific subjects for personal interest or in view of university enrollment.

Enrollment in free-choice modules allows the acquisition of up to a maximum of 25 credits per academic year.

Examinations and Assessment Tests

Examinations for courses taught in English 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 professor must provide two exam dates from which the student can choose. Each professor may also schedule intermediate tests to be administered during the course of teaching. In addition to the two aforementioned sessions, a retake date is scheduled for all courses in July and another in September.

Should a student, following the aforementioned sessions, still have credits to recover, they may re-enroll in the single courses of interest in the next academic year's edition and will have the opportunity to take the exams again under the timeline and procedures set for newly enrolled students in the programme.

An exam is considered passed with a minimum grade of 18/30, while the maximum grade is 30 cum laude (with honors).

The duration of the lectures is from September to June.

As regards Italian language courses, before the start of classes, all students must take a placement test designed to define their initial language level, in order to be placed in a specific class accordingly.

Assessment examination sessions are held between October and June.

Furthermore, at the end of the aforementioned sessions, the CLI will ensure two more opportunities to obtain the B1 level or B2 level: one by the end of July and one by the end of September.

If one of the two levels is not achieved by the last of the two scheduled sessions, the student will have two options: enroll at their own expense in a CLI course and take the exam according to the methods and within the timeframe established by the regulations of that course, or obtain one of the Quality Italian Language Certifications (CLIQ) based on the level of interest.

Award of the Qualification

The Foundation Course qualification is awarded upon obtaining 60 CFC, including 24 credits of Italian language (minimum B1 level).

Upon obtaining the qualification, the student receives a certificate of completion of studies signed by the Rector.

A transcript of records is also available, which can be downloaded autonomously by the student via the Alice portal (as a self-declaration), or it can be requested from the Directorate for Education, Students and Internationalization - International Cooperation Unit, as a certificate for use abroad upon payment of the relevant administrative fees.

Enrollment in a First-Level or Single-Cycle Degree Programme at the University of Pisa

Obtaining the final qualification grants a student regularly residing in Italy the opportunity to apply for enrollment in any first-cycle or single-cycle degree programme at the University of Pisa.

With regard to non-EU students requiring a visa, the rules set out in the "Procedures for entry, residency, enrollment of international students and relative recognition of qualifications for higher education courses in Italy" shall apply.

The qualification does not exempt students from having to pass admission tests for access to restricted-enrollment degree programmes, or from any other form of assessment for access to a degree programme, where required.

In the absence of the Foundation Course qualification or a final secondary school diploma suitable for enrollment in a first-cycle degree programme, the student cannot be enrolled, not even conditionally.

Enrollment at another University: should a student wish to enroll at another university, they must obtain information sufficiently in advance from the latter in order to ensure that they can apply for enrollment with their highest-level school qualification and the final Foundation Course certificate.

Minor Students Requesting a Visa

In the case of non-EU visa-seeking students who are under 18 years of age, it is necessary for them to have a legal guardian or a parent residing with them in Italy until they reach the age of majority.

The relevant Italian Diplomatic Representation will determine the requirements and procedures for assigning a guardian during the assessment for issuing the study visa.

In the event of a study visa being issued despite the absence of a legal guardian/parent, the University reserves the right not to enroll the minor student in question.

Recognition of CFC Credits

Foundation Course credits (CFC) are not university credits; therefore, recognition of these credits cannot be requested for any degree programme shortening.

Student Fees and Benefits

The amount of fees relating to the Foundation Course, as well as the procedures concerning fee refunds, late penalties, and deadlines, are published annually in the Student Fees Regulations.

At the end of each edition of the FC, the Chairpersons of FCH, FCS, and FCSS each nominate the best student of their track, based on the overall performance achieved during the year.

The three best students are entitled to the following benefits:

- exemption from university tuition fees (with the exception of the regional tax and stamp duty) for the first year of enrollment in a first-cycle or single-cycle degree programme at the University of Pisa;
- a scholarship of gross 1,000.00 Euros, should they decide to enroll at our University.

Students enrolled in the Foundation Course cannot apply for the benefits provided by DSU Toscana.

False Documents and Declarations

The submission of false or manipulated documentation or declarations, or non-compliance with the terms and conditions provided within the Responsibility Agreement signed and accepted by the student upon admission to the programme, shall entail the application of the sanctions provided for in the regulations in force regarding student disciplinary proceedings.