

Recommended Guidelines for US-Italy Grade Conversion

Italian Scuola Superiore/ Liceo – US High School

At the present time, there is no international agreement between the US and Italy regarding the a priori recognition of respective academic titles nor of official equivalencies between the academic grading systems. These guidelines are recommended, based on experience with both educational systems, however, individual US and Italian institutions/entities may choose to follow or vary from these suggested guidelines.

Grades in Italian high schools are awarded on a 10-point scale for each term; 6 is the passing mark, and instructors rarely award marks on either extreme (1-3 or 9-10). Schools give both oral (*orale*) and written (*scritto*) grades for academic subjects. Final grades are issued in whole numbers, whereas mid-term grades may include minuses, pluses, half-grades, etc. in the following order from low to high (e.g., 6--, 6-, 6, 6+, 6.5, 6/7, 7--, etc.) Italian high school students must concentrate in a certain area of study (see kinds of schools below), however the curriculum likely includes a distribution of courses, similar to the core requirements in a US liberal arts structure. Regardless of their concentrations, if students fail to earn the passing mark (6) in any subject(s), they are obliged to participate in “debito” (remedial/make-up) lessons during the summer. After remedial summer study, if students subsequently pass a school-set exam in the “debito” area(s), they may be promoted to the next class. Failure to earn the passing mark (6) in any three subjects at one time may lead to failure to be promoted, without opportunity for make-up.

A grade is also given for student attitude/comportment (*condotta*), where the required passing mark for each year is 6; failure to meet this requirement may result in failure to be promoted. *Totale ore assenza* indicates days absent.

| Italian Voto (Grade on 10-pt scale) | Suggested US Letter Equivalency (Grades A-F) | Suggested US Percentile Equivalency (max 100) | Suggested US GPA Equivalency (4.00 scale) | Qualitative Assessment |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| 10 | A++/ Honors | 99-100 | 4.50 | Outstanding (extremely rarely awarded) |
| 9 | A+ | 97-98 | 4.30 | Superior (rarely awarded) |
| 8 | A | 94-96 | 4.00 | Very Good (considered a top mark) |
| 7 | B | 80-89 | 3.00-3.99 | Good |
| 6 | C | 70-79 | 2.00-2.99 | Satisfactory / Average |
| 5 | D-F | 60-69 | 1.00-1.99 | Unsatisfactory/ Remedial lessons & exam required |
| 4 | F | 50-59 | 0.50-0.99 | Poor/ Failure/ Remedial lessons & exam required |
| 1-3 | F | 0-49 | 0.0-0.49 | Severe academic failure & lack of effort |

Secondary School System in Italy

Italian high school, or *scuola superiore*, consists of five years of study which lead to the *Esame di Stato* (often called the *maturità*), a diploma issued by the *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* upon successful completion of national exams (June). Within the *scuola superiore* structure, the most challenging level of instruction and studies are offered at liceo, which specifically prepares students for university. *Liceo* studies are offered in a number of disciplines, such as *liceo classico* (classics literature, Latin & ancient Greek), *liceo scientifico* (math, science, technology), *liceo linguistico* (languages), or *liceo artistico* (fine & performing arts). The term “*ginnasio*” refers to the first 2 years of a 5-year *liceo classico* program. The “standard” track of *scuola superiore* leads to university or to professional training at the post-secondary level. Italy offers technical schools for agricultural, industrial, and commercial sectors (tourism, land surveying, etc). Vocational courses lead to specific trades (electrician, plumber, technician, etc). Vocational programs/schools do not necessarily foresee university study and may lead directly to work after secondary education.

The general level of Italian high-school study, particularly at *liceo*, is relatively advanced, with regard to US education standards. Selected US universities recognize the advanced nature of the Italian *liceo* and *scuola superiore* through advanced placement or university credit for successful completion of the *Esame di Stato*. For further information on Italy’s educational system, see http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurybase_en.php#italy For further details on the US transcript, see the 2005 NAEP High School Transcript study, Institution of Education Sciences, US Dept of Education: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/studies/2007467.asp>