

Understanding the Italian grading system

Exams in Italian universities are typically graded on a scale that goes from zero to thirty points. The minimum score to pass an exam (and be awarded the respective credits) is 18, and the maximum is 30 *e lode* (from the Latin expression *cum laude*, “with distinction”).

At the end of his/her cycle, the average grade of each student is calculated and translated on a scale that goes from zero to one hundred and ten points. The student can then acquire extra points for his/her dissertation, graduating with a score that cannot exceed the maximum grade of 110 *e lode*.

There are international agreements between Italian and foreign universities that specify the “exchange rates” to transfer grades from one system into another. Here we provide a rough guide to interpret Italian grades, by way of a comparison with the British, American, French and Chinese scales. Please notice that this is only indicative– if you are an Erasmus or international exchange student, you should consult the official documents that specify the rules for grade translation that apply to your programme.

Italian (exams and coursework)	American	British	French and Belgian	Chinese	Qualitative description
29-30 <i>lode</i>	A	First class (70 or more)	17-20	优秀	Excellent (distinction)
25-28	B	Upper second class (60-69)	14-16	良好	Very good
21-24	C	Lower second class (50-59)	12-13	中等	Good
18-20	D	Third class (40-49)	10-11	及格	Adequate
17 or less	F	Fail (39 or less)	0-9		Not adequate

A peculiar feature of the Italian academic system is that students can reject a grade they do not like. In this case, they are allowed to repeat the exam in a later session. The same happens if they fail.

In order to attend an exam, students must register in advance on the Unimia or SIFA online system. After the exam, the teacher records their grades and the students receive an automatic message asking if they want to reject it, with instructions explaining how to do it.