

Fact Sheet

Free of charge optional Italian language courses



Mendrisio Campus

Switzerland has four national languages: German is the most widely spoken one (63,5%), followed by French (22,5%), Italian (8,1%) and Romansh, an ancient Latin-based language spoken by just 0.5 per cent of the population.

Italian is the third language in Switzerland and 360.000 inhabitants of Canton Ticino uses it as its main language. Being USI Università della Svizzera italiana the only University of Italian language and culture in the Swiss Academia, since 2006 it is particularly committed in the organization of Italian language courses, both intensive and semestral. Knowledge of the Italian language in Canton Ticino can in fact provide many opportunities both in personal and professional lives. Not only it can make it easier to get along in shops and restaurants and to communicate with colleagues or organizations but also it increases job opportunities.

The Italian language programme is designed for USI students and USI professionals at all levels who want to develop and improve their practical Italian skills. More specifically, throughout each semester USI Università della Svizzera italiana offers a free of charge Italian language study programme organized in fourteen modules: four intensive courses of two weeks each prior to the semester start at Absolute Beginner (A1), Beginner (A1-A2), Elementary (A2), and Pre-intermediate (A2-B1) level and ten semestral courses from CEFR level A1 until CEFR level B2-C1.

Each year about 500 USI students take the Italian language courses and 300 obtain the certificate of attendance.

Why study Italian

- There is an increase in need for communicative skills in a second or third language.
- According to the European Commission, Italian is the fourth most commonly used language in EU.
- Multilingualism is a central issue in Switzerland.
- Italian is a minority language in Switzerland. Only 8,1% of the Swiss populations speaks Italian.
- Switzerland and canton Ticino has long been a magnet for the tourism industry.
- Italy is the country with the highest number of UNESCO sites in the world and a very popular destination for travelers.
- Many literary authors known worldwide are Italian writers.
- The 1980s saw a celebration in the Swiss architecture of the movement Ticino Tendenza. It represents a unique symbiosis of rationalism, modernism, awareness of history and reference to landscape.

Participants

All non Italian-speaking students, researchers, assistants, professors and staff studying or working at Università della Svizzera italiana are most welcome to take the free of charge Italian language courses offered every semester. As class size is an important factor in language learning it is on the other hand not possible to admit family members, friends or students studying in other higher Institutions.

Lecturers

USI value good teaching. All lecturers have a long teaching experience and are highly motivated to make the learning experience as pleasant as possible favoring friendly and stimulating contacts with all participants.

All courses are designed accordingly to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. All four skills are taught (reading, writing, listening and speaking) with particular emphasis on grammar in the lower levels A1-B2 and particular emphasis on oral communication and reading authentic texts in the higher levels B2-C1.

Detailed information regarding courses from level A1 until level B1-B2 on Mendrisio Campus and courses from level A1 until level B2-C1 on Lugano Campus can be found at the following link:

www.italiancourse.usi.ch

Overview

Intensive Courses	Semestral Courses
Prior to the Semester Start	During the Semester
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autumn sem.: Mendrisio Campus Spring sem.: Lugano Campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic year: Mendrisio Campus
60 hours	28 hours
General Italian courses	General Italian courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absolute Beginners (A1) 	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginner (A1-A2) 	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary (A2) 	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intermediate (B1) 	→
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginner (A1-A2) Elementary (A2) Intermediate 1 (B1) Intermediate 2 (B1-B2)
Alternative enrollment programs are available on Lugano Campus.	
Self Study	
The official Italian language proficiency test PLIDA is programmed twice a year in April and November on Lugano Campus.	
www.desk.usi.ch/it/convenzioni-certificati-di-lingua	

Intensive Courses

Prior to the Semester Start

Organisation

Autumn semester

Four intensive courses are offered at the Academy of Architecture, Mendrisio Campus, two weeks prior to the semester start at:

1. Absolute Beginner A1 level,
2. Beginner A1-A2 level,
3. Elementary A2 level,
4. Intermediate B1 level.

Tuition involves six hours per day taught over a period of two weeks: Monday-Friday: 09:00-12:30, 14:00-15:30 (in total 60 hours).

Spring Semester

Four intensive courses are offered on Lugano Campus (about 20 km from Mendrisio) two weeks prior to the semester start at:

1. Absolute Beginner A1 level,
2. Beginner A1-A2 level,
3. Elementary A2 level,
4. Pre-intermediate A2-B1 level.

Tuition involves six hours per day taught over a period of two weeks: Monday-Friday: 08:30-12:00, 13:30-15:00 (in total 60 hours).

Course Load

Intensive Courses

The intensive courses encourage to get fully involved in the language. The morning class focus on grammar and writing whereas the afternoon class focus on improving listening and speaking skills, expanding vocabulary and developing confidence. The course includes doing homework and self-study every evening after class.

Semestral Courses During the Semester

Organisation

General Italian courses

The courses develop grammatical accuracy and builds vocabulary with a communicative teaching method incorporating reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

The courses held on Mendrisio Campus are divided into four levels:

1. Beginner (A1-A2),
2. Elementary (A2),
3. Intermediate 1 (B1),
4. Intermediate 2 (B1-B2).

Alternative enrollment programs are available on Lugano Campus. Further information can be found at the following link:

www.italiancourse.usi.ch.

Course load Semestral courses

Our aim is to provide participants with the opportunity to acquire as much knowledge of the language as possible in a corresponding amount of time. Tuition involves two hours per week taught over a period of thirteen or fourteen weeks (in total 26 or 28 hours per semester depending from the course). Additionally, all courses requires at least two hours of individual study each week.

Individual Study

Each week students will be offered self-study exercises based on the areas of grammar which the class has focused on. Depending from the teacher and level, participants will also be encouraged to read short chapters of continuous reading, produce pieces of writing or prepare presentations. The student would be expected to perform at least two hours of homework outside of class every week.

Entrance Test

All higher level courses require knowledge of material covered in other courses. A definitive decision about admission can consequently be taken only after the entrance test organized the first day. The lecturer will address participants who chose the wrong level to the correct one after the first lesson.

Exemption

All students who passed the exam of the lower level intensive course held before the start of the semester are exempted and are automatically admitted in the higher level semestral course. All other students have to take the entrance test even after successful completion of the final exam of the previous semestral course.

Late Arrival

Since the entrance test is compulsory, students have to take the course starting from the first week. Exceptionally a new examination date can be scheduled for those students who experience delays in their arrival plans due to unexpected problems. The latest possible access in the classes is however the **1st of October in Autumn Semesters** and **1st of March in Spring Semesters**.

Final Evaluation Test

Regular examinations, midterm and final, are held each semester. The results are strictly informative (passing or failing) and give the chance to the teaching staff to recommend following courses.

Attendance Policy

- A regular and active attendance is required once admitted. In order to benefit fully from the course, a 100% attendance is recommended.
- Participation in classroom activities is the basis for all course work together with independent learning and homework. For this reason, though three absences during the semester are excusable, not more than three consecutive absences are accepted. It is the participant's responsibility to always notify in advance any absence via email to the teacher and ask about assignments and homework.
- For the good quality of the courses, any student wishing to drop the class once admitted should contact the teacher as soon as possible.

Certificate of Attendance

All students who attended at least the 75% of the course and took the final test obtain a Certificate of Attendance. The attendance certificate will state the name of the participant and the level of the course but not the grade.

ECTS Points and Final Course Grade

Italian language courses do not count towards a degree at Università della Svizzera italiana. Only Swiss-European Mobility Programme (SEMP), Swiss Mobility and International Exchange students are entitled to receive ECTS points after having passed the final test and attended at least the 75% of the course. At USI all examinations on official courses are graded on the 1 to 10 scale. For language courses the evaluation is however expressed by a binary system (Pass or Fail).

Course Registration

Participants should use the self-assessment Grid of the European Language Portfolio before registration. Central to the European Language Portfolio are the six levels of communicative proficiency defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The levels are summarised for the five skills of listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing. Based upon the result, students can choose the most appropriate course level. Self-assessment Grid:

www.italiancourse.usi.ch/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/self-assessment-grid-159526.pdf

The application is online. Registration begins in **April for Autumn semesters** and **late November for Spring semesters**. For the good organization of the programme, students should register only if seriously interested. Online registration:

www.italiancourse.usi.ch

Confirmation of Enrolment

The online application enrolls participants automatically. A detailed informative email confirming the enrolment will however be sent few days before the beginning of each course. In case of unexpected withdrawal, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the administration by writing to italiancourses@usi.ch as soon as possible.

Course Book and Course Material

The course material is not covered by the University and must be purchased by the student before the start of the course. A confirmation message with the details will be sent to the registrant prior to the course start. Extra materials are chosen by the teacher depending on the needs of the class. As the general objective of Università della Svizzera italiana is to achieve environmental responsibility, the course material is available in digital versions in iCorsi3:

www.icorsi.ch/login/index.php

The login credentials, NET-ID and password, giving access to the platform are provided the first day.

Graded Readers

Graded readers or 'readers' are books that have had the language level simplified to help second language learners read them. The language is graded for vocabulary, complexity of grammar structures and also by the number of words. A collection of graded readers from level A1 until level B2 can be borrowed in the Biblioteca universitaria di Lugano.

Suggested Grammar Books

- Fabia Gatti, Stella Peyronel; *Grammatica in contesto. Strutture e temi di italiano per stranieri*. Loescher editore, 2006.

Course Feedback

We value your opinion. All participants have the opportunity to give general feedback on the courses either by filling out an evaluation form in class at the end of the semester or by speaking to the teacher.

Official Italian Language Proficiency Plida

Università della Svizzera italiana also offers an official Italian language proficiency test once a year in April in cooperation with *Società Dante Alighieri* in Italy. For more information, please visit the webpage:

www.desk.usi.ch/it/convenzioni-certificati-di-lingua

Italian Language Courses In Figures

- Lugano and Mendrisio Campus
- Total number of students who takes the Italian language courses each year: about **500 participants**.
- Total number of students who obtain the certificate of attendance each year: about **300 participants**.

Contact

For any issue relating to the Italian language courses please write to Susanne Stigen Pescia at: italiancourses@usi.ch.

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Mendrisio Campus



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