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Chapter 3

The structure of the vocational education and training system

3.1. The general education system and its role in training

The general education system is currently divided into three levels, preceded by pre-school education: primary education, secondary education and post-secondary education. Up to 1998 compulsory schooling extended from the ages of 6 to 14, a total of eight years. In January 1999 the minimum school-leaving age was increased to 15 years of age. Finally, in May 1999 approval was given to raising the compulsory education and training age to 18.

Pre-school education, which is free of charge and optional, extends from the age of 3 to the age of 5. It is provided by nursery schools, which were established in 1968 and are attended by over 95 % of children in the corresponding age group (figures for 1996/97).

Primary education, which corresponds to the first five years of elementary school, runs from 6 to 10 and is completed with the 'certificate of elementary education' (*licenza elementare*), which entitles the pupil to go on to lower secondary education. Its goal is the pupil's numeracy, literacy and general education.

Secondary education is divided into two cycles, lower and upper.

Lower secondary education corresponds to the three years of lower secondary school, extending from the age of 11 to 13, and is compulsory. Since 1962 this has been a comprehensive course of studies, i.e. attended by all pupils. Its aim is to promote the education and training of the pupil and to encourage guidance on subsequent occupational and schooling choices. It ends with a '*licenza media*', a diploma of lower secondary education, that offers access to any type of upper secondary school. Up to the 1998/99 school year, this diploma also marked the end of compulsory education. With effect from the 1999/2000 school year, compulsory schooling will, as already pointed out, continue up to the enrolment in the first year of upper secondary education for pupils who have not already reached the age of 15. It should be pointed out, however, that the rate of transfer to upper secondary education was already very high: over 94 % in the 1997/98 academic year.

Upper secondary education offers a large number of streams, with various goals and of varying duration (from 3 to 5 years of study, with the option of supplementary years leading to a diploma for shorter courses). These may be grouped in five main streams:

- **academic secondary education** (*istruzione liceale*), providing a general cultural education. Together with teacher training education, it is also known as humanistic or classical education, historically contrasted with technical and vocational education. Academic secondary education covers classical, science and language secondary schools, all of which provide five-year courses structured in two cycles: a lower one of two years and an upper one of three years of education;
- **teacher training** (*istruzione magistrale*), which includes the teacher training schools and institutes in which future teachers in nursery and elementary schools are trained;
- **technical education** (*istruzione tecnica*), divided into three main fields: agriculture, industry and commerce, each including several sections;

- **vocational education** (*istruzione professionale*), offering different specialist skills in many sectors, in agriculture, industry, the craft trades, services and non-typical sectors;
- **art education** (*istruzione artistica*), which includes art colleges and art schools.

Since 1969 any type of diploma of upper secondary education taken at the end of the fifth year of study has provided access to any university faculty (see Section 3.2.3).

Up to 1998, on turning 14, pupils could, if they wished, go on to the system of regional vocational training (see Section 3.2.4) and could, after obtaining their certificate of lower secondary education, take what are known as 'level 1' or basic training courses. From 1999/2000 the minimum age for access to the regional vocational training system under the law approved on 19 January 1999 is 15.

As approved by Parliament in May 1999, the vocational training system and apprenticeship are alternatives to the school system for the compulsory provision of education and training up to the age of 18.

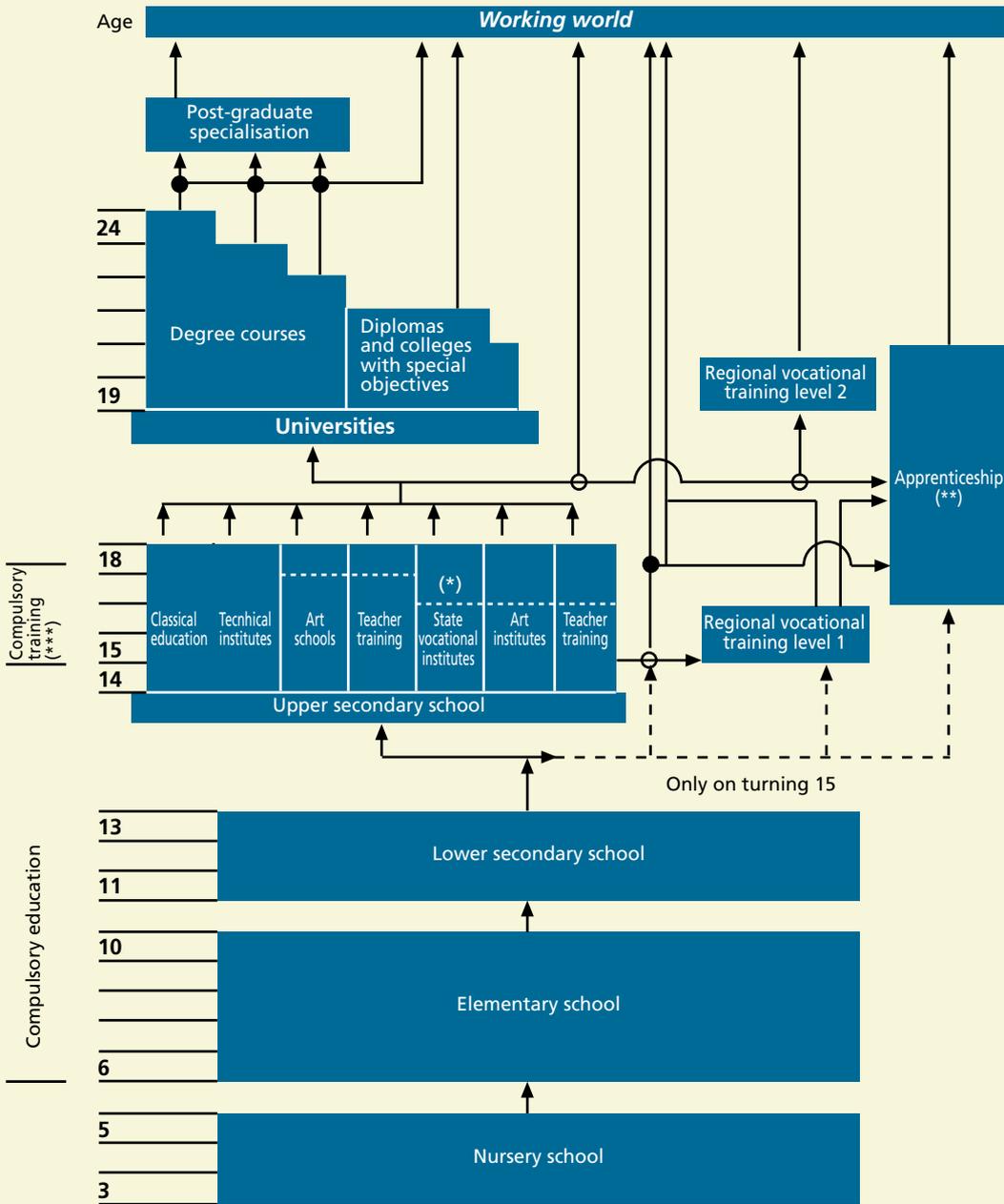
University education (*istruzione universitaria*) includes universities and colleges with special objectives, degree courses, post-graduate specialist courses and masters' degree courses. It leads to the acquisition of degrees, university diplomas, specialist diplomas and research doctorates.

University diplomas (*diplomi universitari*) were introduced into the Italian system in 1990 and the first courses were launched in 1992/93. University diploma courses last for not less than two, and not more than three, years. Since their establishment, there has been a great expansion in enrolments.

Graduate courses (*corsi di laurea*) last from a minimum of four to a maximum of six years. Enrolments have considerably increased during the 1980s as a result of the growing trend among young Italians to continue their studies and to put off the moment at which they have to enter the working world. There was a slight decline in the 1990s, although the trends differed depending on the discipline in question.

The **vocational training system** includes initial and continuing vocational training. Initial training in turn is divided into basic (or level 1) training aimed at those who have only the lower secondary education diploma, and level 2 training for those who have a qualification or a diploma from upper secondary education or a university.

Figure 11. The Italian education and vocational training system



- Key
- (*) In recent years, vocational institute courses have been conducted in the form of post-qualification courses organised jointly with the regions.
 - (**) Accessible between 16 and 24 years of age (26 in south), but the contract cannot be for more than 4 years.
 - (***) Can be fulfilled in school, vocational training or apprenticeship.
 - End of ordinary cycle (with the option of continuing in order to obtain a diploma of five years' study).

To provide a detailed picture of the training routes taken by young people, a model has been constructed (Figure 12). It calculates the flows through the Italian school system by the 'according to class age' (*contemporanei*) method. For each group of pupils and students enrolling, it shows the dropout rates between one year and the next. In calculating the flows, allowance is made not only for outflows but also for re-entries. The data obtained in this way, despite the inevitable approximations, can be used for a trend analysis.

From the figures for 1996, the first striking point is that, out of 1 000 young people enrolling for the first year of lower secondary school, 44 leave school before taking the certificate of completion of compulsory education. Of these, 13 go to regional vocational training facilities and 28 to apprenticeship.

The vast majority of pupils taking the lower secondary education certificate continue their studies in upper secondary school. The rate of school attendance at secondary level has for many years been rising sharply. Despite this, there are many young people who drop out of education before they have completed the full school cycle. Most dropouts occur in the first two years, although it is also common to switch from one school to another.

Out of the 956 pupils obtaining the certificate of completion of their studies up to the minimum school-leaving age, 875 go on to enrol in the next level of education. Among those who leave the educational system with a school-leaving certificate, 25 go on to vocational training, 35 opt for apprenticeship and 21 go to non-training activities.

Of the 875 young people in the group initially enrolling in the first year of upper secondary school, 301 do not complete their normal studies. For many of them, however, this is not a permanent dropout. It can be estimated that 122 leave but then come back to secondary education, often at the time of the final examinations or the final year. Out of 179 permanent leavers, on the other hand, 55 go to regional vocational training, 80 to apprenticeship and 44 to other activities.

The young people initially enrolling for upper secondary school include 12 who leave with an intermediate qualification (in other words after the third year), whereas 684 reach the certificate of completion of upper secondary education. The breakdown according to streams is as follows: 104 in vocational education, 302 in technical education, 198 in academic education, 23 in art education and 57 in teacher training schools.

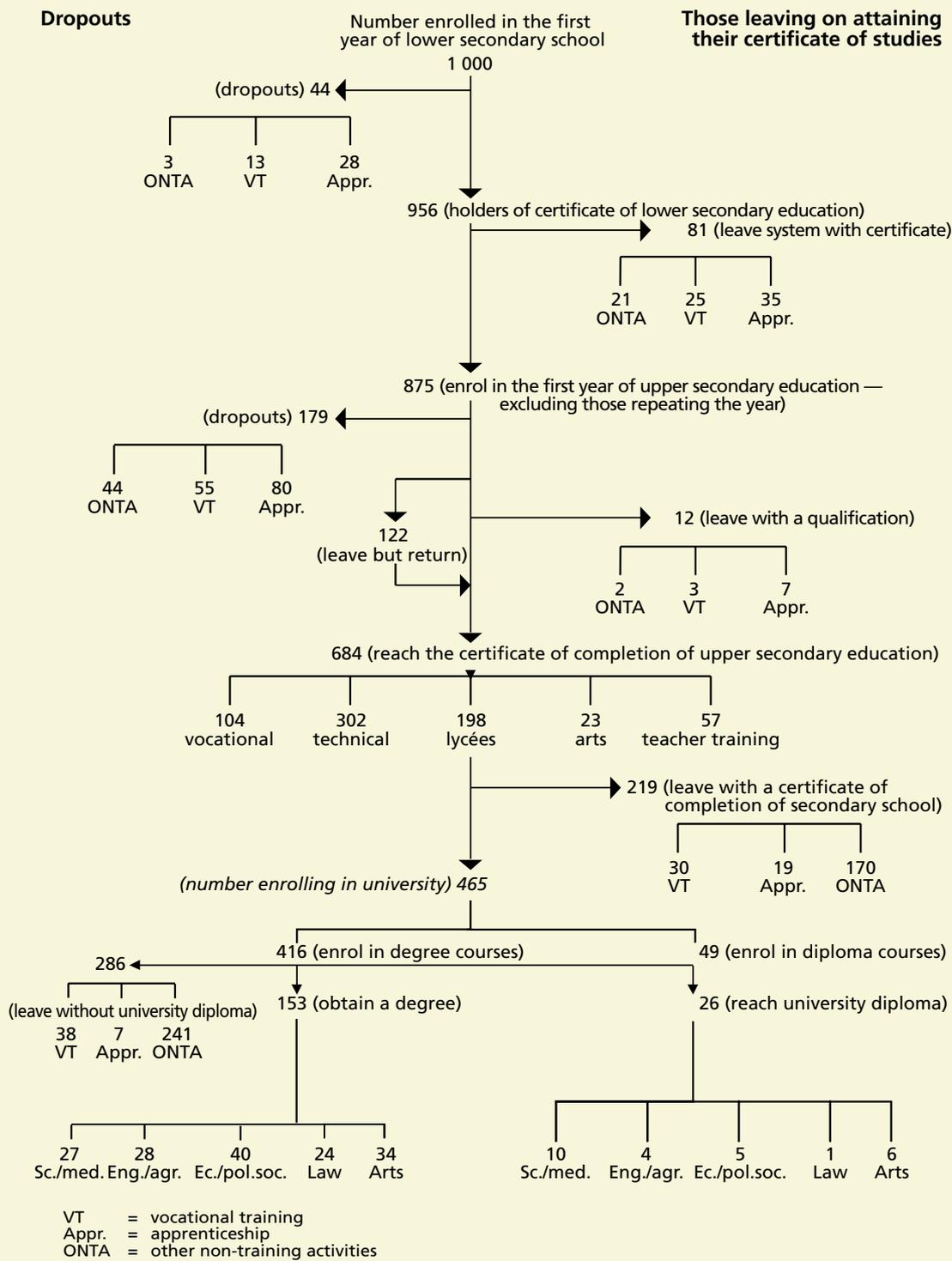
Out of the total of those completing upper secondary education, 30 go to a training course, 19 to apprenticeship and 170 to non-educational activities. No fewer than 465 enrol in university (416 in a full degree course, 49 in a university diploma course). Success rates, however, are fairly low. Only 153 young people in the initial group actually obtain a graduate degree, 26 a diploma. Of the 286 leaving university before obtaining a diploma, 38 enrol in training courses and 7 go to apprenticeship.

The figures presented here can be used to highlight certain critical points in the Italian education and training system and the role performed by vocational training.

The first point is that the existence of dropouts before completion of compulsory schooling, however low the rate, testifies to the persistence in certain areas of Italy of socio-cultural backwardness, poverty and social hardship.

In the second place, it becomes clear that the minimum school-leaving age, set at 14, was no longer reflected in the behaviour patterns of young Italians, nearly all of whom continued in education. This trend has been recognised by raising the minimum

Figure 12. Flows in the Italian training system, 1996



SOURCE: ISTAT, ISCO AND ISFOL, FIGURES PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

school-leaving age to 15 pending an overall reorganisation of educational cycles, to bring the total number of years of compulsory schooling up to 10. Nevertheless, the high number of young people leaving school or transferring from one stream to another in the first two years of upper secondary school is a sign of the difficulties associated with the redefinition of this two-year period as part of the overall reorganisation of the school cycles.

In the third place the model highlights the fact that the attraction exerted by the regional training system is still weak, and that it plays a role complementary to the school system. It is no coincidence that the greatest number of young people going to level 1 vocational training are students who have previously encountered setbacks in their school education. Careful thought should be given to this problem, since, with the raising of compulsory education/training to 18, the vocational training system will be called upon to perform a vital role and must not be perceived as in any way subordinate to school education. This state of affairs needs to be carefully assessed since, with the raising of the compulsory training age to 18, the vocational training system is required to play a fundamental role and so can no longer be seen as somehow subordinate to the school system.

One last point is the low productivity of university education, characterised by the high rates of enrolment and the large percentage of students dropping out of the courses. Even today although their numbers are growing there are relatively few young people who actually complete their university education.

As further evidence of this, thought should be given to the figures set out in Table 16, which provide a detailed picture of the evolution of the process of school attendance now taking place in Italy and testifies to the overall improvement in the 'productivity' of the school system, with the gradual reduction in dropouts. It is now a fairly well established practice to continue education after obtaining the certificate of lower secondary education, as shown by the rate of transfer to upper secondary education. From 82.2 % at the beginning of the 1980s, this rose to 94.3 % in the 1997/98 school year. When one considers that at the beginning of the 1990s this rate was still more or less the same as at the beginning of the previous decade (85.9 %), it is obvious that the tendency to prolong school education has been reinforced in very recent years.

Another very important phenomenon is the increase in the proportion of young people attending upper secondary education. At the beginning of the 1980s, 14 to 18-year-olds in upper secondary education amounted to only just over half of their age group, whereas, in the latest year for which figures are available, the percentage has risen to 86.8 %. Similarly, there is an increase in the percentage of young people taking their diploma on completion of upper secondary education. The trend in the proportion then going on to university, on the other hand, is less linear, affected as it is both by the cost of university studies and the difficult prospects of obtaining employment even for university graduates. As a result, although the rate of enrolment out of 100 young people of the same age is rising, this fact is due to the growing numbers completing their certificate of upper secondary education by comparison with others in the same age bracket.

Table 16. Education attendance indicators, 1980/81 to 1997/98

Indicators	1980/81	1990/91	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98 (⁸)
Lower secondary school certificate holders (per 100 in the same age group) (¹)	88.1	99.8	94.7	101.1	100.7	(⁷)
Rate of transfer to upper secondary schooling (²)	82.2	85.9	91.7	96.1	92.5	94.3
Rate of attendance at upper secondary school (³)	51.7	68.3	77.6	80.0	81.5	86.8
Proportion passing certificate of completion of upper secondary education (⁴)	38.2	51.4	63.1	66.2	69.2	(⁷)
Rate of transfer to university (²)	70.7	71.3	64.0	68.4	67.9	65.9
Enrolments in university per 100 in the same age group (⁵)	25.9	35.6	40.8	43.2	44.8	45.6
Rate of enrolment in university (⁶)	25.1	30.6	38.1	39.9	41.1	45.4
Rate of productivity of the university	30.3	36.8	33.8	32.9	36.7	(⁷)

(¹) Average for young people aged 13, 14 and 15. The figure may exceed 100 % because of those repeating the school year.

(²) The school/academic year indicated at the head of each column is the year of arrival.

(³) Those attending upper secondary school as a percentage of the total of young people aged 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18.

(⁴) Holders of certificate of completion of upper secondary education (*maturità*) compared with the total group of young people aged 18, 19 and 20.

(⁵) Total number enrolling for first year out of the average for young people aged 19, 20 and 21.

(⁶) Total number of those enrolling for university out of young people aged 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23.

(⁷) Data not available.

(⁸) Figures taken from the general report on the economic situation of the country (1997).

SOURCE: ISTAT, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND MINISTRY OF UNIVERSITIES AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH, FIGURES PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

From an international comparison of the education attendance indicators for the 15–24 age group, it appears that in 1995 (the latest year for which figures are available) Italy's performance has now come into line with that of the other countries, although it retains its own specific characteristics.

Table 17 compares attendance in the education system by year of age in the 15–24 age group. Throughout compulsory schooling in European Union countries, school attendance exceeds 90 %. In certain countries (Denmark, Finland, France and Sweden), schooling remains at virtually the same level even after that period. In Italy school attendance is easily in excess of 90 % up to the age of 14, the minimum school-leaving age (although this age is the lowest in the OECD countries). Compared with the average for OECD countries, the Italian model of schooling seems to feature a lower rate of participation than the average during the first few years of secondary school and then a lesser reduction in the rate of participation than in other countries, resulting in a higher rate of participation in higher education.

Table 17. Participation in the educational system (percentage of age group) by 15 to 24-year-olds, EU countries ⁽¹⁾, 1995

Country	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Austria	97	94	88	62	36	26	22	18	16	-
Belgium ⁽²⁾	103	103	100	87	75	67	49	38	28	20
Denmark	98	94	82	72	55	42	40	36	33	28
Finland	99	93	90	81	41	43	49	44	39	32
France	98	96	93	84	70	56	42	31	21	13
Germany	99	97	94	84	65	45	34	41	20	18
Greece	86	79	56	48	45	36	29	17	13	8
Ireland	96	91	81	73	47	37	20	15	13	11
Italy ⁽³⁾	89	86	78	72	55	41	38	31	26	23
Luxembourg	80	81	78	70	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	99	98	93	83	70	60	48	38	30	23
Portugal	88	73	73	55	45	44	47	25	22	17
Spain	94	83	75	63	53	50	40	34	25	17
Sweden	96	97	96	88	35	31	31	30	28	24
UK	98	87	75	54	45	39	33	22	17	14

(¹) The figures in italics refer to the compulsory schooling age.

(²) The figures may be higher than 100 % due to repeat years.

(³) The table is taken from the OECD publication, *Education at a glance*, 1997, which does not in fact include figures for Italy. ISFOL has calculated these in the light of the annual survey conducted by Doxa on a sample of about 15 000 households, and ISTAT education statistics. The findings also include vocational training.

SOURCE: OECD, REPORT ON EDUCATION 1997 AND, FOR ESTIMATES RELATING TO ITALY, DOXA AND ISTAT, FIGURES PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

In the 14–19 age group the school participation rate declines with age: among 14-year-olds it is as high as 95.8 %, while among 15- and 16-year-olds it falls to 90.7 and 86.4 % respectively. At the age of 17 the rate is 81.6 %, at 18 it is 74.4 % and at 19 it is 54.2 %.

It is also of interest that the social origin and cultural level of the families of origin influence the rate of educational participation and the choice of the type of education and training path. The higher the occupational status of young people's parents and their level of education, the higher the participation rate. The school participation rate in the 14–19 age group is found to be 99.2 % where the head of the family is a graduate and 93.0 % where the head of the family has a certificate of upper secondary education. It falls to 80.1 % where the head of the family has a certificate of lower secondary education, 65.6 % where the head of the family has a certificate of elementary education and 36.6 % where the head of the family has no educational qualifications.

Table 18. Educational and occupational status of young people, aged 14–19, by level of education of the head of family (in %)

Status	Level of education of the head of family					
	Total	Graduate	Certificate of higher secondary education	Certificate of lower secondary education	Certificate of elementary education	No certificate
Student	80.4	99.2	93.0	80.1	65.6	36.6
Employed	8.3	0.0	3.7	9.1	13.7	18.1
Unemployed	3.0	0.0	0.7	2.8	5.7	13.6
First jobseeker	7.0	0.4	2.6	6.9	12.7	24.4
Housewife/man	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.3	7.3
Other	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(Absolute figures in thousands)	3 366	284	892	1 256	853	82

SOURCE: ISFOL PROCESSING OF DOXA SURVEY FINDINGS, 1998.

The family's educational level, therefore, has a very great influence on participation in secondary school, a finding that calls for appropriate measures to ensure equity in access to education and training. There is also a fairly clear-cut link between the occupational status of the reference person of the family (generally the father) and the rate of university enrolment.

Sex also appears to exert a fairly marked influence on the rate of school participation. Females tend to outperform males in education, irrespective of their social origin.

Lastly, there is a marked difference based on geographical area of origin: where the prospects of obtaining a job are good, this often works against staying on in education. Inversely, high levels of unemployment may be an incentive to continue in education. In this case, school is often seen not only as an instrument of social and job mobility but also as an opportunity to defer the time of entry into a labour market in serious difficulties.

3.2. Initial vocational training

3.2.1 A general picture

As stated in Section 2.2.1, responsibility for primary and secondary education is held by the Ministry of Education, responsibility for higher education by the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research, whereas responsibility for vocational training is delegated to the regional authorities.

Nevertheless the line of demarcation between the various providers of education and training is somewhat blurred. For instance, certain streams of upper secondary education (vocational, technical, the arts and teacher training) are to some extent 'vocational', just as university diplomas tend to be geared to the working world.

For this reason, in looking at the provision of initial vocational training in greater detail, it will be necessary to take into account not only the regional provision but also the vocational education coming under the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research (MURST).

For the purpose of highlighting the percentage of the various segments of training provision, the reader is referred to Table 19 which shows the breakdown of participation in the 14–19 age group. This age group has been taken as a reference because it is the one for which the training available is most varied.

Table 19. Distribution of participants, aged 14–19, in vocational training by type of training, 1995/96 and 1996/97

	1995/96		1996/97	
	absolute values	%	absolute values	%
Technical institutes	1 120 634	45.5	1 079 431	45.6
Vocational institutes	511 291	20.8	507 448	21.4
Art institutes	60 570	2.5	60 169	2.5
Teacher training ⁽¹⁾	205 944	8.4	210 256	8.9
Level 1 regional vocational training	128 131	6.0	117 316	5.0
Apprenticeship	413 892	16.8	393 138	16.6
Total	2 440 462	100.0	2 367 758	100.0

(¹) Teacher training institutes and schools.

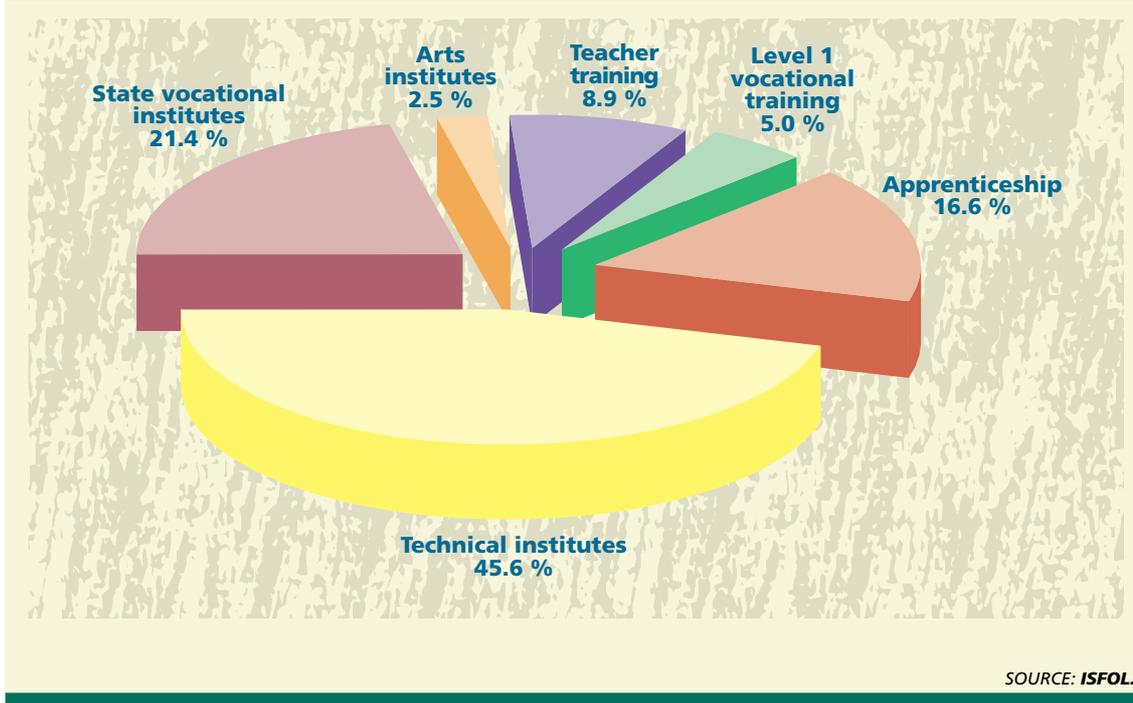
SOURCE: ISTAT AND MINISTRY OF LABOUR, FIGURES PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

Figure 13 shows the relative proportion in 1996/97 of each of the streams into which initial vocational training aimed at the 14–19 age group is divided.

Taking all the channels of education and initial training of a vocational type existing in Italy, both in the school and in the regional training system, as well as apprenticeship, it is apparent that the highest numbers of users are attending State technical institutes (1 079 431, equivalent to 45.6 % of the total), followed by State vocational institutes (507 448, i.e. 21.4 %) and apprenticeship (393 138, or 16.6 %). In the latter, at present, the training element is limited, but, due to the large numbers being trained under this arrangement and to the reform of the regulations now taking place, apprenticeship may well become one of the main channels of vocational training in the system.

Level 1 regional vocational training accounts for a smaller proportion, but it should be borne in mind that the average duration of regional courses is two years, compared with the three to five years of school education, and that if a comparison was made taking this into account, the gap, while still wide, would certainly be narrower.

Figure 13. Participation in initial vocational training, users in the 14–19 age group, by type of training route, 1996/97



There are also several experimental forms of linking and integrating the two sub-systems, just as there are quite a few efforts to bring about institutional integration. In particular, in the reforms that are likely as a result of the labour agreement and the proposed reorganisation of school cycles, integration is seen as a key point in a reformed system of education and training.

One last comment should be made on university diploma courses. Instituted in 1990 by Law 341 on the 'Reform of university teaching regulations', these were introduced for the purpose of providing university qualifications with a mainly practical and vocational content, that could quickly be put to good use on the labour market.

The introduction of university diplomas has brought Italy into line with other European countries, where for a long time there has been a 'lower level' short cycle channel of university education closely geared to the demands of local production systems. This adjustment has become necessary because of the need to reinforce and differentiate the provision of post-secondary education and training in Italy in response to the growing demand for practitioners at middle to high labour market level. It has also become crucial, following the definition of the system of recognition of academic qualifications in the European Union. This requires those wishing to engage in a profession to have successfully attended at least three years of a post-secondary course, although this does not necessarily need to be a university-type course.

3.2.2. Vocational streams in school education

Vocational education and technical education are the main vocationally-oriented streams in the school system. Together they account for about 60 % of young people in upper secondary education, and about 85 % of those in the vocational streams.

The greatest attraction is exerted by the technical institutes, which cater for the highest number of students: 1 081 699 in school year 1997/98, equivalent to 57.8 % of the total number of pupils in vocational training in the schools. Following the growth of the 1980s, enrolments in this type of school fell considerably in the early 1990s (– 16.9 % in the first six years of the current decade). A marked decrease in the number of pupils was recorded in particular by the technical, agricultural and commercial institutes, followed to a lesser degree by the industrial institutes. The opposite trend has occurred in institutes serving other sectors, such as maritime occupations, the hotel and catering trades, social services, and 'women's occupations', where the number of students has risen.

Table 20. Students registered for upper secondary schools by type of institute, 1980/81 to 1997/98

Type of institute	School year						
	1980-81	1990-91	1996-97	1997-98 (*)	1990-91/ 1980-81	1996-97/ 1990-91	1997-98/ 1996-97
	Absolute numbers				% variation		
Vocational institute	448 119	541 705	507 448	507 935	20.9	– 6.3	0.1
Technical institute	1 081 014	1 298 540	1 079 431	1 081 699	20.1	– 16.9	0.2
Lycées (general education)	559 167	733 388	757 775	762 176	31.2	3.3	0.6
Teacher training institutes	206 677	161 648	192 147	216 401 (¹)	– 21.8	18.9	2.9 (¹)
Teacher training schools	30 794	23 154	18 109		– 24.8	– 21.8	
Arts lycées	21 304	36 344	33 456	94 730 (²)	70.6	– 7.9	1.2 (²)
Arts institutes	35 742	61 549	60 169		72.2	– 2.2	
Total	2 382 817	2 856 328	2 648 535	2 662 941	19.9	– 7.3	0.5
	Breakdown in %						
Vocational institute	18.8	19.0	19.2	19.1			
Technical institute	45.4	45.5	40.8	40.6			
Lycées (general educ.)	23.5	25.7	28.6	28.6			
Teacher training institutes	8.7	5.7	7.3	8.1 (¹)			
Teacher training schools	1.3	0.8	0.7				
Arts schools	0.9	1.3	1.3	3.6 (²)			
Arts institutes	1.5	2.2	2.3				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0			

(*) Provisional data from *Relazione generale sulla situazione economica del paese* (1997).

(¹) Includes teacher training schools.

(²) Includes arts institutes.

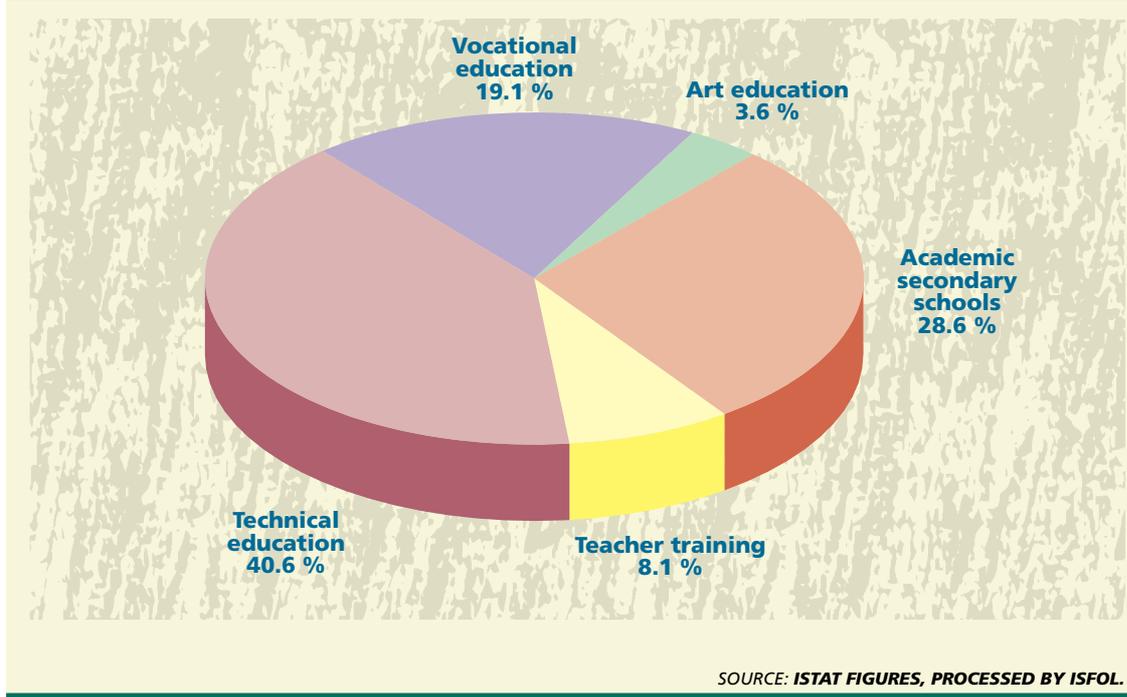
SOURCE: ISTAT FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

The structure of the vocational education and training system

The decrease, which in practice has occurred in almost every sector of upper secondary education (with the exception of teacher training institutes), has been primarily due to the shrinking of the younger generations following a fall in the birth rate. This reduction is no longer being offset by the steady rise in the rate of school participation. The fall is partly the consequence of the gradual shift of the student population towards academic education, which is becoming more popular among young Italians. This phenomenon may be attributed to the growing difficulties being encountered by young people with diplomas coming out of the more vocational school streams and to the general tendency to continue studies up to university and, therefore, to opt for general studies which will not affect future choices of professional options.

A less marked fall (– 6.3 % in the period under consideration) was recorded by State vocational institutes, which cater for 27.2 % (507 935) of students in vocationally-oriented training in the school system. The better performance of this channel shows that a significant proportion of young people is still opting for the most immediately vocational stream.

Figure 14. Pupils in upper secondary schools by stream, school year 1997/98



(a) Vocational education

One of the main channels for vocationally-oriented training in the school is that of vocational education provided by State vocational institutes. These are three-year courses on vocational subjects serving various sectors, designed to help young people gain rapid access to the labour market. On completion of the courses, nationally recognised qualifications are issued (level 1 qualifications). In actual fact only a few young people leave at this point. Since the short cycles were extended to five years, an experiment introduced in 1969, with the establishment of vocational post-qualification courses enabling young people to obtain an upper secondary vocational diploma, and, even more so, with the recent reform of curricula, it has become very common to continue studies up to the fifth year.

Training routes were reviewed and in 1992 drastically reduced in number, following an experimental period (Project 92). At present four basic types of vocational institutes exist:

- for agriculture,
- for industry and the craft trades,
- for the service sector,
- for non-typical sectors.

In turn each type is broken down into various qualifications. There are 17 in the traditional sectors, plus 38 other qualifications in the non-typical sector, which includes streams associated with special demands in local production contexts (confectionery, timber, marble, ceramics, film-making and television, the maritime and health-care sectors).

Table 21. Students enrolled in vocational institutes, by stream, 1980/81 to 1997/98

Stream	School year						
	1980/81	1990/91	1996/97	1997/98 (*)	1990/91-1980/81	1996/97-1990/91	1997/98-1996/97
	Absolute figures				% variation		
Agricultural	31 282	30 154	29 349	n.a	- 3.6	- 2.7	
Industrial	188 344	210 408	199 429	n.a	11.7	- 5.2	
Commercial	154 521	207 318	173 793	n.a	34.2	- 16.2	
Other (†)	73 972	93 825	104 877	n.a	26.8	11.8	
Total	448 119	541 705	507 448	507 935	20.9	- 6.3	0.1
	% composition						
Agricultural	7.0	5.6	5.8				
Industrial	42.0	38.8	39.3				
Commercial	34.5	38.3	34.2				
Other (†)	16.5	17.3	20.7				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0				

(*) Provisional figures from *Relazione generale sulla situazione economica del paese* (1997).

n.a.= not available.

(†) Maritime occupations, hotel and catering trades, social services, 'women's vocational institutes'.

SOURCE: ISTAT FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

The vocational institutes, together with technical institutes, have traditionally enjoyed a measure of autonomy under their legal status because of their institutional links with the local economy and production enterprises. The school councils are empowered to produce annual activity plans and have a certain room for manoeuvre, including the right to use external experts.

In 1988, on the initiative of the Directorate-General for Vocational Education, Project 92 was launched in the form of a supported national experiment with the aim of reforming the curricula and vocational profiles of the State vocational institutes. The project arose from recognition of the inadequacy of the basic general education provided in vocational education. The job profiles at which the education was directed had become obsolescent and had proliferated over the years. The training curricula, which had concentrated on the technical aspects, instruction and practical work, had become too specific.

The objective, therefore, was to promote an improvement in the standards of basic general education, reorganise and innovate the job profiles and formulate curricula that develop multi-skilling and a range of technical abilities. The idea was that young people coming on to the labour market should be able to adjust to current changes in the production world.

The experimental project, subsequently main-streamed under a new regulation contained in ministerial decrees issued in 1992 (covering the initial three years of qualification) and in 1994 (for the final post-qualification two years of study), left the modular structure of the State vocational institutes unchanged. This provided for a preliminary option of leaving at the end of the three-year period with a vocational qualification and, thereafter, the option to go on to a two-year post-qualification course which would lead to the acquisition of a vocational certificate of completion of secondary education (*maturità professionale*).

The curriculum has been set up differently, and is now more general education-based rather than being solely practical and applicatory in nature. It should also be pointed out that, together with an extension of general and scientific education during the first two years and consequently a reduction in the number of hours spent in specialist training, an area of deepening (*approfondimento*), to which four hours a week are devoted, has been introduced. The individual institutes are free to plan this, in an effort to 'customise' study paths.

The experimental project has also promoted the institution of integrated (*integrati*) two-year post-qualification courses. These entail cooperation between vocational institutes and regional vocational training in the light of specific institutional objectives, based on conventions and bilateral agreements signed by the regions and the State (Directorate-General for Vocational Education).

(b) Technical education

The technical education (*istruzione tecnica*) provided by State technical institutes is designed to produce technical and administrative practitioners who will have middle ranking functions in the fields of agriculture, industry, commerce and tourism. These are five-year courses, leading to a technical diploma that provides access to any university faculty. The diploma accredits its holder for the corresponding occupation.

There are many types of training routes, and these in turn break down into many specialist streams. The main types of technical institute are for:

- commerce,
- industry,
- surveying,
- agriculture.

Between the 1980s and 1990s, the experiment was also extended to the technical institutes (assisted projects), due to the efforts of the Directorate-General for Technical Education. Experiments with new curricula providing more time for general basic education and up-to-date specialist contents have affected a large number of schools.

In 1994, in certain streams, the experiments have in fact been converted into regulations. This has occurred in particular in the following streams: electronics, electrotechnology and communications (*Ambra* project); mechanical engineering (*Ergon* project); chemistry (*Deuterio* project), textiles (*Aracne* project) and economics and law (*Igea* project).

Table 22. Students enrolled in technical institutes, by stream, 1980/81 to 1997/98

Stream	School year					1990/91- 1980/81	1996/97- 1990/91	1997/98- 1996/97
	1980/81	1990/91	1996/97	1997/98 (*)				
	Absolute figures				% variation			
Industrial	281 202	327 497	281 956	n.a.	16.5	- 13.9		
Commercial	533 344	667 949	520 161	n.a.	25.2	- 22.1		
For surveyors	137 279	169 327	164 694	n.a.	23.3	- 2.7		
Others (1)	129 189	133 767	112 620	n.a.	3.5	- 15.8		
Total	1 081 014	1 298 540	1 079 431	1 081 699	20.1	- 16.9	0.2	
	% composition							
Industrial	26.0	25.2	26.1					
Commercial	49.3	51.4	48.2					
For surveyors	12.7	13.0	15.3					
Others (1)	12.0	10.3	10.4					
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0					

(*) Provisional figures from the *Relazione generale sulla situazione economica del paese* (1997).
n.a. = not available.

(1) Agriculture, maritime occupations, air transport, tourism, company management and 'women's vocational institutes'.

SOURCE: ISTAT FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

(c) Teacher training

Teacher training schools (*scuole magistrali*) were used traditionally to train nursery school teachers. At present they are organised as two separate cycles: a short cycle lasting for three years and a long, five-year cycle. On completion of the three-year course of study, a certificate of accreditation for teaching is issued. People opting for the three-year period may, following a supplementary examination, switch to the long cycle. At the end of the five-year course of studies, two certificates are obtained: the teacher training certificate and the diploma of experimental vocational studies. The curriculum is directed towards teaching methods and from the first year onwards, it includes work placements in nursery schools.

The **teacher training institutes** (*istituti magistrali*) were originally intended as providers of training for elementary (primary) school teachers. The duration of the course is four years, on completion of which an examination is taken and successful candidates can then have direct access to university faculties of teacher training. Attending a complementary fifth year provides access to other university faculties. Teacher training institutes have generally been considered a vocational training channel, but, with the recent introduction of an ad hoc degree course for the training of teachers, the institutes may now be included in the category of general educational establishments.

Table 23. Students enrolled in teacher training institutes and schools, 1980/81 to 1997/98

Stream	School year				1990/91- 1980/81	1996/97- 1990/91	1997/98- 1996/97
	1980/81	1990/91	1996/97	1997/98 ⁽¹⁾			
	Absolute figures				% variation		
Teacher training institutes	206 677	161 648	192 147	216 401 ⁽²⁾	- 21.8	18.9	2.9 ⁽¹⁾
Teacher training schools	30 794	23 154	18 109		- 24.8	- 21.8	
Total	237 471	184 802	210 256	216 401	- 22.2	13.8	2.9

⁽¹⁾ Provisional figures from *Relazione generale sulla situazione economica del paese* (1997).
⁽²⁾ Aggregate data.

SOURCE: ISTAT FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

Since the introduction in 1998/99 of degree courses for nursery and elementary school teachers, these institutes have virtually been replaced under an experiment, which will lead to a new type of institute of secondary education. This new course of secondary studies will provide access to any university faculty but will no longer issue certificates accrediting their holders as teachers.

The experiment, conducted on an autonomous basis by individual institutes, has been implemented in two fields:

- **social, psychological and teaching methods**, for the definition of a course of studies specifically directed towards the training of teachers for elementary and nursery schools (leading up to the university course), where extensive time is devoted to subjects such as psychology, pedagogy and social sciences;
- **language**, for the definition of a lycée-type of course of studies, directed towards the study of foreign languages and other forms of language (verbal and non-verbal, multimedia) communication.

(d) Art education

Art institutes (*istituti d'arte*) were first created as three-year art schools offering a large number of streams. A final examination can be taken that leads to the diploma of Master of Applied Arts. Certain art institutes have set up, on an experimental basis, an additional two-year course leading to a diploma of upper secondary education (certificate of applied arts), which opens up access to all university faculties.

Table 24. Students enrolled in art institutes, 1980/81 to 1997/98

Stream	School year					
	1980/81	1990/91	1996/97	1997/98 (*)	1990/91- 1980/81	1996/97- 1990/91
	Absolute figures			% variation		
Art institutes	35 742	61 549	60 169	94 730 (')	72.2	- 2.2

(*) Provisional figures from *Relazione generale sulla situazione economica del paese* (1997).
 (') The figure reflects the enrolment of about 30 000 young people in arts lycées.

SOURCE: ISTAT FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

3.2.3. University level vocational training

Diploma courses, launched for the first time in the 1992/93 academic year, may be two or three years in duration. At present the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research has recognised 76 types of diploma, which can be grouped under 9 headings: scientific, medical, engineering, agricultural, economic, political and social, law, literature and sport (the Advanced Institute of Physical Education).

Table 25. Students enrolled in university diploma and special-purpose higher education institutes, breakdown by discipline, 1992/93 to 1997/98

Discipline	Academic year				
	1992/93	1996/97	1997/98	1996/97-1992/93	1997/98-1996/97
	Absolute figures			% variation	
Natural science	1 475	3 768	4 848	155.5	28.7
Medicine	6 558	15 967	19 346	143.5	21.2
Engineering	6 088	16 094	18 448	164.4	14.6
Agriculture	695	1 870	2 448	169.1	30.9
Economics	6 082	12 933	15 859	112.6	22.6
Social and political science	6 632	6 904	6 580	4.1	- 4.7
Law	145	834	1 486	475.2	78.2
Literature	969	2 146	3 378	121.5	57.4
Sport	17 051	16 121	17 205	- 5.5	6.7
Total	45 695	76 637	89 598	67.7	16.9
	Percentage composition				
Natural science	3.2	4.9	5.4		
Medicine	14.4	20.8	21.6		
Engineering	13.3	21.0	20.6		
Agriculture	1.5	2.4	2.7		
Economics	13.3	16.9	17.7		
Social and political science	14.5	9.0	7.3		
Law	0.3	1.1	1.7		
Literature	2.1	2.8	3.8		
Sport	37.3	21.0	19.2		
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0		

SOURCE: ISTAT AND MINISTRY FOR UNIVERSITIES FIGURES FOR 1997/98, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

From the year in which they were first established, the success of university diplomas has been rising steadily. The number of students enrolling has increased every year, by 67.7 % between the 1992/93 and 1996/97 academic years and by 16.9 % between 1996/97 and 1997/98. A further expansion of the medical group has led to an overall growth in the university diploma system. In 1992/93, the number of students enrolled in this group was 6 558, compared with 1997/98 when the number reached 19 346. Despite the gradual fall in the percentage of students in sport institutes due to the steady rise in the provision of training in other disciplines, it will be observed that many continue to study in this area and recently there has even been an increase. The economics group has also been steadily expanding, whereas in the literary group good results have been achieved with courses associated with the conservation of the environment.

The strength of these training routes lies in the fact that they reflect occupational and vocational demands on the local labour market and production systems. This has led to strong links being established — especially in certain disciplines (engineering for example) — between the universities and the working world, as demonstrated by the existence of many consortia and conventions.

However, in certain cases the university format of the diplomas may detract from their specifically vocational nature and lead to a teaching approach closer to the more theoretical and academic approaches adopted in 'long' degree courses. This is particularly evident in some types of courses where the subject taught, the teachers and the teaching materials are the same as those for degree courses.

3.2.4. The initial training system of the regions

(a) General characteristics

Initial vocational training can be subdivided into:

- basic post-compulsory training (level one);
- post-diploma and post-degree training (level two).

There are also courses for special target groups (the disabled, migrants, former drug addicts, ex-prisoners, etc.).

Over the past few years, however, this classification has gradually been replaced by the European Social Fund classification based on strands and objectives. The ESF provides financial support for about 70 % of regional vocational training activities.

In quantitative terms, **basic training** is the largest part of the system. It offers training opportunities as an alternative to school. They are directed at youngsters who have difficulty with over-theoretical and abstract school models and who otherwise would finish or drop out of compulsory school, entering the labour market without any vocational knowledge and thus be at risk of cultural and social marginalisation.

The courses are structured as long cycles of generally two, but sometimes one or three, years, leading to a job qualification. In terms of organisation and to an extent of content, such training is similar in its characteristics to school-based training, and this entails the risk of overlapping and competing with the educational system.

The relative importance of such training in regionally planned provision was for many years very great throughout Italy. It declined considerably in the early 1990s, but this decline has now levelled off. The reform of the training system has made basic vocational training one of the streams, through which people up to the age of 18 may complete their compulsory education and training.

Within the arrangement for **integrated training** with State schools aimed at promoting links between the school system and the regional vocational training system, the most common procedure is that of post-qualification specialisation, i.e. two-year courses designed for young people from the vocational institutes who have obtained their third year qualification and who wish to continue their studies by specialising in the same stream. Under the Ministerial Decree of 15 April 1994, State vocational institutes are obliged to offer post-qualification training integrated with the regional vocational training system in order to make the courses relate more closely to jobs and create effective links with the labour market. The training stream consists of three areas: two for which the school is responsible and one for which the regional training system is responsible. It leads to a double final qualification: the vocational certificate (*maturità professionale*) and the regional certificate (*qualifica regionale*).

The percentage of **level 2 training** is still low but is rising. Over the past few years this type of medium- to high-level training has become far more popular.

The increase in the number of young people completing upper secondary school education and obtaining the diploma tends to defer the need for vocational training at tertiary level and has caused an explosion in the demand for post-diploma courses (within and outside school, university and non-university). This has led to the need to develop this segment of training, in particular by splitting it into a number of training routes that can reflect the various demands expressed by users.

The courses generally take the form of short one-year and, in a few rare cases two-year, cycles. They are aimed at young people who have taken their diploma of upper secondary education. This type of training is characterised by its high level of experimentation and the marked variety in methodologies and teaching content.

Training for special target groups embraces a wide and varied mixture of intervention measures. These include: initiatives aimed at groups at risk of exclusion (the disabled or disadvantaged, including immigrants, prisoners, drug addicts and former drug addicts), initiatives for women and training courses provided for in specific State or regional laws.

The right of the disabled to training has been laid down by Law 845 of 1978 and confirmed by Law 104 of 1992, which gives the regions the task of promoting vocational guidance and qualification for disabled people, according to their individual abilities and potential.

Under annual vocational training plans, the regions also define measures to support the entry of the disabled and people at risk of marginalisation into the working world. Further legislative references to promoting their integration are to be found in the regulations on apprenticeship, training/work contracts and placements, all of which contain clauses favouring the disabled. Attention is focused not only on training schemes in the narrow sense but also on experiments in guided integration into work.

Community guidelines and ESF resources have considerably boosted training for special target groups (the disabled and the disadvantaged). Many of the training schemes brought into being for these groups are today financed by recourse to Community funds, in particular those assigned to strand 3, Objective 3. This identifies four categories of target groups: migrants, immigrants and nomads; the physically or mentally disabled; prisoners, former prisoners and drug addicts; older unemployed adults and the poor. In addition to the funds to support Objective 3 there are the opportunities arising from the two elements in the European Community's 'Employment' initiative, which are directed to disadvantaged groups, 'Integra' and 'Horizon'.

In line with the guidelines laid down by the European Community, the area of 'women's training' has been expanding greatly over the last few years, with the aim of raising the standard of women's occupational skills. It could be said that there has been a 'happy convergence' between the guidelines laid down by the European Community and national and regional policies on this issue. The development of women's training has been boosted by the activation of the Community programmes for equal opportunities launched from 1982 onwards. This convergence has given Italian women the incentive to take vocational training courses, a trend that has increased markedly over the past two decades in line with the growing propensity of women to enter the labour market.

Therefore, throughout the 1980s, with the support of the European Social Fund, a specific training provision for women has been built up in Italy. The aim has been to promote the integration of women in the labour market (initial training) and their continuation on that market (continuing vocational training), and to encourage them

to enter non-traditional sectors of the economy in non-traditional working roles. It should be pointed out that, in addition to European Social Fund financing, there has been an increase over the past 10 years — in particular with effect from Law 125 of 1991 on equal opportunities — in training activities financed out of both national and regional funds. Contributions have been made to those activities by many bodies: public and private sector concerns, local agencies, public authorities and union and cultural associations.

(b) *The structural characteristics of training provided by the regions*

Vocational training courses are administered to an extent by bodies coming directly under the regional authorities, but mainly by bodies operating under a contract, i.e. unions, employers, religious bodies or others. To a great extent the locations of the courses are public or contract-linked training centres, but there are also 'occasional' locations of which the number is tending to increase with the adoption of tendering mechanisms for the award of training activities.

In the 1996/97 training year, according to the figures emerging from the survey conducted by ISFOL, a total of 21 132 courses were organised in all the Italian regions, although it should be borne in mind that some regions supplied incomplete figures. This number exceeds the figure for the previous year and continues the tendency over the past few years for the volume of training provided by the regions to grow, although there are marked differences geographically.

Out of a total of 12 135 initial training courses (including courses for special target groups), 42.4 % (5 147) consist of preliminary qualification courses, 41.6 % (5 047) are level 2 courses and 16.3 % (2 336) are 'special' courses. The remaining 4.4 % are initial training courses for linking and integration or for categories defined by law.

Table 26. Initial training courses, by type and region, 1996/97

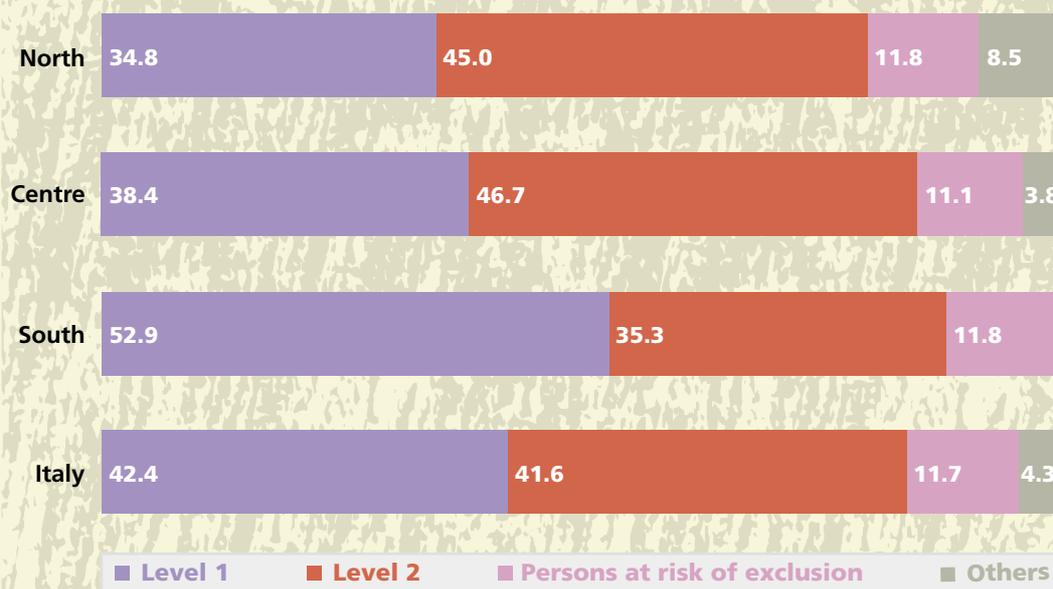
Region	Level 1	Level 2	Persons at risk of exclusion	Others	Total
Piedmont	429	227	121	0	777
Valle d'Aosta	3	7	4	0	14
Lombardy	147	832	100	158	1 237
Autonomous province of Trento	250	80	37	96	463
Autonomous province of Bolzano	151	63	22	0	236
Veneto	600	346	117	0	1 063
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	108	152	45	44	349
Liguria	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Emilia-Romagna	125	636	167	143	1 071
Tuscany	140	507	129	66	842
Umbria	35	2	21	0	58
Marche	155	240	51	0	446
Lazio	543	315	52	20	930
Abruzzi	161	110	58	0	329
Molise	48	94	(¹)	0	142
Campania	114	202	80	0	396
Apulia	267	258	96	0	621
Basilicata	149	138	24	0	311
Calabria	73	137	22	0	232
Sicily (¹)	1 546	505	208	0	2 259
Sardinia (¹)	103	196	60	0	359
North	1 813	2 343	613	441	5 210
Centre	873	1 064	253	86	2 276
South	2 461	1 640	548	0	4 649
Italy	5 147	5 047	1 414	527	12 135

n.a. = Not available.
 (¹) Estimated data.

SOURCE: REGIONAL DATA, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

In general, there has been more training activity in northern Italy, where 42.9 % of courses are held. In central Italy, most of the training is concentrated in Tuscany and Lazio (77.8 % of initial training courses in the area), whereas in southern Italy the pattern of distribution is more or less even. The distribution of courses by type of training also differs geographically. In northern Italy, 34.8 % of the courses held were level 1, 45.0 % level 2. In the central regions, level 1 courses amounted to 38.3 %, level 2 to 46.7 %. In southern Italy, 52.9 % of the initial training activities were directed towards level 1 training and 35.3 % towards level 2 training. Courses for people at risk of exclusion and other types of courses, compared with the total volume of initial training in each individual geographical area, accounted for 20.2 % in the north, 14.9 % in the centre and 11.8 % in the south. The general picture that emerges is of a provision of training strongly directed towards improving the practical expertise of the people already working in northern Italy, whereas, especially in the south, the area grappling with the major unemployment problems, the most common courses are those providing basic skills.

Figure 15. Initial training courses, by type of course and geographical area, 1996/97 (in %)



SOURCE: REGIONAL DATA, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

The composition of courses by sectoral skill and type shows that, in level 1 training, they are basically evenly distributed between industry and craft trades (49.2 %) and service sector activities (49.7 %). They are usually seen as channels of training for young people who have dropped out of the education system. They are courses preparing for extremely practical job profiles, almost always in sectors also covered by the vocational and technical institutes, although the training models adopted by the latter are more theoretical and are designed to provide less practical skills.

In the industrial field, the largest number of basic training courses are in sectors associated with the mechanical and metal engineering, and electrical/electronic industries. There is also a reasonable provision of training for the creative crafts sector (for example for ceramic technicians, decorators and engravers).

Most of the training for the service sector is directed at office work (for example, junior secretaries). There are courses in hairdressing and beauty care as well as catering. These are followed by socio-educational services (for example for people working in schools and childcare) as well as information technology (video terminal operators, general operators and applications programmers).

In the activities defined as level 2, 81.1 % of the training available is concentrated in the service sector, especially in office work and information technology. It should be borne in mind that level 2 activities are school or extra-school courses, and it is not uncommon for them to be directed towards graduates as well. These are courses designed to supplement vocational learning acquired at school with a view to the effective integration into the labour market of people with medium to high or high level certificates of studies.

Table 27. Courses in the regions, by sectoral skill (ISFOL classification) and type of training, 1996/97 (in %)

Sector (ISFOL classification)	Type of course			Total
	Level 1	Level 2	Special courses	
Agriculture	1.1	2.0	7.9	4.2
Industry and craft trades	49.2	16.9	30.8	25.3
Non-metallic ores	–	0.1	–	0.1
Mechanical and metal engineering	17.7	6.9	8.2	9.1
Electrical and electronic engineering	14.3	3.6	3.6	5.5
Chemistry	0.1	0.4	–	0.2
Building	1.3	1.6	0.8	1.5
Timber, furniture, furnishings	1.1	0.4	0.3	0.5
Graphics, photography and paper technology	2.5	1.5	2.2	1.5
Food industry	0.8	0.6	0.7	1.1
Textile industry	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.3
Clothing industry	3.7	0.7	1.6	1.6
Creative craft trades	7.3	1.0	12.6	3.9
Tertiary activities	49.7	81.1	61.3	70.5
Hairdressing, beauty care	9.6	0.3	0.6	2.6
Tourism	0.9	7.4	0.7	2.4
Entertainment	0.2	1.3	0.9	0.8
Office work	14.5	26.1	4.8	25.5
Cooperatives	–	0.2	0.1	0.6
Catering	8.1	1.3	3.1	3.1
Credit and insurance	0.1	0.8	–	0.6
Promotion and advertising	0.6	5.0	0.4	2.3
Retail distribution	0.9	0.9	21.4	3.2
Transport	0.1	0.4	0.8	1.1
Ecology and the environment	0.1	3.8	0.2	1.7
Information technology	7.0	22.5	5.8	13.7
Cultural heritage	0.2	1.7	–	0.6
Socio-educational services	7.1	8.9	22.0	11.0
Miscellaneous	0.4	0.4	0.3	1.1
Overall total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: VOCATIONAL TRAINING PLANS OF THE REGION, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

The courses aiming at special groups are mainly in the sectors of socio-educational services, retail distribution and creative craft trades.

(c) Participation in regional training

In the 1996/97 training year the regional vocational training system catered for a total of 406 920 people, an increase of more than 70 000 people over the previous year. There were 205 917 (50.6 % of the total) in initial training.

Table 28. Trainees enrolled in initial vocational training courses, by type and region, 1996/97

Region	Level 1	Level 2	Persons at risk of exclusion	Others	Total
Piedmont	8 311	4 156	1 621	0	14 088
Valle d'Aosta	131	104	33	0	268
Lombardy	2 872	14 138	1 467	3 471	21 948
Autonomous province of Trento	4 200	1 415	290	1 970	7 875
Autonomous province of Bolzano	2 960	1 179	219	0	4 358
Veneto	11 295	5 665	1 309	0	18 269
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	1 725	2 473	506	1 055	5 759
Liguria	1 000	900	116	46	2 062
Emilia-Romagna	2 506	14 682	2 517	2 761	22 466
Tuscany	1 909	8 179	849	1 506	12 443
Umbria	383	111	181	0	675
Marche	2 522	3 918	635	0	7 075
Lazio	10 465	6 094	976	411	17 946
Abruzzi	2 716	2 117	681	0	5 514
Molise	641	1 021	75	0	1 737
Campania	1 830	3 063	642	0	5 535
Apulia	3 710	4 830	1 018	0	9 558
Basilicata	1 992	2 016	287	0	4 295
Calabria	891	2 129	352	0	3 372
Sicily (¹)	25 448	7 711	2 447	0	35 606
Sardinia (¹)	1 502	2 880	686	0	5 068
North	35 000	44 712	8 078	9 303	97 093
Centre	15 279	18 302	2 641	1 917	38 139
South	38 730	25 767	6 188	0	70 685
Italy	89 009	88 781	16 907	11 220	205 917

(¹) Estimated.

SOURCE: REGIONAL DATA, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

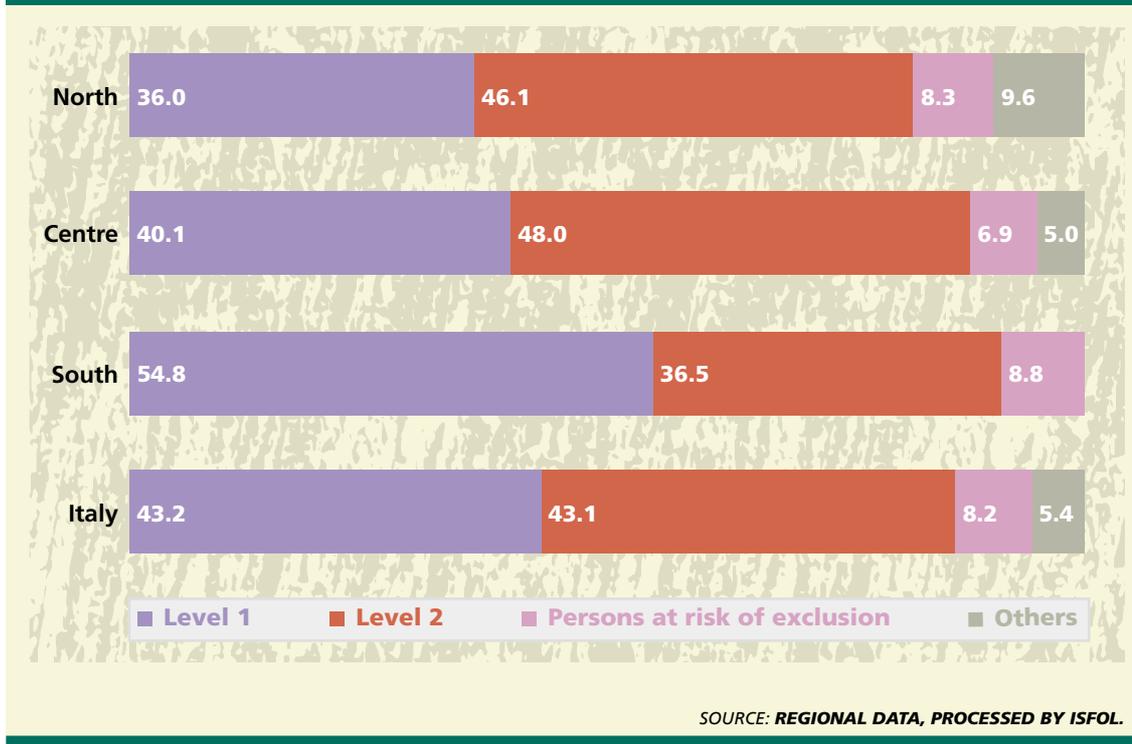
A figure of 43.2 % of the participants in initial vocational training courses provided by the region are concentrated in level 1 activities, almost the same proportion as those taking level 2 courses (43.1 %). Compared with previous years there has been a considerable increase in participation at level 2 reflecting the steady increase in the provision of training at that level.

The largest number of trainees is to be found in the north, where there are over 97 093 (47.2 % of the total). Then comes the south with 70 685 trainees (34.3 %) and the centre with 38 139 trainees (18.5 %).

In the north, 36 % of trainees attend level 1 courses and 46.1 % attend level 2 courses. In central Italy, attendance at level 1 courses amounts to 40.1 % and at level 2 courses to 48.0 %. In the south, those enrolled for level 1 courses amount to 54.8 % and for level 2 courses 36.5 %.

Another consideration is the number of trainees on each course. This figure rises from the south to the north of the country. Whereas in southern Italy each course is attended by an average of 15 trainees, in central Italy the number is 16 and in northern Italy it is 22.

Figure 16. Trainees on initial training courses, by type of course and geographical area, 1996/97 (in %)



(d) Multi-regional activities

To complete the picture of initial vocational training, mention should be made of certain courses provided under the multi-regional operational programmes to implement Objectives 1, 3 and 4, for which the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is directly responsible.

These measures are directed towards the training, retraining and redevelopment of various types of users:

- young first-time jobseekers;
- young people and adults without educational qualifications or with a 'weak' academic and/or vocational profile, or in general those at risk of social exclusion;
- women with job skills unsuited to the labour market, who are in search of employment or whose employment is at risk;
- workers whose employment is at risk, or who are working in sectors likely to undergo structural change in the economic and production system;
- young people taken on under training/work or apprenticeship contracts;
- public administration officials.

Another field of intervention for the multi-regional operational plans is improving the management and organisation of vocational training itself, through efforts to enhance the system and to train the trainers.

In particular the 'Employment emergency' operational plan under Objective 1 is deployed in situations

- arising from the restructuring and redevelopment of major public and private sector production bodies,
- in which the economic system is unable to create employment, and
- attributable to an unforeseeable and critical conjuncture of economic and social factors calling for rapid and flexible action.

The 'Training employment' operational programme under Objective 3 is directed, by coordinating national labour policy with local reality, towards extending the employment base, tackling the problems associated with both the first entry of young people to the labour market and the return to the labour market of those made redundant in the production system.

The 'Retraining and re-skilling' operational sub-programme under Objective 4, together with analyses and pilot projects designed to anticipate qualitative and quantitative changes in the demand for labour, is implemented through training measures aimed at re-skilling, retraining and updating the skills of workers affected by substantial changes in the production system.

The remaining courses are related to innovatory actions directed towards conducting research and experiments and towards implementing new methods related to the overall structure of training measures, reconciling the requirements of the various local situations with those laid down by national employment policy.

The great variety of those benefiting from the provision of training is reflected by an equally broad range of types of bodies administering the courses: training organisations, guidance agencies, bilateral agencies, employers and consortia of employers, public sector bodies, regional authorities, local bodies and consortia of local bodies, universities and upper secondary schools.

The duration of courses also varies a good deal. They range from very short refresher schemes for civil servants (35 hours) to training courses for young people and adults lasting approximately 1 000 hours. It should be borne in mind, however, that irrespective of the length of pluriannual projects, courses are annual and those directed towards basic training are longer than refresher courses.

Of the planned courses put out to tender in 1997, 23.0 % were in the north-west of Italy, 15.7 % in the north-east, 29.1 % in central Italy and 32.2 % in the south. The courses were attended by 27 850 people, 32.2 % in the north-west of the country, 9.8 % in the north-east, 30.2 % in central Italy and 27.8 % in the south.

Table 29. Participants in multi-regional operational programme courses, by geographical area, 1997

Geographical area	Participants	%
North-west	8 966	32.2
North-east	2 732	9.8
Centre	8 411	30.2
South	7 741	27.8
Total	27 850	100.0

SOURCE: ISFOL.

The largest number of participants are in the programme on 'retraining and re-skilling' which, because of its prevalence throughout Italy, accounts on its own for 44.9 % of recipients. The 'Southern Italy employment emergency', which caters for a further 23.7 % of recipients, comes next with 6 611 participants.

Table 30. Participants in multi-regional operational programmes, by programme, 1997

Multi-regional operational programme	Participants	%
940026/I/1 — Southern Italy 'Employment emergency' (Objective 1)	6 611	23.7
940028/I/1 — Southern Italy innovative actions (Objective 1)	1 240	4.4
940029/I/3 — Training employment (Objective 3)	4 615	16.6
940030/I/3 — Central and northern Italy innovative actions (Objective 3)	1 695	6.1
940032/I/4 — Central and northern Italy innovative actions (Objective 4)	1 189	4.3
940032RR/I/4 — Conversion and re-skilling (Objective 4)	12 500	44.9
Total	27 850	100.0

SOURCE: ISFOL.

3.3. Apprenticeship and training/work contracts

3.3.1. General characteristics

Although the alternance training stream is recognised as a fundamental component of the vocational training system, it appears still to be weak and poorly structured in Italy. However, this component of the system is currently the focus of major reform projects which should promote its reactivation.

The main types of alternance training are apprenticeship and training/work contracts.

(a) Training/work contracts

The training/work contract (*contratto di formazione e lavoro — CFL*) has fulfilled an important role over the past 10 years as a preferred channel for access to the labour market for young people. The arrangement caters for young people aged from 15 to 32.

There are two types of contract:

- the type A contract is aimed at the acquisition of advanced or middle-level vocational skills. The maximum duration is 24 months and there are 130 hours of theoretical training in the case of advanced skills and 80 hours for middle-level skills;
- the type B contract facilitates integration into work by providing work experience that helps a young person adapt his or her vocational abilities to the production and organisational context. It may be for up to 12 months and includes a minimum of 20 hours' theoretical training.

In initiating a training/work contract, the employer has to draw up a training plan setting out the 'timing and procedures for the conduct of training and work'. This must be approved by the Regional Employment Board (*commissione regionale per l'impiego*). No approval is required if the training schemes comply with the regulations agreed between the social partners in the course of national bargaining.

The employer is responsible for providing training, which must be conducted 'as an alternative to the performance of work'. In other words, no form of on-the-job training, side by side with other workers, is permitted.

At the end of the contract the employer may recruit the contractual worker for an indefinite period or discontinue the employment relationship. Nevertheless, in order to activate other training/work contracts, the employer must have recruited for permanent jobs at least 60 % of those whose contracts have expired in the preceding 24 months.

(b) Apprenticeship

Introduced in 1955 by Law 25, apprenticeship is a contract of employment that on the one hand places an obligation upon the employer to provide adequate vocational preparation by having the apprentice work side by side with skilled personnel and, on the other, imposes an obligation on the young person to attend training courses outside the workplace. The regions have the responsibility for implementing training programmes for apprentices. Nevertheless, although there are many regional regulations providing incentives for the recruitment of young people under apprenticeship contracts, for the stabilisation of their occupational status and for the reimbursement of training costs incurred by employers, in only a few cases have arrangements been made to set up the external training courses.

To make apprenticeship a more effective training instrument, Law 196 of 24 June 1997, 'Regulations on the promotion of employment', outlined a new model of apprenticeship. This includes:

- extending the age group concerned: the maximum age at which a young person can take up an apprenticeship is raised from 20 to 24 (26 for southern Italian regions, while 29 continues to be the age limit for the craft trade sector). The minimum age is 16;
- a reduction in the maximum duration of the contract from 5 to 4 years, with a minimum limit of 18 months;
- a lifting of the restrictions on educational qualifications required for access to the apprenticeship contract;
- the average number of hours to be devoted to training outside the workplace is 120, with tax and other contribution concessions being granted to employers on condition that the apprentices actually attend the training activity.

The laws, regulations and implementing directives are being defined and preliminary trial projects have been launched.

(c) Reform of alternance training

The 1996 labour agreement sets, as one of its priority objectives, the re-launching of alternance training by reinforcing the training component in both types of 'mixed' contracts. Law 196 of 1997 implemented the changes planned for the part devoted to apprenticeship only. In parallel, the European Commission criticised Italy's training/ work contracts, because the contribution concessions to employers were not justified by an adequate and genuine training commitment or by the creation of additional employment.

As a result, the strategy for the reform of alternance training has been reviewed. The hypothesis starting to take shape is that of enhancing apprenticeship further so that it becomes the sole contract for the integration of young people up to the age of 25 in the labour market. For young people over that age a new integration contract would be established. This would entail concessionary contributions for employers, the volume of which would depend on the level of difficulties of the social groups concerned.

3.3.2 The evolution of the number of persons with training contracts

In 1997, 393 138 apprenticeship contracts were concluded. In the same year workers launched in the working world under training/work contracts numbered 264 405. This means that the two types of contract combined accounted for 10.9 % of total employment in the 15–32 age group and 14.1 % of those in paid employment in 1997.

An analysis of the development of these two arrangements over the 1990s (Table 31) shows that the numbers in apprenticeship have gradually been falling, although it retains a far from negligible role, especially in craft firms and in manufacturing industries.

A more detailed analysis of the distribution of apprenticeship in Italy and the procedures for the use of this type of contract can be conducted by considering the figures from the archives of the *Istituto Nazionale di Previdenza Sociale (INPS)*, the national insurance institute, which count the pool of apprentices month by month.

Looking at the development of the pool of apprentices between June 1996 and October 1997 (Table 32), a first observation is the marked cyclical variation in the number of apprentices. In summer periods the pool expands substantially, and then shrinks again in the winter. Even so the general trend is negative.

A second observation of interest is the difference between the figures provided by the Labour Market Observation Centre and the INPS figures. They differ significantly: the first set refers to the annual flow of all contracts entered into, whereas the second set is a 'snapshot' of the pool of apprenticeships each month. However, the apprenticeship contract may be for up to four years (five years under the former regulations), which means that the pool of contracts in existence at any given point should at least be greater than the number of contracts initiated in a given year.

Table 31. Apprenticeship contracts concluded and workers starting a training/work contract, 1991-97, by geographical area (absolute figures)

Year	North	Centre	South	Italy
Apprenticeship				
1991	310 109	97 776	115 882	523 767
1992	297 355	99 097	109 282	505 734
1993	269 799	88 922	91 044	449 765
1994	261 437	88 962	76 336	426 735
1995	249 469	93 431	75 333	418 233
1996	256 673	90 929	66 290	413 892
1997	249 254	83 532	60 352	393 138
Training/work (CFL) contracts				
1991	185 020	66 371	64 952	316 343
1992	143 109	56 768	55 838	255 715
1993	103 260	41 656	44 036	188 952
1994	134 392	43 145	43 579	221 116
1995	157 640	43 744	47 283	248 667
1996	165 906	48 884	54 430	269 220
1997	148 834	50 175	65 396	264 405

SOURCE: LABOUR MARKET OBSERVATION CENTRE FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

Table 32. Numbers of apprentices, June 1996 - October 1997

Month	Apprentices	Month	Apprentices
	1996		1997
June	294 249	January	250 223
July	320 882	February	255 295
August	309 248	March	249 677
September	282 122	April	246 813
October	262 506	May	246 444
November	259 455	June	271 115
December	257 183	July	298 168
		August	286 830
		September	268 140
		October	298 556

SOURCE: INPS.

The big difference in the two sets of figures and the considerable monthly variations can be explained by the 'volatility' of the apprenticeship contract. Many contracts last for only a brief period, because apprenticeship is used as a device to cope with seasonal work or peak production times, or because apprentices break off the contract on being called up for national service or on changing their choice of work or type of work contract and so on.

From an ISFOL survey, it appears that about 30 % of apprenticeship contracts last no longer than six months and only 24 % exceed two years.

3.4. Continuing vocational training

With the absence of a structured system of continuing vocational training in Italy, it is hard to outline a consistent and comprehensive picture of the measures implemented by various bodies. Furthermore, because of the lack of attention devoted to this area of training provision up to a few years ago, it has been difficult to set up an information system that can reflect the many inputs.

The key providers of continuing training are varied: the regions, the ministries responsible for the multi-regional programmes of the European Social Fund, private companies and also other bodies such as the chambers of commerce and the public administration for the benefit of its own employees.

In order to identify the role of continuing training in the national vocational training system, the sections that follow will offer a picture of the ventures implemented by the various parties. It has not been possible to arrive at a consolidated picture, however, since the data available refer to different years, and, on occasion, cover two or more years. In some cases it has not been possible to acquire any quantitative data.

3.4.1. Schemes promoted by the regions

In 1996–97, the regions provided 8 997 continuing training courses, in other words courses for workers in employment, on 'job mobility registers' ⁽³⁾ or who have been placed on a temporary redundancy footing and the unemployed seeking other jobs (Table 33). About two thirds of the training has been for workers in employment, 2 560 courses have involved the unemployed or workers temporarily laid off or on 'job mobility registers' ⁽³⁾, whereas only 5.6 % of the courses have been aimed at critical employment, i.e. workers at risk of unemployment as a result of structural changes in the economy and production system.

As a result, in regional continuing training systems, most schemes are addressed to workers in employment, who presumably require measures to update their skills and bring them into line with production and organisational changes.

Overall in 1996/97, regional continuing training measures catered for 201 003 workers.

The geographical distribution of courses shows a considerable imbalance. It highlights the commitment of the northern Italian regions, which have provided over 68 % of continuing training schemes, in particular Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy, whereas only 12.7 % of continuing vocational training was conducted in the south.

In making distinctions by type of activity, it will be noted that whereas in the central and northern Italian regions continuing training is directed mainly towards employed workers, in the south it involves above all unemployed workers or those temporarily laid off or on 'job mobility registers' ⁽³⁾.

⁽³⁾ See Annex 3.

Table 33. Continuing vocational training courses provided by the regions, 1996/97

Regions	Unemployed	Critical employment (*)	Employed	Total
Piedmont	488	0	306	794
Valle d'Aosta	6	0	54	60
Lombardy	152	152	1 408	1 712
Autonomous province of Trento	26	0	197	223
Autonomous province of Bolzano	9	0	12	21
Veneto	85	0	370	455
Friuli	180	0	476	656
Liguria	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Emilia-Romagna	371	125	1 714	2 210
Tuscany	189	10	541	740
Umbria	63	160	35	258
Marche	43	0	181	224
Lazio	357	54	94	505
Abruzzi	29	0	87	116
Molise	12	0	0	12
Campania	20	0	38	58
Apulia	46	0	0	46
Basilicata	0	0	110	110
Calabria	148	0	112	260
Sicily (**)	184	0	81	265
Sardinia (**)	152	0	120	272
North	1 317	277	4 537	6 131
Centre	652	224	851	1 727
South	591	0	548	1 139
Italy	2 560	501	5 936	8 997

(*) Workers at risk of unemployment due to structural changes in the economic and production system.

(**) Estimated.

n.a. = not available.

SOURCE: REGIONAL FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

An analysis of the development of continuing training activities promoted by the regions over the past three years highlights the incentives provided for the development of this part of the training system by the adoption of Objective 4 in the new European Structural Funds planning programme.

Compared with 1994/95, there has been a 72.8 % increase in continuing training courses, with the largest percentage increase occurring in the northern regions. In particular the marked variation between activities conducted in 1994/95 and 1995/96 can be attributed to the approval and implementation of the various regional subprogrammes under Objective 4.

Table 34. Continuing training courses by geographical area, 1994/95 to 1996/97

Geographical area	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97
North	3 728	6 701	6 131
Centre	929	1 186	1 727
South	549	605	1 139
Italy	5 206	8 492	8 997

SOURCE: ISTAT FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

The increase in the amount of funds from ESF Objective 4 resources has been accompanied by greater attention on the part of the regions to the planning of training provision for employed or unemployed workers. Incentives for this are provided for under the Labour Agreement and by Law 236/93.

Table 35. Measures launched in the three-year period 1994–96, under Objective 4 projects

Regions	Measures	Participants
Piedmont	1 804	23 292
Valle d'Aosta	81	2 858
Liguria	337	3 677
Lombardy	–	–
Autonomous province of Trento	128	18 065
Autonomous province of Bolzano	353	17 070
Veneto	n.a.	n.a.
Friuli	193	3 437
Emilia-Romagna	1 903	37 535
Tuscany	217	4 040
Umbria	60	682
Marche	–	–
Lazio	–	–
Total	5 076	110 066

n.a. = figures not available.

SOURCE: ISFOL AND IGFOR/SIRGS FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

This stronger regional commitment to continuing training is also evident from a comparison of the figures for the regions' total continuing training activities (Table 33) with those for the actions launched and the participants in projects jointly funded out of Objective 4 resources (Table 35). In the three-year period 1994–96, 5 906 actions were launched under Objective 4, involving 118 074 workers — the figures refer to the central and northern regions (excluding Veneto) — whereas in 1996/97 alone the courses implemented in those same regions of central and northern Italy (excluding Veneto) amounted to 7 403.

3.4.2. Continuing training measures pursuant to Law 236 of 1993

Law 236/93, under which part of the resources derived from the employers' contributions of 0.30 % of the wage bill are allocated to continuing training measures, has only been implemented in the past few years. At the end of 1996, in Circular 174, for the first time the Ministry of Labour published a call for tender worth ITL 207 billion. A second call for tender was prepared in 1998 and published in Circular 37.

The difficulties encountered by the regions in implementing Objective 4 led to different options being adopted in implementing Law 236, especially as regards procedures. The mechanism identified for the allocation of resources — order of presentation of applications and meeting requirements as to suitability, with priority being given to schemes agreed by the social partners — enabled the arrangement to be set up rapidly.

The resources have been allocated to the following types of action:

- **system-related actions**, designed to launch processes that are innovatory in terms of access to continuing training, improving the quality of the organisation and management of training provision and the development of employment. These have been planned by the regions based on strategic guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Labour and the social partners;
- **actions for the re-skilling and retraining of training agency operators**: these consist of schemes aimed at supporting job mobility routes outside and inside the agency. In the latter case, measures are designed to impart skills that can be used for the development of continuing training, guidance and alternance promotion systems. These measures are planned and implemented by the regions on the basis of agreements with the social partners and in accordance with guidelines laid down at national level;
- **in-company training initiatives**: here the objective is to promote innovatory experimental schemes and to reproduce on a large scale the models developed in terms of procedures, organisation, content and goals. The target groups for the measures may be workers in employment, or persons undertaking socially useful work, or persons in employment but at risk (for example workers who are temporarily laid off). For 1998 the sphere of company training initiatives has been extended to include 'individual training initiatives' (*azioni di formazione individuale*), which consist of measures designed to balance and develop the skills already possessed by workers in employment, based on plans drawn up by the individual workers.

At the time of writing only a partial assessment of the workings of the mechanism can be made. Considerable success has been achieved by the measures devoted to company training, so much so that in certain regions the resources made available under the first call for tender were exhausted in a single day. In the second call for tender, therefore, the budget for this type of action was doubled.

With regard to the system-related actions, the second circular reduced the amount of resources available with the objective of channelling them to a smaller number of schemes that gave greater guarantees of quality.

ISFOL has drawn up an estimate of the target groups involved in the various schemes on the basis of the maximum cost stated in the call for tenders.

Table 36. Resources committed and estimated number of participants under measures funded by Law 236, 1997 and 1998

Action	1997		1998	
	Resources (billion ITL)	Number of participants planned	Resources (billion ITL)	Number of participants planned
System-related actions	80	25 600	20	6 400
Training agency operators (Law 40/87)	65	1 400	40	870
Company training	62	65 500	114.5	121 000
Individual training			12.5	10 000

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF LABOUR FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

3.4.3. Measures promoted at national level under the European Social Fund

With the help of the joint financing provided by the structural funds, certain central State authorities are also promoting continuing training measures within the context of multi-regional schemes. Among these, the most substantial is the activity promoted by the Ministry of Labour:

- in pursuance of Objective 4, 2 350 continuing training measures were approved for the three-year period 1994–96. Of these, 830, involving 7 418 students, have been launched;
- in pursuance of Objective 1 for 1996, 493 measures directed towards employed persons in companies in southern Italy and 204 for the long-term unemployed, have been approved. The first type of activity involved 19 856 participants, whereas it is planned to involve some 5 000 people in measures directed towards the long-term unemployed.

Other measures have been promoted by the Ministry of Labour in pursuance of Objective 3. These are directed towards the unemployed, both those previously self-employed and those in paid employment, who have been temporarily laid off or are on 'job mobility registers'. The Ministry of Universities is also responsible for continuing vocational training measures under the multi-regional operating programme, Objective 1, 'Research and technological development'. No figures are available on either of these schemes.

Lastly, the Ministry of Education is planning training for adults without a vocational qualification under a Multi-regional operating programme, in pursuance of Objective 1. For 1995/96, 24 measures aimed at a user group of 2 280 people, have been approved.

3.4.4. Training activities in the workplace

In addition to the various institutional-type measures, some training is conducted by employers for their own employees. Such activities may be funded solely out of the employers' own resources or they may be eligible for a contribution from public bodies. For example, the regions — as part of their continuing training activity — fund schemes conducted by training agencies or by employers themselves. Under Law 236/93, on the other hand, State support for company training courses can be paid directly to the companies.

The somewhat sketchy information available provides an outline picture of all the activities conducted within the workplace. On the other hand, there is no information shedding light on the proportion of such training funded out of public resources, and therefore already accounted for by the activities of those public bodies, and what volume of training is funded exclusively by employers out of their own resources.

The sources of information available on continuing training conducted within companies are a survey conducted by ISTAT in collaboration with ISFOL ⁽⁴⁾ on the training activities of concerns employing at least 10 people and the annual (European) Community Labour Force Survey. The first survey can be regarded now as somewhat out of date as it refers to 1993. The second survey, which is conducted annually, refers only to activities during a four-week period, and figures for the year as a whole cannot be derived from it. Furthermore, the ISTAT-ISFOL survey concentrates on the features of the training bodies, whereas the Labour Force Survey refers to individuals, i.e. the workers being trained.

Nevertheless, a combined review of both sources produces significant figures. In March 1997 in Italy, 352 426 workers received specific training within the workplace. Compared with 1993, the number of workers trained has risen substantially, in both absolute and proportional terms (Table 37). The percentage of those trained out of the total number of employees has risen from 0.98 to 1.75 % and the same percentage by comparison with the total labour force has increased from 0.88 to 1.54 % over the same period.

Table 37. Participation in continuing training activities in the workplace, 1997

Year	Absolute figures	Number trained as % of employees	Number trained as % of labour force
1993	199 744	0.98	0.88
1994	213 950	1.06	0.94
1995	248 183	1.24	1.09
1996	310 065	1.54	1.36
1997	352 426	1.75	1.54

SOURCE: ISTAT AND EUROSTAT FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

The ISTAT-ISFOL survey shows that 888 141 employees took part in the training courses within the companies taken into consideration in 1993 ⁽⁵⁾. It may be presumed that over the five-year period the trends in these figures will be similar to those set out in the table above.

The same survey also shows that the attitude of employers to training is inversely proportional to the size of the company. In 1993 only 4.6 % of concerns with a workforce of 10 to 19 people engaged in continuing training, whereas this percentage rises to 88.3 % in the case of concerns with a workforce of more than 1 000 people (Table 38).

⁽⁴⁾ Cf. *La formazione del personale nelle imprese*, ISTAT, Rome 1996.

⁽⁵⁾ This refers to companies employing at least 10 people in all economic sectors except for agriculture, health, education and non-saleable services.

Table 38. Companies providing training, by company size, 1993 (in %)

Size of workforce	% of companies having training courses
10–19	4.6
20–49	9.3
50–99	19.4
100–249	33.6
250–499	54.9
500–999	75.5
1 000 and over	88.3
Total	9.4

SOURCE: ISTAT FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL, 1996.

Looking at the nature of participants, the most numerous age group attending training has been that of workers aged 35–49, followed by those aged 25–34.

Table 39. Characteristics of participation in continuing vocational training activities, 1997

	% of participants
Age	
15–24	10.0
25–34	29.6
35–49	47.6
50–64	12.3
65 and over	0.4
Total	100.0
Objective	
Training for integration in the working world	25.2
Job advancement	24.5
Job retraining	2.4
Other objectives	47.9
Total	100.0
Duration	
Less than a week	32.0
Less than a month	25.3
Less than three months	17.8
Less than six months	10.5
Less than a year	9.0
One year and over	5.4
Total	100.0

SOURCE: ISTAT AND EUROSTAT FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

The breakdown of training activities by objective shows almost identical percentages for preliminary integration and occupational advancement on the one hand, and on the other the introduction of new technologies and changes in company organisations (these actions have been included under the heading of 'other objectives'). Only a very small percentage of those undergoing training are involved in continuing training designed for occupational retraining.

Regarding the duration of the initiatives, on the whole the training has been for short or very short periods, less than a week or a month, confirming the findings of the survey in 1993 which estimated that the average duration of training courses organised by private concerns is 41 hours.

This brevity suggests that continuing training is generally directed towards middle- and senior-ranking practitioners (executives, managers, etc.). In Table 40, the breakdown of participants is given by occupational category, as found in the ISTAT-ISFOL survey. It has been confirmed by the figures on the breakdown of participants by level of education according to the Labour Force Survey (Table 41).

It should also be borne in mind that, in the 1993 survey, 6.3 % of the managers accounted for 55.0 % of the whole occupational category in the companies concerned.

Table 40. Participants in courses, by occupational category, 1993 (in %)

Occupational category	% of participants
Managers, senior executives	6.3
Middle-ranking executives	8.7
Clerical workers	57.8
Skilled workers	21.5
Unskilled personnel	5.6
Total	100.0

SOURCE: ISTAT SURVEY, 1996.

Table 41. Participation in continuing training, by level of education, 1997 (in %)

Educational qualifications	% of participants
Degree	23.9
Upper secondary education diploma	47.5
Lower secondary education diploma	25.6
No secondary education diploma	3.0
Total	100.0

SOURCE: EUROSTAT FIGURES, PROCESSED BY ISFOL.

3.4.5. The provision of training by the public administration for its own employees

In addition to the training provided by companies for their own employees, there is a similar commitment by the public administration on behalf of its own employees.

In 1996 this training provision consisted of the conduct of 5 067 courses. Within the public administration, the departments offering the most extensive training were the central authorities.

Table 42. Training provided by the public administration, 1996

Public administration	Number of courses	% of courses	Participants	% participation
Central authorities	3 440	68.0	96 492	74.2
Non-economic public bodies ⁽¹⁾	476	9.4	12 396	9.5
Autonomous concerns ⁽²⁾	518	10.2	16 747	12.9
Research bodies ⁽³⁾	633	12.4	4 485	3.4
Total	5 067	100.0	130 120	100.0

⁽¹⁾ These include: ACI, CONI, INAIL, Inpdap. No figures have been received for INPS and Ipsema.

⁽²⁾ These include: AIMA, ANAS, Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, firefighting force, State monopolies.

⁽³⁾ These include: CNR, ENEA, Ispesl, ISTAT, State Institute for Health.

SOURCE: CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT.

Overall 130 120 people were involved in training courses.

It should be pointed out that although it was in ministerial departments where the largest number of civil servants were trained, only 33.4 % of the personnel in service took advantage of these training initiatives and of these only 20.9 % were women.

The target groups for the training were mainly middle- and senior-level managers and intermediate executives, because of the need for modernisation in the public administration.

3.4.6. Initiatives promoted by the chambers of commerce

The chambers of commerce are independent associations providing support to companies. They work through 131 special agencies that offer highly specialised services. Among these are training schemes.

With particular reference to continuing vocational training activities, in 1996 the chambers of commerce directly administered 484 courses and, through special associated agencies, they conducted 1 556. Overall, the number of participants was 49 859.

Table 43. Training conducted by chambers of commerce, by user group, 1996

Type of user	Number of courses	Participants
Entrepreneurs and/or aspiring entrepreneurs	798	16 333
Managers and executives	360	8 491
Technicians and operators	481	14 595
Craftsmen	123	3 135
Other courses	278	7 305
Total	2 040	49 859

SOURCE: UNIONCAMERE-MICA, 1997 SURVEY.