

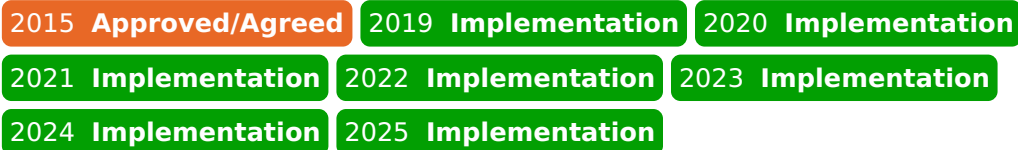
# Strengthening key competences in education and training

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 ITALY

## Timeline



ID number 28318

## Background

In the National strategy, citizenship competences (one of the EU key competences) are a component of Italian curricula. Compulsory education certifies the level of key competences for lifelong learning achieved by learners (ten years of full-time schooling). The national qualifications framework (QNQ) level is awarded at the end of each learning step needed to fulfil compulsory education, with the use of a nationally approved form and after assessing a learner's key competences: after primary, lower secondary education and at the end of two-years of upper secondary education (DI 8 January 2018).

The 2015 school reform (Law 107/2015) has also promoted key competences in upper secondary education through a set of measures, including support to school-work transition as a teaching method and the creation of a digital identity for learners (personal profile on the learner portal developed by the education ministry).

## Objectives

According to the National strategy for lifelong learning (2012 agreement on a National strategy and the 2014 guidelines on school guidance and counselling system) Law 145/2018 has changed the objectives of the school-work transition pathways to transversal competence and guidance pathways, (PCTO, Percorsi per le Competenze Trasversali e per l'Orientamento). Personal, social and learning to learn competence, citizenship competence, entrepreneurship competence, as well as cultural awareness and expression competence, are the new objectives of the guidance and counselling-oriented activities implemented through a situated learning approach.

## Description

The 2015 reform ( Law No 107/2015- Buona Scuola) aimed to increase specific skills: foreign language (English) and communication skills, through the development of content and language integrated learning, literacy and the Italian language for foreign learners; mathematical-logical and scientific skills; digital skills, ICT, computational thinking; critical and conscious use of social networks and media; musical and artistic skills; entrepreneurial

skills; citizenship skills; legal and economic knowledge; healthy lifestyles; and environmental awareness. This law also aimed to promote key competences through a set of measures, including the creation of a digital identity for learners to record and map the competences acquired in the different settings. To this end each learner is assigned a personal profile on the learner portal developed by the education ministry to enable, inter alia, access to comprehensive information concerning the learner curriculum. In 2017, subordinate regulations to the Good school reform created a national model for the evaluation and the certification of key competences at the first level of secondary education. This decision followed the results of a national experiment, started in 2014-15, involving around 3 000 education institutions.

All pathways are tracked in the personal profile of each learner and in their final qualification or high school diploma.

## **2015 Approved/Agreed**

### **2019 Implementation**

Law 145/2018 changed the objectives of the school-work transition pathways to Transversal competence and guidance pathways (PCTO, Percorsi per le Competenze Trasversali e per l'Orientamento). PCTO focus on guidance and counselling systems – as an integral part of the curriculum to help all individuals to develop their full potential. PCTO is aligned with the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018, on four specific key competences for lifelong learning: personal, social and learning to learn competence, citizenship competence, entrepreneurship competence, as well as cultural awareness and expression competence. The PCTO are compulsory for all in the last three years of upper secondary school by planning 90 hours of activity in general education, 150 hours for technical and 210 hours for vocational education and training pathways. Learners spend part of this time at school, as an initial experience, and part in the host organisation. The education ministry-via PCTO- supports skills competitions, which are considered a great opportunity for learners to demonstrate their potential. PCTO also contributes to enhancing the attractiveness and quality of the learning approach.

### **2020 Implementation**

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the obligation to carry out the minimum hours of the last three years of study pathways was suspended. However, most of the learners had significant PCTO experiences and demonstrated their abilities before the examination board during the State exam interview. The presentation was accompanied by a short report and/or a multimedia project, to complete the cultural, educational and professional profile achieved as a result of the stream.

Starting from the 2020/21 academic year, the curriculum where civic skills are defined was attached to the diploma obtained at the end of the upper secondary education State exam. This proved to be a useful tool for guiding learners in their progression either to education (tertiary pathways) and/or the world of work.

Also in 2020, a portal was developed. It proved very useful for schools, and particularly teachers, as it contained useful information and materials on teaching civic competence. The new transversal teaching and the material of the portal are based on the following: the constitution; law (national and international); legality and solidarity; sustainable development; environmental education; knowledge and protection of heritage and the territorial culture; and digital citizenship.

### **2021 Implementation**

In the academic year 2021/22, due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic the obligation to carry out the minimum hours of the last three years of study pathways was suspended. However, multiple PCTO experiences had been carried out by learners and their presentation and critical analysis was accompanied, during the exam interview, by a short report and/or a multimedia project.

In 2021, the education ministry continued to promote national competitions and Olympics to achieve different goals and purposes: stimulating interest in innovation and creativity, training, guiding and activating the development and consolidation of team building and problem-solving skills, developing the ability to transform ideas into actions. These initiatives were in accordance with the Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning. Examples -worth noted- of such promotional activities are: the problem-solving Olympics, the ITC Olympics- in which upper secondary school learners participate, involve the construction of a working prototype, capable of performing a complete action- the national competitions for technical and vocational institutes and the robotics Olympics.

The national competitions for technical and vocational institutes, were managed directly by VET educational institutions at upper secondary level. They include elaboration of cases and / or of the development and realisation of projects related to each professional and technical study field and are based on the reality of the labour market.

According to the legal framework in force, the final interview which is part of the State exam for the completion of the upper-secondary education (known as the second cycle of education) assesses if learners have acquired the civic skills defined in the school curriculum.

During 2021, a series of operational indications were provided to schools and learners attending the last year of the upper secondary level, regarding the preparation, enhancement, and release of the curriculum. The curriculum is a document that contains the entire profile of the learner, information related to the school background, the certifications acquired, and the extracurricular activities carried out over the years.

In May 2021, specific instructions were issued for the compilation of the curriculum for learners in prison (Note of the Directorate-General for School Systems, Evaluation and Internationalisation of the National Education System (DGOSVI) protocol No 10681 of 5 May 2021).

## 2022 Implementation

On 9 February 2022, due to the importance given to the development of the key citizenship competence, a group of experts and a technical-scientific committee were created by the education minister (pursuant to the provisions of Law No 92/2019). These committees were entrusted with the task of monitoring the implementation of law No 92 of 2019, which introduced the teaching in schools of civic education, from kindergarten to all education levels.

The group of experts will have the task of providing advice and support on the transversal teaching of civic education to the education minister and assist in the final draft of the guidelines which were issued with Ministerial Decree No 35 of 2020. It will also formulate proposals, projects, and training courses.

The technical-scientific committee has the mandate to carry out consultative tasks and make proposals, concerning the timetable, forms and methods for monitoring the activities carried out by the schools.

The Ministerial Decree No. 161 of 14 June 2022, as part of the actions funded by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan - Next Generation EU (PNRR), combined with the Ministerial Decree No. 222 of 11 August 2022-issued by the education ministry-entitled Decree of allocation of resources for the implementation of 'outstanding projects' adopted the *School 4.0 plan*. This plan aligns national measures and with the *European Digital Education Action Plan 2021-27 - Rethinking Education and Training for the Digital Age*

In October 2022, with DGOSVI note 25084, the Guidelines for the implementation of the competence guarantee pathways of the adult population (PGCA Guidelines) (which are aligned with the *National strategic plan for the development of skills of the adult population* adopted in 2021) were revised and approved by the P.A.I.D.E.IA. National Working Group. These guidelines were developed to enable Provincial Centres for Adult

Education (CPIAs) in designing and implementing consistently the *Competence guarantee pathways (PdGC)*. The guidelines are fully aligned with the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union – 22 May 2018 on key competences. In these terms every training activity and expansion of education programmes aim to assist adults to acquire basic skills (mathematical, literacy, language and digital skills) and transversal skills (teamwork skills, creative thinking, entrepreneurship, critical thinking, problem-solving or learning to learn skills and financial literacy).

Ministerial Decree, No 328 Guidelines for lifelong guidance of 22 December 2022 related to the reform 1.4 of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan(PNRR), has the purpose to implement the reform of the lifelong guidance system indicated in the PNRR lifelong guidance reform.

### **2023 Implementation**

In January 2023 - in alignment with the Ministerial Decree School plan 4.0 of 2022 - and for supporting schools and all stakeholders involved in innovation processes, a Note (Protocol No 4302, 14 January 2023) was issued by the education ministry. The note contains clarifications and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs). Its concluding part outlined the organisational and didactic structure of the learning pathways, contained details on their formation and design, about the relevant modes of attendance and also details on the certificates that learners receive after successful completion. Indicators for the recognition of the acquired competencies were also included.

### **2024 Implementation**

In 2024, two public notices have been issued to schools concerning the Priority 1 of the National Programme 'PN School and Skills 2021-2027' on the 'Northern Agenda and Summer Plan', which aims to promote learning, inclusion, and socialisation during the summer and the Priority 2 'School and Skills Facilities' (ERDF) whose objective is to improve equal access to quality and inclusive services in the field of education, training and lifelong learning through the development of accessible infrastructure, including by promoting the resilience of online and distance education and training. The education ministry is responsible for operating the National Programme, which is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and contains the strategic priorities of the education sector and has a duration of seven years. The aim of the National Programme is to improve the quality, inclusiveness, effectiveness and relevance of education and training systems to the labour market. It also aims to promote equal access and completion of inclusive and quality education, including through infrastructure development and enhancing lifelong learning.

With Ministerial Decree no. 183 of 7 September 2024, the new Guidelines for the teaching of civic education were adopted, which fully replace the Guidelines adopted with Ministerial Decree 22 June 2020, n. 35. The new guidelines, identify skills development goals and learning objectives for the first and second education cycle and raise awareness of responsible citizenship for nursery schools. The Italian education system is divided into two cycles: the first cycle includes primary school (5 years) and lower secondary school (3 years), while the second cycle includes upper secondary school (5 years) and vocational education and training programs (3 or 4 years). The guidelines are set according to the conceptual cores referred to in article 3 of Law August 2019, n. 92, 'Introduction of school teaching of civic education', which are interdisciplinary. These measures include an in-depth study of the Italian Constitution, the promotion of sustainable economic development, digital citizenship education, student inclusion and participation, and the promotion of health and healthy lifestyles. The guidelines are interdisciplinary and transversal, integrating with the various subjects of the school curriculum.

With Law 8 August 2024, n. 121, the new 'technological-professional chain' was established, aimed at building an education and training path capable of providing solid and innovative training to students, ensuring them the acquisition of quality

theoretical and practical skills. This is achieved through the creation and offer of an integrated training which foresees the cooperation of technical and professional schools, ITS Academies, regional accredited bodies for the provision of VET, universities, businesses and other public and private entities. The creation of the technological-professional training chain aims to address the mismatch between the skills acquired when leaving school and the skills required by the rapidly and continuously evolving world of work, through innovative teaching/learning methodologies that connect, through different and structured work-based learning activities, training in the productive world of different territories. Some examples of key skills acquired include digital, technical, transversal, entrepreneurial, and linguistic skills. These skills are developed through an integrated approach involving technical and professional institutes, ITS Academy, regional entities, universities, and companies.

Beginning from the school year 2024-25 and in line with the establishment of the new technological-professional chain, a new high school path has been created, called 'Liceo del Made in Italy' which was approved with Law 27 December 2023, n. 206. It allows to deepen the study of economics and law, with attention to mathematical, physical and natural sciences and to the analysis of the historical, geographical, artistic and cultural scenarios that are the basis of the Italian productive fabric. Students will be able to learn about the historical and industrial evolution of the 'Made in Italy' production sectors and acquire skills and knowledge relating to business management, market strategies, and the development of the production and organisational processes of 'Made in Italy' companies.

Since 2023, the education has promoted the establishment of a technical working group, which was renewed by Departmental Decree prot. n. 678 of 20 March 2024. Its aim is to create a national project for providing the provincial centres for adult education (CPIA) with homogeneous criteria and a set of shared teaching tools, useful for the evaluation and recognition of existing knowledge and skills that adults have acquired through various experiences. This process helps adults entering the CPIA to receive appropriate credit for their prior learning, making it easier for them to achieve qualifications and continue their education or training. This activity derives from the provisions of the Presidential Decree 263/12, which also aims at 'enhancing the cultural and professional heritage of the person starting from the reconstruction of their individual history'. The final objective is to define operational instructions and develop guidelines and recommendations, to promote effective action by the CPIA for the process of evaluating and enhancing the skills of the adult population and recognising the related credits, for improving strategies and procedures during the certification of the skills acquired in learning experiences, and gained in different contexts, formal, non-formal and informal nature, by adults attending CPIA.

## 2025 Implementation

In 2025, the ministry continued the operational implementation of measures launched in 2024. Activities focused on consolidating existing national programmes and on the experimental roll-out of newly established pathways. The 'Programma Nazionale Scuola e competenze 2021-2027' entered a further implementation phase through the adoption of ministerial decrees and calls. These acts specified priorities and operational arrangements for schools and regions and supported interventions under Priority 1, relating to learning, inclusion and socialisation activities, and Priority 2, concerning school infrastructure and skills-related investments financed by the ERDF.

At national level, the experimental activation of the technological-professional training chain (filiera formativa tecnologico-professionale) was formalised through a decree and calls for applications for the 2025/2026 school year. The initiative enabled the launch of a first wave of pilot classes and the establishment of partnerships between technical and professional schools, ITS institutions, regional VET providers, universities and enterprises.

The roll-out of the *Liceo del Made in Italy* continued with student enrolments and the publication of authorised study pathways, supporting its integration into upper secondary education from the 2024/2025 academic year.

Also, in 2025, new national curriculum documents incorporated and referenced Ministerial Decree No 183 of 7 September 2024 on guidelines for civic education. This ensured alignment between civic education objectives and competences, the updated national curriculum framework and ongoing school-level implementation measures. Ministerial notes and operational documents issued between November 2024 and 2025 provided additional guidance and tools to support schools in applying these provisions.

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education (until 2022)
- Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (until 2019)
- Ministry of Education and Merit

## Target group

### Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

### Education professionals

Teachers

School leaders

Adult educators

## Thematic categories

### Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Acquiring key competences

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Lifelong guidance

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## European priorities in VET

### VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

### Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

[Education reform, Law No 107/2015](#)

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[DM 774/2019 guidelines on transversal competence and guidance pathways - PCTO](#)

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[Ministerial Decree No 35 of 2020-Guidelines for the teaching of civic education](#)

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[Ministerial Decree n.161-Adoption of the School 4.0 plan](#)

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[Note No 25084- Guidelines for the implementation of the competence guarantee pathways of the adult population](#)

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[Ministerial Decree No 328-Adoption of Guidelines for lifelong guidance](#)

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[Ministerial Decree n. 176 of 30 August 2023 - Southern Agenda](#)

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[Programma nazionale Scuola e Competenze 2021 - 2027](#)

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[Linee guida per l'insegnamento dell'Educazione civica](#)

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[Legge 8 agosto 2024 "Istituzione della filiera formativa tecnologico-professionale"](#)

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[Liceo del Made in Italy](#)

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[The Made in Italy Framework Law](#)

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[Ministerial Decree No. 233 of 19 November 2024 \(Decreto ministeriale n. 233 del 19 novembre 2024\)](#)

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[Ministerial Decree No. 256 of 16 December 2024 concerning the launch of experimental upper-secondary education pathways within the technological-vocational training track for the 2025/2026 school and training year \(Decreto minist n. 256 del 16 dic 2024\)](#)

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## Related policy developments

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**2025 Implementation**

### National plan for digital education (PNSD)

In 2016, the education ministry adopted the multi annual National plan for digital education (PNSD). The plan has coordinated government, region and municipality digital resources, as well as managed all the projects focusing on digital education and innovation.

 ITALY

#### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## National strategy for competences/skills

A National strategy for competences/skills has been launched based on the education and training (Good school) and labour (Jobs Act) reforms.

 ITALY

### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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## 2025 Implementation

### The Good school and subsequent reforms

On 13 July 2015, the Italian government adopted a reform of the national education system called the Good school (La Buona Scuola), emphasising alternance between classroom work and periods of workplace training.

 ITALY

### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

### Subsystem

IVET

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