

## Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Italy

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## Introduction

In 2012, the Italian government, together with regional and local authorities (Conferenza Unificata), through an [agreement](#), defined the national lifelong guidance system. Its main goals are to promote a common national strategy for lifelong guidance in education, training and employment, aimed at integrating the guidance services and activities provided in Italy.

The core meaning of lifelong guidance was then established through this agreement: "Career guidance (orientamento) is a process aimed at facilitating self-knowledge, of the educational, occupational, social, cultural and economic context of reference, of the strategies implemented to relate and interact in these realities, in order to encourage the maturation and development of the skills necessary to be able to autonomously define or redefine personal and professional objectives adhering to the context, elaborate or re-elaborate a life project and support the related choices." (unofficial translation from the 2012 Conferenza Unificata agreement, from Italian)

In 2013, Italy issued the National guidelines for lifelong guidance ([Accordo tra Governo, Regioni ed Enti locali sul documento recante: Definizione delle linee guida del sistema nazionale sull'orientamento permanente, 5 dicembre 2013](#)), agreed between the Ministry of Education (Ministero dell'Istruzione dell'Università e della Ricerca, MIUR), the Ministry of Labour (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali) and the regions. The main role of programming and coordination belongs to the regions that, since 2001, hold this institutional function, according to the Italian Constitution.

The national guidelines are directed to career practitioners and stakeholders. They establish the right to lifelong guidance for all citizens and define five main functions that national and regional career guidance systems have to provide:

- career education: activities for learning career management skills (CMS);
- information: services and tools for addressing the information needs of citizens and guidance stakeholders with reliable information resources;
- supporting transitions: services and activities for providing help and advice to citizens to reach learning and career goals and to manage changes and transitions;
- guidance counselling: interviews and guidance tools focused on the design of new career pathways;
- management of the system: development of networks and quality standards and monitoring, training and updating of career guidance practitioners.

In 2014, ministries and regions issued the [National standards for lifelong guidance](#), a technical document that describes services, quality requirements and resources for guidance provision in each main context (education, higher education and employment services).

Over the last years, at a national level, these various measures have been adopted, including of a regulatory nature, on lifelong guidance both at ministerial level and in the context of agreements between the Government, Regions, and local authorities. The analyses and perspectives of these developments constitute reference points for the design and implementation of an effective lifelong guidance system.

In 2022, the Ministry of Education and Merit issued [new guidelines](#) (Linee guida per l'orientamento) for lifelong guidance for the education (schools) sector in the context of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza - NRRP) for Italy. The guidelines aim, through the promotion of appropriate legislative interventions and decrees, to implement the reforms stipulated by the NRRP. The objective is to strengthen the connection between the first cycle of education and the second cycle of education and training, to improve decision-making for young people, which accordingly should enhance the potential and talents of students and contribute to the reduction of school dropout and promote access to learning opportunities in tertiary education (Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito, 2022).

### Sources

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## Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

In 2014, ministries and regions issued the [National standards for lifelong guidance](#), a technical document that describes services, quality requirements and resources for guidance provision in each main context (education, higher education and employment services). The new guidance system fosters cooperation among national and regional levels, but the National guidelines for lifelong guidance leave the institutions free to organise activities and services with great autonomy.

Although efforts are made at national level through the different instruments, there is no single national or regional body responsible for

lifelong guidance and counselling, but several institutions and stakeholders are involved, so lifelong guidance is organised within sectors. Career guidance is mainly provided by public employment services (Centri per l'Impiego - CPI), schools, VET providers, universities and information centres (Informa-Giovani). Some cities such as Milan, Genova, Torino, Roma or Bari have dedicated career centres named Cité des métiers or Porta Futuro. At local level, the role of regions is central to defining regional guidelines, providing funding, and supporting local guidance systems.

In 2022, as part of the reform of the lifelong guidance system in the education sector (schools) envisaged by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), the Ministry of Education and Merit issued a legislative decree, approving the [new Guidelines](#) for lifelong guidance covering the sector. These guidelines are aimed at building - both at ministerial level and in the context of agreements between the Government, the Regions and the local authorities - a structured and coordinated guidance system within the school sector.

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## Access to guidance

One of the main aims of the National guidelines on lifelong guidance (2013) (see section [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#)) was to improve the accessibility of guidance services to all citizens in Italy.

Nowadays, the coordination of main guidance initiatives, campaigns, and information events (study fairs and career days) is shared between the Ministry of Education and Merit, Ministry of University and Research and Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. All ministries have developed dedicated webpages ([webpage of Ministry of Education and Merit](#), [webpage of Ministry of Labour and Social Policies](#) and [webpage of Ministry of University and Research](#)) and web portals for supporting information and guidance such as <http://www.istruzione.it/orientamento>, [http://www.orientamentoistruzione.it/index\\_off.html](http://www.orientamentoistruzione.it/index_off.html), <https://www.universitaly.it/> and <https://www.cliclavoro.gov.it>.

The national public employment services (PES - Centri per l'Impiego) (translation) provide career information and guidance to all citizens, following national standards and guidelines ([the labour market reform - Law N. 150](#) in 2015) and they used to have support of the national agency for employment (Agenzia Nazionale Politiche Attive Lavoro - ANPAL) that was discontinued in February 2024 (<https://www.anpal.gov.it/soppressione-anpal>). Each Region manages these services at local level through a network of regional employment offices (Centri per l'Impiego). In Italy there are 551 employment offices, with 7.772 practitioners (2020 data).

Regional and local stakeholders have autonomy in developing projects and programmes which tackle NEETs and youth unemployment. Career guidance services provided in school focus on increasing the skills, competences, and employability of their graduates and on preparing them for the transition between different education levels and from education to the world of work.

In 2017, the Ministry of Education launched an ESF-funded national programme ([PON Orientamento](#)) to support the development of innovative guidance services in schools. The programme followed up the development of the National standards, approved in 2014. It included career education courses and modules, guidance information actions, and support actions for career choice and employability development, linked to the educational pathways (This programme is no longer running).

Regional and local stakeholders can be engaged through partnerships which may include central and local administrations, associations, foundations, third sector organisations, universities, research centres and networks. Services provided include mentorship by representatives of the world of work, vocational training providers and universities.

Students (in school education and VET) are acquainted with local job offers, working environments and available training offers. Growing occupations and activities, linked also to the digital and green transitions, are particularly emphasised. Relevant actions include information to students on all available routes to qualification, acquaintance with changing technologies at work, career workshops to understand the reality of careers and training environments, clarification of stereotypes about careers and VET, as well as clarification of personal preferences in career choices.

Regional governments are also in charge of the management of PES and of the implementation of all active employment measures foreseen by national legislation. For example, the Emilia-Romagna Region is among the Italian regions, from the perspective of available support services and career guidance activities, having the more advanced employment services (since 2016) (see ANPAL, 2022, p. 59), managed by the Regional Agency for Employment ([Agenzia Regionale per il Lavoro](#)). Its upskilling strategy includes quantitative and qualitative profiling of unemployed, low-skilled/qualified adults, subscription to a personalised service agreement and provision of guidance activities. These range from general career information to fully tailored support. Clients can be referred to further training leading to a qualification or to labour insertion/re-insertion internships leading to validation of competences acquired. Clients have a personal portfolio which is updated at every stage and is integrated in institutional databases. The guidance and validation can be offered by a variety of services which include the PES and other accredited employment agencies.

Clients receive support in job search, CV and job application drafting. If the PES assesses that clients require further guidance support, more complex methodologies are made available. Clients deemed ready for work after initial screening and career guidance support are included in the PES job matching database. Clients with low readiness can also be enrolled in a [labour insertion/re-insertion internship \(tirocinio di inserimento/reinserimento al lavoro\)](#) to develop labour market-relevant competences and career management skills.

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## Quality assurance

The national agreement between Ministries and Regions on Quality standards for lifelong guidance issued in 2014 ([Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2014](#)) describes services, quality requirements and resources for guidance provision in each main context (education, higher education and employment services). This technical document supports regions and other guidance providers to design guidance services and allocate resources and staff. It followed and integrated the National guidelines for lifelong guidance (2013) (see section [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#)). For example, in the context of higher education, all universities have to guarantee the presence of guidance services aimed at supporting students at the beginning of their academic career, during the course of their academic career, and at the end of it to prepare them for the labour market. The document defines the aim of these actions (such as promoting the development of soft skills).

The Ministry of Labour and the Regions issued a specific document on [quality standards for employment services](#) (Decreto ministeriale dell'11 gennaio 2018, n. 4 - LEP), including career information and guidance. This document provides a list of services and references for all public employment offices in Italy and also for private job centres and employment agencies. The standards include ethical treatment of clients, availability of career information and possibility to research job offers to all clients.

The main national report on career guidance is the report issued by ANPAL on the standards of public employment services (see ANPAL, 2022) with data on accessibility, average number of users per center, level of provision of services and other indicators. This report refers only to the PES (Centri per l'Impiego) which main target groups are adults, job seekers and people with disabilities. (ANPAL was discontinued in February 2024, <https://www.anpal.gov.it/soppressione-anpal>).

Quality of guidance in education is monitored by the Ministry of Education, through the agency INVALSI and a self-assessment system (named Rapporto di Autovalutazione - RAV). This model includes items on the level of guidance provision at school and each school must complete the self-assessment questionnaire every year ([Invalsi, n.d.](#)).

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## Career management skills

Following the national guidelines (2013) (see section [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#)), career learning is one of the five main functions of lifelong guidance. Career learning promotes the acquisition of career management skills (CMS) through the provision of guidance programmes and activities within the education system and the career guidance services.

The first edition of the [Guidelines for lifelong guidance](#) issued by the Ministry of Education (2014) also defined CMS as the main learning output of career guidance at school and of other guidance activities and work-related learning experiences. The guidelines provided a short definition of CMS, as presented by Cedefop: 'Career management skills refer to a whole range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self, educational and occupational information as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions' (Cedefop, 2010, p.8). However, at national level, an official (or endorsed) and detailed framework for career management skills is still missing. The Piemonte Region issued regional [guidelines for lifelong guidance](#) (orientamento permanente) including a CMS framework based on 6 areas of skills. So, in this case a CMS framework is endorsed and used by practitioners and teachers.

The [Guidance Guidelines of the Ministry of Education \(2022\)](#), confirms the methodological approach based on the career management skills framework (competenze di gestione della carriera - point 2.2) for the education sector. The CMS framework is the base for designing the career learning activities yearly. National guidelines, however, remain relatively general and a clear, specific description of CMS is still missing. The main task for the schools is to support students in filling in an e-portfolio, but how this can improve CMS is not clearly explain and described in the official documents. Starting from the school year 2023-2024, lower and upper secondary schools provide educational guidance modules in all grades of at least 30 hours (including extra-curricular activities), per school year.

Some projects and good practices developed and promoted by universities, such as the University of Camerino, and local authorities, such as [Regione Marche](#), provided a methodological proposal and tools for promoting a national CMS framework in Italy. In 2015, the Erasmus+ project [LEADER](#) coordinated by University of Camerino worked to develop a methodological framework for CMS, producing a series of activities to promote the development of CMS. The model and the activities were designed and tested in Italy with several pilots (for further information please see [here](#)). A recently developed framework for career management skills was developed by six universities in Europe, through the Careers Around Me project, also co-financed through Erasmus+ funding, and tested in Piemonte Region: ([here](#)).

[Fuoriclasse](#) and [Fuoriclasse in Movimento](#) are projects coordinated by Save the Children Italy to counter school drop-out. The programme reached 4,300 students, 1,300 teachers e 2,800 parents (2021 data) and was developed with the aim of increasing the career management skills and learning skills of at-risk students through career workshops and seminars, formal and non-formal activities, and cooperation with the families. The project website sets out the model's components which, according to the organisation, are considered crucial for sharing tools and guidelines to design guidance activities and interventions based on the CMS framework.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education promoted a document on [entrepreneurial skills and learning pathways for students](#) (Sillabo per l'Educazione Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Italy

all'imprenditorialità nella scuola secondaria, 2018). It supports secondary education providers in establishing learning pathways to develop entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and competences. It directly reflects the [EntreComp model](#) (2016) and is divided into five areas:

1. ways and opportunities for doing business;
2. development of ideas, contexts and addressing social needs;
3. from the idea to the enterprise, resources and skills;
4. the enterprise in action: dealing with the market
5. economic citizenship.

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## Evidence, monitoring and assessment

Monitoring and evaluation of lifelong guidance is carried out at national level by the national authorities based on their reporting needs, while on a more systematic level it is a regional responsibility.

The Ministry of Education collects and analyses data on the education system, while the Ministry of Labour gathers information and data and reports on the national employment services and active labour market policies.

At National level, the National [Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies](#) (Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche, INAPP, previously ISFOL) collects data and produces an [annual report](#) about the national labour and training policies and systems in Italy, but the current monitoring of guidance provision is carried out by each region in its own territory based on regional models and regional data.

As examples at regional level, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region has developed a regional system for monitoring and evaluating guidance activities, based on a web platform that allows schools and guidance centres to collect data and evidence on the quality of guidance provision both in education and labour market sector. Further information can be found [here](#). In addition, Piemonte Region provided analysis of monitoring of the regional guidance system through collected data about all regional guidance activities and services funded by ESF (see also [here](#)).

[Almalaurea](#), a consortium of 80 Italian universities supported by the Italian Ministry of University and Research and Italian companies, presents each year a report on career and study choices of students and graduates in Italy. Other private associations and research institutions provide data and reports on specific aspects and issues, such as the rates of early school leaving and the number of NEETs; see the work of [Fondazione Agnelli](#) and [Save the Children Italy](#).

Phenomena such as early school leaving, study choices, employment rates, and social mobility are quantitatively monitored, while the effectiveness of career guidance policies and activities are described within the reports related to Education and Labour policies. Although certain quality criteria are described in national and regional guidelines, a proper monitoring system evaluating the impact of guidance actions on rates of employment or early school leaving, or individual outcomes (e.g., acquisition of career management skills, increased life satisfaction) (see Cedefop, 2022 for examples) is not yet in place.

As part of a European consortium, some Italian public and private bodies developed indicators and targets they considered relevant for defining an evidence-based system to evaluate guidance actions. The [Guiding Schools project](#), which was a collaboration with eight partners from 7 European countries, some of whom are universities, worked towards the same direction. This was a project funded by the Erasmus+ programme that created digital tools aimed to improve quality in career guidance at school.

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## Career information, ICT in guidance



In line with the European framework (European Commission, 2008), the guidelines from the Ministry of Education (2014) had defined the use and the development of ICT in career guidance as a priority for the national system. It was seen as crucial to:

1. guarantee access to web and ICT resources to every student to promote learning of career management skills;
2. promote training of teachers and practitioners;
3. improve the quality and the usefulness of e-guidance tools.

ICT tools were reported to be fundamental for allowing access to a wide amount of online information, but, in line with evolution of ICT in guidance since then, careful use of digital technology according to safety standards for users. The [2022 national guidelines for lifelong guidance](#) for the education sector (schools) also refer to the need to make available an ICT career information platform for students, practitioners and families.

In Italy, several examples of online publicly funded platforms for provision of career information and labour market information are available as well as job matching tools. For instance, the Ministry of Labour promotes a national web portal [cliclavoro](#) that collects job vacancies from the public employment services (Centri per l'Impiego), but also directly from employers and private job agencies. It also collects CVs from job seekers and provides information on main national and regional initiatives in employment, training and labour market policies.

Another public portal on national qualifications and careers is the [Atlante del lavoro e delle qualificazioni](#) (Atlas of work and qualifications). This is available online and is the result of collaboration between the Ministry of Labour, the National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies (Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche, INAPP) and other stakeholders. It provides a detailed map of work and qualifications, described according to a common language shared between the institutions. The aim of this database of qualifications is to describe nationally each work activity to promote guidance services, validation services, recognition and training of competences and skills required by the labour market.

Official data on employment and education – which are sources of information for career guidance practitioners and service users – is published by the [National Institute of Statistics](#) (Istituto nazionale di statistica, ISTAT) for the country. SISTAN, the National Statistical System network of public and private entities, provides the country and international bodies with official statistical information and additional data sources. “The SISTAN assures the uniformity of direction, the homogeneity of used methods and the rationalization of the processes of official statistics through an organizational and functional coordination plan, involving the entire public administration at central, regional and local levels. The task of coordinating the SISTAN is statutorily held by ISTAT and its president is also the head of SISTAN” (see [Istat, n.d.](#)) 20. .

Moreover, [Unioncamere](#), the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture, manages an [information system](#) that provides forecasts on labour market trends and on the workforce needs of enterprises. The [Excelsior information system](#) is their statistical system and constitutes the starting point that provides quarterly employment forecasts at national, regional and provincial level to inform about labour market trends. This information is important as it allows users to see how the job profile of interest is positioned with respect to the demands of the local region.

The Ministry of Education offers several online platforms for students and their families: [Scuole in chiaro](#) (national database of schools in Italy), [University](#) (national database of university and higher education), [Sistema ITS](#) (national database of the training offer from the higher technical education and training system (ITS)).

In the education (schools) sector, to support the national Lifelong [guidance](#) guidelines (2022), in October 2023 the Ministry of Education launched [UNICA](#), the new national platform for career guidance at school. This web site supports students with information on the education systems using infographics, with links to database and career resources, such as the e-portfolio of the student. Each school has to use this platform to provide yearly at least 30 hours of career learning activities to all students.

Platforms offer information on the structure of the education system, specific information on schools and on all training pathways available after compulsory studies.

There is also a national web tool [Eduscopio](#), promoted by the Agnelli Foundation, that collects information on schools with data and statistics for the evaluation of each school and to support student decisions.

AlmaLaurea, a consortium of 82 universities, offers every year a survey on the occupational outcomes of Italian graduates. It has a database of CVs of new graduates which is made available to employers. The consortium also offers a [website](#) with resources and tests to inform students on the available educational possibilities and to support them in their choice.

[MiOriento](#) is an online service which offers information about the labour market in Europe and postsecondary opportunities, financed by the Varese province with public funds. It aims to help the unemployed, pupils and students gain employment, providing assistance with applications and job interviews. Information given to users of the platform includes university offers, labour market information (LMI), tests and work tools. One feature of the site is [Test di Orientamento](#) (career guidance test). This test aims to help participants have greater awareness of their own resources to know potential and personal constraints, skills and values when choosing a career

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## Training and qualifications

There are no formal training pathways or specific degrees in Italy that give direct access to work in this field (Iannis, 2021). Regarding qualifications for career practitioners and career educators, a formal national skills and qualification system for career practitioners is under construction and there are no legally defined national qualification requirements for career guidance practitioners (Cedefop, 2020).

At national and regional level, the training provision for career practitioners related to guidance and counselling ranges from short specialization and advanced academic courses offered by Italian universities to training courses and modules organized by training providers and various private associations.

Career practitioners generally have academic backgrounds in psychology, sociology, economics and business administration as well as pedagogy. As of 2017, most practitioners (68%) employed by the public employment services (Centri per l'Impiego) have obtained a

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secondary school qualification or lower, while only 28.7% have a university degree (ANPAL, 2017).

The public portal hosting the national repertory on work and qualifications ([Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni](#), managed by INAPP) includes the descriptions of main lifelong guidance activities and the related professional outputs. Created in 2016 as a national reference for all regional qualifications, it is based on the descriptions of sectors, main work processes and sub-processes, work activities and expected outcomes. It includes several work activities related to career guidance. This database is the official base for the design of standards, skills, and training for diverse careers. The repertory describes the guidance practitioner's main activities and expected outputs (such as the provision of career interviews and of career information). However, it does not describe the competences related to each work activity. Therefore, to certify their skills, practitioners have to refer to regional services, following both the regional and national frameworks and procedures. However, in most Italian regions, these services are not yet available, nor are they fully developed (Iannis, 2021).

The National standards for lifelong guidance (2014) (see sections [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#) and [Quality assurance](#)) describe services, quality requirements and resources for guidance provision to regulate regional VET, Public Employment Service (Servizi per l'Impiego), lifelong guidance systems and validation and certification services. The document also specifies the minimum level of competences needed for career practitioners to provide services for different types of career guidance activities in these settings, according to the national standards.

Within the education sector, the Guidance Guidelines (2022) signed by the Ministry of Education report on the requirements for teachers responsible for career education and career guidance (Ministro dell'istruzione e del merito, 2022)..

In primary schools there is no single teacher responsible for career guidance. In secondary schools (first and second grade), each school has to nominate a teacher responsible for career guidance activities. This teacher is selected annually regardless of experience, competences, and qualifications. Possibilities for training opportunities, pathways and support for guidance/career education teachers in the schools sector depend also on regional guidance systems. As an example, [Piemonte Region](#) within the [regional guidelines](#), introduced a system of training for teachers responsible for career guidance and it defined the regional profile of competences required to be a guidance practitioner within the regional system of qualifications.

Training pathways within higher education include mostly master level courses. As an example the University of Rome offers a [Master's degree in Career guidance and placement services](#). It offers a theoretical and practical path with the aim of promoting theoretical and operational skills in professionals, or aspiring professionals, who operate in the various sectors of school, university, professional training and in guidance and placement services. There are also opportunities for awarding credentials and providing opportunities for capacity development through validation in Italy, using a digital badge systems for career guidance practitioners competences' in the public employment services (Centri per l'Impiego), tested in Tuscany (see Iannis, G, 2021).

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## Funding career guidance

Funding for lifelong guidance systems and services is available through a variety of existing funds drawn from European, national, and regional resources. As mentioned in the Lifelong guidance guidelines (2022) signed by the Ministry of Education and Merit, schools can now finance their guidance actions through the strategic and coordinated use of all the resources offered by national and European plans and programmes owned by the Ministry of Education as well as by initiatives promoted at national and local level by universities, regions, local authorities, employment centres, employers' associations, bodies, and territorial organisations. Many of these, however, are temporary with specific timelines.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Piano nazionale di ripresa e resilienza - NRRP) allows the activation of many paths and interventions to promote guidance as part of various investment lines owned by the Ministry of Education and Merit and listed in the [2022 Guidelines](#), such as:

- "New Skills and New Languages", which offers the possibility of carrying out guidance activities, for example highly innovative content, towards studies and professional careers in STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in all first and second cycle schools;
- "Interventions for reducing gaps and school dropout", which contains various tools for schools to personalize training and guidance in favour of students with scholastic difficulties in order to support them in their didactic and training choices, also with the involvement of families;
- "Integrated digital teaching", which allows the attendance of training courses for school staff on digitalisation as well as on the use of innovative teaching methodologies, also with reference to personalized guidance activities;
- "Development of the ITS Academy tertiary training system", which involves the carrying out of guidance activities towards the achievement of innovative qualifications with high technological content and with important employment outcomes promoted by Higher Technological Institutes.

The Ministry of University and Research, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Merit, has activated, within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Piano nazionale di ripresa e resilienza - NRRP) (, the specific investment line 1.6 "Active Guidance in the school-university transition", which allows all second cycle secondary schools to carry out guidance courses of 15 hours each in the third, fourth and fifth classes, promoted by Universities and the Higher Education in Art and Music (Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale - AFAMs, a specific sector of the Higher Education System in Italy) , through the signing of specific agreements.

Within the scope of European financial resources, the new National Programme "School and Skills" 2021-2027 (<https://pn20212027.istruzione.it/>) provides specific interventions to support the reform of the Italian guidance system, introduced by guidelines of the Ministry of Education, for the first and second school cycles and Centres of Adult Education, while the Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027 allows the activation of mobility paths which also have a strong impact in relation to guidance activities and interventions.

The Ministry of Labour and each region allocate funding for employment services and for promoting active employment policies (including guidance services). These use regional, national, and European funds for their operation.

Private foundations and charities are increasingly investing in career guidance, offering funding opportunities for relevant projects.

#### Sources

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## Career guidance for school pupils

Following the [national guidelines](#) on lifelong guidance issued by the Ministry of Education and Merit (2022), schools are responsible for most of the guidance activities for students; wherein each school has to include a plan for guidance activities within the school's official annual plan.

Starting from the school year 2023-2024:

- Lower secondary schools will activate educational guidance modules for students, of at least 30 hours (including extra-curricular activities), per school year, in all classes;
- Upper secondary schools will activate educational guidance modules for students of at least 30 hours (including extra-curricular activities), per school year, in the first and second grades; and modules of at least 30 hours per school year, in the third, fourth and fifth grades.

Career guidance is organised in modules and involves personalised learning that is recorded in the student's digital portfolio ([E-Portfolio - UNICA web platform](#)). Each school appoints a tutor teacher to support students in their implementation and review of each personal E-Portfolio and in the design of own educational choice and career goals.

Teachers, students, and families have access to the national web platform [UNICA](#) that provides information and data on upper secondary education, on tertiary education and data useful for the transition into the world of work.

According to the [reform of the education system](#) (Law N. 107 in 2015), all students, during the last three years of secondary school, are required to attend a work-related learning activity and career guidance pathways (10-12 hours), mainly outside the school. These activities are provided by schools and aim at improving career management and transversal skills ([Percorsi per le competenze trasversali e l'orientamento - PCTO](#)).

To support students' transitions from school to higher education, the [Ministry of University and Research](#) (MUR - Decreto Ministeriale n. 934 del 03-08-2022) instructed universities to provide at least 15h of career learning and guidance activities to support students in learning career management skills to students in their last year of secondary schools. This national programme is funded by the National Resilience and Recovery Plan (PNRR) ([Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza](#)) and all tertiary education institutions have been involved.

Some regions in Italy have issued regional guidelines on the methodological framework for career guidance, on the different types of career guidance services to be provided or on the structure of the activities (see for example, Marche Region, Piemonte Region, Lombardia Region and Friuli Venezia Giulia Region). The regional documents follow the national guidelines issued in 2013 by the Conference of the State and the Regions and the most recent documents provided by the Ministry of Education.

At local level, other career information and guidance activities for students are often carried out in cooperation among schools, training centres, employment services, higher education institutes and universities, employers and managers.

According to policy in Italy, key aims of career guidance activities for school pupils is to reduce disengagement and early school leaving from education and training, to increase access to internships and work placements, and to support the transition from school/university to the labour market.

Services provided include mentorship (similar to tutors in education sector) by representatives of the world of work, technical training providers, and universities. Students are acquainted with local job offers, working environments and available training. Growing occupations and activities, in particular related to the twin (digital and green) transitions, are particularly emphasised. Relevant actions include information to students on all available routes to qualification, acquaintance with changing technologies at work, career workshops to understand the reality of careers and training environments, clarification of stereotypes about careers and VET, as well as clarification of personal preferences in career choices.

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## Guidance for VET participants

Italy is investing a lot in its VET system and improved VET pathways to ensure a better connection between the education systems and the world of work (see e.g., the reform of the Higher technological institutes (Istituti [tecnologici](#) superiori - ITS Academies).

The VET system is organised and managed by regions. It includes IEF courses (initial vocational education and training for the acquisition of specific qualifications) for young students, after compulsory education. The regional VET systems offer higher technical education and training courses (IFTs), higher technical specialisation certificate (released by the region) and higher technical institutes (ITS Academies), higher technical education diploma (EQF 5), after secondary education. The main information and guidance on the VET system is provided by each region and nationally by the Ministry of Education (please see [here](#) for the ITS system and [here](#) for the IEF system).

The Ministry of Labour also promotes the [apprenticeship programme](#), inspired by the dual system and connected with the VET system. In the last years, the Ministry of Education launched an ESF-funded national programme ([PON Orientamento](#)) to support the development of innovative guidance services in education schools, including VET (see section [Access to guidance](#)).

Services provided include mentorship by representatives of the world of work, vocational training providers, and universities. Students are acquainted with local job offers, working environments and available training. Growing occupations and activities are particularly emphasised, especially those related to the digital and green transitions. Relevant actions include information to students on all available routes to qualification, acquaintance with changing technologies at work, career workshops to understand the reality of careers and training environments, clarification of stereotypes about careers and VET, as well as clarification of personal preferences in career choices.

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## Guidance for higher education students

Every university in Italy has created and organised its own guidance and placement service for students and graduates. Most also include academic tutoring and support services for international mobility. Almalaurea (see section [Evidence, monitoring and assessment](#)) provides digital tools for labour market information and specifically regarding occupational outcomes of Italian graduates. The website also offers a database of CVs of new graduates which is made available to employers (see section [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

The Ministries, both Education and University, offer various online career information services to guidance students and their families in the Italian university world. Through [web platforms](#) and services, it is possible to find all the information on Italian universities, degree courses, doctorates, specialization schools and masters. See the website University Italy (<https://www.university.it/>).

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## Guidance for adult learners

The main career guidance providers for adults are the public employment services (PES - Centri per l'Impiego). They are organised by each region, as a national network with the support of the [Ministry of Labour](#) and the [National Agency for Active Labour Policies \(ANPAL\)](#) (that was discontinued in February 2024, see <https://www.anpal.gov.it/soppressione-anpal>). Locally, the public employment services are managed by each region independently.

The Ministry of Labour issued [national quality standards](#) for the employment services, including career guidance (as defined by the [Jobs Act - Law N. 183](#) in 2014 and the [labour market reform - Law N. 150](#) in 2015).

Providing career information and guidance is one of the main functions of the PES system. According to the labour market reform (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015), the public employment service is responsible for training to qualify or requalify, to align with labour market needs and promote careers that support lifelong learning. The activities are the result of collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners. The aim is to increase access to career information, career training and work-based learning opportunities. Moreover, as adult learning is part of the Italian education system (Provincial Center for Adult Education, [Centro Provinciale per l'Istruzione degli Adulti](#) - CPIA), guidance activities are also supported by the Ministry of Education (see, Guidance Guidelines, 2022).

Most guidance activities are also provided by private companies and often consist of academic tutoring services during the learning experience.

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## Guidance for the employed

The public employment service (PES) is in charge of career guidance activities for the employed and, according to the [labour market reform](#) (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015), also responsible for managing funding for geographic mobility, management of tools for reconciling work and private life in cases of care obligation for children and relatives with disabilities, personalised career guidance, analysis of the individual's needs and of competences.

The activities are often done in collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners.

Companies, especially the medium and large-sized enterprises, provide guidance activities for internal mobility, placement and re-placement of their employees. In Italy these activities are provided by private accredited Employment Agencies (<https://www.lavoro.gov.it/strumenti-e-servizi/pagine/albo-nazionale-delle-agenzie-il-lavoro>).

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## Guidance for unemployed adults

The public employment service (PES) oversees career guidance activities for unemployed adults. According to the [labour market reform](#) (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015) and the [Ministerial Decree 4](#), 11 January 2018 (LEP, minimum level of service provision), the PES is responsible for career guidance (at a basic and at a more personalised level), analysis of competences in relation to the local labour market demand, analysis of individual needs within the labour market, coaching, support in undertaking a training opportunity, promotion of internships and information regarding possible funding for active job search, training for starting an enterprise, support and training for active job search.



The reform of the PES organisation decentralised activities to local employment offices and established local employment centres, which are networked via an employment information system (EIS). Their main activity consists of providing (mandatory) counselling and guidance to the job search activities of the long-term unemployed. For each unemployed person, a personal and professional file is created and updated by the PES, with qualifications and work history. This allows the placement advisors of the Employment Centers to identify coherent and compatible professional profiles, for each person. Before six months have elapsed from the beginning of an unemployment spell, each registered unemployed person should be offered vocational training, requalification initiatives or job opportunities. Those who fail to attend a career development interview lose their registered unemployment status, which means they lose their financial benefits; the rejection, if any, of a job offer in line with the professional status of the unemployed person as determined by an employment adviser/job placement officer, located within a radius of fifty kilometres from home, entails the loss of unemployment status seniority.

In the last years, the Italian education system offered new occasions of further education that concentrate on vocational and technical fields in labour market. These educational opportunities are called higher technical institutes (*Istituti Tecnici Superiori*, ITS), which now are part of an important and strategic reform (<https://temi.camera.it/leg19/temi/la-riforma-degli-istituti-tecnici-sup...>), and cover economic sectors which are considered crucial for the Italian economic growth (energy efficiency; sustainable transports; technologies for made in Italy; technologies and innovation for cultural activities; ICT; biotech).

**Upskilling** through public employment services (PES - Centri per l'Impiego) is a regional Italian practice which aims to provide unemployed low skilled/qualified adults with accrued possibilities of entering/re-entering the labour market. As an example, Emilia-Romagna Region oversees PES organisation since 2016 and their management is under the responsibility of the Agenzia Regionale per il Lavoro Emilia Romagna (Regional Agency for Labour Emilia-Romagna). The action is funded by EU funds (ESF) and national ones. The service targets all (low-skilled/qualified) adults who are unemployed and immediately available to work, thus being already registered with and supported by the PES in an active job search process.

The practice includes several stages: the quantitative and qualitative profiling of the unemployed low-skilled/qualified adults; subscription to a personalised service agreement; the provision of guidance activities ranging from informative to specialised ones (also depending on the beneficiary's characteristics); the provision of further training opportunities leading to a qualification or the enrolment in labour insertion/re-insertion internships leading to the validation of the units of competences acquired; a specific validation process (documentation, assessment, certification) for formalising the competences possessed by the individual; an update of the beneficiary's initial profiling at the end of the entire process; and the inclusion of the updated profile in institutional databases. Although the practice follows a standardised path, its approach is an individual-centred one as it is oriented towards individual career development, and specific actions are determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the needs of the beneficiaries.

In Emilia-Romagna, guidance and validation are offered by different services all being part of the **Rete Attiva per il Lavoro** (Active network for labour), a type of 'umbrella operational organisation' which gathers public and private employment services, supervised by the Regional Agency for Labour.

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## Guidance for older adults

The public employment service (PES) oversees career guidance activities for older adults in the same way as for other service users. According to the **labour market reform** (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015) and the **Ministerial Decree 4**, 11 January 2018 (LEP, minimum level of service provision), the PES is responsible for career guidance (at a basic and at a more personalised level), analysis of competences in relation to local labour market demand, analysis of the individual needs within the labour market, mentorship, support in undertaking a training opportunity, promotion of internships and information regarding possible funding for active job search, training for starting an enterprise, support and training for active job search, and management of tools for reconciling work and private life in cases of care obligation (for relatives with disabilities).

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## Guidance for early leavers

The public employment service (PES) oversees career guidance activities for early school leavers according to the labour market reform (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015) and the Ministerial Decree 4, 11 January 2018 (LEP, minimum level of service provision) (see section **Guidance for older adults**). The activities of the PES are the result of collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners. The aim is to increase access to career information, career training and work-based learning opportunities.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education set up the **National Registry** (Anagrafe Scolastica) with the aim of gathering and centralising data on the educational path of students: studies, participation in VET programmes, attendance of career training activities, mobility, and the results of final examinations. From this database, the Ministry of Education collects data on early school leaving from education and training and may also allocate funds and resources to schools with highest rates of early leaving.

**National strategy for youth unemployment** was adopted and an action plan for supporting youth employability was developed, within the Youth Guarantee programme launched in 2014. This programme continues to place great significance on guidance and counselling, by focusing on the individual's profile and needs. It is aimed at young people belonging to the 15-29 age group and provides a framework and incentives for them to participate in training and employment via apprenticeships or an employment contract or return to formal education within four months of becoming unemployed or discontinuing formal education.

Each Italian region has the task of implementing the Youth Guarantee programme, organising, coordinating, and managing the initiatives planned at national level, using local structures, i.e. employment centres and accredited private organisations. Inside each accredited organisation, there is an information desk dedicated to the programme. These offices carry out all the activities of reception, targeted guidance and identification of the needs, strengths, and potential of young people, supporting the service users to be able to identify the path most in line with their aptitudes, preferences and professional experiences. Within four months of signing the Service Agreement, young people enrolled in the programme are offered a Youth guarantee measure in line with their profile.

An inter-institutional unit was created to elaborate and monitor the implementation of the Italian Youth Guarantee programme. This unit involves all Italian public administrations responsible for vocational training, apprenticeship, and public employment services (Centri per l'Impiego). The Youth Guarantee programme funded a newscast (named "Il posto giusto") dedicated to the labour market and produced by the national public broadcasting company RAI. Other private associations and research institutions provide data and reports on specific aspects and issues, such as the rates of early school leaving and the number of NEETs; see the work of [Fondazione Agnelli](#) and [Save the Children Italy](#).

[Fuoriclasse](#) and [Fuoriclasse in Movimento](#) are projects coordinated by Save the Children Italy to counter school drop-out (see section [Career management skills](#)).

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## Guidance for NEET

The public employment service (PES) oversees career guidance activities for early school leavers. According to the labour market reform (article 18 of the Law N. 150 in 2015) and the Ministerial Decree 4, 11 January 2018 (LEP, minimum level of service provision), the PES is responsible for career guidance (at a basic and at a more personalised level), analysis of competences in relation to local labour market demand, analysis of the individual needs within the labour market, mentoring, support in undertaking a training opportunity, promotion of internships and information regarding possible funding for active job search, training for starting an enterprise, support and training for active job search. The activities are the result of collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners. The aim is to increase access to career information, career training and work-based learning opportunities.

The Youth Programme is a [national strategy for youth unemployment](#) with an action plan for supporting youth employability. This programme is implemented by the PES system that provides guidance and counselling to young people belonging to the 15-29 age group (with opportunities for those 30-34) and provides a framework and incentives for them to participate in training and employment via apprenticeships or secure an employment contract or return to education within four months of becoming unemployed or dropping out of formal education. The main target group of this programme are NEETs.

The art. 27 of Legislative Decree no. 48 of 4 May 2023 (so-called Labor Decree), awaiting adoption, proposes a specific facilitation for the hiring of young people under the age of 30, not employed and not included in study or training courses (NEET).

Guidance and short training, more specifically, are provided by PES and by Chamber of Commerce and trade associations. Funding is provided for training internships for NEETs aged 18-29. Financial support is also provided for projects proposed by young and disadvantaged persons.

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## Guidance for young people at risk

The [public employment service PES](#) develops career guidance activities for employed and unemployed individuals, including women, older adults, young people and people with specific needs and disabilities. The activities are a result of collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners. The aim is to increase access to career information, career training and work-based learning opportunities.

A dedicated [national plan](#) to support young people at risk is managed by the National Youth Agency and involves the PES system, the Civil Service for Youth, the European Solidarity Corps and other related local programmes and initiatives.

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## Guidance for persons with disabilities

The public employment system provides career guidance activities for people with specific needs and disabilities. The activities in general are the result of collaboration with companies, unions, and social partners. The aim for all service users is to increase access to career information, career training and work-based learning opportunities. The [Law 68/1999](#) provided a framework for employment and job integration of people with disabilities and in each public employment office there is a dedicated service with trained practitioners who support people with disabilities to improve their skills and to find a suitable job.

In the last years, many Italian regions adopted and promoted specific initiatives for supporting career guidance and labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Lombardy region has increased its allocation for services aimed at job placement and support in education and training for this target user group, allocating 57.3 million with its 2023-2024 programming guidelines. New services will be introduced for relational disabilities and to support the acquisition of digital skills of service users.

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## Guidance for immigrants

The **Decreto 113-2018** (DECRETO-LEGGE 4 ottobre 2018, n. 113) changed the protection system for asylum seekers and refugees (SPRAR system), into a system of protection reserved solely for beneficiaries of international protection and foreign unaccompanied minors.

Due to wars and conflicts that are affecting many countries in the world, several initiatives have been launched in Italy to ensure and safeguard the effective integration of immigrants and refugees in the Italian education system and the labour market. Their access to education and training courses, financial support to facilitate training, skills profiling and targeted skills assessment, measures to support their access to the labour market, are some of the initiatives and measures alongside with the activation of guidance services at local level.

For Ukrainian refugees, a section providing information and didactic materials, regulatory references and operational guidelines has been prepared on the website of the Ministry of Education: <https://www.istruzione.it/emergenza-educativa-ucraina/>.

The Ministry of Education and Merit promotes also the National Observatory for the integration of foreign students <https://www.miur.gov.it/-/scuola-riparte-l-osservatorio-nazionale-per-l-integrazione-degli-alunni-stranieri>. In 2022, it produced a specific Manual (<https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/0/Orientamenti+Interculturali.p...>) with ideas and proposals for the integration of students with migrant backgrounds that includes career guidance.

The national **fund for Migrants FAMI** 2021-2027 (Fondo Asilo Migrazione ed Integrazione) under the Ministero Dell' Interno will foster the integration of migrants, including projects and initiatives to provide information, career guidance, mentorship, and validation and certification services, also carried out by regional PES.

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## Guidance for other groups

The public employment service provides career guidance for ethnic minorities in several recognised minority and regional languages (German in Trentino-Alto Adige Region, French in Valle d'Aosta Region and Slovenian in Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, as required by article 6 of the Italian Constitution). Career guidance is also provided for inmates, under the coordination of the Ministry of Justice. Further information can be found [here](#).

In 2022, The National Observatory for the integration of foreign students produced a Manual (<https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/0/Orientamenti+Interculturali.pdf>) with ideas and proposals for the integration of students with migrant backgrounds, useful for other groups, too.

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