

# Exams

If you are studying Italian at the Uni you might like to do the exams. In some cases there is not much point. If you wish to graduate from first grade and continue with second, you don't actually need to do them. You can get a form from the Secretariat and have it signed by your teacher(s) saying that you are ready to proceed to the next level. Return it to the Secretariat where they'll adjust your student record and give you the timetable for your new grade.

On the other hand, if you sit the exam and fail you definitely cannot proceed to the next level. Once you get to the fifth grade, you must sit and pass all the exams for that level if you want to obtain the diploma. Before you can sit any exam you must submit a Request Form, the ubiquitous *Domanda agli Esami*. There is a cut-off date for submission of this form to the Secretariat, usually about two months into a three-month course. Miniscule notices in the foyer of Gallenga and Prosciutti advise you of the final date: be alert. You need to write the names of your subjects and teachers on the form and have each sign to say you are ready for the exam. In some cases, e.g. poor attendance record, they may not sign. The only medicine for this ailment is preventative, so make sure to attend at least eighty percent of your classes. Some devious souls have even been known to ask their friends to mark the attendance roll for them. The exam Request Form then needs a tax stamp, currently €11, available from the tobacconist in Piazza Grimana. When you submit the Request Form to the Secretariat, they should issue you with an Exam Booklet. The EB needs to be taken to all your exams because results are entered on it by the teachers.

The examination system itself can be perplexing and I'm not sure I have the strength to get around it all here. For a start you are usually assessed by the same person who was your class teacher. The moral is that it's worthwhile building a good rapport with all your teachers during the term! Secondly, most of the exams are oral. The University sets an exam day, the teacher sets a time frame and you book a slot within that period. Exam sessions often run behind schedule, so if you don't like waiting in the hallway for hours for your turn then book an early slot. When you go in, you hand over the Exam Booklet and the teacher asks you a few questions about the course material, to which you reply as best you can. Oral exams are usually between fifteen and twenty-five minutes, although one immensely popular lecturer famously rushes them through even faster; I timed my exam with him at three minutes and forty seconds! Note that there is usually no "study period" before the exam week. Normal classes go right up until the day before the exams unless you have been told otherwise. Christmas is also a unfortunate mark on the calendar; exam schedules often go up to and include December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

If you have completed all the exams for any level you can get some kind of certificate, and indeed the full diploma if you bask at the haloed summit of the fifth. Ask the Secretariat how much the fee is (currently €15), pay the amount at the bank on the ground floor of Gallenga and take the receipt back to the Secretariat. You can either return to collect your certificate/diploma when it is ready or have it mailed to you. Good luck! And by the way, your mother said not to leave all the study until the night before.