



HOW TO

Study Abroad in **Bologna**





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Introduction

The University of Bologna is one of the most highly regarded universities in Italy, Europe, and the world.

The **University of Bologna** is one of the most highly regarded universities in Italy, Europe, and the world. The oldest continuously running university on the planet, founded in 1088, the university and the city alike have provided countless generations of students with incredible education in one of Italy's most historically important regions, Emilia-Romagna.

It's not all just about the history though. The University of Bologna (or UNIBO for short) consistently stands at the forefront of innovation with 230 projects funded by Horizon 2020, the largest ever EU Research and Innovation program, along with a further 145 funded national projects and 170 regional projects.

The university is committed to helping achieve the UN's agenda of sustainable development goals (17 in total), teaching the best suitable practices to accomplish goals by 2030, with sustainability at the heart of this university that has sustained teaching for close to 1,000 years.

Read on to find out more about Bologna's rich history, the history of its university, as well as UNIBO's application process and tuition fees, what it's like to live in the city, and discover the university multicampus across the Emilia-Romagna region.

Si parte!



Image from Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna

Welcome to Bologna

Bologna is the pride and joy of northern Italy's Emilia Romagna region, seamlessly combining the ancient and the modern. Medieval and Renaissance structures play host to a truly cosmopolitan city, boosted by the immense population of around 100,000 students.

Settlements in Bologna date back to the sixth century BC, when it was originally named Felsina. The city reached its peak as an independent commune and principal European university around the 12th century AD. Wealthy families left their mark on the city by erecting towers – 180 in total, of which 15 are still standing today. After many years of power struggles for dominion over northern Italy (including conflict between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire) for dominion over northern Italy, the city joined the newly formed Kingdom of Italy in 1860.

It's a city where people actually live and therefore less touristy than Rome, Florence and Venice. Bologna is a gem with a rich history, a thriving culture to explore and a deliciously resilient foodie tradition.

Bologna's not nicknamed 'la grassa' (the fat one) for nothing – many of the classics of Italian cuisine call this city home, including tortellini, ragù and mortadella. The Emilia Romagna region is also home to Modena, famed for its balsamic vinegar, and Parma, renowned for Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and prosciutto di Parma.

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The city is also one of the country's business hubs, particularly for agriculture, industry, finance and transport. Moreover, it also has one of the largest permanent trade fairs in Europe. The surrounding area is particularly notable for the motorsports industry, with companies like Ferrari, Ducati, Dallara and Maserati all having their headquarters in the Emilia Romagna region.



Image from Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna

History of the University

The oldest university in the Western world, the Bologna 'Studium' was founded by students and for students, in 1088. Towards the end of the 11th century, so-called masters of Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric began teaching Law in Bologna, the university's earliest recorded scholar a man called Irnerius.

The period between the 11th and 12th century saw a great deal of change and restructuring of power balances, defining the relationship between the Church and the state. In 1158, Frederick I Barbarossa, the Holy Roman Emperor, decreed a 'Constitutio Habita', which meant the University of Bologna was legally declared a place where research could develop independently from any other power.

It's been suggested that a female scholar, Bettisia Gozzadini, taught in Bologna between the 12th and 13th centuries, with her lessons taught in public squares due to the huge crowds.

From the 14th century onwards, the scholars were divided into the schools of Medicine, Philosophy, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Logic, Rhetoric and Grammar, as well as jurists. The teaching of theology was instituted in 1364.

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In 1989, the university expanded its boundaries to include campuses in Cesena, Forli, Ravenna and Rimini, establishing a campus in Buenos Aires in 1998.

The university added more and more departments of study as the centuries wore on, including Greek, Hebrew and Natural Sciences. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th century saw the university promote scientific and technological development.

Bologna continued teaching in the interwar years, building relationships with other prominent institutions globally. In 1989, the university expanded its boundaries to include campuses in Cesena, Forli, Ravenna and Rimini, establishing a campus in Buenos Aires in 1998.

Unsurprisingly, due to the university's long and rich history, Bologna has some notable alumni, for example:

- Albrecht Durer (artist)
- Dante Alighieri (poet)
- Enzo Ferrari (businessman and car manufacturer)
- Erasmus of Rotterdam (philosopher)
- Nicolaus Copernicus (astronomer and mathematician)
- Laura Bassi (world's first woman to earn a university chair in a scientific field)
- Petrarch (scholar and humanist)
- Thomas Becket (former Archbishop of Canterbury)
- Umberto Eco (writer and philosopher)



Image from Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna

The University Today

As of 2020, the university has five schools, which co-ordinate the 32 departments: Arts, Humanities and Cultural Heritage, Economics and Management, Engineering, Medicine, and Science. The university offers 221 degree programs, including 84 international degree programs of which 68 are delivered in English.

The University of Bologna is ranked 160th in the world in the most recent **QS World University Rankings**, and second in Italy. Impressively, it also ranks 69th in the world for the academic reputation rankings indicator.

The university also performs well in the **QS World University Rankings by Subject**, with its highest scoring subject, Classics and Ancient History, coming in at 19th in the world. Furthermore, it ranks 39th for Agriculture and Forestry, joint 39th for Modern Languages, 41st for Dentistry and joint 58th globally for the broad Arts and Humanities subject area.

Bologna hosts 87,758 students, making it the most popular university in Italy. Of this 87,758, around 6,484 students are international, 55.7 percent are female, and 44.3 percent are male. Around 82 percent of students are employed a year after graduation, compared to 78 percent in Italy as a whole.

You will need to attach the diploma of your upper secondary education in the 'attachments' section of the application.



In terms of faculty, the university has 2,771 teaching staff (59.9 percent male and 40.1 percent female), plus 2,962 technical-administrative staff.

The University of Bologna has the highest number of international exchange students in Europe. In Italy, it ranks highest in the number of its own students on study abroad programs across the globe.

Not only does the university have five campuses in Italy (Bologna, Cesena, Forli, Ravenna and Rimini) and one in Argentina (Buenos Aires), but it also has branches in Brussels, New York and Shanghai.



How to Apply

Italian and EU students

First and Single-cycle Degree Programs with restricted access (at local or national level) and some with open access require an assessment of basic knowledge. Second-cycle Degree Programs have specific curricula and personal preparation requirements. The methods used to check knowledge may vary depending on the degree program.

Whilst application details vary for each specific degree program, there is some general advice for enrolment procedures for Italian and EU students:

Undergraduate (first and single-cycle degree programs)

Minimum qualification required is one of the following:

- Five-year Italian secondary school diploma
- Four-year Italian secondary school diploma with extra year
- Valid foreign qualification

Some programs require an entry test as part of their admissions process. Some other international degree programs that are taught in English accept SAT scores.

Whilst application details vary for each specific degree program, there is some general application advice for enrolment procedures for Italian and EU students.



Image from Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna

Once you have verified your admissions requirements, you may complete the application for matriculation and pay fees via the [Studenti Online](#) on the university website.

Postgraduate (second-cycle degree programs)

Minimum qualification required is one of the following:

- Italian degree
- Italian university diploma
- Qualification issued by Accademie di Belle Arti, Accademia Nazionale di Danza, Accademia Nazionale di Arte Drammatica, Istituti Superiori per le Industrie Artistiche, Conservatories, approved music schools, accompanied by a secondary school diploma.
- Valid foreign qualification

Matriculation

Once you have passed your admission test and/or verified your admission requirements, you may complete the application for matriculation and pay fees via the university website. Matriculation timeframes vary depending on the degree program, classes always begin between the end of September and the beginning of October.

International (non-EU resident) students

There is an annual 'contingenti'/quota of reserved places for non-EU students with residency abroad set for each degree program across the university (you can find out more on each specific program page on their website).



To matriculate, you will have to pre-enroll online via the University portal, specifying the University of Bologna and degree program you are interested in. You must also specify the embassy or consulate where you will apply for an entry visa to Italy.

However, pre-enrolment doesn't guarantee admission – you will also need to apply for admission and pass the entry requirements verifications.

To complete the pre-enrolment, you will have to take the following documents **to** the Italian embassy or consulate:

- Pre-enrolment application summary submitted through University and validated by the University of Bologna Language competency certifications
- The documents required for the visa application (including health insurance policy, where applicable)
- Foreign qualification documents

You must then obtain the following documents **from** the embassy or consulate:

- Student entry visa to Italy ('studio-immatricolazione Università')
- A stamped health insurance policy (where applicable)
- Legalized and translated foreign qualification documents.

You can find out more about tuition fees later on in this guide.



Tuition Fees & Living Costs

Tuition fees

Tuition fees for your specific course and economic situation can be found using UNIBO's own tuition fee calculator on their website – you simply enter your ISEE value and the degree in which you wish to enroll.

At the University of Bologna, tuition fees are calculated based on the ISEE value of the year that you apply. An ISEE value is an assessment of your family's economic situation, with international students providing their own economic assessments slightly differently, as explored below.

With an ISEE value of up to €23,000, first-year students and students that meet merit requirements are totally exempted from paying tuition fees. Above the €23,000 threshold, tuition fees increase proportionally, more favorably for students with a lower family income who meet merit requirements.

As an international student, you cannot request an ISEE calculation, instead you will have to present documentation confirming your economic situation. Documentation must then be translated into Italian and legalized by Italian diplomatic authorities.

When enrolling after first year, it's possible to obtain total exemption or pay tuition fees proportional to your ISEE, provided you meet certain merit requirements. If you don't meet the merit requirements, tuition fees increase proportionally but with an extra charge.



Image from Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna

As you can see, the amount of tuition you pay varies considerably depending on your economic and/or academic situation (up to €2,800 per year for First Cycle Degrees and up to €5,800 per year for Second and Single Cycle Degrees).

More information can be found on the University of Bologna's website.

Living costs

Along with tuition fees, students in Bologna will of course have to spend a certain amount of money monthly on study materials, accommodation and other living costs.



The university helps students, both international and Italian, to find accommodation.

The university helps students, both international and Italian, to find accommodation. A single room in a shared apartment is around €400 a month plus utilities, whereas a shared room in a shared apartment will set you back around €300 a month plus utilities.

Other living costs in the city are outlined below:

- Weekly supermarket shop: approx. €60
- Cappuccino and croissant in a café: approx. €2.50
- Pizza and a beer in a pizzeria: approx. €15
- Meal in a university canteen: approx. €4.50-6
- Disco-pub in the city center: approx. €10
- Bus ticket (single): approx. €1.50-2
- 'City Pass' (bus ticket for up to 10 trips): €14
- Monthly bus ticket (for students up to 27 years of age): €27
- Cinema ticket: approx. €9
- Application for issuing/renewal of residence permit (non-EU students): approx. €120
- Annual registration with the Italian National Health Service (SSN) for non-EU students: approx. €150



According to Numbeo, the cost of living index in Bologna is 10.64 percent lower than in London, and the rent in Bologna is on average 62 percent lower than in London. Bologna ranks 127th in the cost of living index out of 526 cities in the world.

There are of course differences in living costs if you are at one of the satellite campuses in Cesena, Forli, Ravenna and Rimini. Rent tends to be cheaper outside of Bologna, but restaurants tend to be more expensive in all the other Emilia-Romagna campuses, aside from Forli.



Living in Bologna

Bologna is a great city for students. There's loads of places to go out to eat and drink around the university in the city center, as well as parks and natural spots in the hills that surround the city.

Bologna is Europe's oldest university town and one of Italy's largest cities, bustling with students and culture. Famous for its fresh produce and amazing food, the city lies at the base of the Apennines mountain range, extending 1,200km from the north to the south of Italy.

University students can often be found enjoying Italy's culinary capital with a glass of Aperol spritz.

Giulia, a final year student at the Bologna School of Medicine, said: "Bologna is a great city for students. There's loads of places to go out to eat and drink around the university in the city center, as well as parks and natural spots in the hills that surround the city."

Here are just a few of the best things to do as a student in Bologna:

Take a walk around the old city

Piazza Maggiore is Bologna's central square and has many restaurants, bars and cafes. With views of the beautiful 15th century architecture, the square is the perfect place to soak up the buzz and the culture of the city, while sipping an espresso.

"I just love the atmosphere of the city," said Giulia. "It's one of the most student-friendly places in the country, so you're never short of people to meet or places to go."



Study at the palace library

While in the old city, you can also visit the Palazzo d'Accursio: the city's Town Hall. The palace is also home to the Civic Art Collection and the Salaborsa Library – the town library.

Access to the library is free and inside you will find the remains of the ancient city of Bononia, which dates back to 189BC.

Visit the **Carpigiani Gelato Museum**

The Gelato Museum is just one of the city's 40 museums. Carpigiani has been manufacturing since 1946 and are the world market leader in the production of gelato machines.

A tour at the museum will teach you the origins of gelato making, as well as revealing how it's made. The best bit comes at the end, where you'll get to sample freshly made gelato.

There is even a Carpigiani Gelato University where students study and learn the science of gelato making, to help entrepreneurs and shop owners around the world.

Take a study break at **Giardini Margherita**

This picturesque park is a perfect distraction from your university work when you're looking to unwind.

Particularly lovely in the Autumn when the trees turn golden, this popular

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park covers 26 hectares. Stroll around the park with your friends or take a book and enjoy being surrounded by nature.

Marvel at the city's many Basilicas

Dotted around the city are some of the most beautiful basilicas in Italy. Studying in Bologna, you will become used to seeing these magnificent churches around every corner, but it's definitely worth going out of your way to visit them.

"The Church of San Petronio is a great attraction for locals and tourists alike" said Giulia.

The Basilica of San Petronio is the main church in the city. Inside, as well as the church's breathtaking interior architecture, you will find a statue of Pope Julius II, which was made by Michelangelo in 1545.

Fill your plate at Bologna's food markets

Bologna's food is exceptional, even by Italy's high standards. One of the best ways to taste the massive variety of food on offer is by exploring Bologna's food markets. Luckily for food lovers, there are plenty to choose from.

The Quadrilatero food market is a favorite for many. Located just off the Piazza Maggiore, this is a traditional Bologna food market, with narrow streets packed with vendors and food stalls. It sells fresh produce and speciality products made and grown in the area.



"The food in Bologna is incredible, one of the best in the country," remarked Giulia. "I love the trattorias in the city center, which serve traditional dishes like tortellini and lasagne."

Climb the Asinelli Tower

The two towers of Bologna are both leaning and are often depicted as the symbol of Bologna.

The Asinelli Tower is the taller of the two and was used as a prison in the 14th century, a sight post in World War two and has survived two fires. Today, visitors can climb the 498 steps, up the steep wooden staircases, to the top of the 97-meter high tower. Don't worry though - there are platforms to rest every few floors!



Hike to the sanctuary of the Madonna of San Luca

“The hills are a favorite spot for locals, especially the church of San Luca which sits on the top and that you can walk to from the city center,” said Giulia.

If you’re an avid fan of climbing, you might want to attempt the 4km uphill climb along the portico (which contains over 600 arches) to reach this gorgeous 14th century church. For those who would rather not tire themselves out as much, you can catch the San Luca Express bus to the top.

Whichever way you decide to get there, once at the top you can take a look at the church’s breathtaking architecture and admire the stunning views of Bologna, from the hills to the city center.



Exploring Emilia-Romagna

Not only does the University of Bologna have its main campus in the city itself, it also has four other campuses in Italy, in the beautiful northern region of Emilia-Romagna, which extends from the Apennine Mountains to the Po River. Emilia-Romagna is famed for its incredible cuisine, medieval architecture and seaside holiday resorts.

Studying outside of the main Bologna campus gives you a chance to explore the region in even more depth, with each campus playing host to one main school, as well as three vocations based on the UN 2020 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Read on to discover more about these four fantastic campuses...

Cesena Campus

The campus in Cesena is located near the Apennine Mountains, and is about 15km (nine miles) from the Adriatic Sea. There are around 4,677 students at the Cesena campus, a considerable proportion of the city's population of 97,000.

The campus hosts the school of engineering, with the three vocations of agriculture & food, architecture & psychology, and ICT & bioengineering. It's also home to the Interdepartmental Industrial Research Centers for Agrifood, ICT and Health Science & Technology.

Emilia-Romagna is famed for its incredible cuisine, medieval architecture and seaside holiday resorts.



Most students
cycle everywhere, so
make getting a bike
your first priority
if you come to
the Forli campus!

Cesena is a relaxed and quiet city, perfect if you're looking for a more chilled out university experience. There are plenty of cultural sites to explore, including the Biblioteca Malatestiana, the first public library in Europe.

Forli Campus

The largest of the Emilia-Romagna campuses, the campus at Forli has 6,507 students in a city of 117,630 people. Much like Cesena, Forli has a more sedate feel than the main campus in Bologna, although there's still plenty of things to do. Most students cycle everywhere, so make getting a bike your first priority if you come to this campus!

It's home to the school of economics and management, and counts social & international sciences, linguistics & intercultural studies, and aerospace engineering as vocations. The Interdepartmental Industrial Research Center for Aerospace is also located in Forli.

Ravenna Campus

The Ravenna campus is the smallest of the satellite campuses, with around 3,546 students. The city itself is home to around 158,785 people and is one of the most historically and artistically significant cities in the region, with eight buildings making up the UNESCO World Heritage Site 'Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna'.

There is a school of arts, humanities and cultural heritage at the campus, with the vocations of environment & sea, cultural heritage, and rights.



The campus is also home to the Interdepartmental Research Center for Environmental Sciences, Interdepartmental Industrial Research Center – Renewable Resources, Environment, Sea and Energy (FRAME) and the Advanced School of Studies on the City and Territory.

Ravenna is a history lover's dream – along with the aforementioned early Christian monuments, Ravenna is probably most famous for its mosaics, largely from the 5th and 6th centuries, that greet you at every turn. If you're looking for one photogenic city, Ravenna might be the campus for you!

Rimini Campus

Rimini is right by the Adriatic Sea, and is one of Italy's most thriving seaside resorts, popular with both Italians and foreigners. The campus at Rimini is the second largest Emilia Romagna campus, with 4,937 students in a city with a population of around 150,000.

Like Forli, the campus also houses the school of economics and management, along with, perhaps unsurprisingly, the Center for Advanced Studies in Tourism. The campus vocations are wellness & sustainable development, tourism & fashion, and services for people, business and environment.

As Rimini is such a popular resort, there's a real buzz to the city and no shortage of entertainment, restaurants and nightlife.

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