

Italy Feedback

According to this month's Feedback survey on Italy, agent usage dipped a little in 2007 with more students opting to use the Internet when sourcing a new school. Meanwhile, the nationality mix remains interestingly varied.

Italy feedback at a glance

Total number of students: (female 47, male 15, unknown 3)	65
Average age in years:	30
Average length of programme in weeks:	11.4
Average number of students in class:	7.5
Average number of hours of language tuition per week:	19.5
% of students who found out about their course through an agent:	12
% of students who booked through an agent or adviser:	26
% of students who had been on another lang. programme:	45
% of students who would recommend their school:	91

Student nationality

A total of 23 different nationalities were represented in this month's Feedback survey on Italy, with a majority of respondents hailing from Western European countries such as Germany (10 per cent), the UK (nine per cent), Sweden (eight per cent) and Switzerland (six per cent). However, there was strong representation from Central and Latin American countries, including Brazil, Peru and Ecuador, with this world region accounting for 11 per cent of the nationality base, compared with just five per cent in 2006 (see LTM, April 2007, pages 18-19). Last year, schools reported a drop in the

number of US students studying in Italy, with visa problems said to be a major factor. However, Americans were slightly more numerous this year accounting for 15 per cent of the student body – compared with 8.5 per cent in 2006, suggesting that visa restrictions are relaxing a little.

Student motivation

The average length of stay for students enrolled on an Italian language course climbed to 11.4 weeks this year, compared with 8.1 weeks in 2006. However, a massive 22 per cent of those surveyed had opted to take a two- or four-week language course. Interestingly, the number of students learning

Italian for pleasure shot up 24 percentage points to 44 per cent this year. However, learning a language for current or future work purposes remains a strong incentive for students, with 36 per cent citing this as their main reason – 13 percentage points less than last year.

Student enrolment

Students were less reliant on agents this year with only 26 per cent of survey respondents booking a language course using this method, compared with 32 per cent in 2006. Internet usage increased significantly, with 52 per cent of respondents finding a language programme via a school's

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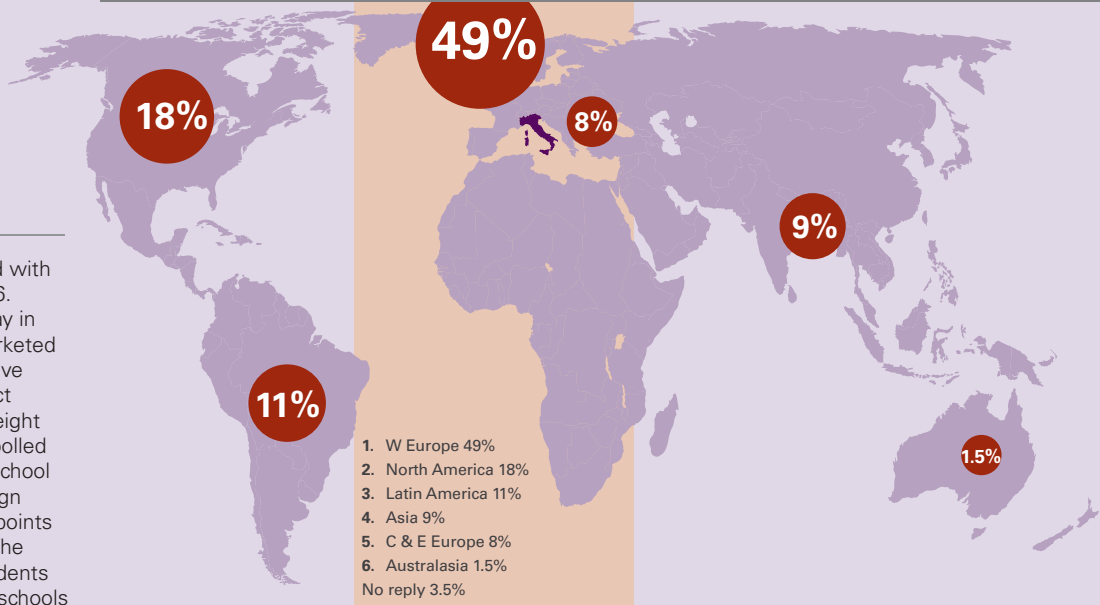
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Student respondents by world region of origin



website, compared with 37 per cent in 2006. Meanwhile, the way in which a school marketed itself appears to have had a positive effect on students, with eight per cent of those polled identifying with a school advertising campaign – four percentage points up from last year. The average age of students in Italian language schools remains high; 30 this year.

Standard of the schools

Students viewed their schools extremely positively this year, with 100 per cent of those who answered the question saying they would recommend their school to others. Class size and nationality mix also scored highly with 91 per cent agreeing that classes consisted of just the right number and nationality mix of students and only six per cent saying the contrary – down five percentage points on last year's result. When it came to accommodation, the largest group of respondents opted for residential lodging – 37.5 per cent, compared with 32 per cent in 2006. However, 31 per cent of those quizzed listed a variety of accommodation options, including staying with friends and family or residing in a self-contained apartment.

Living in Italy

The average cost of a one-week course including accommodation was marginally lower than last year at €334 (US\$497), compared with €354 (US\$527) in our previous survey. Forty-eight per cent of students found the cost of living in Italy to be higher than their home country. Of those who indicated that Italy was an expensive country to live and study in, 27 per cent originated from North America.

Top nationalities

15%

1. American

10%

2. German

3. British 9%
4. Japanese 8%
4. Swedish 8%
6. Swiss 6%
7. Dutch 5%
7. Brazilian 5%
7. Slovenian 5%
10. Canadian 3%
10. French 3%

How did you find your programme?

52%

1. I found it on the internet

28%

2. Recommended by a friend/relative

3. It was recommended by an agent 12%
4. I saw it advertised 8%

In my class there are...

91%

1. The right amount of students

3%

2. Too many who speak my language

2. Too many students from one other country 3%
4. Too many students 1.5%
- Unknown 1.5%

How easy is it to practise Italian with native speakers?

60%

1. Quite easy

18%

2. Very easy

3. Quite hard 15%
4. Very hard 3%
- Unknown 4%

Student reasons for school selection included:

"Good location, good impression when we visited the school, nice people."

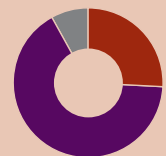
"Because I thought there wouldn't be many Japanese in Genoa."

"Class size, good school description, good response to my questions and relaxed, personal atmosphere."

"I saw an ad in Germany and visited the school before registering."

Did you book your course through an agent or an educational advisor?

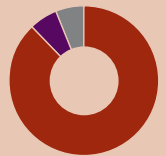
- Yes 26%
- No 66%
- Unknown 8%



Before looking for your course, did you know where you wanted to study?

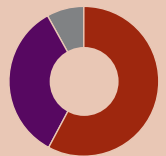
Country

- Yes 88%
- No 6%
- Unknown 6%



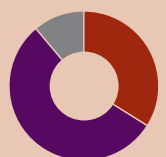
City/town

- Yes 58%
- No 34%
- Unknown 8%



School

- Yes 34%
- No 55%
- Unknown 11%



Thank you to the following schools for participating in our survey: A Door to Italy, Genoa; Accademia del Giglio, Florence; Centro Giacomo Puccini, Viareggio; Centro Linguistico Italiano Dante Alighieri, Rome; Comitato Linguistico, Perugia; Eurocentres, Florence; Il Centro Italiano, Milan; Laboratorio Linguistico, Milazzo; Linguaviva, various; Omnilingua, San Remo; Sorrento Lingue, Sorrento.