

Italy Feedback

This year's Feedback survey of students learning Italian in Italy reveals a high proportion of North Americans and a very low conversion rate of agency enquiries into actual bookings.

Italy feedback at a glance

Total number of students, female 112, male 42 (unknown 4):	158
Average age in years:	27.6
Average length of programme in weeks:	4.7
Average number of students per class:	11
Average no. of hours of language tuition per week:	18.9
% of students who found their course through an agent or educational adviser:	22%
% of students who booked through an agent:	11%
% of students who had been on another language programme:	37%
% of students who would recommend their school:	(unknown 3%) 96%

Student nationality

In contrast to last year's Italy Feedback survey, when Western Europeans made up over 50 per cent of students (see *Language Travel Magazine*, October 2001, pages 20-21), this year, the share of Western European students was down to 38 per cent. North Americans made up the largest single group in terms of world region of origin with a 44 per cent share. However, the results of this survey were distorted by the fact that one language school, which submitted a relatively large number of

surveys, had a very high proportion of both US and Canadian students. Nevertheless, the proportion of British students was down this year, accounting for only three per cent of students, compared with 14 per cent last year.

Student age and motivation

The average age of students in Italy, at 27.6 years in this survey, is relatively high compared with, for example, Spain, where it was 24.9 years (see *Language Travel Magazine*, July 2002, pages 14-15). In our Italy survey, 49 per

cent of respondents were aged between 20 and 25 while only 15 per cent were younger than 19. Although 51 per cent of students said they were currently using Italian for their studies, only 29 per cent said they would be using the language for their future studies. In addition, only eight per cent of respondents said they were currently using the language for work and 12 per cent said they were learning it for their future work. A surprising 56 per cent indicated that they were learning the language for pleasure only.

Student enrolment

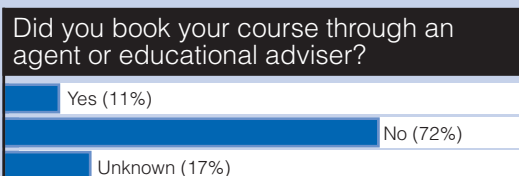
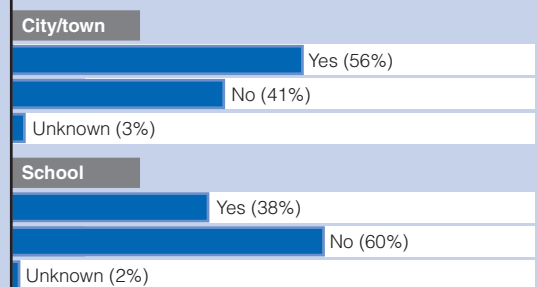
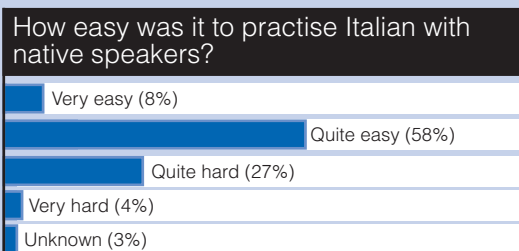
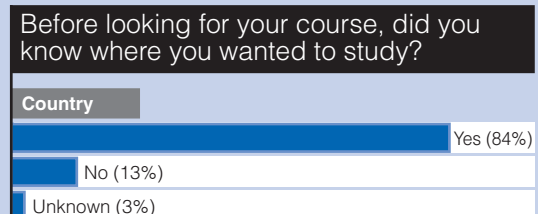
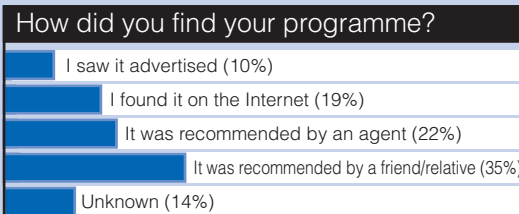
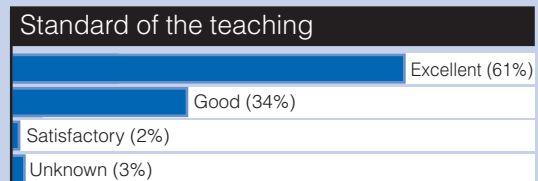
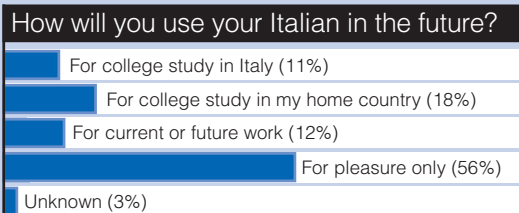
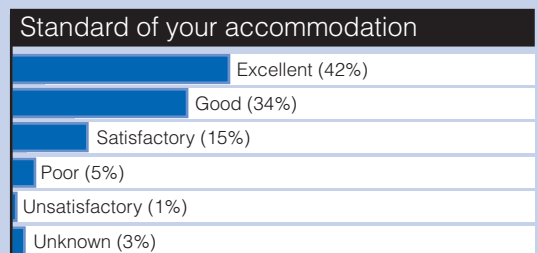
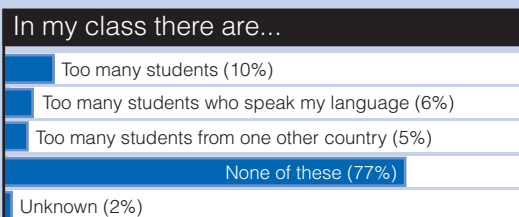
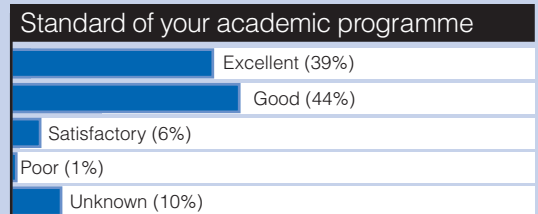
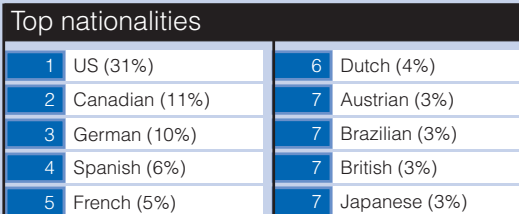
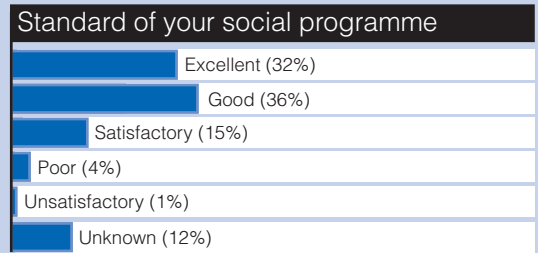
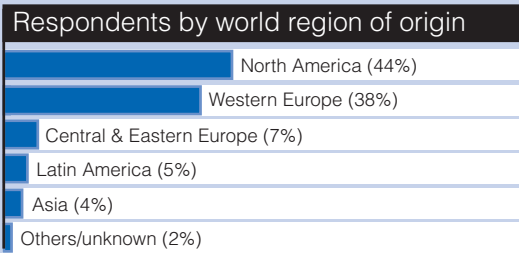
Agent recruitment was relatively low among the schools that took part in this issue's survey. Only 22 per cent of students said they had first heard of their school through an agent, although this compares favourably with last year's nine per cent. However, of more concern this year is the high rate of direct bookings; only 11 per cent of students had actually booked their course through an agent. Closer analysis reveals that over 50 per cent of US students who had initially found out about a course through an agency had booked direct via the school.

Standard of the schools

With 96 per cent of students saying that they would recommend their school to others, it can be assumed that the quality of the Italian language schools in this survey was high. When asked about the standard of individual aspects of their language programme, 95 per cent of students said the standard of the teaching was excellent or good, 83 per cent said the same of their academic programme, and 76 per cent of their accommodation (46 per cent of students were staying with host families, while a further 29 per cent were in private apartments).

Living in Italy

When asked about the cost of living in Italy, 30 per cent of our student respondents said they thought it was higher than at home, 21 per cent said lower, and 41 per cent said about the same. And two-thirds of respondents said it was quite or very easy to practise their Italian language with Italians.



Thank you to the following schools for participating in our survey:
 Associazione Culturale Atrium, Cagliari; Cafe Italiano, Tropea; CLI Dante Alighieri, Florence; Lingua Nova, Livorno; Nausicaa, Pizzo Calabro; Omnilingua, San Remo; Romanica, Modena; Sorrentolingue, Sorrento; StudioItalia, Rome