

ASA

Location-Specific

GUIDE

TO

Florence,

Italy

For Parents and Students

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Please read our ASA Guide to Study Abroad for information about:

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Student Visa

All students must have a passport that does not expire for at least 3 months after their proposed return date from Italy.

♦ **IMPORTANT: Semester students: you will need your valid passport in hand NO LATER THAN 60 days prior to departure, in order to apply for your Student Visa!**

Semester/academic year students are required to obtain a Student VISA from their nearest Italian Consulate. You will have to apply for your visa in person at the Consulate that represents your state's jurisdiction. Please plan ahead because you will have to apply for your visa no less than 60 days prior to your departure, to allow time for processing. Students attending a program of fewer than 90 days (i.e. summer) do not need student visas.

In addition, all **Semester students** will need to register at the local police station in Florence within 10 days of arrival to obtain a *permesso di soggiorno* (Permit to Stay). This is basically the 2nd step of the VISA process and costs approximately €120 (*cost is subject to change*).

♦ **Please read the document “Student Visa Information for Italy” for full details on how to apply for your visa.**

Applying for a VISA can be difficult and frustrating. You must apply in person at the Consulate that represents your state's jurisdiction after making an appointment with the Consulate weeks or months ahead of time. For some students, this will mean having to travel to the Consulate, even if that Consulate is far away. (For example, the Chicago jurisdiction is quite large, as is the Los Angeles jurisdiction.) The Italian Consulate is strict with its VISA application policies, so make sure you have all the necessary documents before your appointment. One of the required documents is an official enrollment letter from Florence University of the Arts, written in Italian. ASA will provide you with this enrollment letter, but **it is ultimately the student's responsibility to submit all of the required visa paperwork to the Consulate on time for processing.**

♦ **YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND THE ASA PROGRAM IN ITALY WITHOUT A STUDENT VISA IF YOU ARE ATTENDING A PROGRAM THAT IS GREATER THAN 90 DAYS LONG.**

Helpful Local Information

ASA students in Florence will have 2 Site Directors to assist them during their stay:

Luciana Avallone, ASA Site Director and FUA Housing & Immigration Coordinator

Email: housing@florencecampus.it

cell phone: 011-39-335-714-6082* (*dial from the U.S.*) / 335-714-6082* (*dial in Italy*)

*This is also FUA's Housing Emergency number.

Kandace Phyll, ASA Site Director and Student Life Manager

Email: kandace@fua.it

cell phone: 011-39-335-714-6001 (*dial from the U.S.*) / 335-714-6001 (*dial in Italy*)

Recommended Hotels in Florence

Hotel Davanzati

Via Porta Rossa n° 5

50123 Firenze (Florence)

Tel: (+39) 055 286 666

<http://www.hoteldavanzati.it/>

Grand Hotel Minerva

Piazza S. Maria Novella, 16

50123 Firenze (Florence)

Tel: (+39) 055 272 30

<http://www.grandhotelminerva.com/>

♦ **SEE “CELL PHONES” SECTION FOR TELEPHONE DIALING INSTRUCTIONS FOR ITALY.**

Host Institution & Housing

ASA students in Florence will attend:

Florence University of the Arts (FUA)
Corso Tintori, 21
50122 Florence
Italy
Tel: (+39) 055 033 2727
Fax: (+39) 055 226 4469
Website: www.fua.it

Contacts at FUA:

Luciana Avallone, ASA Site Director and Housing & Immigration Coordinator* housing@florencecampus.it
Kandace Phyll, ASA Site Director and Student Life Manager* kandace@fua.it
Daria Sposimo, Registrar & Admissions: registrar@fua.it
Luca Bucciarelli, Program Development & Outreach: luca@florencecampus.it
**See above for cell phone number.*

Where will students live?

All ASA students will live in shared student apartments. Most of the apartments have two or three bedrooms. Bedrooms are double occupancy, and all of the apartments are fully furnished. A limited number of apartments have only one bedroom or more than three bedrooms. Therefore, four to six students usually share an apartment. Students are responsible for their own meals and laundry. FUA conducts a detailed housing orientation upon arrival, during which they talk about their housing policies and disperse information and tips on living in an Italian apartment.

How will I get to class from my residence?

Most students live close enough to the school that they will be able to walk to and from class. Most apartments are located a 10-25 minute walk from school. Florence has excellent bus service all over the city, should you need to use it, and the rates for tickets and passes are reasonable. Although Italy is a safe country, we recommend that students take taxis after 10 pm.

◆ **You may not move in early to your program housing or stay after the program ends. Students who choose to arrive early or stay late must make their own lodging arrangements for any extra days. OVERNIGHT GUESTS ARE NOT ALLOWED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.**

Medical Care

What happens if I get sick while I'm in Italy?

Our students' health and safety is always our number-one priority. The first and most important step to take is for the student to notify their Site Director immediately if they are ill. She will help the student in any way possible – by locating medical care, translating, accompanying him/her to the doctor, etc. Modern medical facilities and medications are widely available in Italy.

Cell Phones

What is the time difference between Italy and where I live?

The following times are the number of hours BEHIND Italy each region is:

Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
9 hours	8 hours	7 hours	6 hours

So, if it is 6pm in Italy, then it is 12 noon Eastern, 11am Central, and 9am Pacific.

Dialing Instructions for Italy

011-INTERNATIONAL CODE 39-COUNTRY CODE FOR ITALY + PHONE NUMBER

For example, if the number you want to call is (+39) 123 456 789, you would dial 011-39-123-456-789 when calling from the U.S. To call this example number inside Italy, you would dial 123-456-789.

For more information on calling abroad, go to <http://www.howtocallabroad.com/>

How do the cell phones work?

Each student receives a rented Italian cell phone and SIM card from **Student Cells, Inc.** (www.studentcells.com). ASA provides the phone, while students are responsible for the cost of all calls. **Phone usage will be billed twice monthly to your credit card, so you must bring a credit card with you to Florence in order to register for your phone.** A representative from StudentCells will assist you in registering for your phone after you arrive. Students will get their cell phone number shortly prior to departure, and they'll get their phone upon arrival in Florence.

The rates for calls and text messages can be found at www.studentcells.com (click on Rates). There is a small connection fee for each call you make, upon being answered.

INCOMING CALLS ARE FREE WHILE YOU'RE IN ITALY. Incoming calls are NOT free if you're outside of Italy, and all phone usage outside of Italy will incur hefty ROAMING charges. We do NOT recommend you use your Italian cell phone outside of Italy.

What is the best way to call to/from Italy?

Many students use **SKYPE** which gives you **free international calls** over the Internet. For details, go to www.skype.com.

You can also contact your long distance provider about their international calling plan. Or, use an international pre-paid calling card. To use an international pre-paid calling card, you dial the access number, enter your PIN number/calling card number, then enter the number you want to call.

Try www.nobel.com or www.tel3advantage.com for international pre-paid calling cards for calling U.S. – abroad. Try www.enjoyprepaid.com for international pre-paid calling cards that parents or students can use to call each other, anywhere in the world.

TIPS ON CHOOSING A GOOD CALLING CARD:

- Make sure the rate you're looking at is for a mobile phone and not a landline. Usually the rate to call a mobile phone abroad is higher than the rate to call a landline.
- Check to see if the card has a connection fee or disconnection fee.
- Some cards charge a small weekly or monthly MAINTENANCE FEE that is deducted from your balance.
- Watch out for MINUTE ROUNDING. For example, if your card has 3-minute rounding and you make a 1-minute call, you will actually be charged for 3 minutes of talk time; if you make a 5-minute call, you will actually be charged for 6 minutes of talk time; if you make a 7-minute call, you will be charged for 9 minutes of talk time. So, 1-minute rounding is much more desirable than 5-minute rounding.
- Most cards will give you a toll-free OR local access number to use. Try to use their LOCAL ACCESS NUMBER, if possible, because some cards charge a per-minute or flat fee for using their toll-free access number.
- Normally, the fewer "fees" a card has, the higher the per-minute rate. Conversely, the more "fees" a card has, the lower the per-minute rate. If a card seems "too good to be true," with no fees AND a super low rate...then it probably is! Therefore, it's important to READ ALL OF THE FINE PRINT before purchasing any phone card, and don't be afraid to call the company to ask questions before purchasing anything.
- Don't forget that you may have to pay for the call you make to the access number. If you call the access number from your cell phone, that call uses your minutes (or in the case of students abroad, Student Cells will bill you for the call to the access number).

Mail, Computers & Internet

Will students have Internet/email access while in Italy?

Yes. All students will have free wireless Internet on campus at FUA, so **bring your laptop!** **Please note, students will NOT have Internet access in their apartments.** Students can also access Internet and email at Internet cafes, which are reasonably priced and easy to find throughout Florence.

What kind of adaptor do students need in order to use their laptop in Italy?

In Italy, the power supply is 220 volts/50 cycles, while in the U.S. it is 120 volts/60 cycles. Most laptops have a power supply that supports both 110 and 220 volts and 60 and 50 cycles (dual voltage). If your computer meets these requirements, you will only need to buy a plug adaptor so that the U.S. plug will fit into the Italian wall socket. Voltage adaptors and converters can be purchased at most hardware stores or places like Target, Wal-Mart, etc.

Can students receive mail?

Yes. However,

- We do NOT recommend mailing packages to Italy unless it is absolutely necessary.
- All mail/packages must arrive AFTER the student has moved in.

In general, it is problematic to receive packages in Italy— the recipient is usually charged a customs tax to receive the package. Therefore, it is not advisable to mail anything— especially not items such as clothing, gifts, etc. that are of a non-urgent nature. The customs tax can be anywhere from €5 (approx. \$8) to €200 (approx. \$350), depending on the package’s declared value and contents. It is difficult to predict what the tax will be when sending a package. If you declare a value, it is not uncommon to pay fees as high as US\$60-\$150 to pick up the package! Remember that all insured packages require a declared value.

If you do choose to send something, the following information will assist you. On the customs form, you should mark your items as “used” whenever possible (i.e. “used books” or “used clothing”), or “FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY – NO COMMERCIAL VALUE,” as packages containing new items will be taxed exorbitantly. You will also have to declare a value on the customs form. The higher the declared value, the higher the tax will be on the receiving end. Declaring a value of less than €10/\$10 may help to keep the customs tax to a minimum.

For sending packages, we recommend FedEx, UPS, or DHL because they will give you a tracking number. Although FedEx, DHL, and UPS are not the cheapest ways to mail items abroad, they are the fastest and most secure. You may contact any of these companies for a price quote and estimated transit time by giving them the weight, dimensions and destination of your package. For sending mail (letters, cards, papers, photographs, etc.), we recommend the U.S. Postal Service. *Please confirm the correct address before mailing anything.*

► **OVERNIGHT MAIL**

“Overnight” from the U.S. does NOT mean overnight to Italy! If someone in the U.S. sends an overnight document to Italy, it will arrive in Italy AFTER 2 DAYS OR MORE. For urgent documents, ATM cards, etc., use a reliable service such as FedEx or UPS. While the express or overnight USPS Global Priority service is reliable, it will actually take several EXTRA days to reach its destination because when the item enters Italy it is placed directly into the Italian postal system, which delays its delivery.

Example: If a FedEx letter classified as “overnight” leaves the U.S. on a Monday morning, the student will likely receive the item at the *earliest* on Wednesday or Thursday of the same week. Other couriers (UPS, USPS) may take longer.