

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS PROGRAMME

ITALY 2020/21

# ITALY COUNTRY NOTES

VERSION 1

Document compiled by British Council: Information correct @ 31 July 2020. We are aware that information can change throughout the year. Please inform us should you discover any errors.

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

# NOTES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS APPOINTED TO ITALY IN 2020-21

This is an updated version of the Italy Country Notes document for the 2020/21 English Language Assistants Programme. Any previous country notes relating to previous years should be ignored for the 2020/21 academic year.

## FOREWORD

Congratulations on your recent allocation to a post as an English Language Assistant in Italy. Every year, around 2,000 Language Assistants from the UK support the teaching of English in 14 countries around the world. Every Language Assistant is taking part in a programme that traces its heritage back to 1905. It began as an exchange programme that allowed graduates from France to help English students learn French, with 'young Masters in English secondary schools' heading to France to perform a similar role. Shortly afterwards, a similar agreement was reached with the government of Prussia.

Since those early days, the programme has endured major global events, two World Wars, and the Great Depression to name a few. But while the global political, social and economic landscapes may have changed over the years, the Language Assistants initiative has remained committed to increasing language skills across the world.

This document contains important information and advice regarding a variety of practical and administrative matters affecting UK assistants in Italy. This document should be read carefully, retained for reference and considered in conjunction with any papers issued by the Italian authorities. It is important that you take this information with you whilst undertaking your year abroad in order to be able to consult it at all times when problems/questions arise.

If your permanent (UK) home address, personal e-mail or phone number should change at any time from now, please inform us immediately by sending an e-mail to [languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org](mailto:languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org). We may need to contact you during the year with urgent messages, invitations to events or to add updates to these notes, so please ensure that you have given us the correct contact details.

We hope that you find the following information useful and that you enjoy the year ahead.

Best wishes,

British Council Language Assistants Team

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# 1. CO-OPERATING PARTNERS

## 1.1. BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language and education, and civil society. Each year we reach over 20 million people face to face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

Our work in English aims to bring high-quality language materials to every learner and teacher across the world. In developing and post-conflict countries, we teach English and train teachers through radio, web and TV broadcasts. We offer more than three million UK examinations worldwide, helping people gain access to trusted qualifications to support their career and study opportunities.

Our work in education and society helps transform national education systems, builds more inclusive and open societies and increases opportunities for young people. We encourage international students to come and study in the UK, and help British students gain experience abroad. We bring schools

around the world together, so young people and teachers from different countries can learn from each other.

Our work in the arts involves the very best British and international artistic talent. We help increase audiences for international work in the UK and for UK work globally. We bring artists together and support the development of skills and policy in the arts and creative industries. Through this work, we ensure that culture in its broadest sense plays a vital role in connecting with others and promoting friendly understanding.

In these ways, the British Council builds links between UK people and institutions and those around the world, helping create trust and lay foundations for prosperity and security.

## 1.2. PARTNER ORGANISATIONS IN ITALY

In Italy we have two main cooperating partners, and both work together with the British Council to administer the programme.

Our first cooperating partner in Italy is the **MIUR** – Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (The ministry of the Italian government for the national education system, the Italian universities and research agencies).

Address: Ufficio VIII,  
Internazionalizzazione del sistema  
educativo, Viale Trastevere 76/A,  
00153, Roma, Italia.

Website: <https://www.miur.gov.it/assistenti-stranieri-in-italia>

Our other cooperating partner is **Indire** - L'istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa (The

National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research).

Address: Via Michelangelo Buonarroti, 10, 50122, Firenze, Italia.

Website: <http://www.indire.it/en/>

Contact for both MIUR and Indire: [assistentilingue@istruzione.it](mailto:assistentilingue@istruzione.it).

For those assistants placed in the autonomous region of Trentino-Alto Adige / South Tyrol, you can also contact: Ulrike Huber - Responsible for posts in the German-speaking area [ulrike.huber@schule.suedtirol.it](mailto:ulrike.huber@schule.suedtirol.it), Paolo Bergamaschi - Responsible for posts in the Italian-speaking area [Paolo.Bergamaschi@provincia.bz.it](mailto:Paolo.Bergamaschi@provincia.bz.it) and Susy Rottonara - Responsible for posts in the Ladin-speaking area [Susy.Rottonara@provinz.bz.it](mailto:Susy.Rottonara@provinz.bz.it).

## 2. ROLE OF THE LANGUAGE ASSISTANT

The role of a language assistant is a very important one and one that we hope you will enjoy. Please remember that you are considered a **member of staff** with the responsibilities and required professionalism that this entails. Please refer to [our website](#) for more information on your role as an English Language Assistant.

As a language assistant you are also an **ambassador for the UK and its culture**. The way you behave will influence how those around you view the UK and you should endeavour to be a positive example. If you set a bad example, you could damage the reputation of the programme and adversely affect the experience of future assistants.

Exactly what you will do on a daily basis will vary according to the school in which you are working and how they choose to use you, but there are two important points that apply to everyone:

- Assistants in Italy cannot cover classes as a replacement teacher, as it is against the rules of the programme.
- When you first arrive at your school(s) you should ask for a period of observation. This is particularly useful as an introduction to the school environment and as a chance to gauge the pupils' general level of English. It may not be offered to you automatically.

**Please be aware that during your period of appointment as a language assistant, it is your school and not the British Council who is your official employer.**

### 2.1. TEACHING ENGLISH

It is important to be resourceful and use your initiative. If you do not think that you are being used sufficiently, make suggestions of topics that you could discuss with the students or activities that you could get involved with. Your first-hand experience of life in the UK is an excellent resource and you should draw on this during your lessons.

This document contains a chapter which provides a lot of advice to help you incorporate cultural content into your lessons and about teaching English in general but to get started, the following links may be useful:

- <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/ela-manual>
- [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/language-assistant/essential-uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/language-assistant/essential-uk)

Remember that teachers are often very busy and some will be more responsive to your ideas than others, so don't be put off if your suggestions are not taken up immediately.

It is also very important to make sure that you are familiar with the education system in Italy as it will help you know what to expect when you start teaching at your school(s). Please see the [Eurydice webpage](#) for specific information.

### 3. POSTING INFORMATION

The period of appointment for UK assistants in Italy next year will be 01 October 2020 – 31 May 2021.

We have received correspondence from our partner organisations in Italy, that they will be taking a flexible approach to assistantships for the upcoming academic year.

This means that assistants will be able to come to an individual arrangement with their school as to whether they begin their placement on the 01 October working virtually and then transition to face-to-face teaching later on or begin on the 01 October teaching in the classroom.

Once you have received your letter of appointment containing your school allocation from Indire, it will be your responsibility to speak with your mentor teacher and come to an arrangement regarding working virtually or in the classroom.

We have received assurances that, whether you will be working virtually or

in the classroom, you will still receive your monthly salary.

Assistants are expected to work 12 hours a week. Those who have been appointed to more than one school will be asked to divide their time between the schools concerned. You can request information regarding how your timetable will be arranged from the head of the host school, which is usually the first one mentioned when you are sent the details of your posting.

If you have been appointed to two or three schools you should write to all of them confirming your acceptance of the post. If you do not receive a reply by mid-September it is a good idea to ring the school(s) to ask them about accommodation and give them an idea of your anticipated arrival date.

You should ask them for some information about the school(s) in which you will be working. For example, it may be useful to know the age range of pupils, the average class size, the general level of ability, the social background of pupils and the facilities available. You could also enquire about bringing any specific materials from home. It is also important to enquire about the dress code for teachers and any other general school information.

The maximum number of schools to which you can be appointed is three. Please contact us if you have been appointed to more than three schools. If the different schools are several miles apart and you have to travel between two on the same day, you are entitled to ask for help towards travel expenses. Under no circumstance should an assistant be required to buy or rent a car just to get to their schools. If no regular public transport serves your

school(s) and there are no lifts available to your school(s), please inform us of the situation.

Assistants are entitled to the usual school holidays. Ask your school for details of these, as they can differ in each region. You should be able to obtain the dates from the school secretary. You should not be absent on other occasions without prior permission. Attending the induction course does not give assistants the right to take leave at a later date.

In the coming weeks, we will be sending you a survey to complete. Within this survey you will be asked to officially confirm your acceptance of the post and also provide the school's full name and address and any named mentor teacher on the document you received from the MIUR / Indire or the authorities in Trentino-Alto Adige. When you receive this survey, please endeavour to complete it as soon as possible, so that we have the details of where you will be working for the next year. This is as important as having your up-to-date contact details on record, and we thank you in advance for sharing them.

- If you are an undergraduate studying at a university, please also write to your university tutor / year abroad coordinator to provide them with the address(es) of the school(s).

**Appointments in Italy are for one academic year only and, due to competition for posts, applications for a consecutive period of service cannot be considered.**

### 3.1. PREDECESSORS

Due to the newly introduced GDPR laws, the British Council will be unable to automatically share the contact details

of assistants appointed to your area in 2019-20. However, in the summer information pack you will find a list of names and contact details of former assistants who have given their permission for their details to be passed on to you.

It should be noted that schools do not necessarily receive assistants each year, but your host school(s) may be in a better position to offer you help with contacting former assistants. We would recommend contacting your host school to ask if they would be willing to ask their former language assistants to share their contact details with you.

## 4. PRE DEPARTURE INFORMATION

### 4.1. FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Before travelling to Italy you should ensure that you check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advice pages: [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/italy](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/italy) and ensure that you have subscribed to updates so that you receive any important information or changes to the FCO's advice. There is also now a [dedicated page](#) for advice concerning the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak in Italy.

During a crisis, advice for British nationals will be published on the travel advice website and updated regularly, so by subscribing you will ensure that you are aware of any updates. You can register for emails using this link: [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/italy/email-signup](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/italy/email-signup).



We also recommend that assistants read the 'Advice for Travellers' documentation provided by the FCO, which can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-british-nationals-overseas/supporting-pages/advice-for-travellers](http://www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-british-nationals-overseas/supporting-pages/advice-for-travellers).

## 4.2. PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Assistants must be in possession of a standard 10-year passport before leaving the UK and are advised to ensure that it will not need to be renewed before October 2021. Those who are not in possession of a passport, or need a new one, should complete the application procedure as soon as possible either through a regional Passport Office or online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports>.

Residents of the Channel Islands should check their individual situation with the nearest consulate.

If you have dual nationality (UK/other) you should ensure that your UK passport is valid and you should use this one to travel whilst in Italy. This will save you considerable complications with the local authorities. This does not apply if one of your passports is Italian.

If you hold a British Citizen passport, you don't need a visa to enter Italy. The rules on travel will stay the same until the transition period ends on 31 December 2020. During this time you can continue to travel to countries in the [Schengen area](#) or elsewhere in the EU with your UK passport.

After the end of the transition period, the rules on travel may change. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

will update their [website](#) with details of any changes to the rules as soon as information is available.

We would highly recommend visiting the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website for the most up-to-date official information for British citizens entering, living in and working in Italy. Pages of particular importance are the [Entry Requirements](#) page and the [Living in Italy](#) page.

## 4.3. BREXIT

The UK Government has launched a new [website](#) to help businesses, organisations, individuals and families check what they need to do to prepare for the UK leaving the European Union. The section [UK nationals living in the European Union](#) contains specific advice for British Nationals living in Italy.

Please note, the advice provided is based upon current government guidelines. Language Assistants have a responsibility to keep themselves informed of changes to the government's advice on Brexit and the impact this may have on British nationals living in Italy.

The government's website contains specific advice on [Living in Italy](#). The website contains links to sign up to [e-mail alerts](#) on different topics relating to Brexit. We recommend that assistants sign up to these alerts and continue to check the government's website for any updates.

Advice and links from the Italian government can also be accessed [here](#). Language Assistants must keep up to date with guidance provided by the Italian government, as well as the British government.

We advise English Language Assistants in Italy to read advice which may be published on the Italian government's website. We also recommend that assistants follow the British Embassy in Italy on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

The British Embassy in Italy is holding a series of outreach events across Italy, to update UK nationals on Brexit. Assistants should consider attending these events to keep informed of changes which may relate to their local areas - [British Embassy Citizen Outreach meetings in Italy](#).

The [Withdrawal Agreement](#) sets out the terms of the UK's withdrawal from the EU and provides for a deal on citizens' rights. It sets out a transition period which lasts until 31 December 2020. During this time you can continue to live, work and study in the EU broadly as you did before 31 January 2020.

If you are resident in Italy at the end of the transition period, you will be covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, and your rights will be protected for as long as you remain resident in Italy.

Any rights that are not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement will be the subject of future negotiations. Read this [guidance page](#) for more information

In the meantime, make sure you are registered as a resident in Italy (more details provided below). The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) will update this guidance as soon as more information becomes available.

You should also read the FCO's [guidance on living in Europe](#).

## 4.4. MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

In accordance with the statement in the medical section of the British Council application form, the Ministry of Education in Italy or your school may request a **medical certificate** from you upon commencement of your post in Italy.

If requested by your school or the Italian authorities, you must obtain a medical certificate / letter from your GP (on letter headed paper, stamped and signed) over the summer and forward it to the Ministry when requested to. The medical certificate should be written in English and confirm that you are in a good state of health and do not suffer from any contagious illnesses.

You may also wish to take a copy of the certificate to Italy for your own reference.

If your school or the Italian authorities do not contact you to request a medical certificate, no further action is necessary.

**Please note: failure to produce a medical certificate when asked to do so may prevent you from being able to undertake the assistantship post.**

## 4.5. RESIDENCE PERMITS

If you are resident in Italy before the transition period ends on 31 December 2020, you will be able to stay.

You must [register as an Italian resident](#) (in Italian) if you want to stay in Italy for more than 3 months. You will get one of the following from the local town hall or comune:

- an attestazione di regolarità di soggiorno
- a certificato di residenza

- attestazione di iscrizione anagrafica or attestazione di soggiorno permanente (if resident for 5 years or more)

The rules on residency registration remain the same during the transition period. Read the Italian government's [guidance on residency processes for UK nationals](#) (in Italian).

If you have already registered as a resident and have a residency document, you should obtain the new attestazione from your local comune. This new document will be proof of your rights under the Withdrawal Agreement.

For more information about the new attestazione, read the [Italian Ministry of Interior's circular](#) (in Italian). It includes a sample of the new document. You should take this to your local comune when requesting it.

In order to register as a resident in Italy, it is likely that you will need to provide documentation providing the following:

- You have a work contract
- You have sufficient economic resources as well as personal health insurance

It is also likely that you will need to take your passport, show that you have sufficient financial resources (take a copy of the **lettera di incarico** from the MIUR) and show that you have valid health insurance.

You must check with your town hall what further documentation you may need to apply for residency. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office website also offers information on this subject: [www.gov.uk/living-in-italy](http://www.gov.uk/living-in-italy).

## 4.6. TRAVEL TO ITALY

You are responsible for the cost of your own travel and any travel to and from your place of appointment during the year. Booking in advance for all forms of transport is highly recommended. Past assistants have warned to check the baggage allowance for outward and return journeys when travelling by plane as sometimes the cheaper airlines have quite a low baggage allowance. The following websites may help you when booking your travel:

- [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net) ; [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)
- <https://www.raileurope.com/>,
- [www.directferries.co.uk](http://www.directferries.co.uk)
- [www.eurolines.co.uk](http://www.eurolines.co.uk) , [www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com)
- [www.easyjet.co.uk](http://www.easyjet.co.uk), [www.flybe.com](http://www.flybe.com)
- [www.thomsonfly.com](http://www.thomsonfly.com), [www.opodo.co.uk](http://www.opodo.co.uk)
- [www.expedia.co.uk](http://www.expedia.co.uk), [www.ryanair.co.uk](http://www.ryanair.co.uk)
- <https://www.interrail.eu/en>

## 4.6. TAKING A CAR ABROAD

You will need to research the laws on driving in Italy, including adapting your headlights and driving on the right. The website [www.gov.uk/driving-abroad](http://www.gov.uk/driving-abroad) provides useful information about motoring abroad.

If you plan to take a car to Italy for the period of your assistantship, please ensure that you take out adequate insurance for the full period and be aware that many insurance companies will only insure you for periods of up to 90 days. Past assistants have advised looking into insurance well in advance in order to have the time to shop around for a suitable policy. All UK motor insurance policies offer the minimum legal protection required by EU countries and Switzerland. This gives third party cover for bodily injury or

damage to property. The British Council is unable to recommend specific insurance companies.

Many insurers offer 24-hour UK telephone numbers in case you need help in an emergency. Make sure you have these details with you when you travel abroad. The website of the Association of British Insurers ([www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk)) has general information on driving abroad, including a document 'Motoring Abroad' which has useful information on Motor Insurance cover and Green Cards. A Green Card is an internationally recognised document that provides evidence that the policy holder has minimum insurance cover.

If you require information on driver licensing you should contact Drivers Customer Services (DCS), Correspondence Team DVLA, Swansea SA6 7JL (Tel: 0300 790 6801, or using the online email service which can be found here: [www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla/y](http://www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla/y)). Information on vehicle licensing or registration can be obtained from Vehicle Customer Services (VCS), DVLA, Swansea SA99 1AR (Tel: 0300 790 6802). There is also a website at [www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk). UK licenses are recognised in all EU countries plus Switzerland, for as long as they remain valid.

Driving licence rules will stay the same until 31 December 2020.

If you are resident in Italy, [exchange your UK licence for an Italian one](#) before 31 December 2020.

For information on driving in Italy, read the guidance on:

- what you need to [drive abroad](#)
- [driving licence exchange and renewals](#)
- contacting an [Ufficio Motorizzazione Civile](#) (in Italian)

If you are in Italy and your UK driving licence is lost, stolen or expires you will not be able to renew it with the UK Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). You will need to apply to the DVLA for a 'certificate of entitlement' in Italian to be able to apply for an Italian driving licence.

### **Driving in the UK with an Italian licence**

Until the end of the transition period, you can still use your Italian licence in the UK for short visits or exchange it for a UK licence without taking a test. These rules may change from 1 January 2021. The FCO will update their guidance page once more information is available.

### **Bringing a UK-registered vehicle to Italy**

Read the FCO's guidance on [taking a vehicle out of the UK](#).

If you move to Italy with your UK-registered car, you must register your car with Italian licence plates within 60 days of being officially resident in Italy. If not, your car may be impounded.

Be aware that from the moment you start the process of registering your car in Italy you will not be able to use your car, until you get your new documentation and licence plates. For more information, contact an [Ufficio Motorizzazione Civile](#) (in Italian). You can read the European Union's guidance on [car registration and taxes](#) in Italy. You may be exempt from some of these taxes. If so, you will need certificates of exemption.

## **4.7. TAKING PETS ABROAD**

There are a variety of rules assistants must follow to ensure they are compliant when taking pets abroad / returning them to the UK. Please check the FCO and Italian Government website for more information. You may also wish to

consider pet travel insurance to ensure that any pets are covered for emergency treatment whilst in Italy.

## 4.8. GRADUATES WITH STUDENT LOANS

If you will be overseas for more than three months, you will need to let student finance know. Complete an **Overseas Income Assessment Form** to enable the Student Loans Company to calculate how much you need to repay. On the Overseas Income Assessment Form you should provide them with details of your circumstances and prospective income.

Whilst in Italy the money you receive is considered a monthly allowance or a grant, rather than a salary. This means you are officially taking part in a grant funded mobility programme rather than formal employment. Last year assistants who declared their Language Assistant role as formal employment rather than a grant funded mobility programme faced challenges with the Student Loans Company, who requested copies of employment contracts in English.

You will be required to provide evidence of income or means of support. They will then send you a repayment schedule showing how much you need to pay each month. Your monthly payments will be based upon the earnings threshold for your destination country. More information can be found online [here](#). **Please note that the British Council cannot advise further on student loans matters.**

## 4.9. BENEFITS / UNIVERSAL CREDIT

If you are in receipt of government support in the UK, you must inform the authorities that you are moving to work abroad. Tell your local Jobcentre Plus or the office that pays your benefit if you're

going abroad. If it's a temporary move, tell them when you're coming back.

You must also tell HMRC if you're leaving the UK.

## 4.10. INSURANCE

Whilst it may seem like an inconvenient cost at this stage, **it is highly recommended to take out appropriate insurance for your time abroad**. You will not be insured under the Italian National Health system because you will not be paying contributions from your monthly allowance. When choosing cover, please think carefully about what you would like to happen in the event of sickness / an accident / death. It is also advised to discuss insurance options with partners, family members or a close friend.

You are strongly recommended to take out Personal Accident Travel insurance for the period between leaving home and taking up your appointment, the time during your appointment and also the period between ending your appointment and your return to the UK. This should include the following standard elements of cover:

- Medical costs for treatment in case of illness or accidental injury
- Benefits for permanent disabling injuries, e.g. rehabilitation and living costs
- Benefits for death and costs of repatriation
- Cover for loss or damage to your personal belongings
- Cover for cancelled flights, e.g. if the airline goes out of business or on strike
- Personal Liability cover. This provides legal support and covers financial costs if you cause injury or property damage to others and are found personally liable.
- 24hr emergency assistance helpline.

Many policies also have legal expenses cover, which is recommended in case you need legal assistance while overseas. The British Council is unable to advise on private insurance packages. You are recommended to consult an insurance broker for professional advice and to check whether you are covered by your parents' or family's insurance policy. Undergraduate assistants may find that a "study abroad" policy purchased online is an option. Please be aware that some insurance policies, usually "backpackers" insurance, do not allow for trips home during the year and it is important to check the small print of your policy to make sure that you are covered.

Personal Accident Travel policies are readily available on price comparison websites, or by using a search engine to search for 'travel insurance'. The UK Foreign & Commonwealth website offers additional advice on taking out Travel Insurance: [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-insurance](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-insurance).

Many insurers are excluding Covid-19 as a cause of travel delay or medical expenses. Please check carefully that your policy does include, as a minimum, medical expenses as a result of Covid-19. Currently, providers such as Endsleigh and Alpha are still providing this cover on their gap year policies, so they may be an option, if the other elements of cover meet your individual needs.

You can also hear more about insurance on our dedicated [podcast episode](#), where we talk about the importance of insurance with a former English language assistant who was involved in a major car crash in Spain, as well as the British Council's Head of Insurance for advice on policies.

## **Insurance whilst in post**

It is our understanding that you will be insured privately by your school for the period from 01 October 2020 until 31 May 2021. However, the Ministry cannot guarantee that the cover will start in all schools on 01 October as it may take up to two months to set this up. It is important to check with your school exactly what is covered under their insurance and whether an excess must be paid. Please contact the ministry immediately if your school has not taken out insurance for you.

## **Insurance for travel outside of Italy**

Experience from previous language assistants has told us that holidays provide the possibility for travel around or outside of Italy, if you do leave Italy at any point; it is highly advised to take out insurance for the country / countries that you visit.

In addition to health insurance, it would be wise to consider insuring your personal possession. You should also check your parent's household insurance as this sometimes covers possessions away from home. Furthermore, cover for personal liability is often overlooked but it is extremely important. If you were the cause of an accident of any kind – e.g. cycling on the road – the resulting costs, practical and legal, could be high.

You will also need to take your National Insurance Number with you abroad.

**The British Council will not be responsible for you whilst you are in Italy, although we will offer support when necessary. You are therefore required to take out comprehensive insurance to cover you during your whole time abroad.**

## 5. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Please see the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for more information regarding healthcare in Italy: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-italy>

### 5.1. HEALTHCARE

If you're living in Italy or move there permanently before 31 December 2020, you'll have life-long healthcare rights in Italy as you do now, provided you remain resident.

Read the FCO's [guidance on accessing healthcare in Italy and how to register](#).

After you have registered your residency, you need to register with the Italian National Health Service (Servizio Sanitario Nazionale – SSN) through your local health authority (Azienda Sanitaria Locale – ASL).

You can register for free with the SSN if:

- you have a work contract, are self-employed in Italy or are an immediate family member of someone who is
- you are an immediate family member of an Italian citizen
- you hold an Attestazione di Soggiorno Permanente
- you become unemployed after having worked in Italy, and register on the employment lists (liste di collocamento). This also applies if you register for a professional training course while you are unemployed
- you hold a UK social security form, such as an S1 form for pensioners

If you do not fall into one of the above categories you may be able to register with SSN by paying an annual fee. This depends on the region of Italy you live

in. You should contact your Azienda Sanitaria Locale for more information.

### 5.2. EHIC

If you are resident in Italy, you must not use your UK-issued European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for healthcare in Italy.

When you travel from Italy for a temporary stay in another European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland, you can use an EHIC to access state-provided healthcare in that country. During that short stay:

- the EHIC covers treatment that is medically necessary until your planned return home
- an EHIC is not a replacement for comprehensive travel insurance
- for more information, read the FCO's [travel advice pages](#) and [advice on foreign travel insurance pages](#)

If you are registered for public healthcare as a resident in Italy, and are travelling outside of Italy, carry your Italian European health card (Tessera Europea di Assicurazione Malattia – TEAM) with you.

There will be no changes to your healthcare access before 31 December 2020. You can also continue to use your EHIC, as you did before, during this time.

You should also read guidance on:

- [healthcare and studying abroad](#)
- [finding an English-speaking doctor in Italy](#)
- [checking your prescriptions are legal in Italy](#)

Be aware that each country's healthcare system is different. Services that cost you nothing at home might not be free in Italy. The EHIC is not an alternative to

travel insurance. It does not cover any private healthcare or costs such as a return flight to your home country or lost / stolen property.

## 5.3. MEDICATION

If you take regular medication, please ensure that you have a supply before you leave. It is also important to find out where your nearest doctor, dentist and hospital are as soon as you arrive. You should ask your school for information about the facilities in your area and always advise staff and your landlord of any medical conditions.

## 5.4. MENTAL HEALTH

Although working abroad can be enjoyable, it can also be challenging. Lack of familiar support systems, disrupted daily routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations can intensify stress levels rather than alleviate them.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Therefore, it is advised that you read this information even if you are not currently suffering from mental health problems.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office provides information about mental health and travel via the following links.:

- [www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health)
- [www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-advice-for-people-with-mental-health-issues](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-advice-for-people-with-mental-health-issues)

The leaflets hyperlinked above and below contain guidance on travelling abroad and mental health, and information about how the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) is able to assist British nationals with mental health needs abroad. The leaflets detail the type of assistance you may find in the country. The leaflet also explains

some of the differences between English law and practice and that of other countries.

## Mental Health: Travelling Abroad Checklist

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/466425/Mental\\_Health\\_Checklist\\_-\\_Final.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/466425/Mental_Health_Checklist_-_Final.pdf)

We also have a Podcast [episode](#) discussing the importance of Language Assistants looking after their wellbeing.

## 6. ARRIVAL

### 6.1. INDUCTION MEETING

It is likely that you will be invited to an induction course hosted by the Italian authorities for all language assistants in Italy. In previous years, this has been held at the end of September however the date and location of the induction course has not yet been confirmed for 2020/21. Once this has been confirmed it will be communicated to all assistants immediately, therefore we kindly ask that you keep an eye on your emails over the summer for information regarding this.

Please be aware that this year, the induction meeting may be held virtually.

For assistants allocated in Trentino-Alto Adige, the regional authorities will inform you of your separate induction meeting.

## 7. SETTling IN

### 7.1. ACCOMMODATION

Your school is not obliged to provide or find you accommodation, but they may be able to offer you somewhere temporary to stay for the first few days or weeks, thus giving you some time to



look for permanent accommodation. However, you should not assume that your school will be able to do this, therefore you should discuss your arrival and initial accommodation arrangements with them in advance. Please note that if your school does offer you accommodation, you are not obliged to accept it. If you do accept accommodation offered to you by the school, please remember that you will have to abide by the school's rules.

The first thing to do when looking for permanent accommodation is to ask your mentor teacher if they can recommend anything. For example, they may know a local family with a room to rent, or already have somewhere in mind for you to stay. Even if they cannot help, their local knowledge of the area is invaluable.

Consider going to your teaching location to arrange accommodation in advance of starting your job. Past assistants have emphasised the need to look for accommodation as early as possible, especially if you are staying in popular cities such as Siena or Bologna. The first weeks of your assistantship will be busy as you will be finding your way around an unfamiliar town, dealing with bureaucracy and trying to make a good impression at school. Having accommodation lined up can make this easier. For temporary lodgings while you look for something more permanent, investigate the possibility of staying in a youth hostel or an Air BnB. **Do not** take out a contract on your accommodation **until** you know the locations of your school(s).

We also have a [Language Assistants Podcast episode](#) talking with a former English Language Assistant about the different types of accommodation Language Assistants could consider when moving abroad.

**Please note that the British Council is not in a position to provide or to help find accommodation.**

Once you arrive in Italy the following suggestions may be of interest:

- advertise on the school/staff notice board and ask around the staff; do NOT advertise in local papers or public places
- buy the local newspapers early in the morning and telephone likely numbers immediately
- ring the local university halls of residence or check their flat share adverts and notices, or advertise on their notice board that you are looking for a room
- ask local friends'/acquaintances' landlords if they have any further accommodation to let
- write to or visit as soon as possible any student or youth organisations in the area that might have details of available lodgings: the local tourist office may have a list of such organisations
- find out about local religious organisations as they often know of rooms to let
- accommodation agencies may be able to help but you should be very wary of paying large fees and deposits, and always read the small print in any leases or agreements to be signed. Look for small agencies as often their fees are lower
- ask the local APT (Azienda di Promozione Turistica) if they have accommodation listings
- search for a room or flat on the internet

**Some websites you may find useful are:**

**Temporary accommodation:**

- [www.hostelbookers.com](http://www.hostelbookers.com)
- [www.hostelworld.com](http://www.hostelworld.com)

## Permanent accommodation:

- [www.easystanza.it](http://www.easystanza.it)
- [www.kijiji.it/](http://www.kijiji.it/)
- [www.subito.it](http://www.subito.it)
- [www.mioaffitto.it](http://www.mioaffitto.it)
- [www.bakeca.it](http://www.bakeca.it)
- [www.wantedinrome.com](http://www.wantedinrome.com)
- <http://milan.wantedineurope.com>

We recommend that you take photos of your room and the flat when you move into your long-term accommodation and when you leave to help you get back any deposit you may have to pay, which is usually dependent on the accommodation being in the same condition as when you first arrived. When you leave your accommodation, remember to cancel any personal contracts e.g. internet or utilities.

When you do find accommodation, please ensure that you have checked health and safety issues (temporary and long term) such as fire alarms and exits, gas leaks, electric, water etc.

When signing a rental agreement, please be aware of the notice period given. It is recommended to include a 'diplomatic clause' in the rental agreement to allow for a shorter notice period in the event that the rental agreement needs to be terminated prematurely due to force majeure (including in the event of a pandemic or a travel warning officially issued by a government). This is advised particularly in the light of the current Covid-19 pandemic.

## 7.2. CODICE FISCALE

A codice fiscale is the tax code card in Italy, similar to the National Insurance Number in the United Kingdom. The card serves to identify individuals residing in Italy. You'll need a codice fiscale in Italy for things like opening a bank or postal account, registering a vehicle in Italy, signing a lease for a flat or signing a

contract with utility companies. It is also likely to be required if you undertake work in a private language school to supplement your income.

This tax code can be obtained at the local **Agenzia delle Entrate** (the Italian Revenue Agency). As experiences vary widely, you would be well advised to check for information locally (in your school) before obtaining one. Former assistants have stressed the importance of having a Codice Fiscale and have recommended that you carry it with you at all times.

The process for obtaining a Codice Fiscale can vary greatly, but in general you could follow these instructions:

- Bring your passport or national identity card to your nearest Agenzia delle Entrate office, which you can find [here](#). Unfortunately it is not possible to make an online appointment, we would therefore advise you to check the timetable of your designated office and go as early as possible
- Ask for a Codice Fiscale form and take a number from the front desk
- Fill out the form (personal and address information). Please be aware that the form is in Italian so you may want to bring a dictionary with you
- When your number is called on screen, go to the sportello (window) displayed and give them your form
- They will then give you a piece of officially stamped paper with your number, and your card will arrive later by post

The following governmental website provides some useful information on how to obtain the tax identification number: [Codice Fiscale](#).

## 7.3. CREATING SOCIAL NETWORKS

Even if you have been to Italy before, it is possible that you will find some things strange at first and will need a little time to settle in. On arrival, the thought of making friends and mixing with the locals can seem like a daunting task, but as long as you are prepared to put yourself out there, it is a part of the experience which previous assistants have found the most enriching. Give yourself some time to adjust – you don't need to feel like a local within a week and in the beginning you will have a lot of administrative matters to deal with.

The best way to start is with colleagues at school. Make sure you always seem positive, enthusiastic and willing to learn. Socialise as much as you can with colleagues and accept all invitations to events, dinner etc. tell people what your interests are and ask them to let you know what's going on in the local area. Do keep in mind however that teachers can be very busy, especially during exam time.

Apart from your work in the classroom, you may be able to attend other classes in subjects which interest you. You will find that you become much more integrated into school life and gain considerably more from your stay if you become involved in activities organised by the school such as sports days, theatre or music productions or modern language societies. Go to school open days or parents evenings as these are also a good way of meeting people. If you hear about something which interests you, ask if you can become involved. Don't wait to be invited, as people may assume that you're not interested.

Another excellent way to meet new people is to set up language exchanges with local people who want to practice their English. You could also enroll at a

local language school, join Erasmus societies (at a local university), offer English lessons to colleagues/locals, join a club and join assistant groups on social networks such as Facebook. There are often Facebook groups for people who are new to the city/town, which organise different events to help people make new friends - just search for 'new in "city name"' Previous assistants have also suggested joining a local Couchsurfing group as they often organise social activities.

**You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are a language assistant. Keep your profile private so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you invite other teachers to be 'friends', remember to remain professional in what you say on your profile and be careful about what you write about your employer.**

**You should not exchange personal contact details with students, invite them to be 'friends' or accept similar invitations from them. This is likely to be regarded as inappropriate behaviour. Check with teachers about the school's internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or outside of school.**

**It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and also to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.**

Here are some other ways to meet people within the area:

- Live with other students/native speakers
- Enrol for an evening class; join a sports club, music group, choir etc.
- Enquire about joining the local university and attending lectures

- Get involved in the local culture and join clubs that you couldn't join in the UK
- Volunteer for a charity, society, festival, etc.

Former assistants have recommended not spending all of your time with other assistants, as you won't be able to integrate into your community and life in Italy. On the other hand, don't feel that you must cut yourself off from them – assistants can provide a very good support network for each other, as you understand each other's experiences. Don't forget that there may be language assistants from other countries in your area. You may wish to ask your employer if they have contact details.

As a golden rule, **try to say yes to every social opportunity presented to you** that does not compromise your personal safety. Accept invitations to places and activities even if they do not sound interesting as you might meet other people there who do share your interests

## 7.4. STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

If you wish to attend lectures on a part-time basis, you should obtain information before departure from the [Italian Embassy](#) or the [Italian Cultural Institute in the UK](#) and more detailed information on arrival from the overseas student office of the institution concerned.

You are advised to take with you your birth certificate, copies of your GCSE and A-Level certificates and, if possible, a letter from your academic sponsor in the UK confirming your present academic status. Holders of student cards from foreign universities are often eligible for a number of benefits including subsidised meals, accommodation services, reductions on theatre and cinema tickets etc.

If you have been appointed to a smaller town or to a place where there is little or no possibility of access to a university you should not ignore study opportunities offered by local cultural centres, institutes, libraries and colleges of further or continuing education. Much can also be gained from sitting in on school lessons in a variety of subjects.

## 7.5. SETTLING IN TO SCHOOL LIFE

Starting any new job can be a daunting experience, no matter how confident a person you are. It's completely normal to be unsure of where to go, what to do or who to talk to at the beginning.

You will have to make an effort to get to know your colleagues. Showing that you are enthusiastic and keen to get to know staff will go a long way. Start with a simple hello or ask how their weekend went. Learning some simple conversation starters in the target language is always useful. Remember however that you will be working in a school environment therefore staff may not have a lot of free time. Don't be put off if a teacher doesn't have time to talk to you in the first instance, they may be in-between or preparing for a class. It doesn't necessarily mean that they don't want to talk to you.

Whilst it's important to get to know the colleagues you will be directly working with, it's always useful to get to know other staff too. Try introducing yourself to staff you may not directly work with, for example teachers in other departments, lunch time staff, receptionists, caretakers etc. If there are social occasions or team meetings try to make an effort to attend. It's a great way to get to know colleagues in a different environment.

Language Assistants that are proactive and take the initiative often settle into school life much faster. Being a self-

starter is a great way to make a strong first impression. Teachers are often very busy and will certainly appreciate your efforts to help and try to make an impact.

## 8. MONEY MATTERS

### 8.1. MONTHLY ALLOWANCE

The currency in Italy is the Euro (€).

**Your monthly allowance will be €850 per month net.** This will be paid by the school generally by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the following month.

**Your allowance will be higher if you are placed in the Trentino-Alto Adige region and as payments are made by the regional departments, assistants in this region are unlikely to be affected by payment delays.** Budgets to schools are disbursed twice a year, in November and in February. It is therefore likely that the first payment of your allowance may not arrive until late November. Therefore, you should ensure that you take around €1000 to €1500 or a credit card with you to cover initial costs, which will be higher in Rome and the big cities. British bankcards with the Cirrus logo are widely accepted in Italian cash-points so you may wish to leave this money in a British account, although you should check with your bank whether you will be charged a fee for withdrawals.

Please note that, because the Italian financial year ends on 31 December, assistants have sometimes experienced significant delays in receiving their pay during the months of January and February. If there is a delay, you should let your school know about the situation immediately and contact the Ministry via the email: [assistentilingue@istruzione.it](mailto:assistentilingue@istruzione.it).

**Please also contact the British Council in the UK to inform us of any delays in payment.**

If you wish to supplement your income by giving private tuition in English, you are strongly advised not to advertise in local papers or public places. In general pupils interested in private tuition are easily found through school or private connections, i.e. by word of mouth. However, it is essential to check that the other English teachers in your school(s) do not mind, so that you are not perceived to be 'stealing' their private pupils. The going rate for private one-to-one tuition seems to be €10-25 per hour depending on how much preparation for the lesson you plan to do and how much your pupils can afford.

It is your own responsibility to ensure that any additional work does not interfere with your responsibilities as a Language Assistant. You should always discuss additional work with your employer and be aware of any tax implications of additional earnings, particularly following Brexit.

### 8.2. ERASMUS+ GRANTS

Language assistants who are currently on their compulsory year abroad may be entitled to an Erasmus+ grant. Please contact the Erasmus coordinator at your university for further information.

Please note that the British Council is not the employer or traineeship provider of English Language Assistants. This means that we are unable to complete any Erasmus+ related documents and you should not put the British Council as your traineeship provider. You should put the name of your host institution once you receive these details. Our understanding is that there is a one month grace period following the start of your placement in which to submit any Erasmus+ documents, however individual universities and Erasmus+ coordinators

will have their own internal deadlines. Please liaise with the Erasmus+ coordinator at your university should you have any questions.

### 8.3. CURRENCY AND BANKS

The currency in Italy is the Euro (€). Banks are usually open from 08.30 to 13.30. They reopen at 15.00 or 15.30 and close for the day at 16.00 or 17.00. Most banks are open Monday through Friday and close for the weekend. Unfortunately, there is no uniformity to opening and closing times but the general guidelines given above provide reasonable guidance.

Opening a bank account in Italy can be a complicated process and you pay for the service, so some assistants manage without. Some banks will not allow customers to open an account until they have been a resident in Italy for six months. You can, however, open a **libretto di risparmio** (a savings account) but should seek advice as to which type and how to go about opening it, as savings accounts vary from place to place. Some former assistants have reported that by obtaining a codice fiscale, (see section 7.2.) a bank account can be opened with relative ease. Former assistants have also advised that they needed an Italian phone number prior to opening a bank account.

If you do plan to open an Italian bank account, you are advised to wait until you arrive in your town of appointment in Italy before opening it. This will allow you to research all of the local options, seek recommendations and choose what will be most convenient for the rest of the year. A former assistant recommended getting a pre-paid debit card (**carta prepagata**) available from most banks or at the Post Office (**postepay**). The following website has more information on this kind of card: [www.cartedipagamento.com/carte\\_prepagate.htm](http://www.cartedipagamento.com/carte_prepagate.htm).

You may also find this glossary of banking terms in Italian and English useful: [www.webmatic.it/work0/s/140/pr-2472-file\\_en-italian-english.pdf](http://www.webmatic.it/work0/s/140/pr-2472-file_en-italian-english.pdf)

### 8.4. INCOME TAX

The UK has a double taxation agreement with Italy to make sure you do not pay tax on the same income in both countries. Ask the relevant tax authority your questions about double taxation relief.

Existing double taxation arrangements for UK nationals living in Italy have not changed.

You can read guidance about:

- [telling HMRC if you leave the UK to live abroad](#)
- [the tax on your UK income if you live abroad](#)
- [paying income tax in Italy](#)

You should get professional advice on paying tax in Italy. You can find a tax adviser or business consultant (**commercialista**) at the [British Chamber of Commerce for Italy](#) or [Centro Assistenza Fiscale – Tax Assistance Centre \(CAF\)](#), or find an [English-speaking lawyer](#).

Under this agreement British assistants are normally exempt from Italian income tax for a period of up to two years. However, it is normally the case that 100% of the remuneration received abroad will be liable for UK tax. It is important to know that the agreement only covers teaching jobs. You might be taxed for non-teaching jobs and should check how much you are allowed to earn per year without having to pay taxes.

You are reminded that the UK tax year extends from 06 April 2020 until 05 April 2021 and that income earned in the UK between April and the start of

your assistantship may be taken into account when your own tax liability is being assessed.

## 9. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

### 9.1. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Please remember that you are a member of staff and must therefore adhere to the holiday dates set by the school. If you cannot work because of illness you should inform your school(s) and local education authority (if applicable) immediately by telephone. You may be asked to provide a letter from a doctor. This should cover the entire duration of the absence and must be sent to the school as soon as it is issued. Any prolonged absence on account of illness should be reported to the Ministry of Education in Italy and to the British Council.

Requests for leave of absence for any other reason should be made in advance to the head of school, who is within their right to refuse it. You are reminded that if you are absent from school without prior authorisation, your monthly allowance might be reduced and in extreme circumstances your assistantship might be revoked.

If you do receive permission to take an additional leave of absence from school, we recommend that you get this in writing (i.e. an email) from the head of the school.

If it becomes necessary to resign from your post, you must give sufficient prior notice of your intended departure to the school, the Ministry of Education in Italy and the British Council, setting out your reasons in full. If you're an undergraduate, you must also inform your university in the UK.

Please be aware that if you are absent for more than 30 consecutive days during one academic year, even if these absences are justified, your school withholds the right to revoke your contract. This clause is referred to in the letter of appointment provided by the Italian authorities.

### 9.2. SOLVING PROBLEMS & LINES OF REFERRAL

Conditions in schools in Italy differ from those in the UK. Any difficulties should be discussed with your mentor teacher and/or the teacher of the class concerned in the first instance. If the problem cannot be solved, you should then talk to the head teacher or get in touch with your contact at the local education authority (if applicable). Satisfactory solutions can usually be found through such consultations but if the problem remains unresolved, you may contact the Ministry of Education in Italy.

The British Council in the UK will be happy to offer advice, but should only be contacted when all other attempts to solve the issue have been made. Problems are dealt with most quickly and effectively locally and the British Council will instruct you to take the steps mentioned above. Please see the [Line of Referral](#) document included in your pack for further information.

To avoid problems at school, it is a good idea to form a good working relationship with other members of staff. You should introduce yourself to all members of the English department. It is important to be patient and polite and to be aware of the work pressure of others. Please remember that it is not good practice to correct the teacher in front of students. You should always be punctual, responsible and prepare adequately for your lessons. Furthermore, meeting

regularly with your mentor gives the opportunity for them to feedback about your performance and for you to raise any concerns or issues.

Do tell people if you have problems or if you need information as otherwise they will assume everything is ok. The authorities will not appreciate it if you suffer in silence and complain six months later. A lot of past assistants may tell you that their assistantship in Italy was the best year of their life. This can raise expectations and often leads to people feeling low especially during the first few weeks until they settle in.

The British Council has a zero-tolerance policy approach to discrimination or harassment of any kind. If a serious incident occurs and the line of referral is not appropriate, please contact us.

**Please be advised that during your period of appointment as a language assistant, it is your school and not the British Council who is your employer.**

## 10. IN COUNTRY ADVICE

### 10.1. PERSONAL SAFETY

It is very important to stick to the same health and safety rules as you would at home and always heed advice given by local people. Please refer to the Personal Safety advice on our website which provides an emergency telephone number as well as essential guidelines on how to avoid potentially dangerous situations.

We strongly advise that you spend some time looking at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website and check it regularly as there is a lot of useful and up-to-date information provided. We also recommend that assistants read the 'Advice for

Travellers' documentations which can be found here: [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice). Ensure that you regularly check the Italy travel advice page: [www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/europe/italy](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/europe/italy).

Please also refer to the FCO website for information regarding sexual attacks: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/race-and-sexual-assault-abroad](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/race-and-sexual-assault-abroad).

## 10.2. TRAVELLING AROUND

Living in Italy for a year provides you with a great opportunity to explore and get to know the country.

Each town/comune has its own website which can give useful information about what to see and do in the local area. For these websites use the formula [www.comune.INSERT NAME OF TOWN.it](http://www.comune.INSERT NAME OF TOWN.it) e.g. [www.comune.verona.it](http://www.comune.verona.it).

### Other useful travel websites

- [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)
- [www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree)
- [www.budgettravel.com](http://www.budgettravel.com)
- [www.roughguides.com](http://www.roughguides.com)
- [www.worldtravelguide.net](http://www.worldtravelguide.net)

### Trentino-Alto Adige

Some assistants in Italy have been placed in the autonomous region of Trentino-Alto Adige.

You can read more about the region on the following websites:

- [www.suedtirol.info/en/](http://www.suedtirol.info/en/)
- [www.regione.taa.it/](http://www.regione.taa.it/)

### Train

Travel by train within Italy is relatively cheap although prices do vary



depending on the type of train. Alta Velocità, Eurostar and Intercity trains connect the larger towns and cities and you get there faster. However these are more expensive than the slower Regionale trains, which stop at most stations and are generally very good value. What's more, the Regionale trains usually have a set fare no matter when you book them. For train times and prices visit [www.trenitalia.it](http://www.trenitalia.it) (or [www.sii.bz.it/de/](http://www.sii.bz.it/de/) in Alto Adige). Former assistants also recommend looking in advance for cheap rates on Alta Velocità, Eurostar and Intercity. The Trenitalia website has a variety of offers, see [Promozione e Offerte](#) page on their site for more information.

You can also buy a **Carta Verde**, which is valid for a year, costs €40 and entitles under 26-year-olds to 10% of all rail travel, as well as a 25% discount on some international ticket prices and other benefits. Please be aware that when travelling on a discounted ticket bought with the Carta Verde you will have to show your card and some ID to validate its use.

A previous assistant has also recommended the **InterRail** Italy pass if you are planning a longer trip around Italy. Another assistants living in Milan recommended getting an **ATM abbonamento student** which covers all the main city lines in the metropolitan, the trams and the buses.

### Validating your tickets

When travelling by train remember to validate your ticket by stamping it in one of the green machines located at the end of each platform. If you are caught with a ticket that has not been stamped you will be fined. You must also generally stamp bus tickets when boarding a bus.

## Bus

*Abbonamenti* for travel on public transport are available on a daily, weekly, monthly (and annual) basis and are better value than single tickets. You can also buy Carnets of 10 tickets which can often work out cheaper than a single.

For further information on travel within Italy, you can contact the following organisations:

- Centro Turistico Studentesco e Giovanile (CTS) – information for students (eg travel concessions)  
Ufficio Prenotazioni  
0039 06 4411166 [www.cts.it](http://www.cts.it)  
email: [prenotazioni@cts.it](mailto:prenotazioni@cts.it)
- Italian Government Tourist Board, 1 Princes Street, London, W1B 2AY  
0207 4081254; [www.enit.it](http://www.enit.it)

### 10.3. ISIC

International Student Identity Cards cost £9 and are available online and from student travel agencies such as STA and BUNAC. They can be used to obtain cheap entry into certain museums, theatres, cinemas and art galleries throughout Europe. They may also entitle you to certain travel concessions. Please see <https://www.isic.org/> for further information. Please note that in order to obtain an ISIC you must be a full time student.

For non-students who are aged under 26 there is the International Youth Travel Card (£9), which can be bought in the same way – see [www.statravel.co.uk/youth-identity-card.htm](http://www.statravel.co.uk/youth-identity-card.htm) for further information.

All assistants under the age of 30 (or 26 depending on the country or region), can also buy the European Youth Card. Holders of the card are eligible for discounts at a range of places and on a range of services. For more information on the discounts and where you can buy the card, go to: <https://www.eyca.org/>.

## 10.4. INTERNET

Former assistants have recommended that you do not take out a monthly or year-long contract and instead use a Pay as You Go dongle. There have been issues in the past with assistant being unable to cancel their contracts and then being faced with legal action. If you do wish to take out a contract, please make sure you read the small print carefully and keep a copy of all documents that you sign. Do not sign any contract without fully understanding the terms and conditions.

Student language assistants can sometimes benefit from using eduroam. Thanks to global agreement, the eduroam Wi-Fi roaming service is free-of-charge to users. More than 6,000 hotspots are available at universities, research centres, academies, many schools and other research and education institutions in more than 70 territories around the world. As eduroam grows, more and more hotspots are appearing in additional places such as libraries, museums and public spaces such as railway stations and coffee shops.

## 10.5. PHONING HOME & MOBILES

The international dialling code for Italy is 0039 + the area code. When calling from Italy, dial 00 + country code + area code + number.

The main mobile phone operators in Italy are TIM, Vodafone and Wind.

Past assistants have made the following recommendations:

- get a pre-pay mobile phone rather than a contract;
- take someone with you to help with the paperwork;
- when calling home: phone cards or phone shops are economical,

or using Skype or [www.voipbuster.com](http://www.voipbuster.com).

- call box telephones take phone-cards which can be purchased at tobacconists and newsagents.

## 10.6. LOST OR STOLEN MOBILE/CELLULAR PHONES

If a mobile phone is lost or stolen, call the service provider and give them the IMEI number (this is a cellular/mobile phone's unique identification number) so that the service can be suspended. Report the theft or loss to the police, providing the IMEI and telephone numbers.

# 11. TEACHING TIPS AND RESOURCES

## 11.1. OBSERVATION PERIOD

When you first arrive at your school(s) you should ask for a period of observation of 1-2 weeks. It may not be offered to you automatically. Observation will allow you to familiarise yourself with the school environment, to experience classroom management techniques as well as get to know the names, faces and personalities of your pupils and gauge their level of English.

Try to note the following:

- how the teacher starts and ends the lesson
- how the teacher speaks to pupils
- how the teacher involves all pupils, including shy ones, in the class activity
- what the teacher's attitude is to pupil errors and error correction
- how the teacher controls disruptive behaviour, lateness and lack of effort

## 11.2. BRITISH COUNCIL TEACHING RESOURCES

The British Council produces and co-produces a range of resources specifically for Language Assistants. Making use of these will help you greatly in delivering interesting and useful classroom activities and will support you in solving problems in the classroom.

The British Council is also closely involved with the teaching of English abroad. Local branches develop useful resources and organise a range of cultural activities which may be of interest to you and your school. For information on forthcoming events, go to [www.britishcouncil.org/italy](http://www.britishcouncil.org/italy).

Please note that many foreign schools are anxious to establish links with UK counterparts in order to share information and arrange pupil exchanges. Assistants are encouraged to help in whatever way possible in establishing such links and there is information and guidance on the British Council website. You may also wish to find out if your school has any eTwinning projects or set up a project yourself: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/etwinning>

### Language Assistants Manual

'Language Assistant' by Clare Lavery is a resource book designed for language assistants and provides information on all aspects of the role. This can be downloaded [here](#). Please read this carefully as it is **extremely useful** in preparing you for your assistantship.

## 11.3. TEACHING MATERIALS

### TeachEnglish Website

TeachingEnglish.org is an online resource centre produced jointly by the British Council and the BBC has a

specialised Language Assistants micro-site: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/language-assistant>.

On the site you will have access to:

- [Teaching tips](#)
- [Essential UK: Seasonal lesson plans based around UK topics](#)
- [Primary tips: Help getting started with primary-level students](#)
- [Classroom games](#)

### LearnEnglish Website

The British Council Learn English website is an excellent free online resource for students of English with lots of games, stories, listening activities and grammar exercises: <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/>

This may be a useful tool for you to use for your teaching but also to pass on to your students for them to access from home.

### Facebook Page

The British Council is not able to endorse any externally created Facebook pages for English Language Assistants. However you can 'like' our [British Council Facebook Page](#), which provides an opportunity to discuss teaching ideas, share your experience with other assistants and find out about other international opportunities through the British Council.

### Language Assistants Teaching English Course

This year, we have taken the decision to provide all outgoing English Language Assistants with access to a free teacher training course. Normally participants would be required to pay a fee for access to a different course, however the British Council will cover the costs of this new course. There will be 6 self-

access modules which each take a recommended period of 1 week to complete. The modules are as follows:

1. Getting started
2. Child protection (mandatory)
3. Understanding Grammar
4. Understanding Special Educational Needs
5. Understanding grammar teaching – focus on form
6. Engaging with learning technologies – developing reading skills with digital tools

You will be emailed directly and prompted to register for the training course. Although completion of the course is not mandatory, it is highly recommended, and completing the child protection module is mandatory for all allocated English Language Assistants.

You can find out further information on the Language Assistants Teaching English course on our [website](#), under the preparing to teach heading.

### Other Teaching Materials

One way of making language learning real for your pupils is bringing authentic materials from the UK into the classroom. Take the opportunity to collect a variety of resources while you are still at home.

Past assistants have found that the following materials worked well: Photos of family and friends and your home town, lots of postcards, examples of UK coins and notes, train tickets and timetables, stamps, posters and tea towels to decorate walls, Christmas cards and crackers, posters and games, UK TV programmes and listings, magazines and local newspapers, CDs, photos of school uniforms, a school timetable and school report, flashcards, word searches, maps, tourist brochures, UK food (marmite, jelly, chocolate, custard, mince pies, gravy granules,

etc), adverts, menus, cartoons, comic books, DVDs (e.g. Ready Steady Cook for catering students), simple recipes e.g. scones, recordings of the weather forecast, London tube map, tapes of friends' accents and conversations, bingo, Taboo etc.

The more materials you can find the better. Think about what worked well for you as a language student and about which items you find interesting when you are in a foreign country. You can also ask your host school(s) whether there is something specific they would like you to bring and to find out about topics you are likely to be asked to cover during your assistantship.

### Other Useful Teaching Websites

- [www.englishclub.com](http://www.englishclub.com)
- [www.onestopenglish.com](http://www.onestopenglish.com)
- [www.bogglesworldesl.com](http://www.bogglesworldesl.com)
- [www.cambridgeesol.org/teach](http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach)
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/teachers>
- [www.letssingit.com](http://www.letssingit.com)
- [www.lyrics.com](http://www.lyrics.com)
- [www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com)
- [www.cartoonstock.com](http://www.cartoonstock.com)
- [www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com)
- [www.skyline-english.com](http://www.skyline-english.com)
- [www.eslcafe.com](http://www.eslcafe.com)
- [www.eslpartyland.com](http://www.eslpartyland.com)
- [www.eslgold.com](http://www.eslgold.com)
- [www.esl-lab.com](http://www.esl-lab.com)
- [www.eslflow.com](http://www.eslflow.com)
- [www.eslflashcards.com](http://www.eslflashcards.com)
  
- [www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids](http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids)
- [www.developingteachers.com](http://www.developingteachers.com)
- [www.tes.co.uk](http://www.tes.co.uk)
- <http://projectbritain.com>
- <http://www.slideshare.net/>
- <https://prezi.com/>
- [www.busyteacher.org](http://www.busyteacher.org) - **A favourite among previous ELAs!**
- <http://www.eslprintables.com/>
- <http://englishiscool-esl.blogspot.co.uk/>

- [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc](http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc)
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk>
- [www.royal.gov.uk](http://www.royal.gov.uk)
- [www.discovernorthernireland.com](http://www.discovernorthernireland.com)
- [www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com)
- [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com)
- <http://www.visitwales.com/>

You could also listen to our Language Assistants podcast episode centered around [Preparing to Teach](#).

## 11.4. BOOK LIST

You are not obliged to purchase any materials, however some previous assistants have commented that some of the books below are useful for language assistants, particularly those who may wish to engage in private tutoring or pursue a career in language teaching in the future. Also, look out for the series of handbooks and source books for language teachers published by CUP, Longman, Macmillan and OUP.

### Dictionaries

- BBC English Dictionary (BBC English/Harper Collins)
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Longman)
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Oxford University Press)
- Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (Longman)

### Grammar reference books

- A Practical English Grammar (A.J. Thomson & A.V Martinet, Oxford University Press)
- Current English Grammar (S. Chalker, Phoenix)
- Basic English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
- Practical English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
- Discover English (R. Bolitho & B. Tomlinson, Macmillan Heinemann)

- English Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
- Advanced Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
- How English Works (Michael Swan and Catherine Walter, Oxford University Press)
- Learner English (Michael Swan & Bernard Smith (eds.) Cambridge University Press)

### Basic methodology books

- The Practice of English Language Teaching J. Harmer Longman
- How to Teach English J. Harmer Longman
- How to Teach Grammar S. Thornbury Longman
- How to Use the Internet in ELT D. Teeler & P. Gray Longman
- One to One Peter Wilberg Language Teaching Publications

## 12. SPOTLIGHT ON ITALY

The Italian population is now more than 61 million, making it the fourth-most populous EU member state and the most populous country in southern Europe. The euro is the official currency of Italy.

To hear more about the Language Assistants programme in Italy, you can listen to our [Italy Podcast Episode](#) which includes lots of helpful tips and provides an insight into the experience of being an assistant in Italy.

### 12.1. REGIONS

The regions of Italy are the administrative divisions of Italy. There are 20 regions, of which five are constitutionally given a broader amount of autonomy. The autonomous regions with special statute are Sardegna, Sicilia, Valle d'Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli-Venezia Giulia.

It is worth noting that each region of Italy has its own dialect, which is its own regional variety of the Italian language. These regional dialects are not as subtle as a different accent, but more a completely different lesser-spoken language which derived from Latin independently from standard Italian. The dialects of Italy are generally spoken in more informal situations, such as with friends or family members, however in some regions the dialect is recognised as an official language. More information on the lesser-spoken languages of Italy (or dialects) can be found on: [Ethnologue](#).

## 12.2. PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Italy has many official public holidays every year, some observed nationwide, some local. In all cases you should check public holidays with your school; however the following are usually observed in most regions:

- 01 January – Capodanno (New Year’s Day)
- 06 January – Epifania (The Epiphany)
- 21 April – Pasqua (Easter)
- 22 April – Lunedì dell’Angelo/ Pasquetta (Easter Monday)
- 25 April – Festa della Liberazione (Liberation Day)
- 01 May – Festa del Lavoro/ Festa dei Lavoratori (International Workers’ Day)
- 02 June – Festa della Repubblica (Republic Day)
- 15 August – Ferragosto (Day of the Assumption)
- 01 November – Ognissanti (All Saints’ Day)
- 08 December – Immacolata Concezione (Immaculate Conception)
- 25 December – Natale (Christmas Day)
- 26 December – Santo Stefano (Saint Stephens’ Day)

**Other holidays which are celebrated locally (region/city dependent) are:**

- 25 April – Festa di San Marco (The Feast of Saint Mark)
- 24 June – Festa di San Giovanni Battista (The Feast of Saint John)
- 29 June – San Pietro e Paolo (The Feast of Saint Peter and Paul)
- 19 September – Festa di San Gennaro (The Feast of Saint Januarius)
- 07 December – Festa di Sant’Ambrogio (The Feast of Saint Ambrose)

### Local festivals and sagre

Make the most of your time whilst in Italy. There is always something going on and there are many festivals, small and large, that usually take place throughout the year across Italy. Local food and drink festivals called sagre allow you to taste local delicacies and see villages and towns that are slightly more off the beaten track.

Moreover, you should try to visit the *Carnevale* celebrations which happen across the country in February (especially in Venice). For more information on local festival as at your local tourist information or search online at: [www.sagreinitalia.it](http://www.sagreinitalia.it).

## 12.3. EMERGENCY SERVICES IN ITALY

The European emergency number is 112. However this is not the only emergency number in Italy. The national emergency numbers are as follows:

- Police – 113
- Fire Brigade – 115
- Carabinieri (Italian Military Police) – 112
- Ambulance – 118

### Urgent Assistance

If you’re in Italy and you need urgent help from the British Embassy (for example, you’ve been attacked, arrested

or someone has died), call +39 06 4220 0001.

## 12.4. EARTHQUAKES

Italy is one of the countries in the Mediterranean with the highest seismic risk; therefore many parts of Italy lie on a major seismic fault line. Minor tremors and earthquakes are a regular occurrence. To read more about what to do before, during and after an earthquake, please visit the [Protezione Civile Website](#). This governmental website also issues information and guidance on other risk factors of living in Italy such as extreme weather events.

## 12.5. BRITISH EMBASSY AND CONSULATE

For up-to-date British Embassy and consulate contact details in Italy please refer to:

- <https://www.gov.uk/world/embassies>
- <https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-rome>

Please take note of the addresses of the British Embassy and British Consulate in Italy below in case of emergency or loss of your passport. Assistants who do not hold British citizenship should check with their own Consulates/Embassies in Italy.

### British Embassy, Rome

Via XX Settembre 80a  
00187 Roma RM  
Te: 0039 06 4220 0001  
[InfoRome@fco.gov.uk](mailto:InfoRome@fco.gov.uk)

### British Consulate General, Milan

Via San Paolo 7  
20121 Milano MI

Te: 0039 06 4220 2431  
[Info.Consulate@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Info.Consulate@fco.gov.uk)

British consular offices abroad will advise or help in case of serious personal difficulties but they cannot do the work of travel agencies, Information bureaux, Banks or the police. You are advised to register with, or at least locate, your nearest British consulate as soon as possible after your arrival.

## 12.6. BRITISH COUNCIL ITALY

**Please note:** The British Council in Italy is not responsible for the administration of the Language Assistants programme – this is the role of the **MIUR** in Rome, **Indire** in Florence and the regional authorities in Trentino-Alto Adige.

The British Council in Italy has been working in cultural relations since 1945. There are offices located in Rome, Milan and Naples with a combined staff of over 100 who every year work with many thousands of Italians directly plus millions more online through our activities in English, Arts and Education and Society. The activities and programmes based in Italy are based on mutually beneficial relationships with customers, partners and sponsors.

Many people associate the British Council with qualifications such as Cambridge First and Advanced. Although they are a fundamental part of our work, they are not the only qualifications we offer. The International English Language Testing System - IELTS is one of our most exciting ventures for young people and adults, conducted at our own centres and other external premises in Italy. Thousands of candidates visit the Italian offices each year to take these exams to enhance their study or career opportunities.

In addition to this, the British Council develops and participates in many different projects themed around society, science, education and the arts.

Our work in education and science focuses on sharing the UK's expertise and innovation in teaching, learning and assessment and bringing partners together to work on collaborative projects. Our work in society helps citizens and institutions contribute to a more inclusive, open and prosperous world and connects local issues to global themes, ranging from social action to diversity and youth issues. Our arts team in Italy work with local cultural institutions to develop innovative, high-quality events and projects which promote the best of British creative talent across all art forms, from theatre and dance to visual arts and design.

Furthermore, the British Council has extensive and mutually beneficial relationships with state schools and with local offices of the Italian Ministry of Education through our Bilingual Education project, exam services and Connecting Classrooms projects.

To find out more about the British Council's presence in Italy, please visit the [British Council Italy website](#).