

14 – EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESEARCH

This section provides a synthetic overview of the principal data provided by various educational institutions. The tables contain data regarding the number of classes, pupils and teachers, both for nursery school and primary school and lower and upper secondary school. With regard to university education the tables provide data regarding the number of enrolments and graduates per faculty in the three state universities in the Region (Palermo, Messina and Catania).

In the school year 2008-2009, there was an increase of 691 in the number of children attending infant schools, in much the same way as the overall number of sections rose from 5,206 to 5,226 (+0.4%); the average number of children per section remained the same as in the previous year (22), a figure lower than that for Italy as a whole (23.3). This indicator is subject to variations among the Sicilian Provinces, ranging from 19.9 in Ragusa to 23.5 in Palermo.

The number of children in Sicily attending primary school, in the school year 2007/2008, also dropped by 1.5%, which confirms the trend in the period from 2003 to 2008, during which the falls in the overall totals recorded ranged from 0.6% to 2.7%. In lower secondary schools, on the other hand, there was a slight increase in the number of pupils (+0.4%), after the negative trend recorded in the previous five-year period.

In upper secondary schools, in the school year 2008/2009, as in the previous two-year period, there was a -2.4% drop in the number of pupils enrolled. The most popular secondary schools are still the technical-vocational institutes, which attract more than half the Regional school population, whereas the numbers enrolled at classical and scientific “lyceums” make up 33.5% of the total. The school population seems to be stable in teachers’ training schools, whilst there are significant drops in technical-vocational institutes (-4.1%) and in art-institutes and art-schools (-4.3%).

In 2008/2009 the number of permanent full-time teaching staff remained more or less stable when compared to the school year 2006/2007 (last available data), with a slight increase in infant schools and upper secondary schools, and a fall in other school levels. The number of students per teacher ranged between 9.6 in lower secondary schools to 12.7 in infant schools.

Statistical data regarding university education in the academic year 2008/2009 shows that, overall, when compared to the previous academic year, there was a 6% fall in the numbers of those enrolled in the principal Sicilian universities; this trend was particularly evident at the University of Palermo (-13.8%). Although it still had the highest overall number of registered students (20,055 students), the Faculty of Law showed a consistently negative trend over the last ten years (-7.9% in 2008/2009). On the contrary, the opposite was true for the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, where numbers rose by 1.4% in the last academic year. Overall, 46.6% of students had not passed the required exams in the prescribed time; in the academic year 2008/2009 this number increased by 9.8% over the previous year, with an inversion in the trend when compared to figures from the two previous academic years.

As for the Research and Development (R&D) sector, in Sicily in 2006 (last available data), expenditure destined for this sector amounted to 4.4% of the national total and a sum of 717,766,000 Euros, showing an increase of 15.4% over the year 2005. 57.4% of this sum is represented by university expenses, whilst only 17.9% of the overall sum comes from Public Administration, a figure which does represent a 35.8% increase over the previous year. The private sector, which covers 24.6% of expenses, shows a 7.1% increase. As regards personnel engaged in R&D in Sicily, in the same period (2006), there was a 0.4% decrease in the overall number of full-time equivalent units employed, 63.2% of whom were university personnel. In all, personnel employed in R&D in Sicily represented 4.7% of the corresponding total at the national level.

Glossary

Drop-out rate: number of students enrolled (per 100) who interrupt their studies in that same school, or university course.

Freshman: student enrolled in the first year of a university degree or diploma course.

Intra-muros research expenditure: expenditure for scientific research and experimental development (R&D) provided by business enterprises and public bodies, and carried out by their own personnel and their own equipment.

Primary and lower secondary school certificate: qualification awarded on passing the exams at the end of the primary and lower secondary school cycle.

School-attendance and enrolment rate: percentage ratio between students enrolled in the educational level in question and the resident population belonging to the corresponding theoretical age-group. For upper secondary schools the theoretical age in question is 14 to 18, for university 19 to 25.

School section: class in nursery school

Secondary-school-leaving certificate: qualification awarded on completion of upper secondary school studies.

Transition-rate: percentage ratio between persons who have completed a given level of education and those who are enrolled in the first year of the next level (excluding those repeating the year), in the subsequent school or academic year.

University degree: qualification awarded on completion of a traditional 4-6 year university course or a new first-level degree course lasting three years.

University diploma: qualification awarded on completion of a university diploma course, or at a specialised school, and lasting two or three years (short degree-course)

Further reading

Publications

The University in figures –academic year 2005-2006 – Ministry for the University and Research

The state school: synthesis of data – Various years - Ministry for Education, the University and Research

Graduates and studies (Survey 2004) - ISTAT

Graduates and the labour market (Survey 2004) - ISTAT

Research and Development in Italy (2002-2004) - ISTAT

Statistics for scientific research (2001-2003) – ISTAT

Internet

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

University and work (2007)

Education and entering the labour market

Research and development in Italy (2005)

Italian Statistical Yearbook 2009 – Chapter 7: “Education”

www.pubblica.istruzione.it

Premises, pupils, classes, staff in state schools – school year 2007/08

Pupils with non-Italian citizenship – state and non-state schools – school year 2006/07

The School in figures 2007

Education annals

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

Enrolled students and graduates in the university system

Enrolled students and graduates in the AFAM system (Higher artistic and musical training)

The University in figures - 2007

Full-time permanent teacher data-bank

Indentured teaching staff and technical-administrative personnel data-bank