

FLORENCE  
Italy

## Florence Honors Program

**Tradition**  
**History**  
**Experimental**

The Program was created in 1989 to provide an opportunity for students to explore art on opposite sides of the Atlantic. Each year, the exchange program provides that experience for three students from Italian schools and three from MCAD. In Florence, students from Minneapolis may attend classes at three schools: [Accademia di Belle Arti](#), [Istituto Statale d'Arte](#), and/or [Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche](#).

**Accademia di Belle Arti** The Accademia di Belle Arti dates back to 1563, when it was founded by Cosimo I dei Medici. Subsequently, it was directed by such illustrious heads as Michelangelo. The school's mission was declared in 1571, when it was designated as the "University for Art and Drawing." It has remained under the governance of the provincial education department and enrolls 1,100 students. Courses of study include: art history, anatomy, decorative arts, painting, printmaking, theater scene design, sculpture, and technical drawing.

**Istituto Statale d'Arte** The Istituto Statale d'Arte occupies a seventeenth century building within the Boboli Gardens in Florence's Pitti Palace complex. The building, which has housed the school for over seventy years, is the site of historical works of art such as the "Gipsoteca," the most important collection of chalk molds in Italy. The school also houses a valuable collection of popular and oriental art, and a 20,000-volume library, specializing in art history and applied arts. Approximately 1,000 students from high school to bachelors of fine arts attend the school. The courses of study include: architectural and mechanical drawing, art restoration/conservation, batik, bookbinding, communications, fashion design, gilding, graphic design, jewelry, media graphics, modeling, mosaics, encaustic, printmaking, scenic design, sculpture, textiles, weaving, fresco and gold leaf painting.

**Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche** The demand to train highly qualified designers to feed industry needs led to the creation of Industrial Design Courses in the early 1960's, and evolved into Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche (ISIA) in 1974. ISIA is a four-year, university-level school. The teaching approach is experimental, with faculty appointed annually by the Comitato Scientifico Didattico. It is an innovative Program, recognized nationally and internationally with approximately 100 students. The courses of study include: CAD, computer project analysis, marketing, geometrical and mechanical drawing, graphics, history of art and design, modeling, multimedia, photography, production techniques, rendering, industrial research and analysis, sociology and technological innovation.

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## Eligibility

<b>Semester</b>	spring (January-May)
<b>Major</b>	all majors ideal fine arts and photo
<b>Status</b>	3.0 GPA junior (60-89 credits) 3 students

## Expectations

<b>Credits</b>	12 to 15-studio credits
<b>Curriculum</b>	independent self-initiated immersion in Italian curriculum
<b>Language</b>	Italian language course provided
<b>Visa</b>	yes; \$1,000 per month required for visa application. Apply in person at the Italian consulate in Chicago
<b>Health Insurance</b>	students required to purchase health insurance from the government at registration at the local police station; up to \$350
<b>Housing</b>	provided by the regional government; housing is generally close to one of the three schools; apartment style, dormitory style with shared bathrooms, limited kitchen and laundry facilities or sublet simple furnished apartment, maybe co-ed with Italian students. Commute to campus by bus. May require damage deposits of up to \$250
<b>Environment</b>	historical museum-centered

## The City

<b>Points of Interest</b>	The Uffizi Gallery Pitti Palace Museum of Costumes and Carriages Baboli Gardens
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## Florence Honors Program

opera houses  
Santa Maria del Fiore (13th century castle)  
church of Santa Croce  
Zecchi (art supply store)

## Transportation

- Buses (bus urbani)** Bus passes are available outside the rail station Stazione di Santa Maria Novella; bus numbers and operating hours are listed at each bus stop. Students can purchase a 3 month unlimited bus pass for approx. 60 euro; packs of 4 tickets at the cigarette kiosks or the Tabacharias.
- Taxi** Generally there is no need to use a taxi because of the easy bus system and walkability. An average ride within Florence costs 7 euro.
- Train (il tren)** Trenitalia is fairly cheap, ranging from 12 euro round trip tickets to 80 euro depending on the day of travel and destination. Trains to major cities like Rome and Naples increase in cost with each month; advice is to travel to major sites early (January-March).
- Bicycle (bicicletta)** Bicycles are available for rent, however there are few places to lock and thieves are common.

## Food

- Supermarkets (Supermercati)** The three best supermarkets are Il Conto, Coop, and Esselunga. Most food is local and organic.
- Food Market (mercati)** Mercato Centrale is the best place to purchase produce, fresh pastas, cheese, and meat; cheap and delicious, but the hours are limited.
- Dining** On average. plan to pay 7 euro for a primi piatti (first course) meal to 20 euro for a larger meal. Dining is expensive in Florence (compared to food in cities like Napoli where a pizza can cost 3 or 4 euro). The cheaper and more authentic restaurants are across the river, as well as a restaurant next door to the Scuola Leonardo da Vinci language school which offers a 6 euro primi piatti and bread for the language students.
- Table Charge (il conto)** If you sit to dine an extra charge is incurred, ranging from 2 to 8 euro added onto the receipt.
- Tips** Tips are separate from the table charge and added to the meal total; do not tip on the table.

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**Mensa** Mensa is a student cafeteria that serves the cheapest meal in town. There are two Mensas: one in Centro Firenze and one in the student housing on the outside of town. Students need to show a mensa card and pay from 3 to 5 euro. Cards are available at one of the two major student housing complexes with proof of passport, the letter from the Consul general and acceptance letter from the Academia.

## Living Arrangements

Over the years, students have lived in a variety of apartments, homes and hostels throughout the city, ensuring an immersive cultural experience.

**Italian Roommates** Space is at a premium, so keep living spaces clean. Wash dishes right after use. Don't leave food out. Don't leave personal belongings in the kitchen or on the balcony. If a door is closed, knock; if it is open, still ask before entering. The local preference is to eat late at night so be sure to negotiate time to cook. If roommates are students they will study at home all day, everyday; keep music to a quiet level. Social life consists of dining out and clubbing--if invited, go!

**Laundry** Laundry machines may be available in the building. If not, coin laundries are common (expect to spend 3 to 4 euro on one wash, one dry).

## Culture

**Dress** Italians wear a lot of black. Shoulders should not be exposed until the very end of May or later. Wearing pajamas, house clothing, or flip flops is not acceptable outdoors. When dining out or in the clubs, the dress code is chic; most clubs don't accept jeans with holes or dirty clothing. Women are advised to keep clothing modest and simple.

**Behavior** Be polite by adhering to the Italian social structure. Pay attention to the volume of one's voice. When making eye contact with another person, the longer the gaze, the more it reads as an invitation to interact. Be aware of cultural differences; a smile and a look is often considered an invitation. Walk assertively and purposefully. Whenever possible, try to speak Italian--even if incorrect, an attempt is appreciated.

## Schools/Classes

- La Scuola Di Leonardo Da Vinci** Classes meet five days a week for three weeks. Prior to the start of formal studio instruction, MCAD students complete a comprehensive introduction to the Italian language and culture taught only in Italian. Conversation in any other language discouraged; homework and practice outside of class is expected.  
[www.scuolaleonardo.com](http://www.scuolaleonardo.com)
- Accademia di Belle Arti** Most similar to MCAD; many students in small classrooms; free drawing co-op every Saturday; courses offered may include: photography, typography, painting, sculpture, scenography, design, foundry.
- Istituto Statale d'Arte** Structured as half university half high school; courses offered may include: sculpture (mould-making, marble) painting, mosaics, wood lacquering, graphic arts (xilography, chalcography, lithography, bindery, photo-gravirer), advertising (photography, computer graphics), interior design (furniture-cabinetry, moulds, scenes), jewelry (relief and chasing, metal enameling, micro-casting), weaving (manual weaving, silk printing), fashion (cutting and sewing).
- Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche** Classes in Italian, but some teachers speak English; courses offered may include: industrial design (art and design history, morphology, semiotics, descriptive geometry, graphic design, marketing).

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