ACADEMIC RECOGNITION OF DOCTORATE DEGREE AWARDED ABROAD

Law No. 15 of February 25, 2022, Article 1, paragraph 28-quinquies, point 3.2, has granted universities the authority, previously vested in the offices of the Ministry of University and Research pursuant to Article 74 of Presidential Decree 382/80, to grant legal value to PhD degrees obtained abroad, including those obtained in countries other than those signatory to the Lisbon Convention, in accordance with the rules set forth in Article 2 of Law No. 15 of July 11, 2002. 148.

At the University of L'Aquila, the evaluation of a PhD degree obtained abroad, aimed at obtaining the corresponding Italian PhD degree, may have the following outcomes:

A) the direct award of the corresponding Italian PhD degree;

B) denial of recognition of the foreign degree in the case of a "substantial difference".

For the evaluation of a qualification obtained abroad, for the purpose of directly awarding the Italian PhD degree, the qualification must always meet the following characteristics set out in the CIMEA guidelines, available at https://www.cimea.it/Upload/Documenti/Doc_CIMEA_137_Linee_guida_riconoscimento_titoli_esteri_DdR.pdf):

1. be an official third-cycle doctoral qualification in the relevant foreign system, awarded by an official institution of the foreign system;
2. confer the same academic rights in the relevant foreign system;
3. present the same elements as the corresponding Italian qualification in terms of duration, nature of research, disciplinary elements, and method of obtaining it;
4. there must be a PhD qualification in the same field with which the foreign qualification can be compared, both in terms of type and disciplinary field.

With reference to the requirement in point 1., it is specified that the qualification for which recognition is sought must correspond to the third cycle of studies, according to the Bologna Process qualifications framework, and to level 8 according to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

With reference to the requirement in point 2., it is specified that for the qualification to be recognized, it must have been obtained at the end of a course based on academic studies preparatory to research. **Therefore, PhD qualifications obtained abroad at the end of study cycles pursuing professionalizing purposes cannot be recognized**.
If the above requirements are not met, recognition will be denied.

For the purposes of recognizing a foreign doctoral degree in Italy, possession of the previous qualification that allowed access to PhD programs abroad must always be verified: a master's degree or specialist degree, a degree obtained according to the system prior to Ministerial Decree no. 509/1999, or a qualification obtained abroad comparable to an Italian second-level academic qualification. This requirement is established by Article 6, paragraph 5 of Ministerial Decree 270/2004, which states: *"To be admitted to a PhD program, you must possess a master's degree or another qualification obtained abroad and recognized as suitable."*

The Italian system is based on the concept of consequentiality of qualifications, and it is not possible to recognize a PhD degree obtained in a foreign country whose higher education system allows access to PhD programs with a first-level university qualification.

PROCEDURE

Before submitting the application for direct recognition, the interested party must identify the PhD program available at the University of L'Aquila (https://www.univaq.it/section.php?id=110) with which their degree can be compared, with regard to type and scientific-disciplinary field.

The application, addressed to the Rector, must be completed using the form attached to this notice. The following documentation must be attached:

a. Certified copy (note 1) of the foreign doctoral degree, obtained from a recognized institution in the official foreign higher education system, legalized or stamped with an "apostille" (note 2). The degree must be accompanied by:

   - a declaration of equivalent value issued by the competent Italian diplomatic or consular representation in the area, **or** a certificate of comparability and a certificate of verification issued by the Italian ENIC-NARIC-CIMEA center (note 3) under the agreement with the University of L'Aquila (https://www.cimea.it/pagina-attestati-di-comparabilita-e-verifica-dei-titoli). To register, access the *Diplome* service through the following link: https://cimea.diplo-me.eu/univaq/#/auth/login.;

b. Certified copy (see note 1) of the certification issued by the competent foreign higher education institution on letterhead, stamped and signed, certifying the duration of the course, its full-time nature, the distinguishing disciplinary elements, the doctoral activities undertaken to obtain the final qualification, and the date of awarding the qualification. For qualifications obtained in EU countries, the interested party may attach a certified copy of the Diploma Supplement in English, on letterhead of the foreign institution that issued it, with its signature and stamp;

c. Doctoral thesis in digital format, indicating the web address of the institution's or library's repository where the thesis is stored and available for consultation, and the thesis abstract;

d. Certified copy (see note 1) of the Italian second-cycle qualification with which you were admitted to the foreign doctoral program (note 4) or, certified copy of the foreign second-cycle qualification with legalization or "apostille" stamp (see note 2), accompanied by a declaration of value issued by the competent Italian diplomatic or consular representation in the area **or** a certificate of comparability and a certificate of verification issued by the ENIC-NARIC Italian-CIMEA center (see note 3) under the agreement with the University of L'Aquila (https://www.cimea.it/pagina-attestati-di-comparabilita-e-verifica-dei-titoli). To register, access the *Diplome* service through the following link: https://cimea.diplo-me.eu/univaq/#/auth/login.;

e. Official translation into Italian of all the documents required above and of the thesis, if not written in English (note 5);

f. Copy of a valid identity document. Non-EU citizens must attach a copy of their passport;

g. Receipt of payment of € 316.00 — € 300.00 as a contribution and €16.00 as a tax —to be made via the PagoPA system.

The application for recognition of a PhD degree obtained abroad, along with the above-required documentation, must be submitted in PDF format to the certified email address: protocollo@pec.univaq.it or to the email address dot@strutture.univaq.it

Please note: The fee paid cannot be refunded under any circumstances, regardless of the outcome of the recognition process.

The Doctoral Programs, Research Grants, and Scholarships Unit will evaluate the completeness and formal accuracy of the submitted documentation, requesting any necessary additions. Following the review process, and in any case within 30 days of receiving all the required documents, the application will be forwarded to the Coordinator of the PhD Program for evaluation by the Teaching Board. Requests for clarification or additional documentation will suspend the aforementioned 30-day deadline, which will resume as soon as the interested party has fulfilled the requested requirements.

Please note: Incomplete documentation will not allow the recognition application to be submitted to the Teaching Board for evaluation.

The Teaching Board will examine the foreign qualification from a substantive perspective in order to determine its scientific and disciplinary correspondence with the Italian qualification. In its evaluation, the Board will take into account the candidate's academic record, examining the certifications attesting to doctoral activities, including any publications, and the thesis submitted for the final examination. The Board may request clarifications and/or additional documentation from the candidate.

The Teaching Board will make its decision within 90 days of receiving the documentation. The relevant minutes are forwarded by the Coordinator to the Doctoral Programs, Grants, and Research Scholarships Unit. If the Board's evaluation is positive, the Department will inform the candidates and invite them to deliver or mail to the University of L'Aquila - Doctoral Programs, Research Grants and Scholarships Department - Piazza Santa Margherita, 2 - 67100 L'AQUILA (ITALY) the application for recognition of the qualification already submitted via certified email (PEC) or email, accompanied by a copy of a valid identity document, and **the originals of the documentation referred to in points a), b), and d)** - if the second-cycle academic qualification was obtained abroad, **e).**

The evaluation process for the PhD qualification obtained abroad will be concluded within 30 days of receipt of the above-mentioned documentation with:

- Rector's Decree equating the PhD qualification obtained abroad with the corresponding qualification issued by the University of L'Aquila and granting it validity in Italy pursuant to Law No. 25 of February 25, 2022. 15.
- Rector's Decree Denying Recognition.

For administrative information and clarifications regarding the above procedure, please write to: dot@strutture.univaq.it

NOTES:

1) **Certified copy**: A certified or authenticated copy is a copy of the original document certified by the competent authority as faithful to the original. The authorities responsible for issuing certified copies of qualifications and certificates are: the university that issued the qualifications and certifications, local embassies and consulates, and courts or other authorized public bodies or offices.
2) **Legalization and Apostille**: Legalization is the process by which the signature on a public document is authenticated. If the country in which the qualification was obtained is a signatory to the Aia Convention (October 5, 1961) abolishing the requirement of legalization for foreign public documents, the need to legalize deeds and documents issued by foreign authorities is replaced by another formality: the affixing of the “Aia postille” or "Apostille."

   It is not mandatory to have the qualification legalized or have an apostille affixed in the following cases: if the qualification was issued by one of the countries that signed the European Convention of Brussels of 25 May 1987 (**Belgium, Denmark, France, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Latvia**); if the qualification was issued by a German institution pursuant to the Italian-German Convention on the Exemption from Legalization of Public Documents.

3) **Statement of Comparability and Statement of Verification** issued by the Italian-CIMEA ENIC-NARIC Center: The Statement of Comparability is issued by CIMEA and includes an assessment of the qualification to which it refers in terms of comparability, i.e., an indication of the level of the foreign qualification in relation to the Bologna Process cycles and the levels of the European Qualifications Framework. **Statements regarding the comparability of qualifications from the 55 countries of the Lisbon Convention can be downloaded from the ARDI database**. The Certificate of Verification is a certificate issued by CIMEA - Information Center on Academic Mobility and Equivalence (the Italian ENIC-NARIC center) certifying the authenticity of a qualification. The Certificate of Verification is issued to the holder of a PhD qualification following verification of the actual award of the qualification by an official body in the relevant foreign system. **For the recognition of a PhD qualification obtained abroad, both certificates are required if the qualification is not accompanied by a Declaration of Value.**

4) **Copy of an Italian second-level qualification**: Those who have obtained a second-level qualification in Italy do not need to submit any certificates, but must provide the relevant self-certifications pursuant to Article 46 of Presidential Decree 445/2000.
5) Official translation into Italian of qualifications and documents not written in English: There are several types of translation:

   - **Certified translation**, which is performed, stamped, and signed by a specialized translator. The translation is accompanied by a certificate of accuracy, which attests to the accuracy and authenticity of the translation, as well as the translator's qualifications (if registered with a professional body or other institution) and linguistic competence;

   - **Legalized translation**: A translation subjected to consular legalization, or apostille for countries adhering to the Aia Convention, which verifies the authenticity of the translator's signature. In the case of consular legalization, translations must bear the stamp "per traduzione conforme" (certified translation). In countries where the legal status of an official translator exists, the translator's signature can certify the translation, which is then legalized by the consular office. In countries where this status is not provided for by local law, it will be necessary to obtain a certificate of conformity issued by the consular office. In any case, consular offices are not responsible for and/or do not certify the accuracy of the translation, but only the signature and identity of the person who performed it.

   - **Certified (sworn) translation**: a translation performed by any person who certifies its accuracy to the original produced by the interested party before a designated public official (generally before the public official of the Court Registry). The source text and the respective certified (sworn) translation are typically bound in a single file, the last page of which contains the certification report, which is signed by the translator before the public official, and stamped and signed in turn by the public official.