comparable foreign degree) and the passing of a competitive examination. Course length varies in relation to subject fields. They are devised to provide students with knowledge and abilities as required in the practice of highly qualified professions (e.g. cardiologist, oncologist).

**Master universitario 2° livello  
2nd level Short specialization degree**

These courses lead to an out-of-mainstream university qualification and can be accessed after a 2nd cycle degree course or single cycle degree course or a comparable foreign degree. They consist in quite advanced scientific courses or studies in life-long-learning programmes These courses last at least one year and involve the acquisition of at least 60 credits. This degree-course is then clearly different from the usual Master’s Degree, which – not only in the English speaking countries but by now in the whole area of the Bologna Process – corresponds to the Italian *Laurea specialistica/magistrale*.

---

**Tertiary education in Italy**

- **Scuola di specializzazione**  
  (postgraduate 3rd cycle: Specialization degree, 1-3 years)

- **Dottorato di ricerca**  
  (postgraduate 3rd cycle: Doctoral degree, 3 years)

- **Master universitario 2° livello**  
  (postgraduate 2nd level short specialization degree, 1+ years)

- **Laurea specialistica/ magistrale**  
  (2nd cycle degree, 2 years)

- **Laurea**  
  (1st cycle degree, 3 years)

- **Laurea specialistica/ magistrale a ciclo unico**  
  (single cycle degree, 5-6 years)

- **Master universitario 1° livello**  
  (1st level short specialization degree, 1+ years)

- **Scuola secondaria di 2° grado**  
  (Upper Secondary Education, 5 years)

- **Scuola secondaria di 1° grado**  
  (Lower Secondary Education, 3 years)

- **Scuola primaria**  
  (Primary Education, 5 years)

---

**University mainstream education**

- 1st and 2nd cycle degrees
- Single cycle degree
- 3rd cycle degree

**Professional training**

- 3rd cycle professionally oriented specialization degree
- Life long learning
- Life Long learning specialization degree

---

N.B. The bold face name in each box is the Italian legal name.