

THE ITALIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

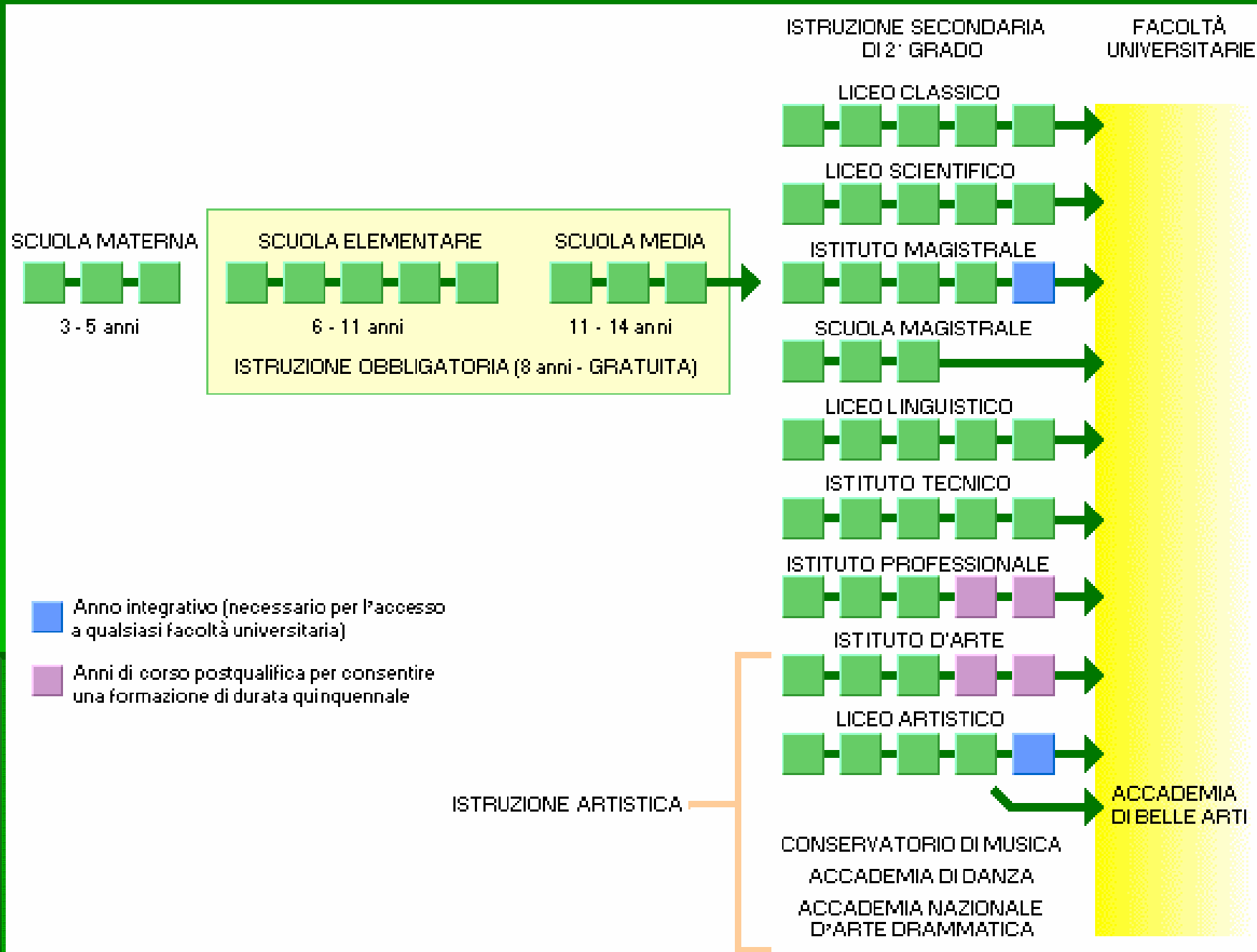
STRUCTURE

- The Italian educational system is strongly centralized
- Compulsory education begins at age six and ends at age fifteen, after the Middle School Diploma and the first year of upper secondary school.

After Middle School exam (grade 8)

students can choose among various types of upper secondary schools:

- Lycaeum (classical or scientific high schools which prepare for University)
- Technical high schools (split into various tracks: industrial, agricultural, chemical, commercial)
- Vocational high schools (also split into many tracks).
- High schools last FIVE years and conclude at the end of grade 13 with a national final exam (“State Exam”)



Specific aspects of the Italian school system

- At the beginning of the first year of each school level (elementary, middle, high school), pupils are split up into class groups which will be the same for several years. Pupils of the same age do not mix to form different class groups; they have lessons always in the same classroom, where the different teachers turn over.

- That's because once students have chosen their track, syllabi are fixed, there is no (or very limited) options. (i.e. different languages, or religion vs. individual study or optional subject);
- Classes last from 50 to 60 minutes and take place (on average) only in the morning;
- One teacher for each subject accompanies the same group of pupils for several years (three in middle school, between two and five in high school)

- The number of teaching hours per subject and the curricula are defined by ministerial decree in the whole country.
- While the subjects and hours must be the same for every school, the curricula are only a sort of concise guide-line in order to reach the educational objectives required by the system, through the didactic planning, which is mainly the teachers' task.