

Master CasaClima: Professionals yesterday, students today, specialists tomorrow - Lifelong Learning and the environment

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"Masters" in the Italian university system are postgraduate training courses aimed at graduates and professionals who feel they want to re-qualify or update their knowledge and skills. Masters are different to other training courses as they are an academic qualification, which, under Italian law, means they have a legal value. A first-level Master can be followed by people who hold a three-year undergraduate degree and a second-level Master can be followed by people who hold a five-year undergraduate degree. Masters should not be confused with postgraduate degrees (=MA/MSc), which in the Italian university system are known as "laurea magistrale".

Masters are advanced training courses which, due to their flexible, practical nature, can be adapted to the ever-changing demands of the labour market.

The Free University of Bozen/Bolzano has been offering the "CasaClima" second-level Master for five years. This Master offers project managers (architects and/or engineers) an opportunity to improve and widen their knowledge of project, technological and economic aspects connected to the use of renewable resources for both new building projects and existing buildings that require restoration or repair.

This field is of particular importance today: 40% of the energy used in the European Union is used by the building sector and in Italy this figure rises to 45%, with an annual increase in consumption of 2%.

Improving the performance of energy providers and improving the comfort in homes and offices should therefore be the new priority of this sector.

The Master has the following objectives:

- to provide specialist training in a sector that has great social, scientific and vocational importance;
- to construct a centre for high-level training in the fields of environmental planning and renewable resources in architecture, together with private and public institutions and companies that work in the field;
- to experiment in the field of applied teaching and learning;
- to create a working cooperation between the University and parallel research sectors;
- to make entry into the world of work easier for young graduates and to provide an opportunity for professionals to improve and widen their knowledge of aspects connected to energy use and the environment.

The theoretical part of the core course is divided into modules that deal with general environmental topics concerned with sustainable development and general aspects of the project concerning the current requirements to provide social wellbeing from an architectural and engineering point of view.

The core course can also be followed as a professional training course by people who do not hold a degree, although they must have had experience in the sector.

Finally, it is noteworthy that 20% of participants are over the age of 50.