

# THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA

## FROM ITS ORIGINS TO THE BOLOGNA PROCESS





## HISTORY IN BRIEF

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- **1088** - Conventionally recognized year of its foundation
- **11<sup>th</sup> century** - Scholars of grammar, rhetoric and logic started to hold law studies. Among them were Pepo and Irnerius.
- **1158** - *Constitutio Habita*: the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I recognized the autonomy of university research and studies from any other power.
- **12<sup>th</sup> century** – The university was organized into *societates* of pupils and scholars, remunerated through the tuition fees paid by students.
- **13<sup>th</sup> century** – The students grouped together into *nationes*
- **14<sup>th</sup> century** – The Schools of Jurists were flanked by those of the so-called "liberal arts"
- **18<sup>th</sup> century** – Foundation of the Institute of Sciences, devoted to studying experimental, medical and physical-mathematical sciences
- **1988** – Signing of the *Magna Charta Universitatum Europaeum*
- **1999** – Declaration of Bologna and setting up of a *European Higher Education Area*



## ORIGINS

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**The Alma Mater - University of Bologna is the most ancient university in the western world.**

Though it is hard to establish the exact date of its foundation, the year **1088** may be accepted as the conventional date when free and autonomous teaching and study activity separate from the ecclesiastical schools began in Bologna.

Around the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, scholars of grammar, rhetoric and logic started to hold studies on law in Bologna; and the first scholar whom we have historical information about was **Irnerius** who collected and ordered the entire corpus of Roman Law and gained renown even outside Bologna.



## FROM THE 11<sup>th</sup> TO THE 13<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

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**Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century, quarrels broke out over the Investiture Controversy. It was a crucial period for the development of European politics.**

In **1158** the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire Frederick I<sup>st</sup> Barbarossa proclaimed a *Constitutio Habita* by which the Empire engaged to protect all *scholares* travelling for study purposes from any interference by the political authorities. Additionally, each school would be regarded as a *societates* of *socii* (a society of pupils) chaired by a *dominus* (scholar) who was remunerated through tuition fees paid directly by the students.

This was a crucial event in the history of European universities. The university became **the place in which research and studies developed on a free basis**, independently of any other power.

The 13<sup>th</sup> century was an age characterized by controversies. The University - burdened with problems and embroiled in the political quarrels of the age - struggled to maintain independence while those in power sought to profit from its prestige. At this time, Bologna numbered over **two thousand students**.

## FROM THE 14TH TO THE 16TH CENTURY



Starting from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, schools of "artists" were added to the schools of "jurists". The Latin word 'ars' was interpreted in its classical meaning, that is a "technique" and thus among the artists there were students of **medicine, philosophy, arithmetic, astronomy, logic, rhetoric and grammar.**

Until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the university was ruled by students: there were student Rectors, who became a true authority in the city. Later on, after the City Council started to pay teachers a stipend, a new historical process began in which Bologna came under the Pope's political control and the university became a public organization. The University was then ruled by a mixture of teachers and students, until the figure of the Rector was restored under **Napoleon's** occupation. But the Rector was from then on a teacher.



## ILLUSTRIOUS PUPILS

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**Since its origins, Bologna's *Studium* has been the school for many illustrious students.**

Well-known Italian scholars, writers, and philosophers such as Dante Alighieri, Petrarch, Guido Guinizelli, Cino da Pistoia and Enzo of Sardinia spent a period studying in Bologna.

The prestige of the University of Bologna spread all over Europe, attracting a large number of foreign students. One of the first famous pupils from overseas was **Thomas Becket**. In the following years Bologna hosted other renowned visiting scholars and students, such as **Pico della Mirandola** and **Leon Battista Alberti**, who studied Canon Law here. In 1506 the University also hosted the philosopher **Erasmus**. In the same years **Nicolaus Copernicus** – a student of Canon Law - was concluding his three-year study course. At that time the scholar started his astronomical observations and, in the work entitled *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, he quoted an observation carried out in Bologna during the night of March 9, 1497.

In their turn came **Paracelsus**, **Albrecht Dürer**, **Saint Charles Borromeo**, **Torquato Tasso** and **Carlo Goldoni**.

## WOMEN

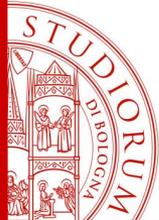


Legend has it that a woman taught in Bologna between the twelfth and the thirteenth century: **Bettisia Gozzadini** (1209-1261). According to the tradition, she gave lectures not only in the *Studium*, but also in the city squares in front of a large crowd.

The University of Bologna had admitted women to teaching since the **twelfth century**. This opening to female teachers would become especially evident in the eighteenth century.



Among the best known female teachers is **Laura Bassi** (1711-1778). In 1733, she held the chair of philosophy and in 1776 that of experimental physics. She also dealt with logic, metaphysics, philosophy, chemistry, hydraulics, mathematics, mechanics, algebra, geometry, ancient and modern languages.



## EIGHTH CENTENARY

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In **1888** the University of Bologna celebrated its eighth centenary, a great event for which universities from all over the world gathered in Bologna to honour their mother institute. *Petrus ubique pater legum Bononia mater* was already a widespread university motto and **the celebration of Bologna marked an international event for higher studies.**

The year 1888 is however conventional and was selected by a committee of historians led by Italian poet Giosuè Carducci and the then Rector, geologist Giovanni Capellini.

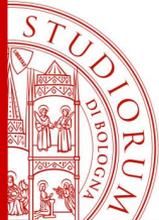
The celebration terminated on the morning of June 12, 1888, when the ceremonial procession from the university headquarters in Via Zamboni to the Archiginnasio was addressed by **Carducci** on the subject of the the Bologna *Studium*. Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce would call this a “wide and harmonious barbarian ode”. The celebration was attended by the Italian Royal Family and prestigious representatives of world culture, some of whom received honorary degrees.

## NINTH CENTENARY



On September 18, 1988 in Bologna's Piazza Maggiore the Rectors of 430 universities from all the world continents signed the **Magna Charta Universitatum Europaeum** during the ninth centenary celebrations of the University of Bologna, formally recognized on this occasion as the Alma Mater of all universities.

The Magna Charta - by now **signed** by **662** Rectors coming from 78 Countries - establishes the **autonomy of the university**, the indissoluble bond between teaching and research, rejecting all limits imposed by “any geographical or political frontier”.



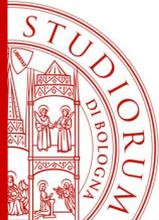
## THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

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On June 19, 1999 Ministers of Higher Education from 29 EU Countries gathered in Bologna to sign an important agreement. This document, known as the **Declaration of Bologna**, gave birth to an irreversible process of integration among the different European higher education systems - the **Bologna Process**.

The main objective of the Bologna Process is the creation of a **European Higher Education Area** and the promotion of the European system of higher education at a world level to increase its international competitiveness.

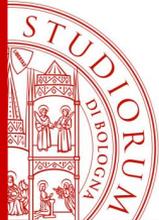
To achieve standardization of the European university systems, the Declaration of Bologna has identified an array of objectives and goals, the realization of which is being monitored through a series of *Follow-Up Conferences* until 2010.



## BOLOGNA PROCESS: MAIN OBJECTIVES

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- Adoption of a higher education system with readable and comparable degrees, through implementation of the *Diploma Supplement*;
- Adoption of a system based on two main cycles of studies - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level. Access to the second cycle will require completion of the first cycle (the duration of which cannot be lower than 3 years).
- Consolidation of a credit transfer system based on the ECTS system of credits, which may also be acquired in different subject areas.
- Promotion of mobility (for students, teachers, researchers and technical-administrative personnel) through the removal of all obstacles to free circulation of people.
- Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance.
- Promotion of an indispensable European dimension to higher education: development of study plans, cooperation between universities, mobility programmes, integrated or joint study, research and training programmes.



## FOR FURTHER DETAILS

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**Web Portal of the University of Bologna**

[www.eng.unibo.it](http://www.eng.unibo.it)

**Our History**

[www.eng.unibo.it/PortaleEn/University/Our+History](http://www.eng.unibo.it/PortaleEn/University/Our+History)

**The Historical Archive**

[www.eng.unibo.it/PortaleEn/University/University+Structures/Service+Structures/75700](http://www.eng.unibo.it/PortaleEn/University/University+Structures/Service+Structures/75700)

**Students' European Museum**

[www.archiviostorico.unibo.it/museostud](http://www.archiviostorico.unibo.it/museostud)



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA