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Students with DSA: more enrollment in Online Universities

Telematic universities increasingly popular among students with disabilities and with DSA, and among those who choose them, 60 percent more make it to graduation.

According to research by AteneiOnline, in the past 5 years, the number of those enrolled in telematic universities has tripled. Among them, the number of students with disabilities or DSA enrolled in a university course appears to have more than doubled in the same period.

Telematic universities differ from traditional universities in that they deliver degree courses purely online in "e-learning" mode. The advantages?

- students can take classes when and where they want and organize their course of study according to their schedules
- the materials needed for learning (video lectures, handouts, notes, tests, etc.) are always (24/7) available online in the e-learning platform
- no travel is required to take the degree courses offered by these universities (saving time and money).

All this without sacrificing in the least the quality of teaching and the validity of degrees, both in terms of job outlets and participation in public competitions.

Online universities for students with special learning-related needs

In addition to the above, there is also an incidence of students with disabilities or DSA more than one-third higher than that recorded at traditional non-state universities (ANVUR / USTAT data).

This is because it appears that telematic universities, because of the possibilities offered by distance technology, offer **specific support services for DSA students**. In fact, Italian universities are increasingly aware of the need to equip themselves with useful services and tools to meet the needs of students with disabilities as well as students with specific learning disorders (SLDs).

As evidence of this, data from ANVUR research shows that telematic universities are chosen more, in percentage terms than other types of universities, by students with visual, neurological and psychological limitations. This is probably understandable in light of the fact that the e-learning mode is advantageous for students with disabilities with this type of limitation, who can view lectures on their computer screens, interact with handouts in electronic format, and view lectures several times or interrupt themselves when they deem it necessary.

According to the data, 80 percent of the telematics universities analyzed already offer students with disabilities or DSA additional time to take exams, as well as the ability to use compensatory tools during tests. Several universities also offer writing and reading assistance during exams, as well as the option to choose the most accessible exam mode.

From the analysis conducted, **the services offered seem to significantly facilitate student life and progression to graduation: in fact, a 60 percent higher graduation rate for students with disabilities and DSA emerges for telematics than at traditional-type universities**.

However, this does not depend on a greater "ease" of degree courses these universities compared to traditional ones: telematic universities recognized by Miur are in fact periodically evaluated by Anvur, which certifies their quality by ensuring that all online degree courses maintain a level of quality equal to that of frontal universities. The main difference behind the greater success of students with disabilities or DSA is likely to be found in the advantages offered by the **e-learning mode of use, which in fact makes online universities more accessible and thus increases the chances of successfully completing the university course**.

Read also **How to create an accessible online course**