



SUPSI

Project “SEN-SI-Special Educational Needs - Strategies for Inclusion in Italian-speaking Swiss universities USI-SUPSI”

“SEN-SI-Special Educational Needs - Strategies for Inclusion in Italian-speaking Swiss universities” aims to develop, evaluate, and implement a comprehensive set of measures to support students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) at USI and SUPSI. These measures will integrate advanced teaching methods and technologies within the Bachelor’s and Master’s programs at both institutions. At the heart of these innovative methods is the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and of the Universal Design for Instruction (UDI), frameworks designed to utilize multiple means of representation, action, and expression to reduce educational barriers and foster inclusivity. UDI, when specifically applied to universities, universities of applied sciences, and teacher training institutions, underscores the importance of inclusive and accessible learning environments.

External Partners

The project benefits from the expertise of a multidisciplinary advisory group, which includes regional partners actively engaged in these topics. These partners include: la Cancelleria dello Stato, il Dipartimento dell’educazione, della cultura e dello sport, la Pro Infirmis Ticino e Moesano e la Scuola universitaria federale per la formazione professionale.

Results

In the project’s first phase, in addition to mapping practices adopted in upper secondary education (Grado Secondario II), an internal survey was conducted at USI and SUPSI, engaging students, academic staff, and technical-administrative personnel through questionnaires.

The survey results led to the identification of effective measures across three key areas of intervention:

- Framework conditions and regulations
- Training for teaching staff and technical-administrative personnel involved in education
- Internal communication development on the topic of SEN

The initial measures have already been implemented, including:

- A stronger emphasis on SEN in the Bachelor’s and Master’s program regulations
- Formalized procedures for requesting and obtaining compensatory measures, ensuring greater transparency
- Expanded and sustainable compensatory/dispensatory actions and measures for students with SEN, consistent across all SUPSI departments and USI faculties

These measures specifically address: program organization, teaching practices, material accessibility, and assessment/certification processes.

Future Perspectives

In the coming years, SUPSI and USI plan to:

- Gradually promote the adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) principles
- Implement the identified compensatory/dispensatory measures
- Enhance awareness-raising and training activities for faculty and those responsible for academic programs

Additionally, the Institutions are considering adopting software that can assess the accessibility of educational materials.

