Infosheet: Courses

(for course instructors)

Contents

Course proposal submission and approval

Faculty who wish to teach are asked to hand in the completed course proposal template to the Graduate School Office via email. All course proposals must be reviewed and pre-approved by the track representative of the respective field. Responsibility for final approval resides with the Dean/Deputy to the Dean. The Graduate School administration will collect all course proposals and forward them to the respective faculty for review and approval. The proposal submission deadline is *May 15th.

*New course proposals and courses with major revisions (unusual credit hour requests, unusual plus components such as extensive lab work/microscope training/sessions outside ISTA etc.) need to be submitted to the respective Track Representative by mid-April.

Course code

Course codes consists of four elements:

Example   C_PHY-4000-S23

1) Course category: C=Credit, A=Audit, TA=Teaching Assistantship
2) Prefix (primary track association): BIO (biology), CS (computer science), DSSC (data science and scientific computing), MAT (mathematics), NEU (neuroscience), PHY (physics), CHMT (chemistry and materials), MD (multi-disciplinary), OTH (general), EXT (external courses)
3) 4-digit number:
   - The first digit identifies the level of the course: 1 = Introductory, 2 = Practical, 3 = Advanced/foundational, 4 = Advanced/specialized
   - The last 3 digits are assigned to courses in the order they are added to the course catalogue.
4) Semester/Year: e.g. Spring 2022/2023 => S23

Course tag

Course tags identify which curricular requirement the course satisfies.

Currently, the following course tags are used:
- *Core curriculum* - e.g. Core Project, Track Core Course, Essential Skills for Scientists
- *Elective* - Courses that satisfy the elective requirement
- *Service* - Courses that carry ECTS, but do not satisfy any curricular requirements

Course level

The courses of the Graduate School have four possible levels:
- *Advanced/specialized* - Typically 1st year MS courses at European universities
- *Advanced/foundational* - Advanced MS courses at European universities or graduate-level courses in the US
- *Introductory* - Courses that do not require any sophisticated background and can be taken by anyone outside the field
- *Practical* - Hands-on practical or laboratory training, workshops, skill acquisition, and similar educational formats

Teaching time

IST Austria follows the Austrian academic calendar. The exact date of each half semester will be determined every year.

Fall term = Oct. 1 – Jan. 31 Spring term =

March 1 – June 30

The academic calendar can be found on the PhD website: https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/academic- calendar/

Set-up of a standard (half) semester course

6 weeks for a half semester course, 12 weeks for a full semester course.
Lectures twice a week à 75 minutes, plus 6/ 12 recitations à 50 minutes each, plus 6/12 homework.
Lectures should be held in fixed slots: i.e. Mon + Wed or Tue +Thu.
Deviations from this set-up (e.g. blocking of lectures on one day per week) are only permitted in exceptional cases (e.g. if external instructors are involved) and need to be approved by the program chair.

Advanced courses can be blocked in exceptional cases, but only during times where they do not interfere with the core modules, i.e. February, July, August, and September.
The workload of a half semester course translates into 3 ECTS credits, a full semester course into 6 ECTS credits.
The exact schedule of the course, policy on absences, on regular assignments, details on evaluation criteria as well as grading policy needs to be communicated in the first meeting. Make slides and additional lecture material available to students.
Make sure lectures are well coordinated to ensure a central unifying thread, especially if there are multiple lecturers.

Regular teaching slots during semester time

a) Lectures (2 weekly slots à 75 min: Mon + Wed or Tue + Thu)
   *8:45-10:00am
   *10:15-11:30am
   *1:15-2:30pm
   *2:45-4:00pm

b) Recitations (1 weekly slot à 50 min; held on one of the lecture days):
   * 11:45am-12:35pm (in exceptional cases: 10:15- 11:05am)
   * 4:15-5:05pm (in exceptional cases: 2:45-3:35pm)

Please note: Instructors can indicate their preferred teaching slots when submitting the course proposal. The GSO cannot guarantee these slots, but will try to accommodate instructor's preferences.

Recitations

Recitations are usually held by the teaching assistant(s). The number of TAs per course should reasonably align with the expected number of students enrolling in a course. Make sure that lectures and recitations are coordinated i.e. the TA should be in the lecture or well aware of what has been covered.

Recitations should be used to address questions about the homework and the lecture material. The TA should prepare a set of questions and problems i.e. prepare extra material. In addition, the teaching assistant should be available for office hours, assist the students in the course with homework, and help grading homework and exams.

Homework needs to be graded and returned on time.

Course Registration

ISTA students as well as all other scientists can register for courses via the student portal Athena (https://athena.ista.ac.at). External students have to complete an online survey first (in case they haven't participated in courses at ISTA before).
The standard registration deadline is one week prior to the course start date. Withdrawal from a course

is possible only within the first three weeks after the course start date.
Instructors can view the actual class list in Athena (instructions available here: https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/Athena_Handbook_for_Faculty)

Cancellation policy

If applicable, please indicate the minimum attendance in the course proposal. If the minimum requirement is met, courses can only be cancelled in exceptional cases.

Re-scheduling of classes

Find a consensus with the students and avoid dates outside the defined (half) semesters.
Please notify the GSO (gradschool@ista.ac.at) in case you need to re-schedule a class.

Course material

Course materials can be published on Moodle or Athena, depending on the instructor's preference.

For Moodle, please access https://courses.ist.ac.at/. The responsibility of maintaining course materials resides with the respective course instructors. Note: The courses of Fall 2022/23 will be available in Moodle in the next few days. We don't grade participants in Moodle, as we use Athena for that purpose only.

For Athena,
1) Open course detail page either through *Course Catalogue or My Courses*.
2) Go to the *Resources* tab and click *Add resource*.
3) A window will pop up. Click *Choose File* and then click *Save* to upload a file to the course.
   If you click *Add one more* in the pop-up window, you'll have the option to upload multiple files at once.

Any material you share here will be visible to the participants of the course.
If you would like students to be able to upload files to the course (e.g. reading materials or home assignments), tick the *Enable student upload* checkbox in *Student uploads*.

Assessment

The composition of the grade needs to be indicated in the course description and announced in the first meeting. Normally it is based on class participation, homework and final exam/essay/project The last week of the (half) semester is reserved as exam week. In general, only one exam will be offered. If a student puts forward compelling reasons for missing the exam, the professors needs to accommodate

the student. The final grades need to be entered in Athena (instructions available here: https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/Athena_Handbook_for_Faculty)

Grading scheme

The standard grading scheme is (1 = excellent 2 = good 3 = satisfactory 4 = sufficient 5 = fail). 1 and 5 should be used sparsely – typically less than 10% - , and the mean grade should be 3. Service courses are usually graded on a pass/fail basis. If instructors of other courses prefer to award grades on pass/fail basis, this has to be communicated to the Graduate School explicitly.

Course evaluation

Course participants should be given the opportunity to complete the online course evaluation survey during class time. Instructors should thus reserve one of the last sessions of a course for this purpose (during exam week). The Graduate School will send out a link to an online evaluation survey two weeks before the end of the course. Instructors should *actively encourage students* to participate and to submit their feedback. The evaluation results will be made available to instructors + TAs.