Graduate School Handbook for PhD Students

2015/2016
This **Graduate School Handbook for PhD Students** and the requirements specified herein apply to the student cohort entering in the fall of 2015. Students admitted prior to the year 2015 should refer to the handbook published in the year of their respective entry.

This handbook is updated annually in August. Updates can be obtained from the IST Wiki “Graduate School” portal ([https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Portal:Graduate_School](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Portal:Graduate_School)).
Contents

WELCOME .................................................................................................................................................. VI

1 OVERVIEW .................................................................................................................................................. 1

1.1 General Overview of the PhD program ............................................................................................... 1

1.2 Who’s who? ........................................................................................................................................... 2

   First-Year Mentors .................................................................................................................................. 2
   Supervisor ................................................................................................................................................ 3
   Dean ....................................................................................................................................................... 4
   Program Chair ....................................................................................................................................... 4
   Ombudspersons ...................................................................................................................................... 4
   International Officer ............................................................................................................................... 4
   Graduate Student Association Representatives ...................................................................................... 5
   Graduate School Office ......................................................................................................................... 5
   Assistant to Professors (A2P) ................................................................................................................. 5

1.3 Admission and affiliation status .......................................................................................................... 6

   B.S. or M.S. ............................................................................................................................................... 6
   Unaffiliated/Affiliated Status .................................................................................................................. 6

1.4 Timeline of the PhD program ............................................................................................................. 7

2 ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS ............................................................................................................... 8

2.1 Preliminaries ......................................................................................................................................... 8

   2.1.1 IQ System ...................................................................................................................................... 8
   2.1.2 Semester Structure ....................................................................................................................... 9
   2.1.3 Important Dates for the Academic Year 2015/2016 .................................................................... 10

2.2 Phase I of PhD Studies ...................................................................................................................... 12

2.3 Coursework in Phase I ....................................................................................................................... 12

   2.3.1 Course Types .................................................................................................................................. 12
   Basic Courses ......................................................................................................................................... 13
   Core Courses ......................................................................................................................................... 13
   Elective Courses .................................................................................................................................... 14

   2.3.2 Credit Requirements .................................................................................................................... 14

   2.3.3 Course Information ....................................................................................................................... 14

   2.3.4 Registering for and Withdrawal from Courses ............................................................................. 15

   2.3.5 Course Structure ............................................................................................................................ 15

   2.3.6 Grading Policy and Final Exam .................................................................................................... 16

   2.3.7 Courses at Other Institutions ...................................................................................................... 17

   2.3.8 Seminars, Meetings, Symposia, Conferences, and Summer Schools .......................................... 17

2.4 Rotations ............................................................................................................................................. 17

   2.4.1 Rotation Performance Evaluation ............................................................................................... 18
   2.4.2 Updating Rotation Records on IQ system ..................................................................................... 18
   2.4.3 Timeline for Rotations .................................................................................................................. 19

2.5 Affiliation ............................................................................................................................................ 20

   2.5.1 PhD Supervisor .............................................................................................................................. 21
   2.5.2 Joint Supervision ........................................................................................................................... 21
   2.5.3 Updating Affiliation Records in IQ system .................................................................................... 21
2.6 Qualifying Exam ......................................................... 22
  2.6.1 Qualifying Exam Committee (or Thesis Committee) ................. 22
  2.6.2 Qualifying Exam Date ............................................. 23
  2.6.3 Format of the Qualifying Exam ................................... 24
      Reading List ....................................................... 24
      Thesis Proposal .................................................. 24
      Exam Chair ...................................................... 25
  2.6.4 Overview of Qualifying Exam Timeline ................................ 26
  2.6.5 Qualifying Exam Registration in IQ system ........................... 26
2.7 Phase II of PhD Studies .................................................. 27
  2.7.1 Thesis Research ................................................. 27
  2.7.2 Progress Reviews ................................................ 27
  2.7.3 Third-year Student Presentations ................................. 28
  2.7.4 Courses ......................................................... 28
  2.7.5 Teaching Assistance Requirement ................................ 28
2.8 Thesis Defense ........................................................... 28
  2.8.1 Thesis Committee ............................................... 29
  2.8.2 Pre-Conditions for Defending .................................... 29
  2.8.3 Defense Format .................................................. 29
  2.8.4 Outcome ......................................................... 30
  2.8.5 Final Thesis Submission ......................................... 30
  2.8.6 Timeframe for the Thesis Defense ................................ 31
  2.8.7 Graduation Ceremony ........................................... 31
  2.8.8 Academic Transcripts and Enrollment Confirmation ............... 31
2.9 Changes to PhD program .................................................. 32
3 DUTIES AND CONDUCT OF PHD STUDENTS ......................... 33
  3.1 General rules for employees of IST Austria ............................ 33
  3.2 Notifying GSO and HR of Changes ................................... 33
  3.3 Short Absences, Sick Leave, Business Trips ........................... 33
  3.4 Internships, Secondments and Extended Leave ........................ 34
  3.5 Entering Vacation Days and Business Trips in the DPW system ...... 34
  3.6 Graduate School Requirements and Communications .................. 35
  3.7 Active Participation and Contributions ................................ 35
  3.8 Updating Student Records on the IST Quercus (IQ) System ........... 35
      RAG status in IQ .................................................. 35
  3.9 Course Evaluations .................................................. 36
  3.10 Sideline Activities .................................................. 36
  3.11 Grounds for Dismissal .............................................. 37
  3.12 Ethical Conduct .................................................... 37
4 FINANCIAL SUPPORT ...................................................... 38
  4.1 Student Contracts and Salary Levels ................................... 38
  4.2 Contract Extensions .................................................. 38
  4.3 Conference Allowance ............................................... 39
5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ................................................... 39
6 PRACTICAL MATTERS AND SOCIAL LIFE ................................................................. 40

6.1 Buildings on IST Campus .............................................................................. 40
6.2 Health and Safety ......................................................................................... 41
6.3 Doctor ........................................................................................................... 41
6.4 Psychologist ................................................................................................. 41
6.5 Vacations ...................................................................................................... 42

APPENDIX ............................................................................................................. 43

Academic Checklist: Phase I ............................................................................. 43
Academic Checklist: Phase II ............................................................................. 45
GSO Forms .......................................................................................................... 47
  Qualifying Exam Protocol ................................................................................. 47
  Thesis Defense Protocol ...................................................................................... 47
  Contract Extension Application Form ................................................................. 47
  Important Contacts ............................................................................................ 48

GLOSSARY: KEYWORDS EXPLAINED ................................................................. 51
Welcome

Welcome to the Graduate School at IST Austria! You have made it through a very competitive selection process and are now part of the international community of scientists at IST. As a PhD student, you are the heart and soul of this institution, bringing your expertise from a diverse range of backgrounds and international institutions, and contributing to top-notch science carried out at IST Austria.

As a PhD student, you are encouraged to ask questions, challenge the status quo, and advance the frontiers of knowledge. Our dedicated faculty and our unique PhD curriculum will guide and encourage you on this journey, and we hope that you will emerge as accomplished scientists and leaders in your respective fields, ready to tackle new research problems now and in the future.

At the Graduate School Office, our job is to support you as you embrace the challenge of the PhD. We deal with all administrative aspects of your PhD, from registering for courses and signing up for rotations to affiliating with a research group and passing qualifying and thesis exams. We are also here to answer any questions you might have about curricular, contract, or thesis requirements, and to collect your feedback and suggestions for the PhD program.

This handbook describes the requirements that you need to fulfill for your PhD degree, and also contains guidelines for conduct and other important information that you should be aware of. If you have any questions about the content of this handbook, or if there are any omissions which you believe should be addressed, please get in touch with us at gradschool@ist.ac.at.

We wish you every success for your PhD, and hope you get the most out of the program. At the same time, don’t forget to have fun being part of the IST Austria community!

Graduate School Office
1 Overview

1.1 General Overview of the PhD program

IST Austria provides PhD training in biology, neuroscience, computer science, mathematics, physics and relevant interdisciplinary areas. Our PhD program is unique within Europe as the program’s design is modeled after that of North American Graduate Schools. In addition, our PhD program has a strong focus on interdisciplinary training, while at the same time facilitating specialization in a specific scientific field. The goal is to promote thinking across the boundaries of disciplines, and to support research and cooperation between scientists. As part of this training, students spend the first phase of the PhD program gaining exposure to a diverse range of scientific fields and techniques, before conducting more specialized research in an area of their choice in the second phase of the program.

To address the mission of emphasis on both breadth and depth of scope in training, the PhD program consists of two distinct phases, Phase I and Phase II.

In Phase I, the breadth phase, students take a combination of required and elective courses. A more detailed description of the course requirements can be found in § 2.3 “Coursework in Phase I”. Students are required to obtain at least 24 course credits in the first academic year.

In addition to taking courses, students perform at least three rotations with different research groups. In some cases, it is possible to take optional 4th and 5th rotations. One of these rotations is performed in the research group within which the student aims to affiliate.
for their thesis research, while the other rotations broaden research horizons and teach new techniques and skills. § 2.4 “Rotations” contains further information on rotations and how to arrange them with faculty members.

In order to move into Phase II, a student needs to formally affiliate with a research group, and pass the qualifying exam.

Once the student passes the qualifying exam, they are in Phase II of the program. In this phase, students perform research towards their PhD thesis, gain teaching experience as a teaching assistant (TA), and need to show satisfactory progress in regular biannual progress reviews. Upon successful defense of the thesis, students are awarded a PhD degree. The academic requirements for Phase II of the PhD are described in § 2.7.

Students are strongly advised to prepare sufficiently for their assessments and make sure that they do not miss any important deadlines as these could be grounds for dismissal (see § 3.11). For details on how to fulfill specific requirements, please carefully read § 2 “Academic Requirements”. The Appendix also contains important checklists which students are advised to use to keep track of academic requirements.

An online system, called IQ, is used to record and keep track of students’ academic progress. Students should familiarize themselves with the system, and remember to always keep their profile within IQ up-to-date, as failure to do so means that academic requirements have not been officially registered. For more information on IQ, refer to § 3.8.

1.2 Who’s who?

There are people who students will likely interact with over the course of the PhD, and who can provide support or answer queries when the need arises. This section outlines who they are and in what capacity they act.

First-Year Mentors

What are first-year mentors?

First-year mentors are members of the faculty at IST that can provide students with advice on courses, rotations, Graduate School requirements and policies, and general academic advice during the first year at IST.

The mentors for the academic year 2015-16 are:

- Calin Guet (calin@ist.ac.at; ext. 4001)
- Christoph Lampert (chl@ist.ac.at; ext. 3101)
- Gaia Novarino (gaia.novarino@ist.ac.at; ext. 5901)
- Uli Wagner (uli@ist.ac.at; ext. 5501)
How am I assigned to a mentor?

Every incoming student is assigned a first-year mentor, and students will be notified of who their mentor is at the Student Orientation day on September 15.

Students should arrange a meeting with their mentor during the second week of arrival (the week of September 21-25). A second follow-up meeting should occur in the first half of December. A third meeting should take place early to mid-March to discuss the affiliation process. Mentors play an important role in providing guidance in academic matters in the first year of the PhD studies. The Graduate School encourages students to take full advantage of their mentors, as they are an invaluable resource to help students succeed. Please note that these meetings are not optional but required.

The role of mentors is to serve students’ best interests. Interactions with mentors are confidential, except in cases where problems arise that require involvement from the Graduate School Office, PhD Program Chairs, or the Dean of the Graduate School to resolve the problem. It is always best to establish up front with mentors what information may be shared and what should be kept strictly confidential, to avoid misunderstandings.

If students wish to be assigned a different mentor a change can be requested from the Graduate School Office by sending an email to gradschool@ist.ac.at. The request should provide a justification for why a different faculty member should be assigned. Unjustified requests will be denied.

Supervisor

From the time of affiliation until the thesis defense, a student’s supervisor is the most important support person. The supervisor has financial responsibility for the student, directs and supports the student in their thesis research, and is also part of the Thesis Committee (see § 2.6.1 and § 2.8.1).

Under the supervisor’s guidance, students will perform independent research in Phase II. It is important that students communicate closely with their supervisors, and update them regularly on the progress of their PhD research. In addition to regular supervision meetings, the supervisor will formally evaluate students in biannual progress reviews (see § 2.7.2 for details). The student’s continuation in the PhD program is conditional upon continually satisfactory progress reviews.

Rotations in Phase I of the PhD program are meant to help students decide which research topic to work on and who is going to be the supervisor for their PhD research in Phase II. Joint supervision is also possible, where the project would benefit from support from two groups.
Dean
The Dean has overall responsibility for the Graduate School and all PhD programs (currently only one) within the Graduate School. The Dean is responsible for the overall strategic direction of the IST Austria Graduate School, and for mediating and making final decisions in all exceptional requests relating to students or their training. Examples of issues that require the Dean’s approval include change in supervisor, application for an external co-supervisor, or the approval of extension to examination deadlines. The Dean for the year 2015/2016 is Nick Barton.

Program Chair
The Program Chair(s) are in charge of all matters relating to the PhD curriculum. In case a student would like to perform a 4th or a 5th rotation, if clarification on the interpretation of PhD program rules is needed, or if there are any exceptional requests pertaining to the PhD program requirements, the Program Chair’s approval is required.

The current Program Chair is Herbert Edelsbrunner. The appointment of a new Program Chair takes place in October, and will be announced on the Graduate School wiki page (https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School).

Ombudspersons
The Ombudspersons are faculty members appointed by the Dean to whom students can address any academic or scientific grievances and who can help settle complaints. The Ombudspersons also provide assistance to all researchers on issues related to good scientific practice and scientific misconduct. The Ombudspersons for the academic year 2015/2016 are Robert Seiringer (robert.seiringer@ist.ac.at, ext. 5701) and Sylvia Cremer (sylvia.cremer@ist.ac.at, ext. 3401).

International Officer
Affectionately known as “Mum” by first-year students, Vlad Cozac (vlad.cozac@ist.ac.at) is a central figure of support – administrative or otherwise – starting before students even arrive at IST and lasting throughout the first year at IST Austria, until students affiliate with a research group. He is the first point of contact for questions regarding business trips, travel reimbursements, housing advice, and visas or residence permits. Vlad’s office is in proximity to first-year students’ offices on the ground floor of Lab Building East.

After students affiliate, Vlad’s duties are taken over by the research group’s Assistant to Professors (A2P) in Phase II.
Graduate Student Association Representatives

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) represents the students of the IST Austria Graduate School. It serves as a platform for exchanging ideas and fostering communication between students, constituting an interface between IST Austria graduate students and the rest of the Institute. When joining the Institute, every graduate student automatically becomes a member of the GSA, but this does not entail additional commitments per se.

Every year, two GSA representatives are elected. GSA representatives are responsible for communicating the students' ideas, feedback and criticism to the faculty. Regular meetings, organized by the GSA, promote the discussion of current issues and support networking between students.

The GSA representatives for the year 2014/2015 are Alexander Leithner (aleithner@ist.ac.at, ext. 4719) and Michal Rolinek (mrolinek@ist.ac.at, ext. 4757). The election of new representatives for the year 2015/2016 will take place in October. New students are encouraged to run for candidacy from their second year on, and are welcome to contact Alex and Michal to understand more about what the GSA duties entail.

Graduate School Office

The Graduate School Office (GSO) provides administrative support for all matters related to the PhD program. The GSO team members work closely with faculty members, the Dean, the Program Chair(s), Graduate Student Association representatives and other administrative staff, including Finance, and Human Resources & Hospitality, to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the PhD Program.

The Head of the GSO is Hania Köver (hania.koever@ist.ac.at), who is in charge of all matters within the GSO office. She is supported by team members Uli Seiss (ulrike.seiss@ist.ac.at), Sarah Seider (sarah.seider@ist.ac.at), and May Chan (may.chan@ist.ac.at).

Students are always welcome to approach any of the GSO team members if they have questions about the PhD program requirements, or any other generic enquiries.

Assistant to Professors (A2P)

Once a student affiliates with a research group, an important contact person will be the Assistant to Professors (A2P), who is assigned to several research groups to provide a limited amount of administrative support to research group members. It is important to notify the A2P of any absences (see also § 3.3).

A regularly updated list of A2Ps can be found on the Human Resources & Hospitality wiki page (https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/HR), and a list of A2P assignment to research groups is directly available from this link: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/8/8f/Professors_at_IST_Austria.pdf.
1.3 Admission and affiliation status

Before a detailed exposition of PhD program requirements can be offered, it is important for students to understand that there can be differences in admission status, and what the distinction is between unaffiliated / affiliated status.

B.S. or M.S.
In most cases, prospective PhD candidates have completed a Master of Science (M.S.) program in a field related to existing research interests at IST Austria. However, students holding a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree will also be considered if they are deemed to have sufficient background and promise in the relevant field(s) of research. There can be differences in the timeline of the PhD program, depending on whether a student’s admission status is “M.S.” or “B.S.”: see § 1.4 for further details.

During Phase I of the PhD program, students admitted with a B.S. status are paid at a lower salary level than those admitted with an M.S. status. Once a B.S. student passes the qualifying exam, they will be paid at the same level as students admitted with an M.S. status. For more details about salary levels, please refer to § 4.1.

Unaffiliated/Affiliated Status
All students admitted to the IST Austria PhD program are initially unaffiliated to any research group. During this unaffiliated stage, which lasts between 9 months (for M.S. students) and up to 16 months (for B.S. students), students complete academic requirements such as courses and rotations. Unaffiliated students are assigned office space within Lab Building East (see § 6.1 for a map of campus buildings), where the International Officer, Vlad Cozac, is also stationed. Vlad is the main contact person for unaffiliated students when it comes to practical matters such as visa applications, housing enquiries, and travel reimbursements for conference trips (see also § 1.2 “Who’s Who” and § 6 “Social Life and Practical Matters”).

After successful affiliation with a research group, the procedures for which are outlined in § 2.5, the student becomes an official member of the research group. Once affiliated with a research group, students need to perform PhD thesis research, undergo progress reviews, and complete a teaching assistantship.
1.4 **Timeline of the PhD program**

The start date of the PhD program is September 15, 2015. The timeline of the PhD program varies depending on whether the student is admitted with a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) status, or with a Master of Science (M.S.) status (see also § 1.2). The typical duration of the program is 4–5 years: 4 years for students with a master’s degree and 5 years for students with a bachelor’s degree. The main differences are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M.S. students</th>
<th>B.S. students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Typical duration of PhD</strong></td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affiliation deadline</strong></td>
<td>Jun 15, 2016</td>
<td>Jan 15, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifying exam deadline</strong></td>
<td>Feb 15, 2017</td>
<td>Sep 15, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initial contracts are made to M.S. students for 4 years, B.S. students for 5 years, with the possibility of extending the contract for another year, conditional on satisfactory progress and approval by the student’s supervisor. For more details on contract extensions, see § 4.2.

Other main differences for students admitted with a B.S. versus an M.S. status are (1) the deadline by which affiliation with a research group should have taken place, and (2) the deadline by which students need to have completed their qualifying exam. Students are encouraged to read § 2.5 and § 2.6 carefully in order not to miss these important dates and plan accordingly.
2 Academic Requirements

This section details the academic requirements which students need to fulfill over the course of the PhD. Students are advised to read carefully through this section and note all the requirements. Failure to meet the academic requirements could result in termination of the PhD contract, so students should duly note all the requirements and the deadlines by which these requirements need to be fulfilled. Students should always feel free to contact the Graduate School Office to ask for clarification if they have questions about any of the requirements.

2.1 Preliminaries

2.1.1 IQ System

One crucial tool which students will need to use throughout the PhD studies is the so-called IQ online system, which is used for registering all academic requirements, including courses, rotations, affiliation with a research group, qualifying exam, progress reviews, and thesis defense.

Students should upload all official documents related to completion of academic requirements to IQ, including rotation protocols, qualifying exam reading list and research proposal, and drafts as well as the final version of the PhD thesis.

IQ can be accessed via the link: http://iq.ist.ac.at/student, and students can log in with their IST username and password.

Students should make sure to always update their academic requirements in the IQ system. Failure to do so will result in missed credits with potential contract implications.

To find out more about how to perform tasks in IQ, please read the IQ Student Handbook, available from: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/4/4a/IQ_Student_Handbook.pdf. If there are any technical difficulties or if students have any questions about IQ, they should feel free to get in touch with the Graduate School Office (iq@ist.ac.at).
2.1.2 Semester Structure

The academic year is divided into two full semesters: Fall and Spring. Each full semester is 12 weeks long, and courses that run throughout the full semester carry 6 ECTS credits. Fall semester runs from early October to end of January, while Spring semester runs from early March to end of June.

Fall and Spring semesters are further subdivided into 1st and 2nd half semesters, each of which is 6 weeks long. Courses that are half-semester-long carry 3 ECTS credits. The semesters at IST are divided in half semesters in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Term Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 5 – Nov 13</td>
<td>Fall: 1st half term 2015/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 23 – Jan 22</td>
<td>Fall: 2nd half term 2015/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 29 – Apr 22</td>
<td>Spring: 1st half term 2015/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2 – Jun 17</td>
<td>Spring: 2nd half term 2015/16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are a small number of courses that take place pre-semester (in September) or in between semesters (in the month of February). Examples include Basic Light and Electron Microscopy (Fall), Introduction to Matlab (Spring), and Programming in Python (Spring). Please check the the “Courses” section on the IST webpage: [http://ist.ac.at/graduate-school/courses](http://ist.ac.at/graduate-school/courses) for an up-to-date listing of all courses.

For the full list of lecture days, non-teaching days and holidays, see the next section.
2.1.3 Important Dates for the Academic Year 2015/2016

This section lists the most important dates for the academic year 2015/2016. The end of this handbook contains a printable wall calendar.

A. Course and exam periods

The course and exam periods are summarized in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-semester</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exam Week: Jan 25-29, 2016</td>
<td>Exam Week: June 20–24, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st half</td>
<td>2nd half</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Non-teaching periods

As the name suggests, no regular teaching takes place during these periods. Some blocked courses, however, may take place in February. Please note that the non-teaching periods are not automatic vacation time—students should check with their rotation supervisor or mentor before scheduling their vacations. In particular, the semester break in February is often used for research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christmas break</th>
<th>Semester break</th>
<th>Easter break</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
C. Rotations

Each rotation lasts between 8 and 9 weeks. During teaching periods, students are expected to spend approximately half of their time on coursework and the other half on rotation work; during non-teaching periods, students work on rotations full-time. For an overview of teaching and non-teaching periods, see § 2.1.3 (paragraphs A and B) above, as well as the printable calendar on the last page of this handbook.

In planning rotations, students should take into account the respective rotation period lengths and whether they overlap with other activities. In particular, Rotation 2 coincides with winter break, exam time in January, but also with the non-teaching month of February during which only blocked optional courses such as Matlab and Python take place. Students should discuss with their rotation supervisors and/or first-year mentor which rotation period is the most appropriate for various kinds of rotation projects.

Rotation 4 is optional, and students should inform the GSO in writing if they plan to take a fourth rotation. If an additional 5th rotation is taken, the respective start and end dates should be discussed with the GSO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Rotation 1</th>
<th>Rotation 2</th>
<th>Rotation 3</th>
<th>Rotation 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 12–Dec 11, 2015</td>
<td>9 weeks @ half-time</td>
<td>5 weeks @ half-time + 3 weeks @ full-time</td>
<td>6 weeks @ half-time + 2 weeks @ full-time</td>
<td>8 weeks @ half-time + 1 week @ full-time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These are the Austrian public holidays. They are marked in red in the printable wall calendar at the end of this document.

- Oct 26: Austrian National Holiday (Mon)
- Nov 1: All Saints’ Day (Sun)
- Dec 8: Immaculate Conception (Tue)
- Dec 25: Christmas Eve (Fri)
- Dec 26: St. Stephen’s (Sat)
- Jan 1: New Year (Fri)
- Jan 6: Epiphany (Wed)
- Mar 27: Easter Sunday (Sun)
- Mar 28: Easter Monday (Mon)
- May 1: Labor Day (Sun)
- May 5: Ascension Day (Thu)
- May 16: Whit Monday (Mon)
- May 26: Corpus Christi (Thu)
2.2 Phase I of PhD Studies

When joining the PhD program at IST Austria, students are not affiliated with any research group. This uncommitted period gives students the opportunity to work closely with several professors to learn a range of skills and research approaches and to make an informed choice about supervision arrangement and future career path. During this phase, the student will be supported by a mentor, whose duties are outlined in § 1.2.

Students are encouraged to keep in touch with research groups with which they might affiliate, and attend seminars, journal clubs and group meetings where appropriate. Research groups in your field of interest will be able to give specific advice on appropriate courses, reading, and conferences that will help towards your affiliation (for more details about affiliation, see § 2.5).

Students are expected to regularly participate in the IST Austria Colloquium, as well as some of the many subject area-specific journal clubs and symposia that regularly occur on campus. You are encouraged to ask for recommendations for events and seminars to attend from your mentors and rotation supervisors. For a listing of journal clubs and colloquia, see § 2.3.8.

The main requirements in Phase I of the PhD program consist of coursework and rotations, with each occupying about half of the student’s time within Phase I.

2.3 Coursework in Phase I

The PhD curriculum is designed to provide a foundation with breadth as well as depth of scope, to support thesis research across a wide spectrum of cutting-edge research problems.

2.3.1 Course Types

There are different course types that aim to provide a foundation for interdisciplinary research. These include:

- Basic courses (required)
- General core course (required)
- Track core courses (at least one required)
- Other course types, such as service courses, breadth courses and advanced courses

These courses are described in further detail in the sections below.
### Basic Courses

The two basic courses, Introduction to Research at IST Austria, and Scientific Presentation and Conduct, are required in the first academic year and carry no course credit.

- **Introduction to Research at IST Austria**: a three-day symposium introducing students to the range of faculty research.
- **Scientific Presentation and Conduct**: one semester-long course covering scientific conduct and ethical issues, as well as communication training (presenting, writing, teaching).

A Pass/Fail grading policy applies to the basic courses.

### Core Courses

The required core courses are interdisciplinary in nature, to foster cross-disciplinary communication and training in diverse scientific skillsets. Students are required to take the general core course, and at least one track core course.

- **General core course (6 ECTS credits)**: This one semester-long course is required of all PhD students, and is designed to encourage the exchange of knowledge between students from highly diverse backgrounds and promote the conditions which allow for interdisciplinary research. In 2015/2016, the general core course is called Modeling, and will focus on applying the concept of modeling to problems in biology, physics, neuroscience, mathematics, and computer science.

- **Track core course (3-6 ECTS credits)**: Every PhD student is required to take at least one track core course. Track core courses are designed to convey a broad view of topics to students within their specific field of research and to encourage them to think beyond the boundaries of their primary research focus. In addition, track core courses, like the general core course, fulfill a community-building function in terms of fostering exchange between students that will affiliate in different research groups. In 2015/16, track core courses will be offered in six research areas: Biology, Computer Science, Data and Computational Science, Mathematics, Neuroscience, and Physics (3-6 ECTS credits each)
Elective Courses

To complete the remainder of the 24 ECTS credit requirement, students can choose between:

- **Breadth courses**: designed to teach students topics outside their field. No or little previous knowledge is assumed.
- **Advanced courses**: designed to teach students advanced topics within a specific field. Previous knowledge is assumed.
- **Service courses**: designed to provide students with specific technical training that they may need to perform their doctoral research (e.g. programming languages, laboratory techniques).

2.3.2 Credit Requirements

All students need to fulfill course **credit requirements** as part of their PhD program. A minimum of **24 course credits** must be completed, all within the first academic year, note, *not* calendar year. **No fewer than 9 credits** should be taken in **any given semester**. Missing credits cannot be made up for in another academic year.

Course credit requirements can be fulfilled by taking a **general core course**, *Modeling* (6ECTS), a **track core course** (3-6 ECTS), as well as further elective courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Courses</th>
<th>Credits, Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Courses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall: <em>Introduction to Research at IST</em></td>
<td>No credit, required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring: <em>Scientific Presentation and Conduct</em></td>
<td>No credit, required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Core Course</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015: <em>Modeling</em></td>
<td>6 ECTS credits, required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track Core Courses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016:</td>
<td>3-6 ECTS credits each, at least one required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Biology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Computer Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Data and Computational Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neuroscience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Physics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Courses, Breadth Courses, Advanced Courses</strong></td>
<td>3-6 ECTS credits each, elective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3.3 Course Information

Current course offerings and descriptions are available in the “Courses” section on the IST webpage:  [http://ist.ac.at/graduate-school/courses](http://ist.ac.at/graduate-school/courses). Basic information such as the course descriptions and a calendar are also available via the IQ system (see § 2.3.4 below). Course websites contain detailed schedule information, course materials, and homework assignments. Students are advised to regularly check the course websites for the most up-to-date announcements from the course instructor(s).

2.3.4 Registering for and Withdrawal from Courses

**Registration** is mandatory if the student wishes the course to count towards the yearly credit requirements. Students need to register at least one week prior to the course start date (note that the “one week prior” deadline does not apply to the very first Fall semester for new incoming students). Students can register for a course either for credit or on an audit basis. Audited courses do not carry any credits and therefore do not count towards the credit requirement.

Course registration takes place via the IQ online system, which students can access via the following link: [http://iq.ist.ac.at/student](http://iq.ist.ac.at/student).

If a student wishes to withdraw from the course, it is the student’s responsibility to both inform the course instructor and withdraw formally via the IQ system. For regular courses (i.e. half- and full semester courses), the deadline for dropping a course is by the third week from the official start of the course. For blocked courses, the withdrawal should happen within one day of the course start date. Should the student fail to inform the course instructor and the Graduate School, or drop out of the class after the deadline, the student will receive a “fail” grade, and these will be listed on the student’s transcript.

For any questions related to the IQ system please email [iq@ist.ac.at](mailto:iq@ist.ac.at).

2.3.5 Course Structure

All courses have a consistent course structure and grading policy while still allowing for stylistic differences in how courses are taught in different disciplines. In the first class the professor will need to communicate the following course details:

1. A full course schedule and syllabus
2. How the course will be graded
3. Exam and homework policy
4. Date of the final examination
5. Policy on absences
Half semester courses last 6 weeks, while full semester courses last 12 weeks. Semester courses (either full- or half- semester) typically occur on either a Monday-Wednesday or a Tuesday-Thursday schedule. Per week, each course will have:

- two 75-minute lectures, and
- one 50-minute recitation

Attendance is compulsory for lectures as well as recitations. Recitations are typically taught by teaching assistants, but sometimes also by faculty members. There are weekly homework assignments, the nature of which will vary from course to course.

The final exam for half-semester courses takes place in the 7th week, whereas that for full-semester courses takes place in the 13th week. For the most up-to-date information on exact course dates, refer to the Graduate School “Courses” webpage: http://ist.ac.at/nc/en/graduate-school/courses/.

2.3.6 Grading Policy and Final Exam

All courses are graded on a numeric point system that is consistent with the Austrian grading system. Core courses cannot be taken on a pass/fail basis. The point system used is on a scale of 1 to 5 and performance is scored as follows:

1 = outstanding performance  
2 = exceptional  
3 = good performance  
4 = satisfactory to sufficient performance; sound work, but with a number of notable errors; this score meets the minimum needed to pass  
5 = insufficient; performance is unsatisfactory

In general, the average grade at IST Austria is a 3 (i.e., good performance).

Different courses will differ in terms of how the grade is derived from participation, homework assignments, and the final exam. At the minimum the final examination contributes to the final grade. Students should contact the course instructor for more details on grading policy for a specific course.

Grades are available in IQ, and students have the option of downloading their transcript. See also, § 3.8 and the IQ Student Handbook.

Only one exam period is offered (exceptions being personal tragedies, severe illness, etc.). The extension of deadlines is solely up to the discretion of the professor. In special cases and upon request of the student, a late exam can be granted by the course instructor (e.g. absence due to illness). Late exams should be conducted as soon as possible but no later than the start of the next (full) semester.
2.3.7 Courses at Other Institutions

IST Austria has an agreement with the University of Vienna allowing students at IST Austria to attend their courses and workshops for credit. Students are advised to check the language of instruction before committing to registration of a course. If students wish to take courses outside of IST and have these appear on their transcripts, they need to register their attendance with the Graduate School prior to taking the course. After the course is completed, documents demonstrating successful completion from the awarding institution need to be filed with the Graduate School Office.

Attending a course at another Austrian institution requires some advance planning, as Austrian universities have specific enrollment times for each semester. They may also require students to submit proof of their high school graduation. Students interested in this option should start this process one month before the start of the semester at the very latest.

2.3.8 Seminars, Meetings, Symposia, Conferences, and Summer Schools

The Graduate School of IST Austria strongly encourages students to attend seminars, reading groups, lab meetings, symposia, conferences and summer schools that complement their scientific interests. These forums are excellent opportunities to hone communication skills and to network within the scientific community. In the first year, unaffiliated students receive a travel budget of up to 1000 Euro for such purposes (see § 4.3). After affiliation, supervisors bear the cost of travel to conferences.

For an updated list of seminars, symposia, and lab meetings which occur on a regular basis at IST, see: https://portal.app.ist.ac.at/#/categories/events.

2.4 Rotations

In addition to the above course requirements, in Phase I, students need to complete three rotations in three different research groups. Rotations are an opportunity for students to get to know a potential PhD supervisor, learn new skills, and experience research outside of their main area of scientific interest. Rotations require the approval of the head of the research group.

While most M.S. students complete only three rotations, students with B.S. degrees and M.S. students who obtain approval for a fourth rotation from the Program Chair can complete optional 4th or in some cases 5th rotations. The Graduate School strongly encourages students to take one rotation outside their main area of scientific research. First-year mentors can also assist students in scheduling rotations to maximize their benefit and prevent an excessive workload during the semester.

Students should notify potential rotation supervisors in advance of their intent to do a rotation in their research groups, and schedule the rotations earlier rather than later to
avoid difficulties in securing a rotation opportunity with their preferred research group. Students should also note that rotation periods are of different lengths, and that advance planning with their rotation supervisors is necessary. Only after approval has been given by the research group leader should students **officially register for the rotation in IQ**.

One of the rotations forms the basis for PhD thesis research in Phase II. Students should think carefully about which research group they would like to affiliate with and apply in sufficient time.

The possibility of affiliation should be discussed in concrete terms with the faculty member(s) whose research aligns most with the student’s research interest. For more information on rotation schedules please refer to § 2.1.3 *Important Dates*. Also read § 2.5 on affiliation.

The student and the professor must come to an agreement on the project and the expected outcome (e.g., short presentation at the end, short paper, etc.). Students are required to meet with each rotation supervisor (i.e., professor) before the start of the rotation. During this meeting the professor and the student need to define the project and the criteria based on which the student will be evaluated. The student should inform the professor at the start of the rotation whether they are considering doing a PhD in the group.

Students who are doing a rotation in research groups that work with lab animals (mainly rodents), will need to attend a **mandatory introduction to animal handling** before the start of the rotations. These introductions will be offered by staff of the Preclinical Facility and will take place in the week before the start of the rotation period.

### 2.4.1 Rotation Performance Evaluation

At the end of the rotation the student and professor should meet for a final rotation performance review. During this meeting the professor will inform the student whether they have met the performance standards expected in the group and whether affiliation is an option or not. Students should note that this is not a binding commitment for either party at this time.

The student and the professor should enter the rotation protocol (the evaluation report) together, using the IQ system. This should happen **at the end of the rotation period**, and the final deadline for submission of the rotation evaluation protocol via IQ is **one week after the rotation period ends**. Failure to do so will lead to the rotation not being credited towards the Phase I requirements. If there are any problems meeting this deadline, students should contact the Graduate School Office as soon as possible and provide a justification for failing to meet the deadline.

### 2.4.2 Updating Rotation Records on IQ system

It is the student’s responsibility to update rotation records on the IQ system, and failure to do so means that the academic requirements have not been registered, and thus, not been
met. Whenever students have obtained approval from the research group leader for a rotation, this needs to be registered in IQ. Before the end of the rotation period, students should also submit the rotation protocol with their rotation supervisor in IQ.

For detailed instructions on how to update rotation records in the IQ, please refer to the IQ Student Handbook, available from the IST Intranet: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/4/4a/IQ_Student_Handbook.pdf

### 2.4.3 Timeline for Rotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before rotation</th>
<th>1. Agree on rotation with rotation supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Pre-register via IQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. At least one week before rotation start:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>schedule meeting with supervisor and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agree on project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During rotation</td>
<td>Perform rotation project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After rotation</td>
<td><strong>Within one week</strong> of rotation end: complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rotation performance evaluation protocol with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rotation supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 **Affiliation**

The student can base their decision of which research group to join on their experience and evaluations from rotations. If the evaluation has been positive, and the research group leader and student have overlapping research interests, the research group leader may agree to **affiliate** a student. Students are advised to think about who to affiliate with early on, as the success of their PhD degree is ultimately tied to how closely their PhD research project aligns with their own research interests.

Steps for affiliation:

1. Agree with proposed supervisor to do a rotation
2. Apply for affiliation in IQ
3. Professor approves IQ request

The window for **affiliation application opens on May 1, 2016** for both M.S. and B.S. students. This date is right after the end of Rotation 4.

However, the deadlines by which the affiliation procedures should be completed differs for M.S. and B.S. students. Note that the deadline is the **date by which the research group leader should have officially approved the affiliation**, and is **not** merely the date by which the student has applied for affiliation.

For **M.S. students, the deadline for affiliation is Jun 15, 2016**. For **B.S. students, the deadline for affiliation is Jan 15, 2017**. Because B.S. students might need more time to complete the necessary coursework, or perform additional rotations, the timeline for affiliation can be longer than for M.S. students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M.S. students</th>
<th>B.S. students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation window opens</td>
<td>May 1, 2016</td>
<td>May 1, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation window closes</td>
<td>Jun 15, 2016</td>
<td>Jan 15, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In special cases, a student might not have found a research group to affiliate with after three rotations. In such cases, it might be necessary to do a 4th or a 5th rotation and defer the affiliation process. If this indeed applies, students should inform the Graduate School Office by email and obtain approval from the Program Chair. If students do not perform a 4th or 5th rotation, then the affiliation deadlines above need to be adhered to.

Students should bear in mind that **failure to affiliate with a research group will result in contract termination** (also read § 3.11 on “Grounds for dismissal”). Students are strongly encouraged to read through the procedures required to affiliate with a research group, and for scheduling a qualifying exam, outlined in this section and § 2.6 of this handbook.
2.5.1 PhD Supervisor

The PhD supervisor must be part of the IST faculty. The student and the intended supervisor must come to a mutual agreement that the student will work towards his or her PhD under the supervisor, and that the supervisor will support this student in this endeavor. It is important to recognize that this constitutes a binding commitment for both sides. Any change of supervisor(s) must be communicated to the Graduate School Office (gradschool@ist.ac.at) immediately and requires approval from the Dean.

2.5.2 Joint Supervision

Students may choose to be co-supervised by two or more professors, subject to agreement by these professors. The co-supervisor can be another faculty member at IST, or faculty (or equivalent) at another institute or university. External co-supervisor(s) must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Once the professor has agreed to act as a student’s supervisor or co-supervisor, the student should register the affiliation with the IQ system (see § 2.5.3 below). The professor will then need to formally approve the affiliation using the IQ system for the official registration of affiliation to take effect. It is the student’s responsibility to remind their proposed supervisor to complete the registration within IQ. In case of co-supervision arrangements, please inform the Graduate School Office via e-mail (gradschool@ist.ac.at).

Due to restrictions within the IQ system as to how many supervisors a student can be registered with, currently only one primary supervisor will be registered within IQ, and the Graduate School Office will maintain additional records as to the exact number of supervisors that a student is affiliated with.

2.5.3 Updating Affiliation Records in IQ system

As with rotations, it is the student’s responsibility to update affiliation records in the IQ system, and failure to do so means that the academic requirement has not been met. Students should remind their proposed supervisor to approve the request in IQ by the affiliation deadline to complete the official affiliation process.

For detailed instructions on how to update affiliation records in IQ, please refer to the IQ Student Handbook, available from the IST Intranet: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/4/4a/IQ_Student_Handbook.pdf
2.6 Qualifying Exam

Phase I ends with the successful passing of the qualifying exam (Q.E.). The exam consists of a presentation of the thesis proposal and an oral exam on an individualized reading list. Students should register officially for taking the qualifying exam and upload these documents into the IQ system.

The Thesis Committee should be appointed soon after a student affiliates with a research group, but at least 2 months prior to the qualifying exam. For details on the organization of a thesis committee and deadlines with respect to qualifying exams, please refer to § 2.6.1 and § 2.6.2.

After being formed, the Thesis Committee will be available for guidance and advice throughout the student’s doctoral studies. At least one committee member needs to come from an external institution (i.e. outside of IST Austria). The primary supervisor must be a faculty member of the Institute.

Upon passing the qualifying exam, the student’s salary level will increase to the post-Q.E. level. For more details, refer to § 4, Financial Support.

2.6.1 Qualifying Exam Committee (or Thesis Committee)

The Qualifying Exam Committee, also known as Thesis Committee, consists of the supervisor and at least two other committee members, one of whom must be external (i.e., not part of the IST faculty). If there is a co-supervisor, then they must be one of the committee members although they do not count towards the two additional required members. A student can have more than three members on their thesis committee.

External committee members without a PhD need the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School (instead of the Program Chair). The second committee member can either be external, or one of the other professors at IST.

The Thesis Committee must be formed in consultation with, and receive the approval of, the supervisor(s). The names and affiliations of the Thesis Committee must be filed with the Graduate School Office via the IQ system at least two months in advance (see § 2.6.5).

The Thesis Committee members should decide on and define what they expect from the student in the Qualifying Exam and clearly communicate their expectations and evaluation criteria to the student. The Graduate School strongly advises students to decide on a Thesis Committee shortly after affiliation.
2.6.2 Qualifying Exam Date

Students should coordinate the exact exam date with the Thesis Committee and inform the Graduate School Office at least 2 months prior to the qualifying exam date.

As the final deadlines for affiliation are different for M.S. and B.S. students, the deadlines by which to pass the qualifying exam are also different. The deadline by which M.S. students should have passed the qualifying exam is Feb 15, 2017. The deadline by which B.S students should have passed the qualifying exam is Sep 15, 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M.S. students</th>
<th>B.S. students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation window opens</td>
<td>May 1, 2016</td>
<td>May 1, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation window closes</td>
<td>Jun 15, 2016</td>
<td>Jan 15, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifying exam deadline</td>
<td>Feb 15, 2017</td>
<td>Sep 15, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are strongly advised to schedule their Qualifying Exam well before the deadlines. In case a student fails the qualifying exam with the option to retry, they have at most 2 more months to retake the exam.

An extension of the date can only be granted in exceptional cases and only after written request and justification from the supervisor.
2.6.3 Format of the Qualifying Exam

The qualifying exam is conducted by the Thesis Committee, in the presence of the Exam Chair, and is not open to the public. The qualifying exam consists of two distinct parts:

1. An oral presentation on the research proposal by the student (normally 20-30 minutes), plus time as needed for questions and discussion (20-40 minutes)

   - BREAK: Committee writes report on outcome of proposal part of the exam

2. An oral exam on the reading list, followed by Committee deliberations

Each section should last at least 45 minutes. During the break the Committee should write the report on the outcome of the proposal part of the exam.

Reading List

The reading list typically consists of 5-10 journal or conference articles and/or book chapters that represent a balance between a survey, a review, and primary research materials within the student’s proposed area of research. The student will be examined on these materials during the qualifying exam.

The reading list must be agreed upon by the student and the PhD Supervisor(s) and should be submitted via IQ, no later than 2 months prior the Q.E. date, along with a list of the names of the Thesis Committee members.

Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal should describe a research problem or research direction, put it into the context of existing work, and should be about 5–10 pages long. It does not have to contain a concrete outline of a thesis or partial results. The student should explain why they want to work on a specific topic, and demonstrate a deep knowledge about the state of the art in the literature around the chosen topic. Some guiding questions could be: What are the open questions? What are the possible implications if some of them were solved?

The student needs to submit the thesis proposal via the IQ system at least one month before the Q.E. deadline.

Once the student has submitted all documents, they should inform the Graduate School Office of the exact date and time of the exam but at least one month in advance. The student should also provide the Thesis Committee with all of the necessary documents. The Graduate School Office will arrange a venue and contact the Thesis Committee members on procedural issues.
Exam Chair

The Exam Chair presides over the qualifying exam but normally asks no questions. The primary role of the Exam chair is to ensure that the Qualifying Exam proceeds in a fair manner that is consistent with the rules and policies of the Graduate School. Furthermore, the Exam Chair should guarantee that the student is given the opportunity to talk to the Committee in the absence of their supervisor (typically after the proposal part of the exam).

The Exam Chair is typically a non-voting member. However, in the case of a tie vote among the voting members, the Exam Chair will cast the tie-breaking vote.

In addition, the Exam Chair must formally sign off on the outcome of the exam. In rare cases in which the Exam Chair does not approve the outcome, the Program Chair makes the final determination of the exam outcome.

The Exam Chair is also responsible for filing the outcome of the exam with the Graduate School Office by submitting the Q.E. protocol form (see Appendix). The result will then be recorded in the IQ system.

Exam Outcome

The Thesis Committee determines the outcome of the qualifying exam by majority vote. There are three possible outcomes of the qualifying exam:

1) **Pass**
2) **Fail with option to retry:**
   - in case the outcome of only *one* part of the Q.E. is negative: it is possible to retake only the failed part
   OR
   - in case the outcome of *both* parts of the Q.E. is negative, but the Committee is confident that the problems can be addressed and fixed within the allowed time frame of two months
3) **Fail without option to retry:**
   - in case the outcome of both parts of the Q.E is negative AND
   - the committee is convinced that the problems are substantial and cannot be addressed within the allowed time frame of two months

Should the outcome be **pass**, the exam chair will forward the results to the Graduate School Office. Upon passing the qualifying exam, the student will have met all the Phase I requirements and the student’s salary will be adjusted accordingly.

Should the outcome be **fail with the option to retake the exam**, then the date for the retake exam needs to be set at the end of the first exam, when the entire Thesis Committee is present. The retake exam should be scheduled for **no sooner than one month**, and no
later than two months following the first exam. The Thesis Committee members and the reading list remain the same for the second exam. There are only two possible outcomes for the retake exam: pass or fail. If the outcome of the retake exam is fail the student’s contract will be terminated at the next possible date.

Should the result be fail without option to retry, this constitutes grounds for contract termination, which will take place on the next possible date.

2.6.4 Overview of Qualifying Exam Timeline

The table below provides an overview of the steps to complete and at which point before the qualifying exam they should happen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time before qualifying exam</th>
<th>Steps to complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximately 3-4 months prior</td>
<td>Find and finalize choice of supervisor(s). If a co-supervisor is external get approval from the Graduate School.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| At least 2 months prior | 1. Find and finalize a Thesis Committee and submit the list and proposed exam date to the Graduate School Office to get approval for the external committee member(s).

2. Finalize the reading list with supervisor(s) and submit to the Graduate School Office.

3. Provide Committee members with the reading list. |
| At least 1 month prior | Finalize the exam date and time and notify the Graduate School Office. |
| 1 month before | Send the thesis proposal to Committee Members and file the thesis proposal with the Graduate School Office. |

2.6.5 Qualifying Exam Registration in IQ system

It is the student’s responsibility to register for a qualifying exam in the IQ system, and failure to do so means that the academic requirement has not been met. Once the student has obtained approval for the Thesis Committee, this needs to be registered in IQ. Students should also submit their research proposal and reading lists within IQ.

For detailed instructions on how to register the qualifying exam in the IQ system, please refer to the IQ Student Handbook, available from the IST Intranet: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/4/4a/IQ_Student_Handbook.pdf
2.7 Phase II of PhD Studies

In Phase II, the student will primarily work on their PhD thesis research. In addition, Phase II students are required to perform teaching assistance (see below). Additional academic requirements (e.g., course work) may be required by the supervisor(s), Thesis Committee, or Program Faculty.

The supervisor(s), Thesis Committee, and the Program Faculty will monitor and evaluate the student’s progress towards obtaining a PhD degree.

Students are advised to make use of their Thesis Committee by keeping them updated on their progress. They can be valuable advisors, and ultimately they will be referees for future job applications. Any changes in Thesis Committee membership should be communicated by the student to the Graduate School Office via email (gradschool@ist.ac.at), with the supervisor and Program Chair cc-ed into the email communication. The student should include brief reasoning why there is a change in Thesis Committee membership. The change will need to be approved by the supervisor and Program Chair.

2.7.1 Thesis Research

The primary role of a student in Phase II is to conduct research which will culminate into a PhD thesis. The exact requirements of the thesis vary by discipline, but the thesis should contain original research, be of high standard, and make significant contributions to the understanding of a specific topic of research.

2.7.2 Progress Reviews

Phase II students have a biannual performance evaluation with their PhD supervisor(s). The student and the PhD supervisor(s) must meet and complete a progress report summarizing the student’s performance. The results of this meeting will need to be entered into the Progress Review section via the IQ system. Reports are due twice a year: October 15 and April 15. For more information on how to submit reports in IQ, please refer to the IQ Student Handbook: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/4/4a/IQ_Student_Handbook.pdf

The purpose of discussing the student’s performance is to establish whether the student is making reasonable progress towards a PhD degree, and make constructive suggestions on how the students can attain the established goals, as well as complete the thesis project.

In addition to meetings with the supervisor for the progress reviews, it is recommended that the student give a presentation with at least two committee members present once a year to demonstrate their progress.

The entire Program Faculty discusses all progress reports in designated meetings in early November and early May. A negative progress report may lead to (1) a warning by the
Program Chair, and then if not remedied, to (2) a dismissal. In problem cases, the Program Chair may warn a student or propose dismissal from the Graduate School. Every dismissal must be voted on by the Program Faculty and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Also refer to § 3.11 “Grounds for Dismissal”.

Please note: all dismissals must be communicated to the student by November 15 to be effective on December 31, and by May 15 to be effective on June 30.

2.7.3 Third-year Student Presentations

Students are required to give a presentation on their thesis research in the Spring semester in the third year of their PhD studies. The presentations are an opportunity for students to present their preliminary research results to the wider Institute, obtain feedback, and hone their presentation skills.

The presentation could take the form of summarizing primary research questions of the PhD thesis, explaining the methodology used to address the research questions, some preliminary data and results (if applicable), some early interpretation of the results, as well as research plans for the remainder of the PhD.

2.7.4 Courses

While there are no course requirements in Phase II, the supervisor might require students to attend courses that will benefit the student’s long-term academic goals. A list of current and past advanced courses can be viewed on the IST website. Keep in mind that not all advanced courses are offered every year.

2.7.5 Teaching Assistance Requirement

Students in Phase II are expected to serve as teaching assistant (TA) for at least one half-semester course before they graduate from IST Austria. Teaching assistants are typically responsible for recitations, and may support the course instructor with grading homework assignments, or other assessments.

Students may also teach or co-teach (i.e. give lectures) for a course. This can also count towards the teaching assistance requirement. If students are interested in teaching a course, they should approach the relevant faculty member.

2.8 Thesis Defense

The thesis defense is the final assessment that decides whether a student obtains a PhD degree and must be scheduled within 4 years of passing the qualifying exam. The Dean of the Graduate School may approve an extension under special circumstances, provided that
there is a reasonable justification for needing extra time. Students should officially register for the thesis defense in IQ (see also § 3.8).

The thesis defense takes the following format:

1. **Public presentation**: the student presents the thesis to a public audience followed by a public questions session.

2. **Closed examination**: questions from the Thesis Committee in private.

Further details of the requirements for the thesis defense are described in the subsections below. Students are advised to read these carefully and approach the Graduate School Office, their supervisor(s), or thesis committee members in case of any questions.

### 2.8.1 Thesis Committee

The Thesis Committee is the same as for the qualifying exam (see § 2.6.1). Changes to the committee should be requested from the Graduate School Office and must be approved by the Program Chair.

### 2.8.2 Pre-Conditions for Defending

The student must provide a **thesis draft** to the Thesis Committee. In order for the student to be able to proceed to the defense, the Thesis Committee must first agree that the thesis is acceptable (with the possibility of minor modifications). The Thesis Committee should inform the student whether they accept the thesis is of sufficient quality and quantity for a thesis defense.

Once this approval is obtained, the student needs to file the **exact date** for the thesis defense and the names of all the Thesis Committee members, as well as a **draft of the thesis** with the Graduate School Office (to be performed via IQ). Once every Thesis Committee member approves, the exam can be scheduled for **at least one month** later, and the Graduate School will announce and advertise the thesis defense.

The Graduate School will assign a Defense Chair from among the faculty. The Defense Chair will request written comments from all of the Thesis Committee members. These comments will be included in the general appraisal of the thesis draft and, if required, a list of requested modifications to the draft will be supplied. The comments and requested modifications will be forwarded to the student.

### 2.8.3 Defense Format

The Defense consists of a **public lecture** and a **private examination** by the Thesis Committee. The public lecture of the thesis should last no more than 50 minutes, followed
by questions from the audience and the Thesis Committee. In the private examination, the Thesis Committee and the Defense Chair may ask additional questions about the thesis draft and request additional modifications.

2.8.4 Outcome

Immediately after the exam, the Thesis Committee discusses the exam and votes on the outcome. All members of the Thesis Committee (which does not include the Defense Chair) have the right to vote. The thesis can be accepted only if there is unanimous agreement among the Committee.

There are two possible outcomes to a PhD defense: accept or reject.

If the outcome is to accept, the Thesis Committee may request a list of requested minor modifications to the Thesis.

In the case where there is no unanimous vote by the Thesis Committee to accept the thesis then the outcome is to reject the thesis. The student has the right to appeal this decision to the Dean of the Graduate School.

The Thesis Committee will immediately write a report (normally 1-2 pages) that justifies their decision, and communicate this decision to the student after their deliberations. The Defense Chair will inform the Graduate School of the preliminary result.

2.8.5 Final Thesis Submission

The student has to provide all Thesis Committee Members with a final version of the thesis which includes all of the requested modifications together with a signature form. The form is included in the thesis style sheet and should be included in the final copy of the thesis. It contains the title of the thesis, the student’s name, a list of names of the Thesis Committee members and their signatures. All Thesis Committee members must approve the final version by signing the thesis. Electronic signatures of external Thesis Committee members, inserted by the Thesis Committee members themselves, are acceptable, as long as the Defense Chair has been cc-ed into the electronic communication.

The student needs to submit the final thesis together with all signatures of Thesis Committee members within two months of the thesis defense to the Defense Chair, who then files the thesis and the defense report with the Graduate School.

Students should also submit a copy of their final thesis in PDF format and include the original source file (e.g. MS Word, LaTeX, etc.) via IQ.

The Defense Chair may grant an extension of one month if the student fails to submit the final thesis in time. If the final thesis is not submitted by the end of the extension the Dean will then determine the fate of the student’s thesis.
Students will be asked to sign an agreement for the thesis to be archived by the Library and made viewable to the public, unless the student and supervisor explicitly request an embargo.

**2.8.6 Timeframe for the Thesis Defense**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time before qualifying exam</th>
<th>Steps to complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 months</strong> prior</td>
<td>1. Provide the Thesis Committee Members with a thesis draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Any changes in the Thesis Committee? If so, have they been approved? (see § 2.8.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 months</strong> prior</td>
<td>1. Collect feedback from Thesis Committee Members on the thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Finalize the exam date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 month</strong> prior</td>
<td>File the exam date and a list of Thesis Committee members with the Graduate School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>within 2 months</strong> after the defense</td>
<td>1. Finalize the thesis including the requested modifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Provide the Committee Members with the final version.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Collect signatures from the Committee members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Submit the final thesis (electronic version) to the Defense Chair.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2.8.7 Graduation Ceremony**

Students who have met all academic requirements and submitted the final version of their PhD thesis (see requirements in § 2.8.5 above) will be scheduled to receive their PhD Degree in a special graduation ceremony that occurs once a year, typically in June.

**2.8.8 Academic Transcripts and Enrollment Confirmation**

Students can request their official academic transcripts and enrollment confirmations via IQ at any time. Once logged in, students can click on ‘Requests’ in the left hand menu, and under ‘Documents’, find a link to a customized transcript. Enrollment confirmations are available in English as well as German.
In the request students may choose for some or all of their numeric grades (i.e., on a 1-5 scale) to be converted to a pass/fail scheme (1-4 is a pass and 5 is a fail).

2.9 Changes to PhD program

From time to time, there might be changes to the PhD program or procedures, which will be communicated to students via email. Students are advised to stay informed about these changes, and to contact the Graduate School Office in case of any questions.
3 Duties and Conduct of PhD Students

3.1 General rules for employees of IST Austria

All PhD students should abide by the Rules for Employees of IST Austria, which may be updated as required. It is the student’s responsibility to remain informed about the most recent version of the rules. The current version is available under: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/e/e9/Rules_for_Employees_of_IST_Austria_150602.pdf

3.2 Notifying GSO and HR of Changes

It is the student’s duty to notify the Graduate School Office (gradschool@ist.ac.at) and the Human Resources team (hr@ist.ac.at) of any changes to their personal information (such as official name and address).

For non-EU students, it is also important to note their visa or residence permit expiry date, and notify the HR team with at least three months’ notice, as it can take several months to apply for a visa or residence permit renewal.

Extended absences (e.g., maternity or paternity leave, long business trips, see also § 3.3), or change in employment status and sideline activities should be communicated to both the HR team (hr@ist.ac.at) and the Graduate School Office (gradschool@ist.ac.at).

3.3 Short Absences, Sick Leave, Business Trips

Unaffiliated students should notify Vlad Cozac (vlad.cozac@ist.ac.at) in case of short absences, such as sickness, home office days, business trips, and conference travel, and apply for leave using the DPW system (see § 3.5), as this is a legal requirement under Austrian labor law.

When students are affiliated with a research group, they should contact their Assistant to Professors (A2P). A regularly updated list of A2Ps can be found on the Human Resources & Hospitality wiki page (https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/HR), with a list of A2P assignment to research groups available here: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/8/8f/Professors_at_IST_Austria.pdf.
3.4 Internships, Secondments and Extended Leave

In some situations, students might go to a conference as part of a business trip, be sent to on a secondment for collaboration with research groups at other institutions, or perform (summer) internships.

A student who is unaffiliated should always notify International Officer Vlad Cozac (vlad.cozac@ist.ac.at) in advance if they are planning to be on a business trip, internship, or secondment, as this may have implications for their employment contract, salary, insurance, taxation, and (if applicable) visa or residence permit. Students should make sure to notify him as soon as possible, but at least one month in advance of such absences, as it takes time to notify the authorities of insurance, taxation and residence changes.

Affiliated students should notify their Assistant to Professors (A2P) of their respective research group of such planned absences. The A2P will then notify HR as needed. A regularly updated list of A2Ps can be found on the Human Resources & Hospitality wiki page (https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/HR), with a list of A2P assignment to research groups available here: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/8/8f/Professors_at_IST_Austria.pdf.

If the student wishes to apply for extended leave, whether it is a maternity/paternity leave, or sickness leave, they should contact the HR team (hr@ist.ac.at) for advice.

3.5 Entering Vacation Days and Business Trips in the DPW system

All PhD students are employees of IST Austria, and therefore bound by the legal requirement, under Austrian law as well as for insurance agencies, and funding agencies, to accurately record any type of absence: i.e., vacation days, sick leaves, business trips, and any other absences.

PhD students have 25 paid vacation days per year, and are encouraged to use up their vacation days before they affiliate with a research group, as it is undesirable to have vacation days transferred to the next unit of affiliation.

Students must submit requests for vacation days and business trips via the online electronic time tracking system called Sage DPW. Each entry must be approved by the supervisor in advance. When students are unaffiliated, the “supervisor” for granting vacation days and leaves of absence is Vlad Cozac. When students are affiliated, such requests should go to A2Ps and research group leaders.

The Sage DPW system can be accessed through the following URL: https://w1521008.ist.local/dpw/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=dpw_data/a-0000.htm.

The HR team conducts regular introductions to the Sage DPW system. Students should feel free to contact the HR team (hr@ist.ac.at) in case of any questions.
3.6 Graduate School Requirements and Communications

It is the student’s duty to stay informed about changes in Graduate School requirements, which is primarily disseminated via email and updated on the Graduate School wiki page (https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School). This may include changes to the PhD program, course requirements, application processes, and examination procedures.

3.7 Active Participation and Contributions

Students are expected to actively participate in lectures, recitations, seminars, symposia and other academic forums. It is helpful for students to engage in conversation with fellow students and faculty members, and to acquire all-round knowledge across disciplines and hone communication skills.

There are regular seminars and symposia taking place at IST, such as the IST Colloquium, Think & Drink, and the Young Scientist Symposium. Students’ participation in these seminars is highly encouraged. For a list of seminars, see also § 2.3.8.

3.8 Updating Student Records on the IST Quercus (IQ) System

The IQ system is an essential tool for students. It is an online portal through which students can administer their academic requirements and officially register for courses, rotations, affiliation, the qualifying examination, progress reviews, and the thesis defense. Therefore, it is crucial that students understand how to use this tool.

It is the student’s duty to make sure that their student records in the IQ system are always up-to-date, and that official registration for academic requirements are made by the deadlines specified. Any failure on part of the student to update their academic records via IQ will inevitably lead to failure to meet academic requirements. If students notice that there are discrepancies between records on IQ and the actual academic requirements they are working towards, or encounter technical difficulties updating their academic records, they should notify the Graduate School Office (gradschool@ist.ac.at) immediately so the problems can be rectified.

A manual (IQ Handbook for Students) is made available online, and students are encouraged to go through it and familiarize themselves with the IQ system’s interface and functions. An up-to-date manual can be found here:

RAG status in IQ

In IQ, students’ deadlines and requirements are pre-programmed, with a red-amber-green, or RAG, alert system which indicates if students are on track to meeting their academic requirements within the allowable timeframe. “RAG” is in fact somewhat of a misnomer, as in our case the system actually consists of four colors: red - orange - yellow – green (but ROYG just did not have the same ring).
The Graduate School Office team sets up these rules to mirror the curricular requirements for students. All these rules are applied to students at particular points during their studies.

If students meet a requirement according to the rules, their status on that particular requirement is green. If a student does not meet a rule’s requirement their status may be yellow, orange or red, depending on how much time is left to meet the requirement, to indicate increasing urgency.

The RAG status indicator alerts both students and the Graduate School Office in advance that something is not quite going according to plan and escalates if the problem is not addressed.

In summary, the colors corresponds to the following statuses:

- **Green** = all is well
- **Yellow** = attention, please tend to something
- **Orange** = there seems to be a problem here
- **Red** = there is something awfully wrong

Students are advised to read the *IQ Handbook for Students* for further information on how to check their RAG status and address problems within IQ, should their RAG color be any color other than green.

### 3.9 Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are a way for students to give feedback to instructors, teaching assistants, and to the Graduate School, in order to improve future courses and to address any problems that may have arisen. Students should submit course evaluations within one week of course completion.

After each course, students are sent a unique token via email to log on to the course evaluation page. Using the online questionnaire, students can provide anonymous feedback and constructive criticism on the instructors and course design.

### 3.10 Sideline Activities

Students have a duty to report any sideline activities (such as additional jobs and research projects outside of IST Austria, ownership of businesses and enterprises) to the Graduate School Office and HR team.
3.11 *Grounds for Dismissal*

There are a number of conditions under which IST Austria may seek to terminate a student’s contract:

1. Failure of the student to affiliate with a research group;
2. A student fails the qualifying exam without the option to retry;
3. A student fails the second attempt at the qualifying exam;
4. A student fails to rectify multiple negative progress reports; and
5. Violation of ethical conduct.

Students are advised to read this handbook carefully to ensure familiarization with all requirements of the PhD program, as well as the rules and regulations which students are bound by. In case of doubt, students should seek advice from the Graduate School Office.

All dismissals must be communicated to the student by November 15 to be effective on December 31, and by May 15 to be effective on June 30.

3.12 *Ethical Conduct*

IST Austria applies the standards for ethical conduct as laid down by the Max-Planck Society’s “Catalogue of Conduct to be regarded as Scientific Misconduct”. This document is an integral part of the “Rules” for PhD Students at IST Austria. The same rules apply for professors, postdocs, and students.

Both documents are available on IST Wiki, and students are advised to familiarize themselves with the guidelines for ethical scientific conduct:

4 Financial Support

4.1 Student Contracts and Salary Levels
All PhD students are under contract to work 40 hours per week. There are three student salary levels, depending on the student’s status.

In Phase I, there are two salary levels reflecting the student’s admission status as either a master’s (M.S.) student, or a bachelor’s (B.S.) student (see also § 1.2). M.S. students are paid at a slightly higher salary level. New students should provide the Graduate School Office with official proof that all the requirements for a master’s degree at their previous university or institution have been met in order to receive the higher master’s salary level. Without such proof, the student will initially be put on a contract for one year at the bachelor’s salary level until such proof has been obtained. If such proof has not been submitted by the end of January of the first year, the student will remain on a bachelor’s salary level until the student passes the qualifying exam.

Students who intend to do paid internships outside of the Institute should notify HR (hr@ist.ac.at) at least one month in advance, as this might have implications for salary, taxation and insurance (see also § 3.3).

4.2 Contract Extensions
Contract extensions are conditional on satisfactory progress and approval by the student’s supervisor, Thesis Committee, the Program Chair and the Dean.

For contract extensions, students will need to meet at least two members of their Thesis Committee at least six months in advance of the contract expiration date to discuss their progress. It is the student’s responsibility to schedule the meeting, and supervisors are encouraged to cover the travel expenses of external members.

The student will need to prepare the following materials, discuss these at the Thesis Committee meeting, and submit them to the Graduate School Office. The deadline for submission of the documents to the Graduate School Office is the same as the progress review deadline before the contract is due to expire (usually this is April 15 of the same year). The materials include:

1) A summary of all the student’s work since starting at IST, detailing the progress they have made
2) Detailed plans for concluding the student’s project(s) at the Institute, with a timeline for submitting publications, submitting the thesis, and defending the thesis.
3) A letter from the student’s supervisor endorsing their application for a contract extension.

Student contract extensions are for one year by default, unless specified otherwise by the group leader, or the thesis defense is in clear sight.
The documents will be reviewed by the Dean and PhD Program Chair, and the student will be notified of the result of the review, as well as whether they will successfully receive a contract extension.

### 4.3 Conference Allowance

Unaffiliated students have 1’000 EUR at their disposal which can be used for reimbursement of conference and business trip expenses (e.g. travel, accommodation, and conference fees). If a student would like to apply for the allowance, they should contact the International Officer, **Vlad Cozac** (vlad.cozac@ist.ac.at), who can advise on how to apply for it and get reimbursed.

Students are responsible for making their own travel and accommodation arrangements and bookings. Note that original receipts need to be submitted for reimbursement. Students should note that any expenses for reimbursements are bound by the business expense rules of the Institute.

### 5 Equal Opportunities

IST Austria is committed to Equality and Diversity and strives to provide a place where everyone is treated equally and respectfully regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and physical ability. A free and open atmosphere at IST Austria is essential for the organization’s development and to maintain the quality of research, teaching and collaboration of scientists. Attracting and hiring people with different backgrounds and experiences builds a strong base for the growth of new knowledge, new ideas and excellent scientific results at IST Austria.

IST Austria carries out a range of efforts to promote equal opportunities, equality and diversity and to act against harassment and discrimination. If students have any questions about equal opportunities and diversity, or IST’s policy on harassment and discrimination, they should feel free to contact Johannes Dollinger (johannes.dollinger@ist.ac.at).
6 Practical Matters and Social Life

Students are strongly encouraged to read through the IST Welcome Guide, which contains a wealth of information on practical matters and social life at IST Austria. The guide is available from the HR Wiki page: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/2/24/Welcome_Guide.pdf

6.1 Buildings on IST Campus

Each building on IST campus is assigned a letter and a two-digit number:

- I01 = Central Building
- I03 = Voestalpine Building
- I04 = Bertalanffy Building
- I05 = Pre-Clinical Facility
- I06 = Lab Building East
- I07 = New Administration Building
- I08 = Power Plant
- I11 = Facility Management Building
- I12 = Facility Management Building
- I13 = Machine Shop
- I21 = Lab Building West
- I22 = New Canteen
- I27 = Kindergarten
- I28 = Fire Department
- I31 - I35 = Apartments
- I36 = Church
- I41 = Tennis Courts
- I42 = Soccer Field
- C01 = Pre-Clinical Facility
- C02 = Administration Container

As an example, I01.01.003 stands for Room 003, 1st floor, Central Building. The campus map can be downloaded as a PDF from: https://ist.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/ISTmap.pdf
The Graduate School Office is located in I03.01.004B, in other words, Room 004B, on the first floor of the Voestalpine Building. Students who start their PhD have shared office space on the ground floor of Lab Building East. Most lectures take place in the Central Building.

Maps of individual buildings on campus with room numbers can be found via the following link, updated by Construction & Maintenance: http://istsmb.ist.local/idrive/construction/.

6.2 Health and Safety

All students are required to attend a health and safety briefing before they commence with their lab work. For more information about health and safety, please consult the Environment, Health and Safety team wiki page: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/EHS.

6.3 Doctor

The occupational physician, Beata Kaufmann (beata.kaufmann@ist.ac.at), is on campus every Wednesday morning from 9am till 1pm. The medical room, where she conducts consultations is in Room 01.016 of the Central Building. Appointments should be made via email, although when in office, she can also be reached by phone (ext. 7447). For more information on services on offer, please visit her IST wiki page: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Occupational_Physician.

6.4 Psychologist

There might be times when problems seem too difficult to cope with, or you experience signs of anxiety, depression, addiction, or poor mental well-being. In such cases, it helps to have someone to talk to about your problems in a confidential, non-judgmental setting. One possibility is to talk to a psychologist, or a counsellor.

Samira Baig (samira@baig.at), the occupation psychologist, is available for consultation on campus every second Friday from 9:30am till 12.30pm. The medical room, where she conducts medical consultations is in Room 01.016 of the Central Building. Appointments should be made via email.

If an emergency appointment is needed, you can find further information on the “Counselling Services” of the EHS wiki page, on how to seek help more urgently: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/EHS#HEALTH
6.5 **Vacations**

Students are encouraged to make use of their yearly vacation days to get out of the lab and explore wider Vienna and the world beyond. Austria is conveniently located in central Europe, and students are unlikely to run out of options for exciting destinations to explore, even when travelling on a budget.

However, students should remember to register their vacation days in the online DWP system, as it is a legal requirement under Austrian labor law to keep accurate records of employees’ vacation days (see also § 3.5).
Appendix

This section contains checklists which students can use to keep track of academic requirements.

**Academic Checklist: Phase I**

All students are required to attend the basic courses.

**Required Basic Courses (required):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course Credit</th>
<th>Grade (Pass/Fail)</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>Introduction to Research at IST</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>Scientific Presentation and Conduct</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**24 course credits** should be obtained in the **first academic year** from **General Core Courses** (6 ECTS), **Track Core Courses** (minimum of 3 ECTS), and other elective courses. Students should take a **minimum of 9 ECTS per semester**.

**General Core Courses (6 ECTS required):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>General Core Area</th>
<th>Course Credit</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>6 ECTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Track Core Courses (at least 3 ECTS required):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Track Core Areas</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Course Credit</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Elective courses:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Track Core Areas</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Course Credit</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Credit Requirements:**

(24 credits per academic year; minimum of 9 credits per semester)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall 2015 Credits</th>
<th>Spring 2016 Credits</th>
<th>Total Credits (at least 24)</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015/2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rotations:

Students should notify the research group leader that they intend to perform a rotation as far in advance as possible before the start of the rotation, and only after approval has been given by the research group leader should students officially register for the rotation in IQ.

The deadline for submitting rotation protocols is **within 1 week after the rotation period ends**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rotation</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Grade (Pass/Fail)</th>
<th>Date Documents Submitted in IQ</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rotation 1 (required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotation 2 (required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotation 3 (required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotation 4 (optional)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotation 5 (optional)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PhD Supervisor(s):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name(s)</th>
<th>Date Affiliation Approved in IQ</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-supervisor (optional)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-supervisor (optional)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Qualifying Exam:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Date Submitted in IQ</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading List (required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Proposal (required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Member 1 (Internal, IST, required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Member 2 (External, required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee member 3 (optional)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee member 4 (optional)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Outcome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Exam Date (if required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Outcome (if required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Academic Checklist: Phase II**

**Advanced Courses:**
These are not required by the Graduate School, but the student’s supervisor(s) may require these.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester/Year</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Course Location (IST, Uni Wien, etc.)</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teaching Assistant Requirement:**
All PhD students are required to TA at least one half-semester courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester/Year</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Instructor(s)</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Progress Reports:**
(Note: Progress Reports are due every October 15th and April 15th.)

**Year 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Date Filed With Graduate School</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress Report 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Report 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Date Filed With Graduate School</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress Report 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Report 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Date Filed With Graduate School</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress Report 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Report 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Date Filed With Graduate School</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress Report 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Report 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Thesis Defense:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Date Submitted in IQ</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam Date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Chair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Thesis Committee Members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Note: this should be identical to the Q.E. committee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Thesis to the Thesis Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Thesis to the Graduate School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome of the Defense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Final Thesis Submission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Date Submitted in IQ</th>
<th>Completed (✓)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Revised Thesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Co-supervisor (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Co-supervisor (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Committee member 1 (Internal, IST)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Committee member 2 (External)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Committee member 3 (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Committee member 4 (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Thesis Approval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**GSO Forms**

Various graduate school-related forms can be downloaded from: [https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School - Forms](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School - Forms)

**Qualifying Exam Protocol**

This form is to be filled out by the Exam Chair during the qualifying exam. The qualifying exam protocol can be downloaded from: [https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/6/60/Qualifying_exam.pdf](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/6/60/Qualifying_exam.pdf)

**Thesis Defense Protocol**

This form is to be filled out by the Defense Chair during the thesis defense. The protocol for thesis defense can be obtained from: [https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/8/8d/Thesis_defense.pdf](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/8/8d/Thesis_defense.pdf)

**Contract Extension Application Form**

If students wish to apply for a contract extension, they should fill out and submit a contract extension application form to the Graduate School Office. Note that additional documents need to be submitted for a contract extension. Further details are available in § 4.2.

To download a contract extension application form, visit: [https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/0/05/Application_Extension_Employment_Contract_v2.pdf](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/0/05/Application_Extension_Employment_Contract_v2.pdf)
**Important Contacts**

**Dean of the Graduate School** – *head of Graduate School*
Nick Barton  
nick.barton@ist.ac.at  
ext. 3001

**Program Chair** – *head of PhD Program (until October 2015)*
Herbert Edelsbrunner  
herbert.edelsbrunner@ist.ac.at  
ext. 3301

**Mentors** – *providing guidance to first-year students*
Calin Guet  
calin.guet@ist.ac.at  
ext. 4001
Christoph Lampert  
chl@ist.ac.at  
ext. 3101
Gaia Novarino  
gaia.novarino@ist.ac.at  
ext. 5901
Uli Wagner  
uli@ist.ac.at  
ext. 5501

**Graduate School Office** – *administration of graduate student affairs and program requirements*
Hania Köver  
hania.koever@ist.ac.at  
ext. 1159
Uli Seiss  
umrike.seiss@ist.ac.at  
ext. 1034
Sarah Seider  
sarah.seider@ist.ac.at  
ext. 1135
May Chan  
may.chan@ist.ac.at  
ext. 1163

**Ombudspersons** – *dealing with possible incidences of misconduct related to research, teaching, and/or academic supervision*
Robert Seiringer  
robert.seiringer@ist.ac.at  
ext. 5701
Sylvia Cremer  
sylvia.cremer@ist.ac.at  
ext. 3401

**International Officer** – *responsible for unaffiliated students*
Vlad Cozac  
vlad.cozac@ist.ac.at  
ext. 1083

**Graduate Student Association (as of September 2015)**
Alexander Leithner  
alexander.leithner@ist.ac.at  
ext. 4719  
Sixt group
Michal Rolinek  
michal.rolinek@ist.ac.at  
ext. 4757  
Kolmogorov group

**Assistants to Professors** – *provide assistance to individual research groups*
Up-to-date as of September 2015. Please see updated list at: [https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/8/8f/Professors_at_IST_Austria.pdf](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/8/8f/Professors_at_IST_Austria.pdf)

Alexandra Mally  
alexandra.mally@ist.ac.at  
ext. 1105  
Research groups:
  - Eva Benkova
  - Herbert Edelsbrunner
  - Jiří Friml
  - Harald Janovjak

48
Assistants to Professors (continued)

Dana Domnisor  
[mailto:dana.domnisor@ist.ac.at]  
ext. 1096  
Research groups:  
József Csicsvari  
Simon Hippenmeyer  
Björn Hof  
Gaia Novarino  
Ryuichi Shigemoto

Elisabeth Hacker  
[mailto:elisabeth.hacker@ist.ac.at]  
ext. 1015  
Research groups:  
Krishnendu Chatterjee  
Thomas A. Henzinger  
Christoph Lampert  
Uli Wagner  
Chris Wojtan

Eva Kramberger  
[mailto:eva.kramberger@ist.ac.at]  
ext. 3700  
Research group:  
Peter Jonas

Jerneja Beslagic  
[mailto:jerneja.beslagic@ist.ac.at]  
ext. 1137  
Research groups:  
Nick Barton  
Jonathan P. Bollback  
Vladimir Kolmogorov  
Krzysztof Pietrzak  
Gašper Tkačik  
Caroline Uhler

Louis Alesch  
[mailto:louis.alesch@ist.ac.at]  
Research groups:  
Carl-Philip Heisenberg  
Calin Guet  
Beatrix Vicoso

Marija Soronda  
[mailto:marija.soronda@ist.ac.at]  
ext. 1178  
Research groups:  
Laszlo Erdős  
Mikhail Lemeshko  
Jan Maas  
Robert Seiringer  
Johannes M. Fink  
Georgios Katsaros  
Martin Loose  
Leonid Sazanov

Stephanie Danzinger  
[mailto:stephanie.danzinger@ist.ac.ac.at]  
ext. 1124  
Research groups:  
Michael Sixt  
Bernd Bickel  
Tobias Bollenbach  
Sylvia Cremer  
Daria Siekhaus
**Doctor** – general health issues; additions
(on campus Wednesdays)

Beata Lutomska-Kaufmann  
**dr.beatakaufmann@sanote.at**  
+43 664 4249668  
ext. 7447

---

**Psychologist** – work-related psychological issues; mental health issues; additions
(on campus every second Friday from 9:30am till 12.30pm)

Samira Baig  
**samira@baig.at**  
+43 664 4736950  
ext. 7447

---

**Equal treatment & antidiscrimination** – contact person for issues related to discrimination, unequal treatment on the grounds of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, mental or physical abilities; equality, gender mainstreaming; bullying; (sexual) harassment

Johannes Dollinger  
**Johannes.dollinger@ist.ac.at**  
ext. 1046  
+43 664 88687695

---

**Works council** – general support relating to employment, benefits, working conditions, and employee well-being

Christine Francois  
**christine.francois@ist.ac.at**  
+43 664 88349294
Glossary: keywords explained

**A2P**: see *Assistant to Professors*.

**Academic year**: starts in October (Fall semester) and ends in September (Spring semester). See also, *Semester* and § 2.1, § 2.1.2 and § 2.1.3.

**Admission status**: whether students were admitted with a previous Bachelor of Science (B.S.) or Master of Science (M.S.) degree. See § 1.3.

**Affiliation**: this is the process whereby PhD students join a research group. See also *Rotation*, and § 2.5.

**Assistant to Professors**: each research group is assigned an Assistant to Professors, a.k.a. A2P, who can provide assistance with rotation reimbursements, reporting student’s business trips to HR, etc. See § 1.2.

**B.S.**: Bachelor of Science, one of the two statuses with which students can be admitted. See also *M.S.*, and § 1.3.

**Contract extension**: when the contract is about to expire in a few months, and the thesis defense is not yet in sight, students need to apply for a contract extension. For the second contract extension, extra documents justifying the extension are needed. See § 4.2.

**Exam Chair**: is the person who oversees the qualifying exam to ensure procedures are adhered to. See § 2.6.1 and § 2.8.1, also, *Qualifying Exam, Thesis Defense, and Defense Chair*.

**External Thesis Committee Member**: see *Thesis Committee*, § 2.6.1, and § 2.8.1.

**Fall**: see *Semester*.

**Full semester**: see *Semester*.

**Grading**: grading of courses can be on a numerical or pass/fail basis. See § 2.3.6, and § 2.8.8.

**Graduate Student Office**: the administrative team that handles PhD program and student affairs. See § 1.2.

**Half semester**: see *Semester*.

**IQ**: IST Quercus system—an online platform that students can use to officially register for academic requirements. It is the student’s duty to keep their IQ profile up-to-date. See § 2.1.1 and read the *IQ Student Handbook*: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/4/4a/IQ_Student_Handbook.pdf

**IST Wiki**: a Wiki designed for use within the Institute: a good starting place for exploration is the Graduate School page: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School

**Lab rotation**: see *Rotation*.

**M.S.**: Master of Science. One of the statuses with which students can be admitted. See also *B.S.*, and § 1.3.

**Mentor**: all students are assigned a first-year mentor, who can provide guidance on academic and other issues related to PhD studies. See § 1.2.

**Ombudsperson**: deals with student grievances, possible incidences of misconduct related to research, teaching, and/or academic supervision. See § 1.2.

**Phase I**: the first stage of the PhD, where a student takes courses, performs rotations, affiliates with a research group, and prepares for the qualifying exam, also known as “pre-qual(ifying exam)”. See § 1.1 and § 2.2.
Phase II: the second stage of the PhD, after a student has passed the qualifying exam, also known as "post-qualifying exam". In this stage, the student performs PhD thesis research, provides teaching assistance (see Teaching assistance), and prepares for the thesis defense (see Thesis defense). See § 1.1 and § 2.7.

Qualifying exam (Q.E.): students need to pass the qualifying exam in order to transit from Phase I to Phase II of the PhD studies. In preparation, students need to appoint a thesis committee (see Thesis committee), prepare a research proposal, and a reading list. See § 2.6.

Rotation: is a period in which students spend time in a research group (a different one for each rotation period) performing a research project. It is on the basis of this experience that students can choose to affiliate with a research group, and professors can decide if a student is suited to research in a given group. Students are required to do at least three rotations with three different research groups. See also Affiliation, and Research Group.

Research group: is headed by a professor of the Institute, and may consist of postdoctoral researchers, PhD students, lab technicians, interns, and visiting scientists.

Salary levels: there are three PhD salary levels, reflecting on different PhD statuses: 1) B.S. admission salary level; 2) M.S. admission salary level; and 3) post-qualifying exam salary level. See § 4.1.

Semester: there is a distinction between full- and half semesters. Each full semester is 12 weeks long, and courses that run throughout the full semester carry 6 ECTS credits. Fall semester runs from mid-September to end of January, while Spring semester runs from early March to end of June. On the other hand, half semesters are only 6 weeks long, with half-semester courses carrying 3 ECTS credits. See § 2.1.2 for more details.

Supervisor: is in charge of overseeing the PhD student’s thesis research from the point that a student affiliates with a research group. Co-supervision, whether internal or external, is also possible. See § 1.2, § 2.5, and § 2.5.1.

Teaching assistance: when a student provides help with teaching a course or recitation, in Phase II of their studies. See § 2.7.5.

Thesis committee: a thesis committee consists of the PhD student’s supervisor(s), and at least two other committee members, one of whom must be external (i.e., not part of the IST faculty). The thesis committee is the same for the qualifying exam and the PhD thesis defense (unless explicit approval has been given for a change in committee membership). See § 2.6.1.

Thesis research: is the independent research which a student performs, towards their PhD thesis. See § 2.7.1.

Thesis Defense: is the final examination that decides whether a student can successfully obtain a PhD degree. The thesis committee is the same as that for the qualifying exam. See § 2.8.

Work hours: PhD students are under contract with a 40-hour work week. See § 4.1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mo</th>
<th>Tu</th>
<th>We</th>
<th>Th</th>
<th>Fr</th>
<th>Sa</th>
<th>Su</th>
<th>Teaching Weeks</th>
<th>Fall 1 = Fall, 1st Half Semester</th>
<th>Spring 1 = Spring, 1st Half Semester</th>
<th>Fall 2 = Fall, 2nd Half Semester</th>
<th>Spring 2 = Spring, 2nd Half Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sep 15: Start of PhD 2015/16; Orientation Day</td>
<td>Sep 16-18: Intro to Research at IST</td>
<td>Sep 21-Oct 2: Fall Pre-semester courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct 5: Fall 1 starts; Fall Full Semester starts</td>
<td>Oct 12: Rotation 1 starts</td>
<td>Oct 15: Progress Review (Fall) due*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 13: Fall 1 lectures end</td>
<td>Nov 16-20: Fall 1 Exam Week</td>
<td>Nov 23: Fall 2 starts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dec 11: Rotation 1 ends</td>
<td>Dec 14: Rotation 2 starts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 22: Fall 2 lectures end; Fall Full Semester lectures end</td>
<td>Jan 25-29: Fall 2 Exam Week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 26: Rotation 2 ends</td>
<td>Feb 29: Spring 1 starts; Spring Full Semester starts</td>
<td>Mar 7: Rotation 3 starts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Apr 22: Spring 1 lectures end</td>
<td>Apr 25-29: Spring 1 Exam Week</td>
<td>Apr 29: Rotation 3 ends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May 1: Affiliation window opens</td>
<td>May 2: Spring 2 starts</td>
<td>May 2: Rotation 4 starts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 15: Affiliation window closes (MS students)</td>
<td>Jun 17: Spring 2 lectures end; Spring Full Semester lectures end</td>
<td>Jun 20-24: Spring 2 Exam Week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jul 1: Rotation 4 ends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aug 22-24: Spring 2 Exam Week</td>
<td>Aug 29-31: Summer courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Applies to Phase II students only