

Graduate School Handbook for PhD Students

2018/2019



This **Graduate School Handbook for PhD Students** and the requirements specified herein apply to the student cohort entering in the fall of 2018. Students admitted prior to the year 2018 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

and the PhD program website:

<https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/>

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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 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, data science and scientific computing, mathematics, physics and relevant interdisciplinary areas. What sets the PhD program apart from many other programs within Europe is that it is modeled after North American graduate schools, with an initial phase of exploration. In addition, our PhD program emphasizes breadth of 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.

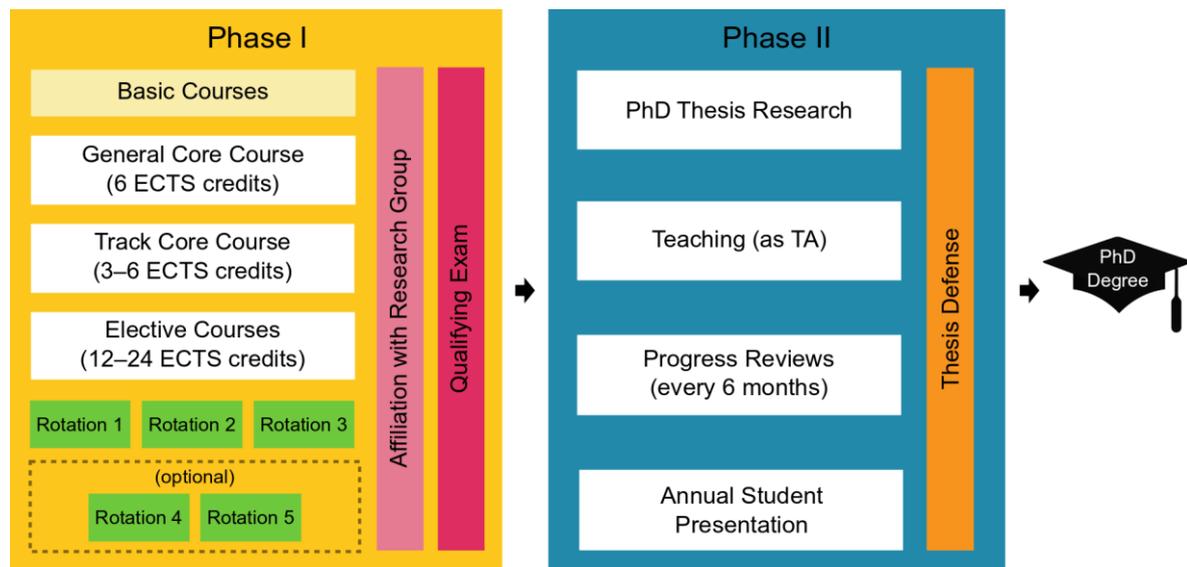


Figure 1. Schematic overview of academic requirements*

In **Phase I**, students take a combination of **required** and **elective** courses and also complete rotations. A more detailed description of the course requirements can be found in § 2.3 “Coursework in Phase I”. All students must take the basic courses, the general core course (Fall of year 1) and the track core course (Spring of year 1). The number of elective coursework requirements depends on the educational background of the student and is decided in consultation with the track

representative. For further details on course requirements, see § 2.3 and an overview of curriculum tracks and segments in the Appendix: *Curriculum for 2018-2019* (p. 63).

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 with which the student aims to affiliate for their thesis research, while the other rotations are aimed at broadening research horizons and teaching 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 § 3.10). For details on how to fulfill specific requirements, please carefully read § 2 “Academic Requirements”. The Appendix also contains checklists which students are advised to use to keep track of academic requirements.

An online student portal 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.

Track Representatives

There are six tracks, or discipline areas, in the PhD program: Biology, Computer Science, Data Science & Scientific Computing, Mathematics, Neuroscience, and Physics. A Track Representative, or "Track Rep" for short, is responsible for each subject area and helps develop the curriculum for that given track.

Students who plan to take courses within a particular track should consult the respective Track Rep to help decide which courses are the most suitable for the research area they wish to specialize in. This meeting should take place at the beginning of the academic year before the start of the first semester. Further information about Track Rep meeting times and office hours will be disseminated during the Student Orientation Period.

The Faculty Track Reps for the academic year 2018-19 are:

Track	Track Rep	Contact Details
Biology	Eva Benkova	eva.benkova@ist.ac.at
Biology Deputy	Calin Guet	calin.guet@ist.ac.at
Computer Science	Krishnendu Chatterjee	krishnendu.chatterjee@ist.ac.at
Data Science & Scientific Computing	Gasper Tkacik	gasper.tkacik@ist.ac.at
Mathematics	Uli Wagner	uli.wagner@ist.ac.at
Neuroscience	Ryuichi Shigemoto	ryuichi.shigemoto@ist.ac.at
Physics	Maksym Serbyn	maksym.serbyn@ist.ac.at

The Student Track Reps for the academic year 2018-19 are:

Track	Track Rep	Contact Details
Biology	Domen Kampjut	domen.kampjut@ist.ac.at
Computer Science	Viktor Toman, Laura Schmid	viktor.toman@ist.ac.at laura.schmid@ist.ac.at
Data Science & Scientific Computing	Nikola Konstantinov	nikola.konstantinov@ist.ac.at
Mathematics	Pascal Wild	pascal.wild@ist.ac.at
Neuroscience	Heloisa Chioffi	heloisa.chioffi@ist.ac.at
Physics	Michael Hennessey-Wesen	michael.hennessey@ist.ac.at

For more details about course credit requirements, students should also refer to § 2.3.2.

First-Year Mentors

What are first-year mentors?

First-year mentors are members of the faculty at IST who can provide students with general academic advice during the first year at IST (e.g. on courses, rotations, Graduate School requirements and policies). Mentors are typically outside the immediate subject-area of the student.

The mentors for the academic year 2018-19 are:

▪ Vladimir Kolmogorov	vnk@ist.ac.at	ext. 4801
▪ Max Jösch	maxjosch@ist.ac.at	ext. 7633
▪ Onur Hosten	onur.hosten@ist.ac.at	ext. 2088
▪ Jan Maas	jan.maas@ist.ac.at	ext. 6101
▪ Beatriz Vicoso	bvicoso@ist.ac.at	ext. 6401
▪ Carrie Bernecky	carrie.bernecky@ist.ac.at	ext. 2082
▪ Martin Loose	martin.loose@ist.ac.at	ext. 6301
▪ Anna Kicheva	anna.kicheva@ist.ac.at	ext. 3076

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 during the Student Orientation period.

Students should arrange a meeting with their mentor during the second or third week of arrival (i.e. September 24 and October 5). A second follow-up meeting should occur in the first half of December. A third meeting should take place early to mid-March and could be used 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 preparation for the qualifying exam and 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. The student's continuation in the PhD program is conditional upon continually satisfactory progress reviews. For further information, see § 2.7.2.

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. In the case of joint supervision, it would be useful to identify one main administrative supervisor, who can sign off on absences and is registered in systems such as the IQ student administration system as the main supervisor.

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 is currently Nick Barton (nick.barton@ist.ac.at).

Program Chair

The Program Chair is 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 Gasper Tkacik (gasper.tkacik@ist.ac.at).

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 2018/2019 are **Robert Seiringer** (robert.seiringer@ist.ac.at, ext. 5701) and **Eva Benkova** (eva.benkova@ist.ac.at, ext. 5301).

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 Austria and lasting throughout the first year, 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 (see also § 3.1 and § 3.5).

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*.

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 2018/2019 are Wojciech Rzadkowski (wojciech.rzadkowski@ist.ac.at) and Laura Burnett (laura.burnett@ist.ac.at).

Every year, two new GSA representatives are elected. The election of new representatives for the year 2018/2019 will take place after the qualifying exam deadline, with the new representatives taking over by around mid-March 2019. Students are encouraged to run for candidacy and are welcome to contact Wojciech and Laura to understand more about what the GSA duties entail.

Buddies

There is a so-called “buddy system” for all incoming students whereby each new student is paired up with one of our current graduate students. Buddies are volunteers who will try their best to help you or point you in the right direction, in case you need help. Feel free to approach your “buddy” for advice, whether it be on life at IST Austria, or more generic issues pertaining to life in Austria.

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, Graduate Student Association representatives and other administrative staff, including Finance, and & 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), May Chan (may.chan@ist.ac.at) and Hanna Raszynska (hanna.raszynska@ist.ac.at). For further

details of each of their duties and responsibilities, please refer to the Graduate School wiki page:

https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School

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 People Services & Hospitality wiki page (<https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/HR>), and a list of A2P assignment to research groups is 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.

Short Route/Long Route

Students at IST Austria are admitted with a variety of different educational backgrounds, including 3-year bachelor's degrees, 4-year bachelor's degrees, and a variety of different master's degrees. At the time of admissions, students are assigned a default "long-route" or "short-route" status depending on their educational background. Students may apply to change routes by December of year 1 (more information will be given once students arrive on campus). There can be differences in the timeline of the PhD program, depending on whether a student admission status is on the "short route" or "long route": see § 1.4 for further details on timeline differences.

Unaffiliated/Affiliated Status

All students admitted to the IST Austria PhD program are initially **unaffiliated** to any research group. During this unaffiliated stage, which usually lasts 9 months (but can last up to 16 months for long route students), students complete academic requirements such as courses and rotations. Unaffiliated students are assigned office space within Office Building West (see § 6.1 for a map of campus buildings).

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 a biannual progress reviews, give a fourth-year presentation, and complete a teaching assistantship. The academic requirements which students need to fulfill are detailed in § 2.

1.4 *Timeline of the PhD program*

The start date of the PhD program is September 17, 2018. The timeline of the PhD program can vary depending on whether the student is admitted on a short or long route (see also § 1.2). The typical duration of the program is 4–5 years: 4 years for students on a short route and 5 years for students on a long route. The main differences are as follows:

	Short Route	Long Route
Typical duration of PhD	4 years	5 years
Usual affiliation deadline	June 30, 2019	June 30, 2019
Affiliation window closes	Sep 15, 2019	Jan 15, 2020
Qualifying exam deadline	Feb 15, 2020	Sep 15, 2020

Initial contracts are made to students on a short route for 4 years and students on a long route for 5 years, with the possibility of extending the contract for another year, conditional on satisfactory progress and approval by the student’s supervisor and the Graduate School. Contract extensions must be applied for as part of the progress review 6 months prior to contract expiration. For more details on contract extensions, see § 4.2.

Other main differences for students admitted on a long route versus a short route are (1) the final 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. Failure to meet academic requirements could result in termination of the PhD contract, so students should duly note all requirements and the deadlines by which they 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 student portal**, which is used for registering all academic requirements, including courses, rotations, affiliation with a research group, qualifying exam, progress reviews, fourth-year presentation, 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, ethics self-assessment forms, 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 single sign-on IST intranet username and password. There is a monitoring system within IQ, indicated by a RAG (red/amber/green) status. The purpose of this is to monitor your progress and remind you of requirements that have not been fulfilled on time. Please check your RAG status regularly. If your RAG status is green, this indicates that you are on track. If it is yellow, orange, or red, please check the RAG status details, and update your academic records or upload the required reports as soon as possible.

Students should make sure to always update their academic records in the IQ system. Failure to do so may result in missed credits and requirements, which are sufficient grounds for contract termination. For information on keeping your RAG status up-to-date and grounds for dismissal please refer to §§ 3.8 and 3.10.

To find out more about how to perform tasks in IQ, students are advised to read the *IQ Student Handbook*, available from:

[https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate School - IQ student](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_IQ_student).

If there are any technical difficulties or if there are any questions about IQ, students 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 typically carry **6 ECTS credits**. The Fall semester runs from early October to end of January, while the Spring semester runs from end of February 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:

Fall 1st half semester : Oct 8 – Nov 23

Fall: 2nd half semester : Nov 26 – Jan 25

Spring 1st half semester: Feb 25 – Apr 12

Spring 2nd half semester: Apr 29- Jun 21

There are a small number of blocked courses that take place **prior to the fall semester** (late September/early October) or in between semesters (in the month of February). These are usually courses on lab techniques, e.g. *Introduction to Animal Handling*, and programming languages, e.g. *Introduction to Python*, *Introduction to R* (Fall), *Matlab* and *Mathematica* (Spring). For some of the semester courses, e.g. the *IST Core Course*, basic experience in specific programming languages will be required. For details on such pre-requisites please check the individual course descriptions on the course list website: <https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/course-list/>

Overview of courses and schedules are available here:

<https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/course-schedules/>

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 2018/2019

This section lists the most important dates for the academic year 2018/2019. The end of this handbook also contains a printable wall calendar.

A. Course and exam periods

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

Fall			Spring		
Pre-semester	Full semester		Pre-semester	Full semester	
Sep 18– Oct 5, 2018	Lectures: Oct 8– Dec 21, 2018; Jan 7-18, 2018 Exam Week: Jan 21-25, 2019		Jan 28– Feb 22, 2019	Lectures: Feb 25–April 12, 2019; Apr 29–Jun 14, 2018 Exam Week: Jun 17–21, 2019	
	1st half	2nd half		1st half	2nd half
	Lectures: Oct 8– Nov 16, 2018 Exam Week: Nov 19–23, 2018	Lectures: Nov 26– Jan 18, 2019; Exam Week: Jan 21–25, 2018		Lectures: Feb 25–Apr 5; Exam Week: April 8–12, 2019	Lectures: Apr 29– Jun 14, 2019 Exam Week: Jun 17–21, 2019

B. Non-teaching periods

Regular teaching does not take place during non-teaching periods. Some blocked courses, however, may take place during the February semester break. Please note that the non-teaching periods are **not automatically 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.

Christmas break	Semester break	Easter break
Dec 24, 2018–Jan 4, 2019	Jan 28–Feb 22, 2019	Apr 15–26, 2019

C. Rotation periods

Students are required to do at least three rotations in three different research groups. A fourth and fifth rotation are optional. The time slots for rotation 1-4 are determined by the graduate school office (please see below). If a rotation project extends beyond the determined time frame, the student needs to notify the GSO in advance.

If a student wants to do a fifth rotation, start and end date have to be determined jointly with the rotation supervisor and communicated to GSO before the start of the rotation.

Each rotation lasts between 8 to 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 (exception: Christmas Break).

	Rotation 1	Rotation 2	Rotation 3	Rotation 4
Dates	Oct 15–Dec 14, 2018	Dec 17, 2017–Feb 22, 2019	Mar 4–Apr 26, 2019	Apr 29–Jun 28, 2019

D. Public Holidays 2017/2018

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

Oct 26	Austrian National Holiday (Fri)
Nov 1	All Saints' Day (Thu)
Dec 8	Immaculate Conception (Sat)
Dec 25	Christmas Eve (Tue)
Dec 26	St. Stephen's (Wed)
Jan 1	New Year's Day (Tue)
Jan 6	Epiphany (Sun)
Apr 21	Easter Sunday (Sun)
Apr 22	Easter Monday (Mon)
May 1	Labor Day (Wed)
May 30	Ascension Day (Thu)
June 10	Whit Monday (Mon)
June 20	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 § 3.7.

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. In addition students are encouraged to make suggestions for new course offerings.

Students should contact their track rep and mentor (see § 1.2) to seek advice on which courses to take. Students are also encouraged to register for courses early on for the Fall semester. For details on course registration, please refer to § 2.3.5.

2.3.1 Course Types

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

- Basic courses (required, year 1)
- General core course (required, year 1)
- Track core courses (at least one required, year 1)
- Elective courses

These courses are described in further detail in the sections below. For a schematic diagram summarizing the curriculum in 2018-2019, see the Appendix: *Curriculum for 2018-2019*.

Students should refer to the course website for the latest course announcements, course offerings, and schedules: <https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/course-schedules/>

Basic Courses

The two **basic courses**, *Introduction to Research at IST Austria*, and *Scientific Presentation and Conduct*, are required in the first academic year, are seen as basic preparation for students who need it and therefore carry no course credit.

- *Introduction to Research at IST Austria*: a series of lectures during the first semester introducing students to the range of research performed by IST faculty. Students are expected to attend at least one third of the lectures, which are intended to help students make their rotation choices.
- *Scientific Presentation and Conduct*: a series of panel discussions, workshops and discussion sections covering scientific conduct and ethical issues, navigating the PhD at IST Austria, as well as communication training (presenting, writing, teaching). Most of these take place during the orientation phase, but in 2018/2019 some have also been integrated into the general core course. After the first year, the IST Austria career development program takes up a lot of issues first addressed in *Scientific Presentation and Conduct*, and students are encouraged to continue attending these workshops.

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** in their first year at IST Austria.

- **General core course (6 ECTS credits):** This one semester-long course (Fall of year 1) 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.
- **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 2018/19, track core courses will be offered in six research areas: Biology, Computer Science, Data Science and Scientific Computing, Mathematics, Neuroscience, and Physics (3-6 ECTS credits each).

Elective Courses

To complete the remainder of the credit requirement (see also § 2.3.2), it is possible to take:

- **Introductory 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). Service courses do not satisfy any credit requirements, as they are seen as extra preparation to get up to speed on course prerequisites.

2.3.2 Credit Requirements

All students need to fulfill course **credit requirements** as part of their PhD program.

Students on the long route will have to complete 36 ECTS credits, students on the short route will need to complete 24 ECTS credits. This requirement will mainly have to be fulfilled in the first phase, however, all students are encouraged to defer up to 6 ECTS credits until after their qualifying exam. 12 ECTS (general core course and track core course) are required in year 1; additional coursework should be completed mostly by the end of semester 3 (students on a short route) and semester 4 (students on a long route).

Note: all coursework must be completed by the time the initial contract expires; no contract extensions will be approved if coursework is outstanding.

Course credit requirements should be fulfilled by taking the **IST Core course** (6ECTS), a **track core course** (3-6 ECTS), as well as further elective courses.

Required Courses	Credits, Requirement
<p>Basic Courses (Fall 2018):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Introduction to Research at IST</i> ▪ <i>Scientific Presentation and Conduct</i> <p>General Core Course (Fall 2018)</p> <p>Track Core Courses (Spring 2019):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biology ▪ Computer Science ▪ Data Science and Scientific Computing ▪ Mathematics ▪ Neuroscience ▪ Physics <p>Elective Courses: Service Courses, Introductory Courses, Advanced Courses: (Fall 2018/Spring 2019)</p>	<p>No credit, required</p> <p>No credit, required</p> <p>6 ECTS credits, required</p> <p>3-6 ECTS credits each, at least one required</p> <p>Please refer to the course website (https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/course-schedules/) for details on course credits.</p>

2.3.3 Course Offerings

Current course offerings and descriptions are available in the “Courses” section on the website: <https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/course-list/>. Basic information such as the course descriptions and a calendar are also available via the IQ system (see more on registration in § 2.3.5). Individual course websites are maintained by the course instructor and their TAs, and 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).

Note that courses in certain tracks, such as the Computer Science track, there are courses offered at TU Wien which will count towards IST Austria course requirements by default. Please refer to the course website: <https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/cooperations/>, for further information on such course offerings.

2.3.4 Course Selection and Curriculum Planning

Once students have informed themselves about the course offerings at IST Austria, and made a preliminary list of possible courses and rotations, they should arrange a meeting with the faculty track representative closest to their field of interest, in order to discuss their curriculum (course work and rotations). At the end of this meeting a course and rotation plan needs to be agreed on and a summary submitted to IQ. Please use the “Rotation and Course Planning Form” in the *Appendix* of this student handbook (p. 64). For details regarding the submission of this form to IQ please refer to the *IQ Student Handbook*:

https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_IQ_student

Note that certain tracks might have courses that recur on the basis of a two-year cycle (in other words every two years). Please refer to the course website (<https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/course-list/>) for the latest course announcement.

2.3.5 Registering for and Withdrawal from Courses

Students can register for a course either for **credit** or on an **audit** basis. In both cases they need to sign up via the student portal IQ (<http://iq.ist.ac.at/student>; for instructions please consult the IQ student handbook). Audited courses do *not* carry any credits and therefore *do not count* towards the credit requirement.

Students should register for courses as early as possible (first come, first served), but **at least one week prior to the (half) semester start date:**

Courses 2018/19	Registration deadline IST employees
Pre-semester Fall	September 18, 2018
Fall full semester	October 1, 2018
Fall 1	October 1, 2018
Fall 2	November 19, 2018
Pre-semester Spring	January 21, 2019
Spring full semester	February 18, 2019
Spring 1	February 18, 2019
Spring 2	April 22, 2019

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 such records will be listed on the student's transcript.

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

2.3.6 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 communicates 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**

Note that some courses might be offered in extended blocks once a week, or might include additional practical training sessions. 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/>.

2.3.7 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).

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 at the discretion of the course instructor. 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.

2.3.8 Course evaluations

The IST Austria Graduate School constantly tries to improve the courses offered at the institute. Since the feedback from course participants is crucial in this context, students are strongly encouraged to participate in the course evaluations held at the end of each course.

The Graduate School will send out a link to an online evaluation survey two weeks before the end of the course. Course instructors are advised to reserve a time slot for the completion of the survey during class time, in which neither TAs nor instructors are present. However, the survey can also be completed by the student outside class. The evaluations are entirely anonymous and it only takes a few minutes to fill in the form. Any constructive criticism on the course design, and the performance of instructors and TAs is very much appreciated.

All course evaluations will be revised by the track representatives who will discuss improvements with the faculty concerned.

2.3.9 Courses at Other Institutions

IST Austria has an agreement with the University of Vienna and TU Wien, 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 by completing the application form:

http://istsmb.ist.local/idrive/all/sseider/Application_recognition_of_external_courses.docx, and submitting it to the GSO via email. The request will be reviewed and, if applicable, approved, by the track representative in the respective field. 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 different 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.

Additional information on external courses such as a list of courses previously taken by IST students externally, is available on the Graduate School Wiki:

https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_External_Courses_and_Resources

Note that courses in certain tracks, such as Computer Science, there are courses offered at TU Wien which will count towards the IST Austria course requirements. Please refer to the website for of list of these courses:

<https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/cooperations/>

2.3.10 Seminars, Symposia, Conferences, Summer Schools, and Erasmus+

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 are expected to fund the cost of travel and registration for approximately one conference or workshop per year.

In addition the Erasmus+ staff mobility grant enables IST Austria to send staff to on-site trainings at other institutions in participating Erasmus+ program countries. The program offers great opportunities for acquiring knowledge and professional experience abroad to academic and administrative staff of IST Austria. For more information please see: [https://wiki.ist.ac.at/index.php/Erasmus+ program](https://wiki.ist.ac.at/index.php/Erasmus+_program)

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.

Note that rotations are also an important way to assess your research skills and independence and carry more weight than courses. Even when students do not intend to affiliate with a given rotation supervisor, the rotation assessment might still be taken into account by any potential thesis supervisor.

Most students complete only three rotations. Students on a long route and – upon approval from the program chair – also students on a short route can optionally complete a 4th or in some cases a 5th rotation.

The Graduate School strongly encourages students to take one rotation outside their main area of scientific research. First-year mentors or track reps might also be able to assist students in deciding how to organize rotations to maximize their benefit and prevent an excessive workload during the semester.

Students should **notify potential rotation supervisors early on** 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 to work out research project details and milestones. Only after approval has been given by the research group leader should students **officially register for the rotation in IQ**.

Students need to inform the GSO office and obtain approval from the Program Chair

- If they want to do two subsequent rotations in the same group. In this case they still have to complete two rotations in two other research groups before or afterwards.
- If they want to do an external rotation. Students need to communicate the name and affiliation of the external rotation supervisor to the graduate school office at least 2 weeks before the start of the respective rotation period.

2.4.1 Registration and Performance Evaluation

1. *Before the rotation:* Student and rotation supervisor should meet no later than **one week prior** to the start of the rotation to jointly **complete the first part of the rotation protocol**: they need to define the project, the criteria based on which the student will be evaluated, as well as the expected outcome (e.g., short presentation at the end, short paper, etc.) and determine who will be the main contact person for the student during the rotation (could be the research group leader or a group member). For instructions on how to complete the first part of the rotation survey, please refer to page 6 of the *IQ student handbook*:
https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_IQ_student
2. *During the rotation:* Student and rotation supervisor/contact person should check in regularly to monitor the progress of the rotation project and discuss potential open questions.
3. *After the rotation:* At the end of a rotation, student and supervisor meet again for a final performance review and **complete the second part of the rotation protocol**. The outcome of the evaluation will be assessed, strengths and potential weaknesses of the student discussed. 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 final meeting is also an opportunity for the student to give feedback to the supervisor on aspects of their supervision. Both the student and the supervisor have the option to file confidential feedback with the Graduate School via email.

The rotation protocol needs to be **submitted no later than one week after** the end of a rotation. If this deadline cannot be met, it is the student's duty to notify the Graduate School Office immediately, explaining the reasons and indicating a target submission date. Failure to do so will lead to the rotation not being credited towards 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.

Note: 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*. Read also § 2.5 on affiliation.

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* course 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. Details will be communicated by Preclinical Facility staff in due course.

For the list of questions on the IQ rotation survey, please use the following download link: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/2/27/Survey_lab_rotation.pdf

2.4.2 Timeline for Rotations

Before rotation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree on rotation with rotation supervisor 2. Schedule meeting with supervisor and agree on project, expected outcome etc. 3. At least one week before rotations starts: complete <i>first part</i> of rotation protocol
During rotation	Perform rotation project
After rotation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within one week of rotation end: complete <i>second part</i> of rotation 2. Remind supervisor to confirm rotation protocol in IQ (only afterwards the rotation will show as passed in the system)

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. Completion of a rotation in the respective research group
2. Apply for affiliation in IQ
3. Professor approves IQ request

The window for **affiliation application opens on May 1, 2018** for both short route and long route students. This date is right after the end of Rotation 3.

Both short route and long route students are *usually* expected to affiliate by July 1st. 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.

	Short Route	Long Route
Affiliation window opens	May 1, 2019	May 1, 2019
Standard affiliation deadline	June 30, 2019	June 30, 2019
Late Affiliation window closes	September 15, 2019	January 15, 2020

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 have to inform the Graduate School Office by email and obtain approval from the Program Chair. In addition, students should contact the track rep closest to their field of interest to discuss in person what steps they are taking towards affiliation. In that case the deadline for students on a short route would be extended until September 15th. For students on a long-route, the affiliation deadline exceptionally can be extended until January 15th of year 2, but this should only occur under close consultation with the track representative closest to the student's area of interest.

Students should bear in mind that **failure to affiliate with a research group will result in contract termination** (also read § 3.10 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 in § 2.6 of this handbook.

2.5.1 PhD Supervisor

The **PhD supervisor** must be an IST faculty member. 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.

Once the professor has agreed to act as a student’s supervisor or co-supervisor (see § 2.5.2), the student needs to register the affiliation in the IQ system (see § 2.5.3). 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. It is important to recognize that once the affiliation is approved within IQ by the proposed supervisor 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 Austria, or faculty (or equivalent) at another institute or university. External co-supervisor(s) must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

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/index.php/Graduate School - IQ student](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_IQ_student)

2.5.4 Ethics Self-Assessment Forms

At the time of affiliation all PhD students at IST Austria receive an ethics self-assessment form and ethics fact sheet (available from IST Wiki: [https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate School - Forms](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_Forms)). These will have to be uploaded to IQ together with the thesis proposal as part of the qualifying exam registration process (see also § 2.6.5).

If you are planning to use human embryonic stem cells (hESC) please get in touch with the Ethics Officer, **Verena Seiboth** (verena.seiboth@ist.ac.at), as soon as possible. Projects dealing with hESC have to be declared to the Ethics Committee at IST Austria. In addition, PhD projects of Marie S. Curie fellows involving the use of hESC require an additional ethics clearance from the EC (European Commission) before the project start.

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 need to register officially for taking the qualifying exam and upload these documents on IQ.

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 remainder of 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, at least two other committee members**, one of whom must be external (i.e., not part of the IST faculty), as well as **an Exam Chair**, who presides over the exam in a neutral capacity and ensures that the format and procedures of the exam are adhered to. 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 four members on their thesis committee.

External committee members without a PhD need the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. The second committee member can either be external, or one of the other faculty members at IST.

The Thesis Committee must be formed in consultation with, and receive the approval of, the supervisor(s). The Graduate School strongly advises students to decide on a Thesis Committee shortly after affiliation.

For the qualifying exam, the student needs to find an Exam Chair, who should be an IST faculty member and whose research falls outside the immediate research field of the student. The names and affiliations of the Thesis Committee and exam chair must be filed with the Graduate School Office via the IQ system at least two months prior to the qualifying exam (see § 2.6.5).

Any subsequent changes in the Thesis Committee must be reported by the student to the Graduate School Office, and need to be approved by the PhD Program Chair.

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.

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*.

The deadlines by which to pass the qualifying exam differ for short-route and long-route students. The deadline by which short route students should have passed the **qualifying exam** is **Feb 15, 2020**. The deadline by which long route students should have passed the **qualifying exam** is **Sep 15, 2020**.

	Students on a short route	Students on a long route
Affiliation window opens	May 1, 2019	May 1, 2019
Standard affiliation deadline	June 30, 2019	June 30, 2019
Late affiliation window closes	Sep 15, 2019	Jan 15, 2020
Qualifying exam deadline	Feb 15, 2020	Sep 15, 2020

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, the retake exam should be scheduled to take place **at least one month and no longer than 2 months** after the first attempt.

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 a **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**.

Note: Students should indicate their name on the Q.E. reading list.

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, appoint an Exam Chair 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 PhD 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: GSO Forms, Qualifying Exam Protocol*). 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

The exam chair notifies the Graduate School Office about the outcome and submit the exam protocol.

Should the outcome be **pass**, 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. The exam chair may change, if the chair of the first attempt is not available 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.

Time before qualifying exam	Steps to complete
Approximately 3-4 months before	Find and finalize choice of supervisor(s) . If a co-supervisor is external get approval from the Graduate School.
At least 2 months before	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find and finalize a Thesis Committee and start coordinating the qualifying exam (enquire about possible dates). 2. Compile a reading list in consultation with the supervisor and send it to the committee members. 3. Complete the qualifying exam survey (names of committee members and expected QE date) and upload the reading list in IQ.
At least 1 month before	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirm the QE date with the committee members and find an exam chair. 2. Inform the graduate school office about QE date, starting time, and exam chair. 3. Finalize thesis proposal and send it to the committee members. 4. Upload thesis proposal and ethics self-assessment form in IQ.

2.6.5 Qualifying Exam Registration in IQ system and Ethics Self-Assessment

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 and reading lists (2 months prior) and research proposal (1 month prior) 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/index.php/Graduate School - IQ student](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_IQ_student)

As mentioned in § 2.5.4, students should also fill out an ethics self-assessment form and upload this as part of the qualifying exam registration in IQ. The relevant form can be found here:

[https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate School - Forms](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_Forms)

Further details on the Institute's ethics guidelines are published under:

[https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Academic Affairs#Good Scientific Practice and Research Ethics](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Academic_Affairs#Good_Scientific_Practice_and_Research_Ethics)

See also § 3.11 on "Research Integrity & Research Ethics at IST Austria".

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. If in doubt, please consult your Thesis Committee (see § 2.8.1).

2.7.2 **Progress Reviews and the Graduate School Portfolio**

All phase II students participate in progress reviews twice per year, in advance of the October 15 (Fall) and April 15 (Spring) progress review deadlines. The goal of the progress review is to serve as a formal opportunity to receive feedback on scientific progress and progress towards the PhD degree from both the supervisor and the thesis committee, and to serve as a record for the Graduate School on where students stand. In addition, progress reviews provide an opportunity for students to give their supervisors feedback, and to discuss issues such as career development.

The Fall progress review meeting may include the supervisor only; for the Spring meeting, the entire thesis committee should ideally be present (skype ok for external

members, a minimum of one additional committee member besides the supervisor is required). Any thesis committee members who are not able to participate in the Spring progress review should be sent a brief summary of the meeting by the student.

Prior to each progress review meeting, students should prepare a presentation of their scientific progress since the last meeting, and also update their Graduate School Portfolio, which contains a record of their training activities since starting the PhD.

These two presentations form the basis of a structured discussion with the supervisor and/or thesis committee, the results of which need to be uploaded to the IQ system and are reviewed by the Dean, the Program Chair, and the entire program faculty. 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 § 3.10 “Grounds for Dismissal”.

For information on how to submit progress reviews in IQ, please refer to the *IQ Student Handbook*:

https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_IQ_student

2.7.3 Annual Student Presentations

In Phase II students are required to give a presentation on their thesis research of their PhD studies in a forum that includes at least 2 research groups (setting bigger than just a group meeting). The presentation should occur at least annually and should encompass members of multiple research groups. It is an opportunity for students to present their preliminary research results, obtain feedback, and hone their presentation skills. The presentation could take the form of summarizing primary research questions of the PhD thesis to an audience within the student’s discipline, explaining the methodology used to address research questions, presenting some preliminary data and results with some early interpretation of these (if applicable), as well as research plans for the remainder of the PhD.

2.7.4 Courses

Students are encouraged to continue taking courses in phase II, either to satisfy their overall credit requirement, or when a supervisor recommends students to attend courses which will benefit the student’s long-term academic goals. A list of current and past advanced courses can be viewed on the IST website:

<https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/course-list/>. Keep in mind that not all courses are offered every year.

2.7.5 Teaching Assistance Requirement

Students in Phase II are expected to offer teaching assistance (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 give lectures for a course. This also counts towards the teaching assistance requirement. If students are interested in teaching or co-teaching a course (e.g. a service course), they should approach the relevant faculty member.

Students need to register their teaching assistance within IQ to make sure it counts towards their academic requirements. There is a two-part TA survey on IQ which TAs should fill out. The first part should be completed *before* the TA-ship, while the second part should be completed *after* the TA-ship. Please refer to IQ handbook for further details:

[https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate School - IQ student](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_IQ_student)

Course participants are encouraged to give feedback on the TAs performance in course evaluations (held at the end of each course). TAs can access their evaluation results online: <https://course-assessment.app.ist.ac.at/>.

A successful TA can request a **teaching reference letter** from the course instructor that should demonstrate proven teaching experience and affirm the students' teaching competencies.

2.8 Thesis Defense

The thesis defense is the final assessment which 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, and
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.

Students should aim to supply a draft of the thesis to the Thesis Committee **three months before** the thesis defense (see timeframe in § 2.8.5) and read through the thesis submission guidelines as early as possible but in any case *before* document creation to make sure that the final thesis document meets all the requirements for uploading to the IST Austria publication repository *PubRep* (see § 2.9). Only when the final requirements for thesis submission are fulfilled are the conditions for Ph.D. degree completion considered officially met.

2.8.1 Thesis Committee

The Thesis Committee is the same as for the qualifying exam (see § 2.6.1), with the exception of Exam Chair, who can be a different faculty member than for the qualifying exam. As for the qualifying exam, the exam chair has to be assigned by the student.

Changes to the committee (other than the Exam Chair) should be requested from the Graduate School Office and must be approved by the PhD 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 and time** 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 up to **one month** later, and the Graduate School Office will announce and advertise the thesis defense.

The Defense Chair will request written comments from all of the Thesis Committee members prior to the defense. 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 immediately after the defense.

2.8.3 Defense Format

The Defense consists of a **public lecture** and a **private examination**. 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, to be communicated to the student by the Defense Chair in writing.

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.

The Thesis Committee will write a report immediately after the exam (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.

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.

The external Thesis Committee member(s) should sign the **signature page** prepared by the student to confirm approval to accept the thesis. It is at the discretion of the internal members and the Defense Chair whether to withhold their signature till all the requested modifications have been made by the student (see also § 2.9 on “Final Thesis Submission”).

In case the external committee member joins the thesis defense via skype, the exam protocol as well as the signature page must be signed, scanned and emailed to the GSO. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain the external member’s signatures

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.

2.8.5 Timeframe for the Thesis Defense

The following table summarizes the recommended timeframe for organizing a thesis defense. Students should submit the final copy **within two months of the defense**, and in accordance with the thesis submission guidelines:

[https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Thesis Submission Guidelines](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Thesis_Submission_Guidelines).

See also § 2.9 on “Final Thesis Submission”.

Time before thesis defense	Steps to complete
3 months prior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read carefully through the thesis submission guidelines. 2. Provide the Thesis Committee Members with a thesis draft.
2 months prior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect feedback from Thesis Committee Members on the thesis and make sure that they are willing to accept it (with minor modifications) 2. Finalize the exam date and starting time with all committee members
1 month prior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assign thesis defense chair 2. Complete the IQ thesis defense survey (exam date and time, list of Thesis Committee members) and upload draft thesis to IQ 3. Prepare signature page (containing names of all committee members and exam chair)
within 2 months after the defense	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalize the thesis including the requested modifications. 2. Provide the Committee Members with the final version. 3. Collect signatures from the Committee members and exam chair (signature page) 4. Submit to the library: Final version of thesis (pubrep), License agreement, thesis release form, copy right page (only if applicable) 5. Submit to the Graduate School Office: Library confirmation, completed signature page, final thesis (upload IQ)

2.9 *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 to request approval. If the Defense Chair or any of the committee members have withheld their signature till this point, the student should also obtain their signatures.

A sample **signature page** is included in the **thesis style sheet**. It contains the **title of the thesis**, the **student's name**, a list of **names of the Thesis Committee** members, including the Defense Chair, and space for their **signatures**. All Thesis Committee members and the Defense Chair must approve the final version by signing this page. 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.

Students should note that there are certain prerequisites for the thesis which need to be met. Please carefully read through the thesis submission guidelines with instructions on preparing the thesis document, signing the licensing agreement, how to upload the thesis and source documents to IST PubRep, and how to submit all documents electronically:

https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Thesis_Submission_Guidelines

Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the above guidelines as soon as they start preparing their thesis document.

The submission of the final thesis version should take place **within two months** of the Thesis Defense. 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 agreed on extension date the Dean will determine the fate of the student's thesis and final degree award.

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.

2.10 Graduation Ceremony

Students who have met all academic requirements and submitted the final version of their PhD thesis (see requirements in § 2.9 above) will be scheduled to receive their PhD Degree in a graduation ceremony in the following year. All graduates concerned will receive a corresponding invitation in due course.

A preliminary confirmation of completion can be requested from the Graduate School Office upon completion of all requirements.

2.11 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).

2.12 Changes to the PhD program

From time to time, there might be changes to the PhD program or procedures, which will be communicated to students via email, town hall meetings, and/or via the GSA. 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/index.php/Rules and Guidelines](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Rules_and_Guidelines)

3.2 *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. Business and conference trips which take less than 4 weeks will be officially counted as business trips. For absences of 4 weeks or more, see § 3.3.

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 People Services & 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](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/8/8f/Professors_at_IST_Austria.pdf).

3.3 Internships, Secondments and Extended Leaves

In some situations, students may be away for an extended period of time to collaborate with research groups at other institutions, or to do a (summer) internship. Such absences must be planned in advance with the consent of the supervisor, or, in the case of unaffiliated students, the PhD Program Chair. Students should also ensure that the Graduate School Office, People Services, and the relevant DPW supervisor (i.e. Vlad Cozac or A2P of supervisor, see more information below) are notified in advance, as such absences may have implications for their employment contract, salary, insurance, taxation, and (if applicable) visa or residence permit. In case of absences of **3 months or more**, prior approval from the Dean should also be obtained, as such extended leaves have implications for academic progress.

You should make sure to notify the relevant individuals **as soon as possible** but **at least one month in advance**, as it takes time to notify the authorities of insurance, taxation and residence changes. Details should be provided of:

- Country and name of organization where internship will take place
- Start and end dates of internship
- Amount of payment received during internship

The logistics of each internship will be worked out individually, but in principle absences for *less than 4 weeks* will be treated as a **business trip** (see §§ 3.2–3.1), while absences *between 4 weeks and 6 months* in length will be treated as a **secondment**.

Note that for tax reasons your absence from Austria should **never exceed 182 days** in any given **calendar year**.

In case of pregnancy, students should notify People Services immediately. For all types of extended leave, whether it is a maternity/paternity leave, or sickness leave, they should notify the Graduate School Office for advice in the first instance.

3.3.1 Extended Leaves of Absence

In some situations, students may need to be away for an extended period of time (4 weeks or more), either as *part of their graduate study* (e.g. an internship or collaboration visit at another institution), or *as an interruption of their studies* (e.g. parental leave, medical leave, or other approved leave of absence).

Both kinds of leave need to be planned and approved in advance, as they may have implications for academic requirements, employment contract, salary, insurance,

taxation, and (if applicable) visa or residence permit. Note that for tax reasons absences from Austria should **never exceed 182 days** in any given **calendar year**.

3.3.2 Extended leaves that are part of the PhD degree ((internships, secondments)

Internships or extended research stays at another institution (secondments) are considered to be *part of the PhD degree*. During an internship or secondment, students are expected to adhere to all PhD program requirements and deadlines, and should make arrangements accordingly. For all absences of **3 months or more**, prior approval from the Dean is required, as such extended leaves can have implications for academic progress. Students continue to receive a salary during the time of the internship or secondment, paid either by IST Austria or the receiving institution (worked out on a case-by-case basis; see below).

To request an internship or secondment, students should submit an **internship application form to People Services, and an academic requirements check-list to the GSO, at least two months in advance**. This form contains information that will help People Services work out the logistics of contracts, salary, insurance, taxation, and visa or residence permits, which are worked out on a case by case basis and depend on factors such as the country of the internship and whether the internship is paid. The internship application form also includes the necessary approval signatures from the supervisor (or in the case of unaffiliated students, the PhD Program Chair), and, for stays of longer than 3 months, the Dean's signature.

3.3.3 Extended leaves that interrupt the PhD degree (maternity and paternity leave; medical leave; other approved leaves and absence)

In some situations, certain life events may prevent continued active participation in the PhD program. In such cases, students may take an extended leave that is considered an interruption of the PhD degree. IST Austria considers three different types of such leaves: maternity / paternity; medical; and personal. The details of how to handle each are outlined in the table below.

In all cases of extended leaves that interrupt the PhD study, students should schedule a special progress review meeting within the first month of return. Failure to do so will result in an unsatisfactory progress review and can serve as grounds for contract termination. For any leaves exceeding 18 months, the student is required to schedule a special meeting with the Dean to discuss reinstatement and continuation of the PhD degree.

Type of leave	Internship / Secondment	Maternity / Paternity	Medical	Personal
Part of PhD?	Part of PhD	Interruption of PhD	Interruption of PhD	Interruption of PhD
Maximum time	3 months (up to 6 months if approved by Dean)	Regulated by Austrian law	Unlimited	6 months
Approval required?	YES – <u>internship application form</u> signed by supervisor and (if >3 months) Dean	NO	NO	YES – <u>extended leave approval form</u> signed by supervisor and Dean
Eligibility	Paid or unpaid internship or research stay at another research institution; consent of supervisor and (if >3 months) Dean	Pregnancy / birth of a child	Official medical leave notification from Austrian health insurance (GKK) and/or a physician	Eligible reasons include major life events that prevent continuation of studies; requests for additional vacation time will not be considered. Pre-Q.E. leaves will be granted only in highly exceptional circumstances.
Salary and insurance	Paid and insured by Institute and/or receiving institution; details to be worked out on a case by case basis	Paid and insured by Austrian health insurance system. Different salary models exist depending on the duration of the leave taken.	Paid and insured by Institute initially. Further time-course and payment regulated by and Austrian health insurance system.	Unpaid Students are responsible for their own insurance, as well as for checking the implications of the leave on their residency and work permit status.
Extension of PhD requirements	NO	YES Maternity: 12 month extension, regardless of actual leave time taken Paternity: Extension of <i>up to</i> 12 months, dependent on actual leave time taken	YES Extension dependent on actual time taken	TBD Extensions (if any) to be worked out on case by case basis and subject to approval by the Dean
Action required	People Services: Turn in signed <u>internship application form</u> to People Services GSO: Turn in extended leave academic requirements check-list to GSO	People Services: Contact People Services immediately; see separate Maternity / Paternity Guideline GSO: Turn in extended leave academic requirements check-list to GSO	People Services: Contact People Services immediately GSO: Turn in extended leave academic requirements check-list to GSO	People Services: Turn in signed <u>extended leave approval form</u> to People Services GSO: Turn in extended leave academic requirements check-list to GSO
Additional guidelines and forms		Maternity / Paternity guideline supersedes information in this document		<u>extended leave form</u>

3.4 *Notifying GSO and HR of Changes*

It is the student's duty to notify the Graduate School Office (gradschool@ist.ac.at) and the People Services team (ps@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).

3.5 *Entering Vacation Days and Business Trips in the DPW system*

All PhD students are employees of IST Austria, and therefore bound by **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, secondments 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 administrative "supervisor" for granting vacation days and leaves of absence is **Vlad Cozac**, although students should seek approval from their rotation supervisor in advance. When students are affiliated, such requests should go to **research group leaders**, and absences are administered by **A2Ps**.

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 as well as hone their 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 https://wiki.ist.ac.at/index.php/Portal:Scientists#Reading_groups.2C_journal_clubs.2C_seminars.

3.8 *Updating Student Records in 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 (iq@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:

https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_IQ_student

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 *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.

3.10 *Grounds for Dismissal*

There are a number of conditions under which IST Austria may seek to terminate a student's contract. These include, but are not limited to:

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.

3.11 Research Integrity & Research Ethics at IST Austria

3.11.1 Research Integrity

Research integrity focuses on aspects related to ensuring the quality and reliability of scientific and scholarly knowledge. This comprises topics such as scientific record keeping, authorships, conflict of interest, and avoiding scientific misconduct (fabrication of data, falsification of data, plagiarism).

Information on research integrity and research ethics is available on the IST wiki site https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Academic_Affairs#Good_Scientific_Practice_and_Research_Ethics

If you have any general questions about good scientific practice or scientific record keeping or would like to obtain more information, please contact **Verena Seiboth** (verena.seiboth@ist.ac.at) in the Academic Affairs office.

3.11.2 Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice

All persons involved in research at IST Austria are obliged to adhere to the standards of Good Scientific Practice as defined in the “Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice” of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (Österreichische Agentur für wissenschaftliche Integrität, OeAWI; <http://www.oeawi.at>). These guidelines outline the principles of integrity in research and scholarship and provide definitions of good scientific practice and of scientific misconduct. The OeAWI guidelines can be found on IST wiki:

https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/d/d9/IAS-AA04_Guidelines_OeAWI_IST.pdf

3.11.3 Scientific record keeping

Every person performing experimental work at IST Austria has to keep detailed, daily records of the conducted experiments. For scientific record keeping, either a paper lab notebook or an electronic lab notebook can be used.

A well-kept notebook provides a reliable reference for writing up methods and results of a study, for preparation of formal reports, papers, and presentations. A comprehensive notebook permits one to reproduce any part of a methodology completely and accurately. It can be an invaluable source of information for a variety of purposes, including demonstration of adherence to standards of good scientific practice and of academic and ethical integrity. In addition, it is a legally valid record for determination of claims of discovery where new inventions are concerned.

The Rules for scientific record keeping at IST Austria can be found on IST wiki:

[https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/2/25/Rules for scientific record keeping Oct 2016.pdf](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/2/25/Rules_for_scientific_record_keeping_Oct_2016.pdf)

3.11.4 Ombudspersons for Good Scientific Practice at IST Austria

The Ombudspersons can be addressed by employees of IST Austria if there are any complaints regarding scientific or academic behavior. In particular, they are the persons of contact for scientists who have questions regarding or wish to report a possible incidence of misconduct related to research, teaching, and/or scientific supervision at IST Austria.

The Ombudspersons for the academic year 2018/2019 are **Robert Seiringer** (robert.seiringer@ist.ac.at, ext. 5701) and **Eva Benkova** (eva.benkova@ist.ac.at, ext. 5301).

3.11.5 Research Ethics

Research ethics addresses aspects related to scientific topics and approaches. Some of these topics are regulated by Austrian legislation. This includes projects involving humans and human materials, experiments using animals as model systems, genetically modified organisms, and data and privacy protection. However, other topics may require more individual, ethically responsible decisions of the researchers. Every scientist should take ethical principles and responsible approaches to research into account and should ensure that their work is in agreement with such principles. Researchers thus have a professional responsibility to critically reflect on potential ethical limitations of their research. In addition to the obligation of scientists to adhere to legal provisions, a responsible approach towards research involves avoiding or minimizing the risks of harm to humans and the environment and potential misuse (dual use) of their research results.

In order to ensure the maintenance of high ethical research standards at IST Austria, the Ethics Officer and the Ethics Committee can be consulted on questions regarding ethical issues of research projects at IST Austria.

The Ethics Officer is a contact person for scientific and administrative staff of IST Austria for questions related to research ethics and supports the Ethics Committee in its work. The Ethics Officer for 2018/2019 is **Verena Seiboth** (verena.seiboth@ist.ac.at) in Academic Affairs.

The Ethics Committee can be consulted on ethical issues regarding ongoing and planned research projects. It does not evaluate topics regulated by law in Austria. In those cases permission from the respective governmental authorities needs to be

obtained. If addressed with an inquiry, the Ethics Committee evaluates potential ethical risks of planned and ongoing research projects and scientific approaches, and issues a recommendation if the respective research projects should be performed as outlined in the project description. The Ethics Committee for 2018/2019 consists of **Peter Jonas** (peter.jonas@ist.ac.at) and **Krzysztof Pietrzak** (krzysztof.pietrzak@ist.ac.at).

Tasks of the Ethics Officer and Ethics Committee are published on the IST wiki: https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/e/ed/Tasks_of_the_ethics_officer.pdf

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 educational background.

In Phase I, there are two salary levels reflecting the student's educational background (see also § 1.2). Students with a master's degree are paid at a slightly higher salary level compared to students with a bachelor's degree. 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 and 3.4).

4.2 *Contract Extensions*

IST Austria tries to strike a balance between guaranteeing adequate financial support necessary to produce substantial theses and do competitive research, while also encouraging reasonable graduation timelines. Contract extensions beyond the initial 4- and 5-year contracts are possible, but are subject to approval by the Program Chair, Dean, and President. As a general rule of thumb, students can expect that extensions of up to 1 year beyond the initial contract will usually be granted, but should not count on extensions beyond this.

Contract extensions must be applied for at the biannual progress review 6 months prior to contract expiration (usually in Spring for contracts expiring in September). At the time of the progress reviews (April 15th, October 15th), students in their fourth year and beyond should check whether their contracts are due to expire within the next 6 months. This information is available in the ICP self-service section: <https://icp.ist.ac.at/manage/profile/view>.

Students whose contracts are due to expire should have an in-depth conversation with their thesis committee (as part of the regular progress review) about what their anticipated timeline to graduation is. They should also make sure that their

Graduate School Portfolio contains a detailed account of their current progress towards the thesis, with specific reference to the chapters that their thesis will contain.

On the basis of this discussion, students should decide on which of the following three situations applies to them:

Situation	Action
Thesis defense foreseeable within timeframe of current contract → no contract extension needed	Complete first step of thesis defense registration in IQ, specifying the target defense date as discussed with committee. DUE DATE: October 15th / April 15th
Thesis defense foreseeable, but not within timeframe of current contract → short-term (< 1 year) contract extension	Complete contract extension survey in IQ. Make sure to include your target defense date as discussed with committee. DUE DATE: October 15th / April 15th
Thesis defense not foreseeable within the next year → 1-year contract extension (maximum, renewable next year)	Complete contract extension survey in IQ. DUE DATE: October 15th / April 15th

The contract extension documents and Graduate School Portfolio submitted to IQ will be reviewed by the Dean, the PhD Program Chair, and the entire faculty. The student will be notified of the result of the review, as well as whether they will successfully receive a contract extension, after the progress review meeting.

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.

After affiliation, supervisors are expected to pay for students to attend one conference, workshop, or professional development opportunity per year. In

addition, students can apply to have eligible trainings covered by the Erasmus+ program. More information is available on the wiki.

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 Equity and Diversity

IST Austria is committed to equity and diversity and strives to provide a place where everyone is treated with equity 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 equity and diversity and to act against harassment and discrimination. If students have any questions about equity and diversity, they should feel free to contact **Hilde Janssens** (hilde.janssens@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	I22 = Cafeteria
I03 = Voestalpine Building	I27 = Kindergarten
I04 = Bertalanffy Building	I28 = Fire Department
I05 = Pre-Clinical Facility	I31 - I35 = Apartments
I06 = Lab Building East	I36 = Church
I07 = New Administration Building	I41 = Tennis Courts
I11 = Facility Management Building	I42 = Soccer Field
I12 = Power Plant	C01 = Pre-Clinical Facility
I13 = Machine Shop	C02 = Administration Container
I21 = Office and Lab Building West	

As an example, I01.01.003 stands for Room 003, 1st floor, Central Building.

The campus map can be downloaded as a PDF from:

http://ist.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/IST_Campus_Map_Juni_2017.pdf



Students who start their PhD have shared office space on the ground floor of Office Building West. Most lectures take place in the Central Building.

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**. 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 occupational 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 DPW system, as it is a legal requirement under Austrian labor law to keep accurate records of employees’ vacation days (see also § 3.5).

Curriculum for 2018-2019

PhD Program requirement for students on a long route:

36 ECTS

Required general core

Required track core

24 ECTS from at least 4 segments and at least 2 tracks

PhD Program requirement for students on a short route:

24 ECTS

Required general core

Required track core

12 ECTS elective coursework

6 ECTS

6 ECTS

24 ECTS

6 ECTS

6 ECTS

12 ECTS

Additional specifications:

* All students should discuss their course choices with their track reps, rotation supervisors, and mentors.

* If the chosen track core course carries only 3 ECTS credits then the elective requirement is increased to 27 ECTS credits (for students on a long route) or 15 ECTS credits (for students on a short route).

* Additional track core courses count towards elective and segment requirements

* 6 ECTS encouraged to be deferred until after the qualifying exam.

Physics	Mathematics	Computer Science	DSSC	Biology	Neuroscience
Physics Core	Mathematics Core	Computer Science Core	DSSC Core	Biology Core	Neuroscience Core
Continuum Mechanics and Hydrodynamics	Discrete Math	Programming Languages	Quantitative and Computational Methods in Biology		
Atomic, Molecular and Optical Physics	Probability	Artificial Intelligence	Probabilistic Models	Systems Biology	Translational Neuroscience
Condensed Matter	Geometry and Topology	Algorithms and Complexity	Numerical Computing	Evolutionary and Population Biology	Systems Neuroscience
Mathematical Physics	Algebra	Visual and Numerical Computing	Data Analysis	Cell and Developmental Biology	Developmental Neuroscience
Biophysics	Analysis	Software Systems	Optimization	Molecular and Structural Biology	Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience

Rotation and Course Planning Form

Name: _____ I am with a BS/MS in _____.

I am currently on the short/long route _____

I am considering applying to change routes in December _____.

Planned rotations:

Rotation Period	Name of group	Courses planned concurrently with this rotation
Rotation 1: Oct 15 – Dec 14		
Rotation 2: Dec 17 – Feb 22*		
Rotation 3: Mar 4 – Apr 26		
(Rotation 4: optional) Apr 29 – Jun 28		

*Note that Rotation 2 is broken up by winter break (~2 weeks), and also includes the non-teaching month of February (except for courses on *MATLAB*, *R*, and *Animal Handling*).

Planned coursework:

Course Name**	ECTS	Track and segment name (e.g. Computer Science – Algorithms and Complexity; see curricular requirements)

** Please note that courses with very low attendance might be canceled, so make sure to think about back-up options.

I have discussed this form with my track rep. Name of faculty advisor(s): _____

Please note that you are also encouraged to discuss this plan with your rotation supervisor(s).

Please indicate which track is most closely aligned with your interests: _____

Do you plan to take all coursework before the qualifying exam (Q.E.), or will you delay 6 ECTS until after Q.E.?
Please upload this form to IQ by Friday, October 5th. The form will be reviewed by the Dean and PhD program committee.

Links to Graduate School Office Guidelines and 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. A sample of qualifying exam protocol can be downloaded from:

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. A sample protocol for Thesis Defense can be obtained from:

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 request 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.

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*

Gaspar Tkačik gasper.tkacik@ist.ac.at ext. 4501

Track Representatives – *faculty representatives for each track*

Biology	Eva Benkova	eva.benkova@ist.ac.at
Biology Deputy	Calin Guet	calin.guet@ist.ac.at
Computer Science	Krishnendu Chatterjee	krishnendu.chatterjee@ist.ac.at
Data Science & Scientific Computing	Gaspar Tkačik	gasper.tkacik@ist.ac.at
Mathematics	Uli Wagner	uli.wagner@ist.ac.at
Neuroscience	Ryuichi Shigemoto	ryuichi.shigemoto@ist.ac.at
Physics	Maksym Serbyn	maksym.serbyn@ist.ac.at

Mentors – *providing guidance to first-year students*

Vladimir Kolmogorov	vnk@ist.ac.at	ext. 4801
Max Jösch	maxjosch@ist.ac.at	ext. 7633
Onur Hosten	onur.hosten@ist.ac.at	ext. 2088
Jan Maas	jan.maas@ist.ac.at	ext. 6101
Beatriz Vicoso	bvicoso@ist.ac.at	ext. 6401
Carrie Bernecky	carrie.bernecky@ist.ac.at	ext. 2082
Martin Loose	martin.loose@ist.ac.at	ext. 6301
Anna Kicheva	anna.kicheva@ist.ac.at	ext. 3076

Graduate School Office – *administration of graduate student affairs and program requirements*

Hania Köver	hania.koever@ist.ac.at	ext. 1159
Uli Seiss	ulrike.seiss@ist.ac.at	ext. 1034
Sarah Seider	sarah.seider@ist.ac.at	ext. 1135
May Chan	may.chan@ist.ac.at	ext. 1163
Hanna Raszynska	hanna.raszynska@ist.ac.at	ext. 4201

Ombudspersons – *dealing with possible incidences of misconduct related to research, teaching, and/or academic supervision*

Robert Seiringer	robert.seiringer@ist.ac.at	ext. 5701
Eva Benkova	eva.benkova@ist.ac.at	ext. 5301

International Officer -- *responsible for unaffiliated students*

Vlad Cozac	vlad.cozac@ist.ac.at	ext. 1083
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Graduate Student Association

Wojciech Rzadkowski wojciech.rzadkowski@ist.ac.at
Laura Burnett laura.burnett@ist.ac.at

Assistants to Professors – *provide assistance to individual research groups*

Up-to-date as of August 2017. Please see updated list at:

https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/images/8/8f/Professors_at_IST_Austria.pdf

Alexandra Mally	alexandra.mally@ist.ac.at	ext. 1105	Eva Benkova Maria Ibanez Jiří Friml Harald Janovjak Daria Siekhaus Zhanybek Alpichshev Fyodor Kondrashov
Astrid Bonventre-Darthe	astrid.bonventre-darthe@ist.ac.at	ext. 1194	Nick Barton Vladimir Kolmogorov Christoph Lampert Krzysztof Pietrzak Gašper Tkačik
Elisabeth Hacker	elisabeth.hacker@ist.ac.at	ext. 1015	Krishnendu Chatterjee Thomas A. Henzinger
Eleftheria Kralli Beller	eleftheria.krallibeller@ist.ac.at	ext. 3700	Peter Jonas
Louis Alesch	louis.alesch@ist.ac.at	ext. 1032	Calin Guet Edouard Hannezo Carl-Philip Heisenberg
Rita Six	rita.six@ist.a.cat	ext. 1165	Jozsef Csicsvari Johann Danzl Simon Hippenmeyer Maximilian Jösch Martin Loose Gaia Novarino Leonid Sazanov Ryuichi Shigemoto Sandra Siegert Carrie Bernecky

Christine Francois-Rennhofer christine.francois-rennhofer@ist.ac.at ext. 1137

Beatriz Vicoso
Herbert Edelsbrunner
Uli Wagner
Florian Schur

Stephanie Danzinger stephanie.danzinger@ist.ac.at ext. 1124

Bernd Bickel
Johannes M. Fink
Björn Hof
Georgios Katsaros
Maksym Serbyn
Chris Wojtan
Onur Hosten

Agnieszka Rowinska agnieszka.rowinska@ist.ac.at ext. 1148

Sylvia Cremer
Anna Kicheva
Michael Sixt

Susanne Wheatley susanne.wheatley@ist.ac.at ext. 1178

Dan-Adrian Alistrah
Laszlo Erdös
Tamás Hausel

Marija Soronda marija.soronda@ist.ac.at ext. 1008

Julian Fischer
Mikhail Lemeshko
Jan Maas
Robert Seiringer

Doctor – *general health issues;*
(on campus Wednesdays from 9am to 1pm)

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

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 ext. 7447 +43 664 4736950

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*

Hilde Janssens hilde.janssens@ist.ac.at ext. 1046 +43 664 88326065

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

Daniela Klammer dklammer@ist.ac.at

ext. 1095 and 1098

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 and/or thesis defense to ensure procedures are adhered to. See § 2.6.1 and § 2.8.1, also, *Qualifying Exam*, *Thesis Defense*, and *Thesis Committee*.

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 § 2.3.7, and § 2.11.

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/index.php/Graduate School - IQ student](https://intranet.ist.ac.at/istwiki/index.php/Graduate_School_-_IQ_student)

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](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-qual (ifying 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 also § 2.6 and § 2.8.

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 can 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), at least two other committee members (one of whom must be external, i.e., not part of the IST faculty), as well as an Exam Chair (see also *Exam Chair*). The Thesis Committee (with exception of Exam Chair) is the same for the qualifying exam and the thesis defense (unless explicit approval has been given for a change in committee membership). See § 2.6.1 and § 2.8.1.

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.

IST Academic Calendar 2018/19

	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Teaching Weeks	Fall 1 = Fall, 1 st Half Semester Fall 2 = Fall, 2 nd Half Semester	Spring 1 = Spring, 1 st Half Semester Spring 2 = Spring, 2 nd Half Semester
	27	28	29	30	31	1	2			
Sep	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		Sep 17: Start of PhD 2018/19; Orientation Day	
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		Sep 18-20: Intro to Research at IST Austria	
	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	21	22	23	Pre-sem	Sep 18-Oct 5: Fall Pre-semester courses	
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Pre-sem		
Oct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pre-sem		
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Fall 1: 1	Oct 8: Fall 1 starts; Fall Full Semester starts	
	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	Fall 1: 2	Oct 15: Progress Review (Fall) due*	
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Fall 1: 3	Oct 15: Rotation 1 starts	
	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	Fall 1: 4		
Nov	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Fall 1: 5	Nov 16: Fall 1 lectures end	
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Fall 1: 6	Nov 23: Student Open Day	
	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	24	25	Fall 1 Exams	Nov 19-23: Fall 1 Exam Week	
	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	Fall 2: 1	Nov 26: Fall 2 starts	
Dec	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Fall 2: 2		
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Fall 2: 3	Dec 14: Rotation 1 ends	
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Fall 2: 4	Dec 17: Rotation 2 starts	
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
Jan	31	1	2	3	4	5	6			
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Fall 2: 5		
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Fall 2: 6	Jan 18: Fall 2 lectures end; Fall Full Semester lectures end	
	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	26	27	Fall 2 Exams	Jan 21-25: Fall 2 Exam Week	
	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	Pre-sem	Jan 28-Feb 22: Semester break / Spring Pre-semester courses	
Feb	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pre-sem		
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Pre-sem		
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Pre-sem	Feb 22: Rotation 2 ends	
Mar	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	1	2	3	Spring 1: 1	Feb 25: Spring 1 starts; Spring Full Semester starts	
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Spring 1: 2	Mar 4: Rotation 3 starts	
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Spring 1: 3		
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Spring 1: 4		
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Spring 1: 5		
Apr	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Spring 1: 6	Apr 5: Spring 1 lectures end	
	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	13	14		Apr 8-12: Spring 1 Exam Week	
	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	20	21		Apr 15: Progress review (Spring) due*	
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Spr 1 Exams	Apr 26: Rotation 3 ends	
May	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>1</u>	2	3	4	5	Spring 2: 1	April 29: Spring 2 starts; Rotation 4 starts	
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Spring 2: 2	May 1: Affiliation window opens	
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Spring 2: 3		
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	Spring 2: 4		
	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	Spring 2: 5		
Jun	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Spring 2: 6		
	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	Spring 2: 7	Jun 14: Spring 2 lectures end; Spring Full Semester lectures end	
	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	Spr 2 Exams	Jun 17-21: Spring 2 Exam Week	
Jul	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Jun 28: Rotation 4 ends	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		June 30th: Affiliation deadline	
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21			
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28			
	29	30	31	1	2	3	4			

** Applies to Phase II students only*