

Infosheet: Courses

(for lecturers)

- **Course proposal submission and approval**

Faculty who wish to teach are asked to hand in the completed course proposal template to the Graduate School Office via email. All course proposals must be reviewed and pre-approved by the track representative of the respective field. Responsibility for final approval resides with the Program Chair.

The Graduate School administration will collect all course proposals and forward them to the respective faculty for review and approval. The proposal submission deadline is May 15th*

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

- **Course classifications:**

General core course – IST signature course which are interdisciplinary in topic, design, coverage, and teaching

Track core course - designed to expose participants to key questions and concepts of the respective field (current tracks: Mathematics, Computer Sciences, Physics, Biology, Neuroscience, Data Science and Scientific Computing)

Advanced course – designed to teach students advanced topics

Introductory course (previously known as 'breadth') – designed to teach students basic topics outside their specific field

Service course – short courses designed to provide students with specific technical training (usually taking place in blocked format outside the official teaching periods)

- **Tracks/ segments**

Every standard (introductory or advanced) course must be assigned to at least one track and one track segment. An overview of tracks and segments is available here: <https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/track-segments>

- **Teaching time:**

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

Fall term = Oct. 1 – Jan. 31

Spring term = March 1 – June 30

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

- **Set-up of a standard (half) semester course**

6 weeks for a half semester course, 12 weeks for a full semester course.

Lectures twice a week à 75 minutes, plus 6/ 12 recitations à 50 minutes each, plus 6/12 homework.

Lectures should be held in fixed slots: i.e. Mon + Wed or Tue +Thu.

Deviations from this set-up (e.g. blocking of lectures on one day per week) are only permitted in exceptional cases (e.g. if external instructors are involved) and need to be approved by the program chair.

Advanced courses can be blocked in exceptional cases, but only during times where they do not interfere with the core modules, i.e. February, July, August, and September.

The workload of a half semester course translates into 3 ECTS credits, a full semester course into 6 ECTS credits.

Exact schedule of the course, policy on absences, on regular assignments, details on evaluation criteria as well as grading policy needs to be communicated in the first meeting. Make slides and additional lecture material available to students. Every course needs to have a webpage in Moodle (see section 'Course websites').

Make sure lectures are well coordinated to ensure a central unifying thread, especially if there are multiple lecturers.

- **Regular teaching slots during semester time:**

a) Lectures (2 weekly slots à 75 min: Mon + Wed or Tue + Thu)

* 8:45-10:00am

* 10:15-11:30am

* 1:15-2:30pm

* 2:45-4:00pm

b) Recitations (1 weekly slot à 50 min; held on one of the lecture days):

* 11:45am-12:35pm (in exceptional cases: 10:15- 11:05am)

* 4:15-5:05pm (in exceptional cases: 2:45-3:35pm)

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

- **Recitations:**

Recitations are usually held by the teaching assistant(s). The number of TAs per course should reasonably align with the expected number of students enrolling in a course.

Make sure that lectures and recitations are coordinated i.e. the TA should be in the lecture or well aware of what has been covered.

Recitations should be used to address questions about the homework and the lecture material.

The TA should prepare a set of questions and problems i.e. prepare extra material.

In addition, the teaching assistant should be available for office hours, assist the students in the course with homework, and help grading homework and exams.

Homework needs to be graded and returned on time.

- **Registration:**

IST students as well as all other scientists can register for courses via the student portal IQ (<https://iq.ist.ac.at/student>). External students have to complete an online survey first (in case they haven't participated in courses at IST before).

The standard registration deadline is one week prior to the course start date. Withdrawal from a course is possible only within the first three weeks after the course start date.

Instructors can view the actual class list in the IQ faculty interface (instructions available here: <https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/teaching-and-student-records/>)

- **Cancellation policy:**

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

- **Re-scheduling of individual sittings :**

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

- **Course websites:**

Every course has a course website in Moodle. There, instructors can view up-to-date list of participants and communicate with them. In addition, instructors can access the list of sessions, adding class topics, homework assignments, quizzes etc. Details will be communicated by GSO before the course start date. The responsibility for the maintenance of course websites resides with the respective course instructors.

Please note: We currently don't grade participants in Moodle, as we use IQ for that purpose only.

- **Assessment:**

The composition of the grade needs to be indicated in the course description and announced in the first meeting. Normally it is based on class participation, homework and final exam/essay/project. The last week of the (half) semester is reserved as exam week.

In general only one exam will be offered. If a student puts forward compelling reasons for missing the exam, the professors needs to accommodate the student.

The final grades need to be entered in IQ (instructions available <https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/faculty-contribution-to-the-graduate-school/#teaching>)

- **Grading scheme:**

The standard grading scheme is (1= best; 5= fail).

1 and 5 should be used sparsely – typically less than 10% - , and the mean grade should be 3.

Students can ask for transcript in pass/fail modus.

Service courses are usually graded on a pass/fail basis.

If instructors of other courses prefer to award grades on pass/fail basis, this has to be communicated to the graduate school explicitly.

- **Course evaluation:**

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

- **General note:**

All relevant information for course instructors can be found on the Grad School here:

<https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/faculty-contribution-to-the-graduate-school/>

<https://phd.pages.ist.ac.at/teaching-and-student-records/>