Fully Funded PhD Positions in Astronomy, Biology, Computer Science, Chemistry & Materials, Data Science & Scientific Computing, Earth Science, Mathematics, Neuroscience, and Physics

The Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA) is looking for highly qualified candidates with Bachelor's or Master's degrees to apply for our PhD program. We offer **fully funded PhD positions in Astronomy, Biology, Computer Science, Chemistry & Materials, Data Science & Scientific Computing, Earth Science, Mathematics, Neuroscience, and Physics** in a world-class research environment on the outskirts of Vienna.

In 2019, ISTA was ranked #3 in the world-wide Nature Index ranking (normalized). In 2018, ISTA was ranked within the top ten of Nature Index Rising Stars "Top 30 academic institutions under 30" list.

All students are offered **5-year contracts**, they receive internationally **competitive salaries**, and **full social security coverage**.

The **application deadline is January 8, 2027 (15:00 CET)** for a PhD program start date in September 2027.

APPLY NOW

Join our Virtual Student Open Day on November 18th!

The Virtual Student Open Day is a great opportunity to explore our programs and campus virtually, wherever you are located. The program includes a range of live sessions from the Graduate School Office, academics, and students.

You can find out about our PhD program, the ISTA research experience, support services, the ISTA campus and much more by attending one of the talks.

- **International and Diverse Scientific Community**

Our scientists, from professors to postdocs to students, hail from all corners of the world, representing over 80 different nationalities, and build on research and degrees earned from the finest global scientific institutes and universities.

- **English-Speaking**

We use English throughout the Institute as the language of instruction and communication.

- **Interdisciplinary**

Our Graduate Program is characterized by modern comprehensive training with a special interdisciplinary focus.

- **Cutting-Edge Research Training**

Students work closely with outstanding faculty within small research groups and have access to first-rate facilities. Students spend the first year completing coursework and rotations before affiliating with a group.

This first phase of exploration allows students to ensure that the research topic, as well as the research group, are the best match for them before embarking on in-depth thesis research in the second phase.

- **Entry with a Bachelor's or Master's Degree**

We welcome students with a Bachelor's or a Master's in science to apply for our PhD program.

- **Funding**

All PhD students are offered **5-year contracts**. All students making reasonable progress are **fully funded** until the time of their thesis defense.

ISTA relies on diverse funding sources to support all its researchers. Our Grant Office supports ISTA scientists who would like to apply for external funding. Students also receive financial support to attend scientific conferences and workshops.

- **Careers**

Our distinguished alumni have gone on to successful careers after their PhD studies at ISTA.

PhD students receive support through our mentorship and career development programs which focus on training in transferable skills for academia and beyond. Throughout their studies, PhD students are supported by Career Services, which provide career development advice and training.

We also provide xista, an in-house science venture that supports researchers in the commercial development and use of their research results.

Skills/Qualifications

ISTA welcomes students with different academic backgrounds who can bring their skills and experiences to the scientific setting.

Students with a **Bachelor's or Master's degree** in Astronomy, Biology, Computer Science, Chemistry & Materials, Data Science & Scientific Computing, Earth Science, Mathematics, Neuroscience, and Physics are encouraged to apply.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

ISTA cherishes diversity in personalities, backgrounds, experiences and thoughts among all our employees. Diversity creates a workplace that enables employees to gain new ideas and insights and that will take science into exciting new directions.

ISTA is committed to equal opportunities and social equity, regardless of age, gender (identity), ethnicity, race, social/cultural background, creed, religion, sexual orientation, and physical/cognitive abilities. Please see our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion web page for more information.

WHAT ARE THE SELECTION CRITERIA?

The selection committee uses a collection of indicators to evaluate the applicant's preparedness, motivation, and potential. The following will be considered:

Scientific Promise:

- Undergraduate performance: overall, with a special focus on relevant field-specific courses
- Reference letters provided by professors and senior scientists: one letter from industry is acceptable, but letters from an academic background are given priority. Referees are asked to address analytical capabilities, technical proficiency, ability to work independently and motivation/commitment
- Statement of purpose: the applicant's past research experience and motivation for applying to this particular PhD program: is it a good academic fit? Does the program contribute to the candidate's future career plans?, etc.
- Additional relevant skills (field-specific): demonstrated by internships and/or participation in research projects, participation in science Olympiads, programming languages, lab techniques, etc.

Background:

- Quality of the undergraduate background
- Transferable skills: communication skills, experience with working in teams, previous mobility and international experiences, leadership experience as demonstrated in student organizations, etc.
- Diversity: e.g. a woman in computer science/math/physics; an applicant who switched fields, etc.

ISTA processes applications for its PhD program once a year. To apply, you have to create an online account, which will allow you to track your application through its various stages.

WHAT APPLICATION MATERIALS ARE REQUIRED?

We ask you to upload the following documents to the application portal:

- **CV**
- **Statement of purpose** that explains your research experience and your motivation for applying to the ISTA PhD program. It should be 1-2 pages maximum. In your statement, specify up to three research groups you find the most interesting. At this stage you do not need to contact potential supervisors.
- **University transcripts and diplomas** of all degree programs and all years you have attended and/or are currently enrolled in (in English and in original language).
- **Contact information of 3 referees**

All documents must be submitted in English. Copies of university transcripts must be in both English and in their original language. The **application deadline is January 8, 2027 (15:00 CET)**.

Follow us on social media:

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