



SCUOLA INTERNAZIONALE SUPERIORE DI STUDI AVANZATI
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
Via Bonomea 265, 34136 Trieste, Italy

To the First Year Students of the PhD in Statistical Physics

Welcome to SISSA and to the PhD in Statistical Physics. The Staff, the members of the faculty, the PhD students, all the other group members, and myself look forward to meeting you and to getting to know you individually.

These notes are meant to provide you some useful information about scientific and logistical aspects of life here. Please take a moment of your time to read them carefully, and feel free to ask questions in the forthcoming meeting, which is scheduled for **Monday, November 7th 2016 at 14:00 in room 138** (1st floor).

There is also a Student's Wiki page http://wiki.sissa.it/students/index.php/Main_Page which provides useful information. For any PhD related information you should refer to our web site:

<http://www.statphys.sissa.it/wordpress/>

*** * STARTING UP in SISSA * ***

REGISTRATION – Upon your arrival in SISSA, please check-in immediately at the PhD Students Secretary in room 222 (2nd floor), in order to be registered, to have a SISSA account open, to receive the badge, and additional instructions.

DESK – You will be located in room 126 (3 persons) and 127 (2 persons) for the first year (during which you will be mainly attending lectures) and then you will move to one of the smaller, quieter offices at the beginning of the second year. Rooms 126 and 127 should be equipped with enough workstations for all of you and sockets/cables are available for connecting laptops. In case of problems with connections or computers, hardware and software please contact helpdesk@sisssa.it.

COURSES/EXAMS – Lectures will start on **November 7th** and, unless specified otherwise, they take place in room 138. The schedule of the courses can be found here,

http://www.statphys.sissa.it/wordpress/?page_id=78,

together with the announcements of upcoming seminars and journal clubs. The list of courses which will be offered during the academic year 2016/2017 can be found in the webpage: <http://www.statphys.sissa.it/wordpress/>

All these activities will continue until June. Note that the schedule of the activities is subject to occasional changes due to other commitments of the lecturers (and of the students). Check frequently the group web pages to stay updated!

The lectures we offer cover a wide range of the most important topics in statistical physics and therefore you are asked to attend **all** of them. Take advantage of this unique opportunity (probably the last one) to have someone available to teach you about these subjects, also by asking questions and by participating actively to the lectures. At the end of the courses you will be asked a feedback concerning possible improvements.

You are required to take a number of exams, following a “credit” system. In particular you are required to pass the exams of at least:

- 1 courses of 4 credits,
- 4 courses of 3 credits,
- 2 courses of 2 credits.

The list of credits for each course can be found here on the webpage <http://www.statphys.sissa.it/wordpress/>.

Exams of each course can consist of 'homeworks' (exercises, essays, etc.) assigned during the course, of a final written/oral exam, or of a combination of the two. Ask each lecturer what the minimal requirements to pass the exam of the course are. Exams are typically scheduled upon agreement with the lecturer. We strongly encourage you to take the exam of a course as soon as possible after its conclusion and no later than the **end of June**.

By the **end of September** you must have passed the required exams. Exams have to be registered by the Lecturer on a register hold by the Student Secretariat. In order to be admitted to the second year of PhD it is necessary that you achieve a satisfactory level (as well as show a satisfactory overall performance) in all the exams you took. In particular, the average of the marks should not be below 27/30 and each single mark not below 24/30.

Students have the option to define an individual study plan including courses offered by other PhD curricula at SISSA. Such individual plans need to be approved by the Coordinator of the PhD (Prof. Pasquale Calabrese), who will deliberate on the number of credits to be assigned to courses external to the PhD.

As an integral part of the training you are strongly encouraged to regularly attend the (free) English course, organized by SISSA (ask the Student Secretary about details) during the first and/or second year.

SEMINARS – The Group organizes seminars, journal clubs, etc. (some jointly with other Institutions in the Trieste area) giving an opportunity to learn about various current aspects of Statistical Physics and to share our own research expertise. In particular, the group seminar is usually held on **Tuesdays** at 11:00 in room 128/129 at SISSA or at 11:30 in the “Stasi Seminar room” at the main building of ICTP. Check the calendar of activities for the actual schedule. All PhD students of the group are requested to attend these events as an integral part of their training. The list of upcoming seminars can be found in the weekly schedule

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http://www.statphys.sissa.it/wordpress/?page_id=78 .

In order to receive the seminar announcements and get updates about the activities of the group, please subscribe (as soon as possible after your arrival in SISSA) to the SP seminars mailing list (which is jointly held with ICTP): https://lists.ictp.it/mailman/listinfo.cgi/statistical_physics_seminar

Tuesdays seminars are usually recorded and they are then posted on the webpage:

http://www.statphys.sissa.it/wordpress/?page_id=502 .

In case you are interested in, consider also subscribing to the mailing list of:

- the ICTP Condensed Matter group (which typically has seminars on Wednesday afternoon in the Stasi Seminar Room in the ICTP main building): in order to do so, send a request to cm@ictp.it.
- the SISSA Condensed Matter group: https://lists.sissa.it/mailman/listinfo/cm_info

Keep also in mind that SISSA offers opportunities to learn about research in other subjects through SISSA Colloquia, interdisciplinary seminars and the lectures for the Master's course in Science Communication (see the corresponding web pages for details): do not underestimate these possibilities to broaden your knowledge.

RESEARCH - Before the summer, you should talk to all of the members of the faculty of the PhD (both SISSA and ICTP staff) about possible projects for your PhD, so as to decide on what interests you most, and who might be your supervisor. Remember that it is primarily your responsibility to find out about this.

You are expected to start working on your PhD project immediately after the end of the courses (concurrently with completing the exams which you decided to take). The whole PhD program is expected to take three years, but a fourth one of scholarship can be requested if motivated. In the spring of your second year (typically around end of February/March) you are expected to give a progress report, i.e., a seminar to the group member with which you illustrate the progresses made in your research project. This will be a relevant element for the approval of your admission to the third year of PhD. Depending on circumstances, during your third (and possibly fourth) year of PhD course you might be asked by the PhD Coordinator to report in informal journal clubs about your research. You are encouraged to share regularly, although informally, the progresses you make in your research with the members of the group and inform the PhD Coordinator of possible issues.

GROUP MEMBERS— An overview of the current group members can be found at http://www.statphys.sissa.it/wordpress/?page_id=1684 .

We aim at being an integrated research community and we strongly encourage you to interact with the faculty, postdocs, visitors and other students (and also with colleagues in other groups of SISSA). Interaction is a key resource in research and is invaluable for broadening your knowledge and developing new ideas as well as for getting specific help.

SECRETARIAL HELP – Contact the Student Secretariat (room 222) upon your arrival in SISSA, in order to be enrolled officially in the PhD program, getting the badge to access SISSA out of working hours, keys of your office, open the email account etc., and subsequently for any general matters concerning administration and/or PhD fellowship. For mission forms or matters strictly related to the Statistical Physics Group, contact our Secretary, Ms. Barbara Corzani (corzani@sissa.it, room 229, ext. 424).

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES – There is one elected representative of the Statistical Physics students in the Council of the Physics Area, currently Alessio Chiocchetta (alessio.chiocchetta@sissa.it). There are also elected representatives for all the SISSA PhD students in the School Council. You can directly contact them at the mail address studentreps@sissa.it. The statute of SISSA and other official documents regarding the school can be viewed at <http://www.adm.sissa.it/> (some of them available only in their original Italian version though, momentarily). In particular, the School Council has established an ethical code and nominated Confidential Counselors, who can be contacted for any situation involving harassment, mobbing, and other forms of psychological pressure.

MISSIONS – We will try to provide financial support to your traveling for meetings, collaborations, conferences and summer schools; however, this must always be subject to your supervisor's and to the PhD Coordinator's approval and to the group budget constraints. Whenever you plan to go on a mission – whether to be paid for by SISSA or not – you need to ask permission to *both* your supervisor and the PhD Coordinator at least **two weeks** before departure and filling the official group calendar at <https://calendar.sissa.it/SOGol>. If the mission is approved, at least **one week** in advance, fill in the online mission forms that you find at <http://services.sissa.it/home/>

under "Missions > Online forms". Before starting a mission, please read carefully the rules about the eligible expenses that you find in the file linked right below the Online forms. If in doubt, please ask in advance to the secretary Ms. Barbara Corzani (corzani@sissa.it, room 229, ext. 424).

Please, note that:

(a) for matters of insurance, you must fill in the mission forms even if you do not request financial support to SISSA.

(b) any mission longer than 20 days has to be authorized by the Area Council and therefore you have to inform the PhD coordinator at least two months in advance.

(c) in case of a mission abroad longer than 30 days you are entitled to ask for an increase of your monthly scholarship. Ask the Students Secretary in room 222 (2nd floor) at least two months prior departure.

First-year students are not typically allowed to go on a mission, especially during the courses or before having passed all the requested exams. Possible exceptions and special requests have to be discussed with the PhD Coordinator.

VACATIONS/ABSENCE – Any period of leave or absence, for whatever reasons, has to be agreed upon with the PhD Coordinator during the first year and with the PhD Supervisor after it. Accordingly, you have to inform them in advance and after you have to fill the official group calendar at <https://calendar.sissa.it/SOGo/>

SISSA FACILITIES – Please use all SISSA resources with intelligence and honesty. A complete list them can be found in the School web page <http://www.sissa.it/facilities>

CAFETERIA – There is a cafeteria and a bar in SISSA (level 0), providing a range of food, from full lunches to sandwiches and salads. PhD Students have the right to obtain the ARDISS card to get a discount on lunch prizes. The card can be obtained after paying the ARDISS tax from the ARDISS offices in town. To get some further discounts you will have to submit the following documents: a) a certification of the family composition; b) income and property declaration of your family (ISEE); c) fill out and print the form you can get at <http://www.ardiss.fvg.it/>. The first two documents must be in Italian (or translated into Italian at the Tribunal, Foro Ulpiano 1). Please ask the student representatives for further details. Also the pizzeria/restaurant just opposite to the main entrance provides a discount if you present (for yourself only) a SISSA badge.

HOUSING – SISSA provides a free housing service, which can help you in finding accommodation. All information on how to get assistance can be found on the SISSA web page at <http://www.sissa.it/housing> .

COMPUTING – A SISSA account will be created for you upon registration at the Students' Secretariat, which you are requested to go to upon your arrival in SISSA. For computing needs, there is a Helpdesk provided by the SISSA Information Technology and Computing Services (ITCS). Please visit the webpage <http://itcs.sissa.it>. In case of problems with hardware/software/email etc., contact the Helpdesk at helpdesk@sissa.it with detailed, clear, constructive and polite requests for help. Keep in mind that there are student in the group that are hired for support with computing needs and for managing the group webpage.

For matters regarding computing-related problems within the group, contact one of the computing assistant students, currently Paola Ruggiero (paola.ruggiero@sissa.it) and Gianni Mossi (gianni.mossi@sissa.it). Additional information about the ITCS facilities can be found on the SISSA web pages.

SISSA offers a financial contribution to first-year PhD students who want to buy a personal laptop – check the student's Wiki page or ask the Students Secretary (room 222) for details.

We strongly encourage all the students to create and maintain their own webpage. Detailed instructions on how to do this can be found here:

<http://people.sissa.it> .

LIBRARY – You will soon have a meeting with someone from the Library Staff who will explain the available resources and the formalities for accessing them. See also the SISSA Library website.

PHONE, MAIL and FAX – If you need to call outside Trieste for work, you will need to ask first for authorization from the Group/PhD coordinator (and then call through the reception). You can send (ordinary) mail related to work through the SISSA mail office, marking any envelope with your name. Personal pigeons holes as well as out-mail holes are located at level -1. A fax machine is available at the main building reception. A plotter, which can be used to print posters for conferences, is located in the post office area at the -1 Floor. See <http://www.itcs.sissa.it/printing> for information on requesting a print.

STATIONERY – SISSA provides basic stationery items (pens, pencils, notepads, etc.) in a limited amount: those available are listed here <http://www.adm.sissa.it/store/>. If you need something from that list, send an e-mail request to store@sisssa.it and then go and collect it from the store, which is located at level -1.

GYM – The gym is situated within the SISSA campus, in the middle of the park, and is available to SISSA students and staff. Users can avail themselves of a wide range of fitness equipment and machines, and a broad schedule of gym courses. The timetable has been arranged in order not to interfere with the activity in the School. All the details can be found here <http://www.sissa.it/gym>.

SISSA CLUB – You may ask your colleagues about the SISSA Club <http://club.sissa.it> , which provides sporting facilities, a piano, a table tennis (ping pong), cultural events, etc. There is also a SISSA choir and a Cineclub, showing movies in English or with English subtitles. There is a music room in Building B4.

SISSA FORUM – This is the right place to share ideas, opinions news or events with your colleagues from all the areas and where the student's representatives will post most of the official communications. The forum contains a place for official discussions but there is an off Topic area where you can post whatever you may think could be enjoyed by the SISSA student's community. You can find the forum at the address: <https://www.sissa.it/forum/>

KINDERGARDEN – On the SISSA campus you can also find a kindergarten, "La SISSA dei Piccoli", providing nursery care for up to 21 children aged between 12 and 36 months. <http://www.sissa.it/kindergarten> .

This nursery school is situated in the park, in a welcoming and completely renewed building where children can also play outdoors in a wide area.

150 HOUR FELLOWSHIPS – These are small supplementary bursaries paid to

some students in return for them doing jobs which are important for the smooth running of SISSA (e.g. webmaster, library assistance, computing software support, etc.). Every year there are official announcements of the available posts and the most suitable candidate is selected for each job from among the applicants. Please ask the Student Secretariat or members of the group for more details.

LANGUAGE LESSONS – SISSA offers free Italian and English language courses. If interested ask for details about the Italian ones. The English courses are taught at two levels. As mentioned you are instead strongly advised to follow the English classes if English is not your mother tongue, before the end of the second academic year. For both courses ask information to Riccardo Iancer (iancer@sissa.it).

MIRAMARE CAMPUS – SISSA is one of the several Scientific Institutions in Trieste. In particular there is a daily shuttle service to/from the ICTP (ask the reception for the timetable). ICTP has scientific connections with SISSA (e.g. joint seminars, congresses, etc.) and provides various facilities (library, cafeteria etc.). You might be interested in looking at their web pages (<http://www.ictp.it/pages/info/visiting.html>) as well as in subscribing to their mailing list “ICTPLINK” which informs on Weekend activities, Concerts, Sale Announcements, etc.

**** STARTING UP in EU/ITALY/TRIESTE ****

HOUSING – Accommodation cost around 200-400 euro/month, depending mostly on the accommodation you choose (room vs apartment). Each year students have also to pay the “Tassa per il diritto allo studio” to the Regional Authority for the University Study (ARDISS). It costs about 100 euro and allows you to access several ARDISS services, e.g. use the university cafeterias and obtain discounts for sport activities through the Sport University Center (CUS). Most of all PhD students can apply for a University Apartment at ARDISS. For that you need the same documents as to apply for an ARDISS card plus a certificate issued by SISSA that confirms your student condition. The houses are a few and priority is given to those with lower income. Moreover students can ask for partial refund of their rent, by providing the rental contract plus the SISSA certificate when applying for the ARDISS card. Please note that without a formal rental contract, this partial refund cannot be granted. Most importantly SISSA has a Housing office among its facilities, see below the Facilities section of this document.

TAXES FOR RETIREMENT – Taxes for pension are paid in part by SISSA and in part by the student. According to the Italian law, you cannot get them back at the end of your PhD studies, even if you are not Italian. If you come from a country having a convention with Italy, you will have to reclaim them in future.

ITALIAN RESIDENCE AND IDENTITY CARD – Foreign students can ask for an Italian domicile (residenza) and an Identity Card (Carta d'Identità). The Card is a

valid identification document in Italy. You have to submit an official translation of your birth certificate to obtain them. Note that without a certificate of “residenza” you cannot buy a car, convert your driving license and apply for residential rates for your electricity bills. It is also required in order to invite a spouse (if married).

BANK – The Unicredit Bank is the SISSA bank. You might consider opening an account with them. An ATM is available in the entrance hall. Sometimes this ATM can be also used to pay bills.

MEDICAL ISSUES – First aid is available within SISSA: contact any of the secretaries for information. For more serious (urgent) medical problems, there is a medical room in Building B4. Details to be provided. It is possible to obtain sanitary assistance for foreigner students. It is sufficient to request it in the ASL (Sanitary Local Authority, via Stock 2, Trieste). It costs about 150-200 euro/year and includes family doctor and hospital service.

PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING – The PhD years can be stressful ones in the life of a young researcher. If you fell under strain do not hesitate to discuss this with your supervisor or PhD coordinator or resort to the psychological assistance offered by SISSA.

You can find a contact in this sense at the following link:

http://wiki.sissa.it/students/index.php/Psychological_support.

OTHER/EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES – Apart from what we listed above there are extra benefits that you can enjoy as a SISSA graduate student, which we briefly list below.

UNIVERSITY SPORT CENTER – Besides using the internal Gym, students can subscribe to the University Sport Center (CUS) in order to obtain discounts for various sport activities. The cost is about 15 euro/year. Beware: you will not have much time for this during the first year!

DISCOUNTS IN CINEMAS – Students can obtain a discount at all cinemas in Trieste. It is necessary to show either an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) or the SISSA student card. The first can be obtained at the CTS (Piazza Dalmazia 3/b) and costs about 15 euro/year; the SISSA card can be obtained for free, by bringing a photo to the Student Secretary. It also possible to show the “Trieste Universitaria” card, obtained free of charge from ARDISS (<http://www.ardiss.fvg.it/>) together with the card for the meal discounts. This card also allows to get many other discounts in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, for example for purchasing ski passes.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES – Information on cultural activities in Trieste can be found in: ICTP newsletter, NTWK monthly journal (freely distributed in many bars), Il Mercatino (first issue of each month), and on the websites of: Teatro Miela, Rossetti, Teatro Lirico Verdi and on Trieste.com.

**** Being a SISSA member ****

PUBLICATIONS – It is considered a rule of common sense that if you write a paper, which is not in collaboration with a SISSA staff member, you must receive formal “approval” from your supervisor/tutor (or any staff member if you do not have yet a formal supervisor) before submitting it for publication or uploading it to the physics ArXiv.

PRESENCE IN SISSA - As a SISSA student, you are required to be present in SISSA and to take part actively in the life of the School and of the Group. Apart from authorized situations (such as for missions, illness) you are expected to work in SISSA or to inform your tutor/supervisor of your absence. For your own safety, you are warmly encouraged to give to our secretary Ms. Barbara Corzani (corzani@sissa.it) the name and phone number of a reference person we could contact in case of emergency or of your (unjustified) absence.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY – All of the above is about practicalities, “regulations” and what we can provide to help you to work (hopefully well) in the coming years. Please do not forget that we are here for you, but also that you are a full member of the Group and we will be relying on your contribution to its scientific and social life. We will always welcome any constructive suggestion from you concerning new initiatives or improvements to any aspect of our life and work here. Students have to comply with the SISSA Codice di Condotta (Ethical Code) and Safety Regulations. Finally, please do not hesitate to contact me directly about anything that concerns you. I hope that you will learn a lot, have a successful start to your PhD and above all will have fun doing science at SISSA.

Welcome on board!

Prof. Pasquale Calabrese
Coordinator of the PhD in Statistical Physics
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