

IMPRS-HD: rules & conditions¹

1) IMPRS curriculum

While there is an **mandatory IMPRS curriculum**, students do not need to attend lectures again if they have attended similar lectures previously.

The IMPRS mandatory curriculum is the same for students aiming for a doctoral examination in astronomy (the usual case for IMPRS students) or in physics.

IMPRS-HD requires attendance of the following courses during their PhD:

- **Introduction to Astronomy & Astrophysics I+II** (eg. September block course)
- **Theoretical Astrophysics** (semester course, every winter term)
- Two of the following advanced lectures on astronomy (block course or semester lecture), but two outside their field of PhD research:

**Observational Methods, Stellar Astronomy & Astrophysics,
Galactic & Extragalactic Astronomy, Cosmology**

- **IMPRS seminars:** 1x literature seminar (winter term), 1x research seminar (summer term),
1x seminar work shop (3-day retreat)
- One **special lecture** course (from the list of lectures offered every semester)
- One **IMPRS summer school** (or another school)

Specifics of the student's curriculum are decided by his/her **thesis committee**.

Exams on lectures or exercises is not required unless recommended by the thesis committee, or imposed by the HGSFP requirements for acceptance.

The student is free to attend any other lectures offered by Heidelberg university.

2) Thesis committee

The PhD research and the particulars of each student's curriculum is mentored by a standing **thesis committee (TC)** consisting of the supervisor and two other independent scientists, (at least) one of them from a different institute.

The TC has to **meet at least 3 times** – 1st after the arrival of the student to consider the work plan and the curriculum, a 2nd time half-way through the thesis to discuss thesis progress, and a 3rd time or 4th time before handing in the thesis and registering for the final exam. It can meet more often, depending on the demand of the TC or the student.

It is the **responsibility of the main supervisor** to make the TC meetings happening. The student is supposed to help organizing the TC meetings. The TC meeting should be informal - it is up to the committee how to evaluate the progress of the thesis work.

A brief **informal report** about the TC meeting has to be written for reference for the TC members and the student (a copy must be sent to the IMPRS-HD office, imprs-hd@mpia.de). It is the **responsibility of the main supervisor** that the report is written.

¹Updated March 2023. More detailed information is provided at the IMPRS-HD webpage: www.imprs-hd.mpg.de

Supervisors who do not support the TC meetings may be excluded from being listed as potential IMPRS supervisors. Without regular TC meetings, further financial support for the student can be withdrawn (travel funding, extension contract).

3) **IMPRS membership**

IMPRS-HD calls for applications once a year. Shortlisted applicants can be accepted for IMPRS-HD if a PhD project, a supervisor, and funding is secured, and if the PhD committee of the Department („Promotionsausschuß“) has accepted the candidate.

The IMPRS board will decide about the acceptance of "Quer-Einsteiger" (PhD students who are already enrolled, but not yet IMPRS students) case by case.

Student and supervisors must sign the IMPRS membership form within 2 weeks after arrival. Students of IMPRS-HD are also [members of the HGSFP](#).

IMPRS students must [register](#) for the Department for Physics and Astronomy of Heidelberg University via the HGSFP office and have to enroll at Heidelberg University.

4) **Financial support**

Every year, IMPRS-HD can offer 1-2 new **PhD fellowships** from its own budget. The decision whom to offer these grants is done by the IMPRS board.

IMPRS-HD may grant **travel support** for IMPRS students. Application for travel support is by sending the IMPRS travel application form to the coordination office, stating the reasons for the travel, a financial plan for the trip, and providing the signature of the supervisor (2 months in advance of the trip).

IMPRS-HD does not finance hardware, software, or observation runs.

5) **IMPRS organization**

Four astronomy-related [institutions collaborate](#) to form the IMPRS-HD: the MPI for Astronomy (MPIA), the MPI for Nuclear Physics (MPIK), the Center for Astronomy of Heidelberg University (ZAH; consisting of the Astronomisches Rechen-Institut (ARI), the Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics (ITA), the Landessternwarte Königstuhl (LSW)), and the Heidelberg Institute for Theoretical Studies (HITS).

IMPRS-HD is represented by two [spokespersons - one for the Max Planck Institutes and one for the University institutes](#).

Students of each IMPRS generation elect their [student representative](#) every year.

IMPRS-HD decisions are made by the [IMPRS board](#).

6) **HGSFP membership**

IMPRS-HD is an independent part of the Heidelberg Graduate School for Physics ([HGSFP](#)).

Requirements in addition to the IMPRS requirements are defined by the HGSFP and the Department:

- All PhD students are required to take part in [teaching](#). The minimum teaching duty is **two semester units** (two "Deputate") during the PhD and will be checked before registration for the final examination. Additional participation in teaching can be required by the home institute of the student.
- Astronomy candidates must attend the [astronomy lab course](#).
- The HGSFP requires attendance of **16 SWS** (semester units, ~8 courses) during the PhD study (these could be seminars, lectures, seminars, lectures, schools etc.). This requirement is usually satisfied by attending the IMPRS curriculum. Proof for the 16 SWS of lecture attendance has to be provided by a signed informal letter when registering for the final PhD examination.