



The ISTScholar Selection Process: A Guide for Applicants



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1. Instructions

Page - Application information

ISTScholar is the PhD program of IST Austria. To apply you have to create an online account, which will allow you to track your application through its various stages.

You do not need to complete the application process in one session. You can return to your account and save your application as often as you like, up until you are ready to submit.

Step 1: Create an account

Register online by entering your e-mail and choosing a password. You will receive an e-mail with a link to finalize the registration of your user account immediately.

Step 2: Read the instructions

Read the instructions carefully to make sure you complete all steps and upload all necessary documents.

Step 3: Enter application data

There are five parts to your application. Make sure that you press "Save" each time before moving on to a different section! When you leave a page without having saved it, your data will be lost and you will have to re-enter it.

Step 4: Submit your application

Ensure that your application is complete and correct before submitting. Once you have submitted your application, you will not be able to make further changes. The submission deadline for applicants is January 8, 2018 11:59 PM CET. Referees need to submit their recommendations by January 15, 2018 11:59 PM CET. These deadlines are firm and extensions are not granted.

IST Austria will only process complete and submitted applications; all others will not be reviewed.

If your application is incomplete (e.g., sections left blank, documents and/or references missing, misspelled e-mail addresses of referees, and so on...), we will not contact you to inform you that it is incomplete.

Applicants should note IST Austria cannot answer telephoned queries. Please note that we receive a large number of applications and a high volume of applicant inquiries as the deadline approaches. We aim at answering all written inquiries within 24 hours during standard office hours (Mon – Fri 9 AM – 5 PM CET), but may take longer during peak times.

If there is an urgent matter regarding your application submission that is not addressed in the instructions, please contact our administrator at gradschool@ist.ac.at

Results will be available from mid-February onwards.



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Page - Personal data

Please enter information into all required fields. Required fields are highlighted.

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| First name | Date of birth (YYYY-MM-DD) |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Last name | Gender |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Address | Nationality |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Country | |
| <input type="text"/> | |
| Phone | |
| <input type="text"/> | |
| Mobile phone | |
| <input type="text"/> | |
| Homepage / online profile (URL) | |
| <input type="text"/> | |

Example: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/brucewayne>

IST Austria values diversity and is committed to equality. The Institute acts strongly to provide a place where everyone is treated equally and respectfully regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and physical ability.

Page - Education

Please enter your degree information here.

If the official title is different from Bachelor or Master please choose the best equivalent. Once a degree entry has been saved, it will appear on top of the page. You can modify the information by clicking the pen icon on the right hand side, or delete it by clicking the red **X** sign on the right.

If you have not been awarded your Bachelor's/Master's yet, please enter the expected graduation date in the corresponding fields. In case of admission you will need to finish your 1st degree before September. You will be asked to upload copies of your certificates and transcripts in the Section "Application Data".

All documents need to be submitted in English. All diplomas and transcripts need to be submitted in their original language as well as in English. An official translation is not required at this point.

Grading system:

If grades range from 1 to 10, with 10 being the best then enter 10 for 'Highest possible grade'. If the grading system is in a letter grading (e.g. A – F), transform it into a number grading (e.g. 1 – 6). Do the same for grades given in % (e.g. 100% = 100 = highest possible grade, if the average grade is 78% = 78).

| | |
|--|---|
| Degree <input type="text" value="Bachelor (or equivalent)"/> | Your average grade <input type="text"/> |
| Field of study <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade has not yet been awarded |
| Institution <input type="text"/> | Highest possible grade for this degree <input type="text"/> |
| Main website of the institution <input type="text"/> | For example, if grades range from 1 to 10, with 10 being the best, then enter 10 here. |
| Department <input type="text"/> | Lowest passing grade for this degree <input type="text"/> |
| City <input type="text"/> | For example, if grades range from 1 to 10, and with 5 you pass the degree, but with 4.9 you don't, then enter 5 here. |
| Country <input type="text"/> | |
| (Expected) Year of graduation <input type="text"/> | |
| (Expected) Month of graduation <input type="text"/> | |

Page - Application data

Choose **up to three areas** that represent your current research interests. You can either choose a broad area, such as Biology or Computer Science, or a more specific area, such as Biology: Cell and Developmental Biology. The maximum number of areas you can select is three.

Your selection of areas is not binding. IST Austria offers a single interdisciplinary PhD program. Once admitted to the program, you can explore different areas of research.

Areas of Interest

Please rank your interests by arranging your selection from top to bottom by dragging your top choice to the top. You can pick either broad areas (e.g. Biology) or specialized ones (e.g. Biology – Biophysics). Keep in mind that your application will be reviewed by members of the selection committee who have a corresponding background.

Computer Science

Computer Science—Algorithms and Complexity Theory

Computer Science—Cryptography and Security

Computer Science—Formal Methods and Programming Languages

Computer Science—Software, Distributed, and Embedded Systems

Computer Science—Machine Learning and Computer Vision

Computer Science—Scientific Computing and Computer Graphics

Mathematics

Mathematics—Analysis

Mathematics—Geometry/Topology

Mathematics—Mathematical Physics

Mathematics—Probability

Mathematics—Mathematical Biology

Data Science

Biology

Biology—Biochemistry

Biology—Biophysics

Biology—Cell and Developmental Biology

Biology—Evolutionary Biology

Biology—Genetics and Genomics

Biology—Quantitative Biology

Biology—Structural Biology

Biology—Systems Biology

Neuroscience

Neuroscience—Cellular Neuroscience

Neuroscience—Developmental Neuroscience

Neuroscience—Molecular Neuroscience

Neuroscience—Structural Neuroscience

Neuroscience—Systems Neuroscience

Neuroscience—Theoretical/Computational Neuroscience

Physics

Physics—Atomic, Molecular, and Optical Physics

Physics—Biophysics

Physics—Fluid Dynamics/Turbulence

Physics—Mathematical Physics

Physics—Material Science

Physics—Nanotechnology

Physics—Quantum Physics

Physics—Solid State Physics

Attachments

Please upload all relevant documents in English and as **unencrypted, password-free PDF files**. Other file formats are not supported. If a document consists of more than one page, please combine these pages into a single PDF document. If you do not have a pdf converter installed on your computer, please use any online PDF converter (for example the free online2pdf.com)

Mandatory uploads are a curriculum vitae, and a statement of purpose that explains your research experience and your motivation for applying to ISTScholar. 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.

Please upload university transcripts for any degree program you have attended and/or are currently enrolled in. If you have completed a degree please upload the final transcript and diploma/certificate. All diplomas and transcripts need to be submitted in their original language as well as in English. **We will not process applications that do not include transcripts.** A language certificate (TOEFL/IELTS, GRE) is helpful but not mandatory. The IST Austria TOEFL code is 6384.

Curriculum vitae

No file selected.

✔ 535026a.pdf

✔ 535026a.pdf 

Statement of purpose

No file selected.

✔ 535026a.pdf

✔ 535026a.pdf 

Bachelor certificate

No file selected.

Bachelor grades

No file selected.

Master certificate

No file selected.

Master grades

No file selected.

Language certificate

No file selected.

Other

No file selected.

Page - Additional information

In this section you can give us additional information that may strengthen your application e.g. about lab experience you might have or internships you did. Please note that this is mostly voluntary information. Your application will be considered complete if the optional fields are left blank. All applications will be reviewed in the same rigorous manner. Your answer in the residency question will not affect your application in any way.

Where did you learn about ISTScholar?

Have you resided in Austria for more than 12 months (cumulative) since January 1, 2015?

Have you done an internship at IST?

Have you done any other internships?

If yes, please describe it in 1-2 lines

Do you have any laboratory experience outside course work?

If yes, please describe it in 1-2 lines

Have you participated in any science olympiads in any of the fields below?

- Biology Chemistry Computer Science Mathematics
 Physics Other

If yes, please describe it in 1-2 lines

Have you won any awards?

- for your bachelor's thesis for your master's thesis
 for a publication for other academic achievements

If yes, please describe it in 1-2 lines

If you have any publications, please specify URLs (DOIs preferred)


Page - References

Enter the names and e-mail addresses of 3 referees who have taught you or supervised your work and are therefore able to evaluate your academic and research performance. We will accept up to one letter from a non-academic work environment. They will receive an e-mail directly from us (gradschool@ist.ac.at) with the subject "Request for Letter of Recommendation – IST Austria" with a link to an online platform. Make sure that the e-mail address is still valid and the spelling is correct.

We will **not** contact you should we receive bounce backs from e-mail addresses

E-mails can get lost in personal or institutional spam folders or may be blocked by institutional fire walls. Therefore make sure that your referees have approved the e-mail address gradschool@ist.ac.at **before** sending the request.

Enter all e-mail addresses manually, do not copy/paste them from a website as it may be encoded to protect it from spambots trying to extract addresses from websites. Again, double check the spelling! We will not contact you should we receive bounce backs from e-mail addresses.

Use the send recommendation option  to send the request to the referees immediately while still working on your application. Otherwise the request will only be sent after you have submitted your application.

Please note that we are unable to process your application without three letters of recommendation. These letters are an integral part of your application, and it is your responsibility to ensure that all letters of reference are submitted by **January 15, 2018 11:59 PM CET**. You can track the status of the letters to see whether the letters have arrived. Please make sure to remind your referees in a timely manner. The deadline is firm and we do not grant extensions.


| Name | Institution | |
|--|---|---|
| Tre'gok Olahg Contacted at 2016-10-13 09:13 | Starfleet Academy, United States of America |    |
| Tel'peh Kaas | Starfleet Academy, United States of America |    |
| Uldir Haruhana <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coruscan University, Belize |    |

You can log-in to the application and check the Referee Status page to see the status of each reference letter (created – requested – received). You will **not** receive a separate notification from us once letters have been submitted.

Submit application

Submit your application. Applications that are not submitted will **not** be reviewed. The tool will not allow you to submit your application in case you have not filled-in certain required fields. Fields that require input from you will be listed here.

Keep in mind that a complete application also includes transcripts and degree diplomas!

 Please correct the following errors

- **First name** Cannot be left blank
- **Last name** Cannot be left blank
- **Address** Cannot be left blank
- **Where did you learn about ISTScholar?** Cannot be left blank
- **Country** Cannot be left blank
- **Date of birth (YYYY-MM-DD)** Cannot be left blank
- **Date of birth (YYYY-MM-DD)** Invalid date
- You didn't upload a CV
- You didn't upload a statement of purpose
- You have to specify at least 3 referees
- You have to enter at least a Bachelor or Master degree
- You need to specify at least one area of interest

Page - Referee status

This is a list of your referees and the status of your reference letter. There are 3 possible statuses:

Created

You have entered the referee and their e-mail address but have not requested the reference yet, i.e. the referee has not yet received an e-mail from us yet. If you do not explicitly request the letter, then the e-mail will only be sent after you have submitted your application.

Requested

The e-mail to the referee has been sent, but the referee has not answered the request yet.

Received

The letter of recommendation has been submitted and received.

Referee status

This is a list of your referees and the status of your reference letter.

| Title | First name | Last name | Email | Status |
|-------|------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| | Tre'gok | Olahg | olagh@starfleet.org | requested |
| | Tel'peh | Kaas | kaas@starfleet.org | created |
| | Uldir | Haruhana | gradschool@ist.ac.at | received |



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2. Selection committee

The selection committee consist of the entire faculty of IST Austria.

3. Overview of the evaluation and selection process

3.1 Online application tool

IST Austria accepts applications only via its own online application platform available during the application period (Mid-October – January 8).

The deadline to submit the application is January 8; referees have until January 15 to submit their letters of recommendations. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all documents are received on time. Extensions to submitted documents late are not granted. IST Austria will only process complete and submitted applications; all others will not be reviewed.

The application consists of a 5 step process where applicants have to provide (a) contact information, (b) information on the educational background, (c) upload a CV, statement of purpose, university transcripts and diplomas in their original language as well as in English, (d) provide background on the grading scheme of their country, (e) information on internships and/or other relevant activities, and (f) contact details of 3 referees from an academic setting willing to provide them with letters of recommendations.

Referees are contacted automatically via the platform and provided a unique link to the platform through which they are able to provide feedback about the applicant using a standardized questionnaire.

For details please consult the Instructions for applicants.

3.2 Mode of evaluation:

The formal and first scientific evaluation is undertaken online, with a meeting of the experts deciding on who is to be invited for interviews in early/mid-February. Results will be available shortly thereafter.

3.3 Formal checks

The program management reviews all submitted applications on formal grounds. Applications that are started but not submitted are not considered. Applications that appear to be for areas not represented at IST Austria are marked as such and forwarded the six track representatives of each tracks who review these applications and either approve the evaluation or put them back into the applicant tool. Applications that are missing the required documents or are missing the necessary number of reference letters are marked as incomplete and are no longer considered in the selection process.

3.4 1st level evaluation: review of applications

All complete applications are forwarded to three different professors at IST Austria, for scientific review and evaluation. Every application is to be reviewed independent of their eligibility for ISTScholar.

The assignment is based on these criteria in descending order (1) name of a professor mentioned in the statement of purpose; (2) based on the research interests indicated in the application; every professor is matched with up to three research interests, if the research interests match, then the application is assigned to the professor; (3) spread of the work load among professors; if the applicant indicated only very general research interests, then the work load of each professor is taken into account as well. All experts have the opportunity to add one or more experts to the application if they deemed necessary.

Scientific promise

The bundle of indicators is used to evaluate the candidate regarding the applicant's preparedness, motivation, and potential. The following will be considered:

- a. undergraduate performance
overall, with a special focus on relevant field specific courses
- b. reference letters provided by professors and senior scientists
Letters from industry are acceptable, but letters from an academic background should be given priority; referees are asked to address analytical capabilities, technical proficiency, ability to work independently and motivation/commitment
- c. statement of purpose
past research experience and motivation for applying to this particular PhD program, is it a good academic fit, does the program contribute to the candidates future career plans, etc.
- d. additional relevant skills (field specific)
E.g. demonstrated in internships and/or participation in research projects, participation in science Olympiads, programming languages, lab techniques, etc.

Background

- a. quality of the undergraduate background, i.e. quality of the institution attended
- b. transferable skills
E.g. communication skills, experience with working in teams, previous motilities and international experiences, leadership experience as demonstrated in student organizations etc.
- c. diversity
E.g. a women in computer science/math/physics; an applicant who switched fields; etc.

3.5 Request for redress

The review committee consists of the Dean and the program chair. Applicants who receive a rejection letter after the 1st round of review are given the option to submit a request for redress on the grounds of procedural shortcomings by February 15, 2018. The deadline is chosen in such a way that candidates could have still been invited for interviews should the review committee deem appropriate. Requests for redress received after the deadline are not considered.

3.6 2nd level of evaluation: interviews

Semifinalists will be invited to IST Austria for a second round with interviews and a campus visit. We will cover the travel costs, provide semifinalists with an invitation letter should they need a visa, and on-site accommodation. Interviews take place in mid-March. Early interviews make take place if the student requests it (e.g. if under time pressure from another institution). Invited candidates are

asked to provide the names of up to 5 professors who they are interested in talking to. The final interview assignment will balance the wishes of the students, wishes of professors, and overall time constraints. The assignment is done in such a way that students are given at least their two top choices. Candidates have the option to arrange meetings additional professors if their time permits.

The final selection committee takes place in the week after the interviews and admission offer will go our shortly thereafter. The deadline to accept or decline an offer is April 15.