

Report from the Board of Directors meeting 04.II.2014

Main topics of interests for the students

1. General communications
2. Kindergarten contribution
3. PhD courses 2014-15 Announcement
4. Pre- and post-degree fellowships 2014
5. Rent contribution. Clarifications.
6. Modification of research fellowships rules ('short post-docs')
7. Enrollment to NHS for EU citizens (phd students and postdocs)

1. General communications

The total funding from the Ministry to SISSA for 2013 has been computed and communicated. We got ca.340k euros less than last year, we had forecast 1M. Moreover, we got ca. 300k euros more than expected (and computed) for PhD fellowships.

2. Kindergarten contribution

SISSA has been offering a contribution to the monthly fee for the employees, researchers and students with kids at the kindergarten “La SISSA dei piccoli”. In order to compute the amount of the contribution with respect to the income we had met several troubles last year, because all the income of postdocs and students cannot be considered for a 'normal' ISEE – as well as the foreign income and properties, unless after a very complicated (and possibly expensive) process - which is the standard parameter for economic contributions in Italy, from the municipality, etc.

We set an agreement with the CNA CAAF (tax support centre) to provide a 'SISSA ISEE' (not standard, keeping into account not-taxable income as the fellowship and the foreign income and properties without too much red tape) for 20€+VAT for people willing to apply for the contribution, whose amount will start from 480€/month.

3. PhD courses 2014-15. Announcement

After the relatively scarce number of applications of the last year, mainly in Mathematics and for some courses of Physics, the official announcement of the PhD courses has been changed. The number of positions available, the date and procedure of the exams are reported in the table shown below.

PhD Courses	2013-14	2014-15	Exam date	Exam mode
<i>MAMA</i>	7/8	8	11-12.09	Q+W+O
<i>AP</i>	5/5	5	16-17.04 18-19.09	Q+O
<i>SBP</i>	5/5	5	23.06 23.09	Q+W+O
<i>APP</i>	4/4	4	8-9.07	Q+W+O
<i>MP-GEO</i>	2/4+3/4	8	10-11.09	Q+W+O
<i>SP</i>	2/5	5	9-15.04 3-9.09	Q+O(skype)
<i>TPP</i>	5/5	5	10-11.07	Q+W+O

SFG	4/7	7	29-30.09	Q+W+O
NB	7/7	8	29-30.09	Q+O
CNS	6/6	7	23-24.04 29-30.09	Q+W+O
CM	3/6	5	5-9.05 24-30.09	Q+O(skype)

Legend: MAMA Mathematical Analysis, Modelling and Application, AP Astrophysics, SBP Physics and Chemistry of Biological Systems, APP Astroparticle physics, MP-GEO Mathematical Physics and Geometry, SP Statistical Physics, TPP Theoretical Particle Physics, SFG Functional and Structural Genomics, NB Neurobiology, CNS Cognitive Neuroscience, CM Theory and Simulation of Condensed Matter; Q Qualifications, W Written test, O Oral test, in bold the threshold.

Moreover, all but SP and CM are going to activate the preselection of extra-EU candidates **for Qualifications only** in late spring (deadline for applications, March 31st).

Finally, some positions for the joint ICTP-SISSA joint PhD program in Maths and Physics have been (as usual) opened: 2 for either MAMA or MP-GEO, 1 for either AP or APP, 1 for, respectively, SBP, SP, CM and TPP.

4. Pre- and post-degree fellowships

The former are the ones usually granted to students coming to SISSA to prepare their master degree thesis ('borse di addestramento alla ricerca') and consist of 500€/month. The latter are usually granted to people coming to SISSA in order to prepare their PhD exam or to carry out short research in the several groups. About the latter ones, a new regulation is on the way to increase the effectiveness about people coming from abroad to take the exams: more detail after the approval. The total amount of positions is in the table shown below.

PhD courses	Pre-degree		Post-degree	
	2013	2014	2013	2014
AP	0/2	2	4/8	9
SBP	3/12	11	2/8	4,5
APP	6/6	6	1/8	8
Mathematics	4/6	6	11/12	12
SP	15/15	3	2/8	2,5
SFG	6/6 + 5 from CM	18	23,5/24	24
NB	10/10	12	24/24	30
CNS	7,5/8	18	16/16	24
TPP	0	0	12/12	10,5
CM	1/12 (5 to SFG)	12	0/8	8
Total	57,5/77	88	93,5/120	132,5

5. Rent contribution. Clarifications

It has been restated that the rent contribution of 100€/month is granted to people with domicile in provincia di Trieste, unless (there have been a couple of exceptions in the last years) they are requested to live somewhere else because of research reasons.

6. Modification of research fellowships rules

After pointing out that the current age limit to access this kind of fellowships (meant to ensure the completion of the research project after the defense, if needed and in a sensibly short time) was 33

years old for people with a degree in Medicine and 30 for everyone else, it has been repeatedly pointed out the unfairness of this kind of threshold, since students are enrolled to PhD courses at different ages, and the age at the end of the program is not a viable benchmark.

In order to comply with the spirit of the fellowships (completing the research in order to have a valid publication and being able to get a postdoc, not 'being more-than-a-student-but-less-than-a-proper-postdoc') and to ensure equal opportunity to the students regardless their age at the beginning of the PhD program, the age limit has been erased. In addition, the fellowship must start before the three months following the defense, in order to guarantee the continuity of the research project.

7. Enrollment to NHS for EU citizens

Last year the problem of EU citizens (PhD students and postdocs) not enjoying an Health Insurance broke out. The reason of this fact was a new agreement between the central government and the regional ones about Health Service (which in principle now should be called Regional and not National Health Service); in fact, according to EU rules a citizen should be enrolled either to his origin NHS or to the one of the country he pays the taxes in, but the income from PhD and Research fellowships (Assegni di Ricerca) is not taxable in Italy. That meant for European postdocs and students no more enrolled (each country has different rules about this) to their home health service there were not Health Insurance of any kind, as opposite as it used to be equating EU to not-EU students or postdocs.

We raised the problem, after months of stand-by, with the Minister of Immigration when she came to SISSA last summer, and a number of 'technical tables' among ministries has been established and it is working on the issue. In the meantime, after some unfruitful attempts with private insurances, we have 'forced' RHS to let EU students and postdocs enroll to the system. The quota for the students is the same for not-EU ones (149.77€), while the one for the postdocs must be computed as the 7.5% of the salary up to 20 658.29€ and of 4% on the remaining part. The school will pay up to 2/3 of this amount (up to 1115€) for all the postdocs who will enroll to the RHS. If (despite not advisable) the postdocs decide to pay for a private health insurance, SISSA will pay anyhow up to the 2/3 of the amount or 1115€.