



Who wants to be rep?

Have you ever thought about being a **representative** in the School bodies? Do you want to work to **make SISSA a better place**? Would you like to learn more about how the **University system** works? Do you think you can make a good **point of reference for your fellows** during your PhD or Post-doc life? Are you interested in learning **skills** such as cooperation, negotiation, interaction, public speaking, and how to relate with administrative tasks?

In this pamphlet you will find **all the relevant info** you need to join the group of Students' representatives in SISSA and walk an extra mile in your academic experience! If you are interested, contact the current Students' representatives in the governing bodies (studentreps@sisssa.it) to ask any question.

Being a Student's representative

Who's a Students' representative?

Students' representatives (or “reps”, for short) constitute the joining link between the students and the School.

Being a rep means knowing your fellow PhD students and professors together with the way the School works, but most importantly it means *paying attention to the issues that your colleagues face in SISSA*, and be willing to discuss them with the other reps or professors, in order to find a solution. Every step made in this direction will not only help improving your PhD course and your fellow students' life during their time in SISSA, but above all it will make a positive contribution to the whole school, making it a better place for everybody.

Every rep must consider and *plan their action* in the best interest of the students whenever he/she is asked for help, and, in case the issue under consideration needs it, keep the highest *confidentiality*. Every rep will soon discover that this activity will teach him/her how to manage novel matters, different with the ones he/she is generally used to face while working on research. This will definitely improve his/her *communication and problem-solving skills*, and help him/her acquire new *abilities* useful for a future occupation.

Duties of a rep

Regarding the *time commitment* in being a rep, this usually depends on how each person shapes their effort; anyway, there are some general indications on how to do it, plus some duties that are required to every rep. At a minimum every rep should expect to spend at least *an hour every two weeks* on rep duties.

Among the required commitments, there are:

1. The monthly participation to the *Students' Council*, where reps share their work experience, discussing any problem arising in their PhD and how to deal with it, and, if appropriate, asking for support to the reps in the governing bodies (see below).
2. A *general PhD meeting* with all the students of the course every six months (and whenever it is necessary), where to report discussions from the Students' Council and other governing bodies, talk about the general state of things, and listen to suggestions regarding courses,

exams, activities, etc.

3. Meetings of the *Area Council* (and in some cases specific meetings for their PhD curriculum), where reps together with professors discuss and take decisions about the Area organization (budget, exams, etc.).

Among the recommended commitments, it is suggested to hold:

1. A *meeting after the election* with all the PhD students, to introduce themselves and gather some information about any ongoing issues.
2. A brief *meeting at the beginning of the academic year* with all the new PhD students, to give them an introduction to the life of the School, and answer any doubt they may have.

Near the end of the mandate, the rep is required to actively look for a *successor*, and to offer support during the initial weeks of the new term.

Guide to how the School works

Statute and PhD regulation

The *Statute*¹ is the document which regulates how the School is managed. In this document, all aspects of the School's administration are normed: for example, it states the duties of the different governing bodies (see below), what are the scientific Areas in which research is divided (Physics, Mathematics and Neuroscience), how these Areas and their PhD courses are organized, and other administrative issues.

The *PhD regulation*² deals instead with the teaching activities of PhD courses, together with admission, progress, graduation, suspension of the fellowship in case of illness/pregnancy, increase of the fellowship for missions abroad, and similar issues. Please note that the different PhD curricula might have their own additional rules about entrance exams and teaching.

1 http://www.adm.sissa.it/_media/documenti/nuovo_statuto.pdf (in Italian)

2 http://www.adm.sissa.it/_media/documenti/decreto_regolamento_phd_2013.pdf (in Italian)

Governing bodies

There are four main governing bodies in SISSA: the Senate, the Board of Directors (“Consiglio di Amministrazione” in Italian, or CdA), the School Council and the Evaluation Unit (“Nucleo di Valutazione” in Italian, or NUV).

1. The *Senate* is concerned with the general programming and coordination of the scientific and educational activities of the School. It is composed by the Director, the Coordinators of the three Areas, four Professors' representatives (two for Physics, one for Mathematics and one for Neuroscience), two Students' representatives and one Post-docs' representative.
2. The *Board of Directors* is mainly concerned with the financial administration of the School. It is composed by the Director, two Students' representatives, one member of the technical-administrative staff, and six other people, either internal or external to the School, with different specific expertise.
3. The *School Council* is composed by all Professors, some Students' and Post-docs' representatives, and some representatives of the technical-

administrative staff, and discusses the educational activities of the School. Each year, a *report* from the Students' Council on all matters concerning the students from the past year is discussed in a meeting of the School Council.

4. The *Evaluation Unit* verifies the efficiency of the teaching and research activities of the School, as a *super partes* body. It is composed by three external members and two internal ones, one of which is a Students' representative.

Another consulting body of the School is the *Students' Council*, which consists of all the Students' and Post-Docs' Representatives both in Area Councils and in the other governing bodies. The Students' Council is held monthly, and is a moment of discussion among all the reps to coordinate their action in the best interest of the students' community. A *President* and a *vice-President of the Students' Council* are elected by the Council itself: the President leads the discussion during the meetings, and presents the annual students' report in the School Council.

Administration

For most bureaucratic questions, you can turn to the Area Secretariat or the Students' Secretariat.

- The *Students' Secretariat*¹ is concerned with “general” problems, like enrollment to the School, housing, tax declaration, etc.
- The *Area Secretariat*² administrates all issues (missions, booking of lecture rooms, etc.) which concern your Area specifically (Physics, Mathematics, Neuroscience).

For more specific issues, related to your PhD or Area, the people in charge are the following:

- The *PhD Coordinator* (together with the Professors' Council) is in charge of all the administrative issues of your PhD course, like for example coordination of teaching activities, approval of plan of studies, qualifying/progress exams, approval of missions (when funded on the specific PhD course funds), etc.
- The *Area Coordinator* administrates your research Area as a whole. The Area Coordinators are Michele Fabrizio (fabrizio@sissa.it) for Physics, Ugo Bruzzo (bruzzo@sissa.it) for Mathematics, and Mathew Diamond (diamond@sissa.it) for Neuroscience.
- The *Director* has the power to decide on the most important issues. The

Director exerts functions regarding direction, initiative, promotion and coordination of the scientific and didactic activities of the School and is responsible for the accomplishment of the School's goals.

1 E-mail address: phd@sissa.it

2 http://wiki.sissa.it/students/index.php/SISSA_staff

Support to students on the workplace

To analyze and possibly resolve various problems that one may have with people in SISSA, the School has introduced several institutional roles.

- The *Ombudsperson*¹ is the person to go to whenever one encounters a problem with their advisor, on a scientific or personal level, e.g. inconclusive research project, hampering of one's personal approach to pursue their career, and so on.
- The *Confidential Consultant* ("Consulente di Fiducia" in Italian) deals with mobbing, discrimination on the workplace, or sexual harassment episodes.
- The *Committee for the Wellbeing*² ("Comitato Unico di Garanzia" in Italian, or CUG) proposes and verifies the results of positive actions for the realization of equal opportunities, and promotes improvement of the organizational wellbeing.
- The *Health and Safety Management*³ is in charge of issues like emergencies and buildings evacuation, as well as health security (for example in laboratories).

1 The two people filling this position are prof. Alessandro Laio (laio@sissa.it) and prof. Daniele Amati (amati@sissa.it).

2 E-mail address: cug@sissa.it; more info on the website <http://www.sissa.it/committee-wellbeing-cug>

3 E-mail address: safety@sissa.it; more info on the website <http://www.sissa.it/health-and-safety-management>

Financial subsidies to the students

SISSA contributes to the *expenses* of its students¹. In addition to the fellowship, you can get:

- a contribution for your *rent*²;

- a contribution if you buy a *laptop or tablet*³;
- a contribution towards *health care*⁴ expenses (especially dental care);
- “150 hours” *fellowships*⁵;
- a contribution for non-EU students to *travel back home*⁶.

An additional contribution is reserved to PhD students who get *pregnant* or who suffer *serious illness*: they can interrupt their activity and still get 70% of the fellowship, for a maximum period of 5 months. In this regard, the PhD regulation also allows to suspend the fellowship and “freeze” the PhD career for at most 12 months.

Moreover, SISSA helps the students to deal with the Italian bureaucracy, for example:

- to get your *permit of stay*⁷;
- to get your *health insurance*⁸.

As additional benefits, ERDISU/ARDISS⁹ (a regional institution for education) offers:

- a partial reimbursement on monthly/yearly subscription to the *bus service*;
- discounts on *meals* at SISSA cafeteria;
- *housing* in ERDISU/ARDISS-owned apartments.

1 <http://www.sissa.it/financial-support-phd-students>

2 http://wiki.sissa.it/students/index.php/Contribution_towards_living_expenses

3 http://wiki.sissa.it/students/index.php/Laptop_contribution

4 http://www.adm.sissa.it/_media/documenti/regolamento-assistenziale.pdf (in Italian)

5 http://wiki.sissa.it/students/index.php/150_hours

6 http://wiki.sissa.it/students/index.php/Travel_grant_contribution

7 http://wiki.sissa.it/students/index.php/Permit_of_stay

8 http://wiki.sissa.it/students/index.php/Health_insurance

9 <http://wiki.sissa.it/students/index.php/ERDISU>

Students' reps in the governing bodies

The duties of the *Students' and Post-docs' representatives in the governing bodies*¹ (Senate, Board of Directors, Evaluation Unit) are notably different from those of the Students' representatives in the Area Council. A special role is reserved also to the *President of the Students' Council*.

First of all, these reps are not responsible for just one PhD course or one Area, but represent *all the students and Post-docs* of SISSA in the bodies which have the highest influence on the School and decision-making power. As such, they operate in the interest of every member of the SISSA community, discussing and deciding on the most general issues, which have an impact on a large portion of the people working in SISSA.

These reps meet regularly with the Director and the Secretary General, to discuss on issues which involve the students directly. Moreover, they are also the link between the students' body and the administration, and are consulted for questions like promoting *social initiatives* – as the *Welcome Day* for the new students and the *students' summer party* – and appointing tender boards – for example to assign the 150 hours fellowships.

The *time commitment* of these reps is also proportionate to these greater responsibilities. Usually, meetings of the governing bodies are held once a month, and can last up to several hours. On top of that, they should discuss the “hottest” issues among themselves and with the other representatives in the Students' Council, to decide what is the position of the students' body on the question under examination.

The Students' representatives in the governing bodies will learn from this experience how to deal with delicate issues and to confront directly with the authorities of the School.

1 Email address: studentreps@sisssa.it

Elections

Students' reps

Every student in SISSA is eligible for being *elected* in both the *governing bodies* (Senate, Board of Directors, Evaluation Unit), and as a representative in his/her *Area Council*. Every student has the right to vote for their representatives in the aforementioned organs. The elections are valid only if at least 30% of the total number of students expresses its vote. Candidates are elected if they collect at least the 15% of the total number of votes. The mandate lasts for *two years* for all these roles.

The *Students' representatives in the School Council* can be elected by the Students' representatives in each Area Council. Each Area has to elect two Students' representatives for the School Council. Every student in the Area can be elected. The mandate lasts for *two years*.

Post-docs' reps

For the *Post-docs' representative in the Senate*, every Post-doc in SISSA has the right to vote; for the *Post-docs' representative in the Area Council*, only the ones affiliated to that Area can vote. The eligible candidates are Post-docs *paid entirely by SISSA* (the contracts must only be financed by SISSA and not other institutions, e.g. INFN, CNR, etc.) and which have *at least one solar year* of contract left at the date of elections. The mandate lasts for *one year*.

Submit your candidature

To present an *official candidature*, you must contact Antonella Derin¹ or check this web page²: in the appropriate section you will find the form to fill ("Modulo per la presentazione di candidature"). Usually candidatures can be presented up to 3-4 days before elections.

1 Email address: derin@sissa.it

2 <http://www.adm.sissa.it/elezioni/indice> (in Italian)

Students' Representatives in the governing bodies

Senate



Silvia Corsini

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Board of Directors



Matteo Casati

Area of Mathematics
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Cristiano De Nobili

Area of Physics
Theor. Particle Physics
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Massimo Lumaca

Area of Neuroscience
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Evaluation Unit



Eolo Di Casola

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Students' Council President



Claudia Mancuso

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Post-docs' Representatives



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SENATE

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Students' Representatives in the Area Councils

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Area of Physics



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Claudia Mancuso

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Students' Representatives in the School Council

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