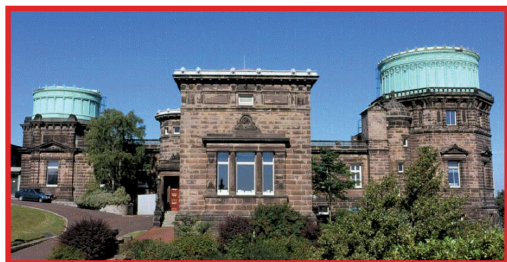


## Postgraduate study at the IfA

At any one time, there are about 25 PhD students studying at the Institute for Astronomy (IfA). The PhD degree typically takes three and a half years, and involves research over a very broad range of topics. A unique aspect of astronomy in Edinburgh is the co-location of the IfA with the UK Astronomy Technology Centre, and so there is the option for joint PhDs that involve state-of-the-art instrumentation.



The 3.5-year British PhD is rapid by comparison with programmes in many other countries. Therefore, the focus at Edinburgh is very much on undertaking thesis-related research from the outset. This proceeds in parallel with more formal education in background knowledge and transferable skills.

In the first year, there is a reading group that covers the basics of astrophysics in a series of tutorial sessions. Also during this year, students take a variety of advanced undergraduate courses in physics and astrophysics, as advised by their supervisor. In the second year, students present a pedagogical seminar in which a restricted topic of interest is given at the advanced undergraduate level and in the third year a full research seminar.

### PhD Projects

In order to start the research process efficiently, we attempt to match students and supervisors in advance. Generally, our PhD offers are associated with a particular project and supervisor. This is a commitment only on our part, however. A student

coming for a PhD here will be guaranteed a project that they believe they will find interesting - but if a student's interests change, it is easy to consider alternative projects.

There is a list of PhD projects that were available in previous years on our website. These should help give a fuller idea of what is involved in typical PhD projects at Edinburgh.

### The Application Process

Applications for admission to PhD studies at the IfA may be sent at any time but the normal application period is December to January, with interviews in February and March, for entry in September. All our grants for PhD studies will normally be allocated by early April, although applicants with their own funding can be accepted much later than this.

The majority of our PhD places are funded by STFC, who impose certain eligibility requirements. These are listed on the STFC website: [www.stfc.ac.uk](http://www.stfc.ac.uk). Applicants that are ineligible for STFC funding may seek funding from other sources, but should note that the University of Edinburgh imposes higher fees for some categories of overseas students, as do most UK universities. All students may apply for SUPA prize studentships ([http://www.supa.ac.uk/pg\\_applications](http://www.supa.ac.uk/pg_applications)).

### Application Forms

A link is available on our website

which will give you a web form that supplies the IfA with the relevant information in direct electronic format. The form requests names and addresses of two academic referees; please ask them to send letters of recommendation (in written or email form) to the address below at the same time as you apply.

Elsewhere in the University's web pages, you may encounter a general postgraduate application form, but there is no need to fill this in.

### The University of Edinburgh

The IfA is part of the School of Physics which in turn is part of the College of Science and Engineering. The University's postgraduate prospectus is available electronically in a variety of formats from the University website: [www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/](http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/)

### For further information about applying for a PhD place at the IfA please contact

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