2021 call for PhD students

Selection process and application portal:

a guide for applicants

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

2. Overview of the evaluation and selection process

2.1 Online application tool

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

Documents submitted via any other channels will not be considered.

The **deadline to submit the application** is **January 8, 2021 (11:59PM CET**); **referees** have until **January 11, 2021 (11:59PM CET)** to submit their letters of recommendations.

The deadline to change the details of your referee is January 8, 2021 (11:59PM CET). Requests received later will no longer be considered.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all documents are received on time. Requests to submit documents late are not granted. IST Austria will only process complete and submitted applications; all others will not be reviewed.

All documents need to be submitted in English, additionally transcripts will also need to be submitted in their original language. Applicants are asked to submit the following:
   (a) contact information
   (b) indicate the names of professor they wish to work with
   (c) indicate their research interests
   (d) upload a CV, statement of purpose, university transcripts and diplomas in their original language as well as in English
   (e) information on the educational background
   (f) background on the grading scheme of country
   (g) information on internships and/or other relevant activities
   (h) contact details of 3 referees willing to send letters of recommendations

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

2.2 Completeness checks

The program management reviews all submitted applications on formal grounds. Applications that are started but not submitted are not considered. 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.

2.3 Mode of evaluation:

The formal and first scientific evaluation is based on the application materials, with a meeting of the experts deciding on who is to be invited for interviews in early February. Results will be available shortly thereafter (mid February).

The second scientific evaluation is conducted via interviews by 3-5 professors. Interviews may be done remotely or on-site. Results will be available after all interviews have formally concluded (mid to late March).

2.4 1st level evaluation: review of applications

All complete applications are forwarded to at least three different professors at IST Austria, for scientific review and evaluation.

The assignment is based on these criteria in descending order:
(1) name of a professor listed by the applicant
(2) based on the research interests indicated in the application; every professor is matched with a predefined list of research fields; 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. course performance
   overall, with a special focus on relevant field specific courses
b. reference letters provided by professors and scientists who have supervised the applicant in an academic setting
   one letter from non-academic work environment is accepted, 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)
   F.ex. 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
   F.ex. communication skills, experience with working in teams, previous motilities and international experiences, leadership experience as demonstrated in student organizations etc.

c. diversity
F.ex. a women in computer science/math/physics; an applicant who switched fields; etc.

2.5 2nd level of evaluation: interviews

Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed by IST professors (March). For 2021 we are investigating whether we will be able to invite candidates on campus, interview them remotely or a hybrid of both options.

If we are able to do on-site interviews, the dates are March 18-20 (Wed-Fri) 2021. In this case we will cover the travel costs, provide you with an invitation letter should you need a visa, and on-site accommodation for the visit.

Shortlisted candidates are asked to list 3 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.

Early interviews make take place if the student requests it (f.ex. if under time pressure from another institution).

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.

3. Instructions – Overview and Timeline

The application portal will be available in the application period only (2nd half of October to January 8). To apply to the PhD program of IST Austria 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.

We recommend using a desktop computer; performance on mobile devices such as tablets and mobile phones cannot be guaranteed.

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 confirm and 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" regularly before moving on to a different section.

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, 2021 11:59 PM CET**. Referees need to submit their **recommendations** by **January 11, 2021 11:59 PM CET**. The deadline **to change the details of your referee** is **January 8, 2021 11:59PM CET**. These deadlines are firm and extensions are not granted. Beware of the timezone!

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.

If there is an urgent matter regarding your application submission that is not addressed in the instructions or FAQ, please contact our administrator at **gradschool@ist.ac.at**
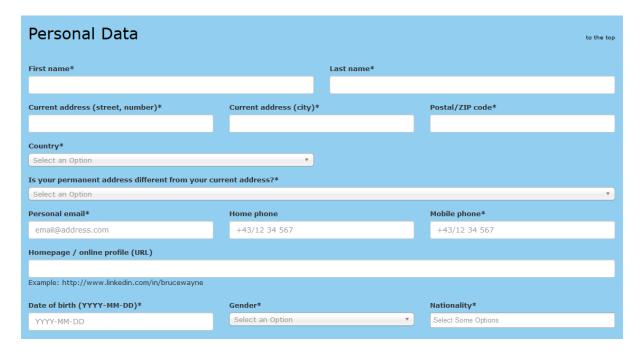
Applicants should note IST Austria cannot answer telephoned queries. Please note that we receive a large number of applications and a high volume of applicant inquiries as the deadline approaches. We aim at answering all written inquiries within 24 hours during standard office hours (Mon – Fri 9 AM – 5 PM CET), but may take longer during peak times. Requests submitted outside these times and

on the weekend (Sat and Sun) will be answered on the next working day. Keep in mind that December 24-26, Dec 31, Jan 1 and Jan 6 are public holidays in Austria.

Results of the first round will be available around mid-February; offers will go out after interviews in March. Deadline to accept or decline an offer is April 15. Start of the PhD program is September 15.

3.1   Personal data

Please enter data into all required fields. Required fields marked with an asterix (*).

Make sure that you follow the format when entering your data.

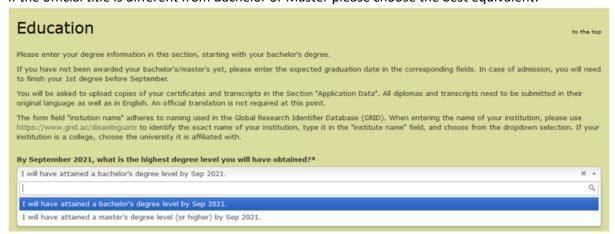Mobile phone: +43123456; make sure to include the country code.
Date of birth (YYYY-MM-DD): 1994-10-26. Any other formats such as 1994-Oct-26 or 26.19.1994 are not supported and will result in an error when trying to submit.

3.2   Education

Please enter data into all required fields. Required fields marked with an asterix (*).

Please enter your degree information in this section, starting with your bachelor's degree. The minimum formal entry requirement is a Bachelor degree. In case of admission, you will need to finish your 1st degree before September.

If the official title is different from Bachelor or Master please choose the best equivalent.

If you are still enrolled in your degree program and have not been awarded your bachelor's/master's yet, please enter the expected graduation date in the corresponding fields and indicate that the degree has not been awarded yet.

The form field " institution name" adheres to naming used in the Global Research Identifier Database (GRID). When entering the name of your institution, please use https://www.grid.ac/disambiguate to identify the exact name of your institution, type it in the "institute name" field, and choose from the dropdown selection. If your institution is a college, choose the university it is affiliated with.

Bachelor's (or equivalent) degree

Bachelor's field of study*

Bachelor's department*

Bachelor's institution name (please type part of name and choose from dropdown selection)*

If your institution is a college, please choose the university it is affiliated with.

Bachelor's institution website*

http://ist.ac.at

City

Country*

Select an Option ▼

Degree start date (YYYY-MM)*

YYYY-MM

(Expected) year & month of graduation (YYYY-MM)*

YYYY-MM

Highest possible grade for this degree*

10.0

For example, if grades range from 1 to 10, with 10 being the best, then enter 10.0 here. Include at least one decimal place.

If the grading uses letters, please use the numerical equivalent. E.g. for a grading scale from A-F, with A being the best, then the numerical equivalent scale would be 1-6, with 1 being the best: enter 1.0 here.

You can convert your grading system using the following site: https://www.scholaro.com/gpa-calculator/

Lowest passing grade for this degree*

10.0

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 5.0 here. Include at least one decimal place.

If the grading uses letters, please use the numerical equivalent. E.g. if D is the passing grade on a scale from A-F (converted to 1-6), then you would enter 4.0 here.

You can convert your grading system using the following site: https://www.scholaro.com/gpa-calculator/

Your average grade*

10.0

Please include at least one decimal place.

Final grade

☐ Final grade has not yet been awarded

By September 2021, what is the highest degree level you will have obtained?*

Indicating that you will have earned a **Master** degree will open up a second field dedicated to the Master program. You can add additional degree programs by answering the question: "Do you have any other degrees?" with "Yes".

If you are enrolled in a dual BS-MS program or a 5-year program finishing with a Master (or equivalent) degree, please use the same start and end dates for both the Bachelor and the Master program.

You can add **additional degree** programs by answering the question: "Do you have any other degrees?" with "Yes". This will open up a new section, addressing the same questions as for the Bachelor and Master degrees.

Do you have any other degrees?

Yes   ✕ ▾

Other Degree(s)

Please add your other degree(s) in this section. Click "add Other Degree(s)" below this box to add more degrees.

Degree type*

○ Bachelor's (or equivalent)   ○ Master's (or equivalent)   ○ PhD (or equivalent)   ○ Other

Field of study*   **Department***

Institution name (please type part of name and choose from dropdown selection)*

If your institution is a college, please choose the university it is affiliated with.

Make sure that you follow the format when entering your data.

Degree start date requires the following format: 2012-09
Any other formats such as 2012-Sep or Sept 2012 are not be supported.

Highest/lowest possible passing grade requires the following format: 5.0.
Enter at least one least one decimal place. Any other formats, letters or special characters such as 5, A, 5% etc. will not be supported. If your university uses the percentage system, indicate the percentage you obtained and which percentage is required to pass. Enter them in a number format only. If the grading uses letters, please use the numerical equivalent. E.g. for a grading scale from A-F, with A being the best, then the numerical equivalent scale would be 1-6, with 1 being the best: enter 1.0 here.

3.3 Application Data

Application Data

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Choose up to three areas that represent your current research interests, starting with the most relevant one (in decreasing order of relevance). 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". For more information on the research topics covered by our faculty, please consult: https://phd.ist.ac.at/all-research-groups/ (by subject area) or https://ist.ac.at/en/research/ (by group leader).

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.

Please rank your interests (top interest first) by choosing up to 3 research areas from the following list:*

Select Some Options

Please name 3-5 professors (in order of preference) whom you would like to interview with, should you be shortlisted for interviews. They should be in (or closest to) the area(s) of research you would like to pursue if you were admitted to IST Austria.*

Select Some Options

Please refer to the following page for an overview of groups: https://phd.ist.ac.at/all-research-groups/ (by subject area) or https://ist.ac.at/en/research/ (or by group leader). Please note that faculty that are not yet on campus are not listed on the website.

Choose 3 research areas you are interested in doing your PhD in and rank them. We recommend using subfields to ensure the best match between your application and the professors working in that field of interest.

The list indicates research areas represented by professors currently at IST. Keep in mind that you will need to find an academic home. If your primary interests are not listed here, then IST is not a good academic fit.

The following fields are available.

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

Chemistry: Inorganic Chemistry
Chemistry: Physical Chemistry

Computer Science: Algorithms and Complexity Theory
Computer Science: Cryptography and Security
Computer Science: Formal Methods and Programming Languages
Computer Science: Machine Learning and Computer Vision
Computer Science: Scientific Computing and Computer Graphics
Computer Science: Software, Distributed, and Embedded Systems

Data Science: Bioinformatics
Data Science: Modeling
Data Science: Numerical Simulation
Data Science: Statistics
Data Science: Topological Data Analysis

Mathematics: Algebra / Representation Theory
Mathematics: Analysis and Differential Equations
Mathematics: Discrete Mathematics
Mathematics: Geometry / Topology
Mathematics: Mathematical Biology
Mathematics: Mathematical Physics
Mathematics: Number Theory
Mathematics: Probability Theory

Neuroscience: Cellular Neuroscience
Neuroscience: Computational/Theoretical Neuroscience
Neuroscience: Developmental Neuroscience
Neuroscience: Molecular Neuroscience
Neuroscience: Structural Neuroscience
Neuroscience: Systems Neuroscience
Neuroscience: Translational Neuroscience
Physics: Atomic, Molecular and Optical Physics

Physics: Biophysics
Physics: Complex Systems
Physics: Fluid Dynamics / Turbulence
Physics: Material Science
Physics: Mathematical Physics
Physics: Nanotechnology
Physics: Optical Imaging
Physics: Quantum Physics
Physics: Soft Matter
Physics: Condensed Matter Physics
Physics: Statistical Physics
Physics: Numerical Simulation
Physics: Ultrafast Optics

Please name 3-5 professors (in order of preference) whom you would like to interview with, should you be shortlisted for interviews. They should be in (or closest to) the area(s) of research you would like to pursue if you were admitted to IST Austria. Keep in mind that you will need to find an academic home. If your primary interests are not listed here, then IST is not a good academic fit.

For an overview of groups consult: https://ist.ac.at/en/research/ (or by group leader) or https://phd.ist.ac.at/all-research-groups/ (by subject area). Please note that faculty that are not yet on campus may not be listed on the website.

3.4   Attachments

All documents must be submitted in English. All university diplomas and transcripts/scoresheets must be submitted in their original language and in English. An official translation is not required at this point.

All fields marked with an asterix (*) are required fields. You will not be able to submit your application should you fail to upload a CV, a statement of purpose, and at least your Bachelor or equivalent degree transcripts (as available at the time of application).

Language tests such as TOEFL, IELTS etc. are not mandatory. Include them only, if you have them readily available. The program language is English throughout. Therefore, proficiency in written and oral English is expected and essential. If invited for interviews we will evaluate your English skills in the interviews.

Curriculum vitae*
[Browse...] No file selected.

Statement of purpose*
[Browse...] No file selected.

Bachelor's certificate / diploma
[Browse...] No file selected.

Bachelor's grades / transcript*
[Browse...] No file selected.

Master's certificate / diploma
[Browse...] No file selected.

Master's grades / transcript
[Browse...] No file selected.

Language certificate
[Browse...] No file selected.

Other
[Browse...] No file selected.

Please upload all relevant documents in English and as **unencrypted, password-free PDF files.** Other file formats such as .doc, .jpg, .png etc. are not supported. The maximum size per file is **39MB**. If a document consists of more than one page (f.ex. transcripts), please combine these pages into a **single PDF document**. Make sure that the files **allow for document assembly**.

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**. If you have not completed your program yet, please use the transcripts/scoresheets that are currently available to you.
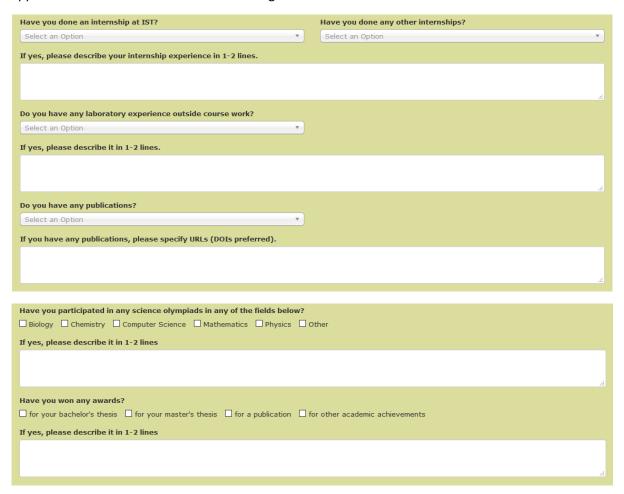
Please note, with regard to the information provided in your CVs:
We do not collect any special categories of personal data during the application process (in particular data revealing your racial or ethnic origin, political opinion, religious or philosophical beliefs or trade union membership, as well as health data or data on sex life or sexual orientation). If you

nevertheless provide us with information that contains special categories of personal data, this constitutes your explicit consent pursuant to Art 9 (2) point (a) GDPR that we may process this data.
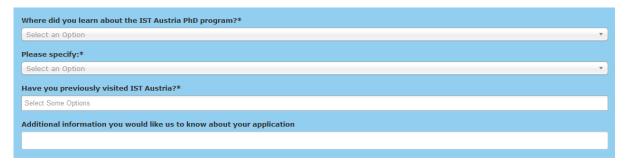
3.5   Internships, Awards, and Publications

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.

Have you done an internship at IST?

Select an Option ▾

Have you done any other internships?

Select an Option ▾

If yes, please describe your internship experience in 1-2 lines.

Do you have any laboratory experience outside course work?

Select an Option ▾

If yes, please describe it in 1-2 lines.

Do you have any publications?

Select an Option ▾

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

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

3.6   Additional information

All fields marked with an asterix (*) are required fields.

Where did you learn about the IST Austria PhD program?*

Select an Option ▾

Please specify:*

Select an Option ▾

Have you previously visited IST Austria?*

Select Some Options

Additional information you would like us to know about your application

3.7   Referees

Enter the contact details of 3 referees. Make sure that the e-mail addresses are
still **valid,** the **spelling** is correct, and that you there are **3 distinct email addresses** (i.e. duplicate
email addresses are not permitted). Institutional e-mail addresses are preferred.

1. Enter the details of referee
2. Click "add referee" to add fields for the next referee
3. Save the application form
4. Use the "contact referees" button to send the request immediately

Your referees will receive an e-mail directly from us with the subject "Request for Letter of
Recommendation – IST Austria" with a link to an online platform. The **deadline for the referees** to
submit their letter is **January 11, 2021 11:59PM CET**. Be mindful of the timezone your referees are
located in.

E-mails can get lost in personal or institutional spam folders or may be blocked by institutional
firewalls. Therefore, **make sure that your referees have approved** receiving emails from 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.

Save the application form, and make sure to click the "**contact referees**" button. Otherwise the
request will only be sent only after you have submitted your application.

You can send a **reminder** to your referee **once**. Do not send a reminder minutes or hours after the
first request. Allow your referee time to respond.

Once you have requested the reference letter, you will no longer be able to make any changes to the
referee. If you need to update the contact details of one of your referees, you will need to contact
gradschool@ist.ac.at and specify exactly which referee is affected and what fields need to be
updated. The deadline to request changes is January 8, 2021 (11.59 PM CET). Requests received later
will no longer be processed.

Title*

First name*

Last name*

Institution*

Email*

email@address.com

Country*

Status referees

You can log-in to the application and check the Referee Status page to see the status of each reference letter (created – requested – received).

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.

Reminded

A reminder 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. You will **not** receive a separate notification from us once letters have been submitted.

Referees

Title	First name	Last name	Institution	Country	Email		Status
Dr.	Fred	Fake sen.	University of Coruscant	Norway	@ist.ac.at	⇨	created
Dr	Fred	Fake Jr	University of Tatooine	Bolivia	@ist.ac.at		submitted
Dr	Fred	Fake	University of Tatooine	Argentina	@ist.ac.at	⇨	submitted

Choose your referees carefully: they should be someone who has taught you or supervised your academic and/or research work and are therefore able to evaluate your academic and research performance. These can be professors, assistant professors, postdocs or equivalent positions.

We recommend including the principal investigator(s) who supervised your thesis work.

We require that letters of recommendation are coming from the referee directly. These letters are confidential and you will not have access to them. Uploading a letter of recommendation by yourself will lead to an automatic disqualification and your application will no longer be considered.

You can request the reference letters before submitting your application form. Make sure to click the "**Contact referees" button** to send the request to the referees immediately while still working on your application. This allows your referees to have more time to work on the reference letters.
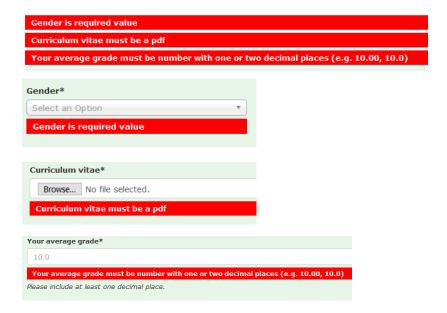
You can send a **reminder** to your referee **once!** Use this functionality carefully and allow your referee time to respond the request.

If you need to **change the contact details of your referees** (typo in the e-mail address, substituting a referee with a new one), you will need to contact gradschool@ist.ac.at. The deadline to make changes is January 8, 2021 23:59PM CET. Requests will be answered within standard office hours (Mon-Fri 9AM-5PM CET; requests received on Sat and Sun will be answered on the next working day).

3.8   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 the required fields. Fields that require input from you will be listed and relevant fields will be highlighted .

3.9   Status referees

You can log-in to the application and check the Referee Status page to see the status of each reference letter (created – requested – received).

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.

Reminded
A reminder 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. You will **not** receive a separate notification from us once letters have been submitted.

Referees

Title	First name	Last name	Institution	Country	Email		Status
Dr.	Fred	Fake sen.	University of Coruscant	Norway	@ist.ac.at		created
Dr	Fred	Fake Jr	University of Tatooine	Bolivia	@ist.ac.at		submitted
Dr	Fred	Fake	University of Tatooine	Argentina	@ist.ac.at		submitted