

International Centre for Fundamental Physics Master's Program

Academic Rules & Regulations

First Year

I. General Information

The first year of the ICFP Master's program provides a broad and rigorous introduction to fundamental physics, with a focus on statistical physics, quantum mechanics, and relativity.

- Academic Directors: Sylvain Nascimbene - École normale supérieure – PSL
- Programme type: Initial training
- Language of instruction: English

The academic year is divided into two semesters:

- Semester 1: Course activities — 30 ECTS
- Semester 2: Research internship in France or abroad — 30 ECTS

II. Admissions

Prerequisites

The ICFP program welcomes applications from highly qualified French and international students with a solid background in physics and mathematics, holding a Bachelor's degree or equivalent qualification. A good working ability in English is required. There is no French language requirement.

Selection Process

Admission is based on a review of the application file, followed by an interview.

III. Program Overview

Semester 1 — Courses (30 ECTS)

The first semester offers a broad range of lectures in modern physics, including fundamental interactions, biophysics, quantum mechanics, and condensed matter physics. Students freely choose courses from the ICFP course list according to their interests, accumulating 30 ECTS credits.

⚠ **With prior approval from the Academic Director, students may take up to 9 ECTS in courses outside the Master's curriculum. At least 18 ECTS must be validated from lecture-based courses of our program (counting excludes courses outside our program, library-based project and supervised research project).**

Semester 2 — Research Internship (30 ECTS)

The second semester is dedicated to a 6-month full-time research internship in any field of physics or its interfaces.

- International students: internship in France.
- French students: internship abroad.

IV. Examinations & Validation

Evaluation criteria and procedures are communicated no later than the first day of classes and are published on the program's website. Exams are scheduled by the Master's administration; students are notified by email. Unless otherwise stated, no documents or electronic devices are permitted during exams.

The ICFP Master uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

1. Semester and year Validation Rules

a) Automatic Validation

A semester is automatically validated when all module grades are equal to or above 10/20.

Each semester must be validated independently — the two semesters cannot compensate each other

b) Validation by Compensation

A student who does not reach 10/20 in all modules may still pass the semester if their overall weighted semester average is at least 10/20.

- Students may refuse grade compensation. This decision must be explicitly communicated to the program coordinators and the Master's administration within one week of receiving the official grades.
- If compensation is refused and several grades are below 10/20, all corresponding modules must be retaken.
- The grade obtained during the second session replaces the initial grade, even if it is lower.

⚠ *There is no eliminatory final grade. All modules contribute to the semester average.*

c) Semester Not Validated

If neither automatic validation nor compensation applies, the semester is not validated and the student is automatically enrolled in the second session (resit).

2. Resit Examinations

The resit rules depend on the reason why the student did not pass the initial exam.

Standard Resit (Semester Not Validated or Refusal of grade compensation)

- Students who do not validate a course are contacted directly by the examiner.
- Resit exams are scheduled at the end of each semester and may be organized under different conditions from the initial exam.
- The resit grade replaces the initial grade, even if it is lower.
- The grade is not capped.

Resit Following a Justified Absence

- The student must provide the required documentation within one week of the exam date.
- The student will be allowed to retake the missed exam at the earliest opportunity, before the first semester jury.
- The grade is not capped.

Resit Following an Unjustified Absence

If no valid documentation is provided, the absence is considered unjustified.

- The student must sit the second session examination, scheduled after the first semester jury.
- The semester will not be validated during the first session jury.
- The transcript of records will specify that the grade was obtained during the second session.

3. Absence from Examinations — Documentation Requirements

Any absence from an exam must be justified with appropriate documentation, submitted to:
enseignement@phys.ens.fr and to the relevant professor, no later than one week after the exam date.

Health-Related Absence

- Submit a signed and dated medical certificate from a doctor.
- The certificate must explicitly state that the student was unable to attend on the day of the exam.

Other Reasons (Bereavement, Force Majeure, etc.)

- Submit appropriate supporting documentation (death certificate, official notice, etc.).
- The same one-week deadline applies.

 *Incomplete or late documentation will result in the absence being treated as unjustified, triggering second-session examination.*