



# MSc Physics & Astronomy Newsletter

Second semester '25-'26

## Announcements

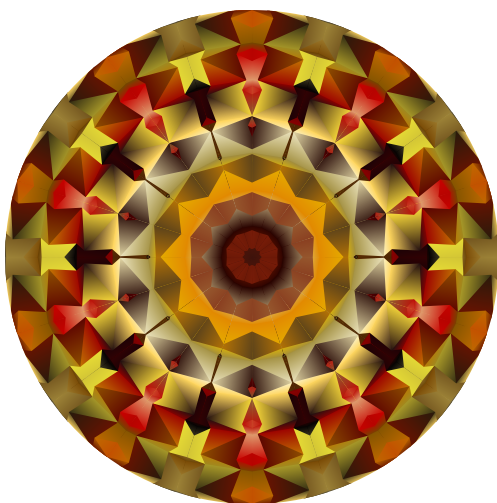
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### Student Numbers

The MSc programme Physics and Astronomy remains in excellent shape, despite a reduction in student numbers in The Netherlands in general. During the '24-'25 academic year, 165 students graduated. At the same time, we attracted 156 new students, who started in September 2025.

### New Courses

The start of the current academic year saw the introduction of several new courses, which will make the curriculum more flexible and better connected to both research projects and careers outside of academia.



### *Kaleidoscope*

The Kaleidoscope course is compulsory for all students in the MSc, and runs over two academic years. Besides consolidating existing and new programme-wide activities, it gives students the opportunity to learn about the activities of research groups at VU and UVA, as well as in the wider Amsterdam area. Weekly sessions include research seminars, project markets, career events, discussions of scientific integrity, diversity, and others, and talks from alumni as well as older students. The Student Response System (SRS) now forms part of Kaleidoscope, which helped to significantly boost response rates.

### *Capita Selecta*

Another new edition this year, is the possibility for lecturers to offer 3 EC modules as part of a Capita Selecta course. These modules are intended to cover advanced, research-related topics aimed at small groups students. They are ideally suited for example to offer specialised material which would not have sufficient uptake as a stand-alone elective course, or to bring a small group of students starting similar research projects up to speed in the early stages of the second year. For more information, or to offer a module of your own, please contact the [course coordinator](#).

### **Learning Trajectories**

This calendar year, we will make a start with the introduction of learning trajectories in the MSc programme, as planned in the MSc strategy that was formulated with support and contributions from many of you. This year, we will focus on identifying groups of courses that already function as learning trajectories, and on aligning their content and objectives. Next year, we will consolidate this approach, and also make the learning trajectories visible to students, to help them take a well-informed and consistent path through the curriculum from broad and general first-period courses toward specialised topics preparing for a research project.



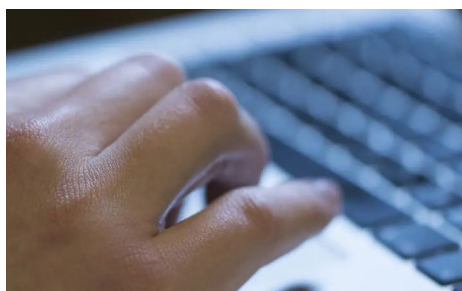
### **Open Days**

Two online events (UvA and VU) were held in November for interested prospective students. As in previous years, attendance and interest was good, especially from international students. On-site open days will take place in February and March.



## Education

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### Website

A new [Education Website](#) has recently been launched by the UvA Faculty of Science, bringing together all education-related information. It contains information about for example the Teaching and Examination Regulations, the Assessment policy, and Lecturer Compensation Model (DVM), as well as timetables, classrooms, Canvas, and more!

A new [Staff Website](#) is currently under development and expected to go live in 2026.

### Glass

Students register for courses through the university-wide Glass application, which contains information about all courses we offer. Each semester, there is one week in which Glass accepts registrations, an additional week that can be used for example by students who don't get placed in courses with restricted numbers during the first round, and a third week for late registration or students who change their minds.

Glass is also being rolled out this year to collect timetabling constraints from staff, as well as several more tasks behind the scenes.

### Research projects

As research projects for this year are well underway, please remember that students need to register their projects using the datanose form. This is essential for track coordinators and programme management to monitor progress, and should be done at the beginning of each project.

### Course checklist

The MSc Physics & Astronomy curriculum offers students a choice from almost a hundred different courses. Surveys consistently show our students appreciate this large variety of available topics to learn about, as well as the high quality of teaching that characterises our courses. To encourage a uniform application of these high teaching standards across all our courses, a short list of some [best practices](#) has been assembled.

We hope this will be a useful reference when preparing the next edition of your course, and an inspiration to share your own best practices with others!



## Programme management

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### Management Team

The beginning of this year saw several changes in the programme management team. Jasper van Wezel started as programme director, succeeding Ivo van Stokkum who led the programme through a doubling in size over the past eight years.

Several tracks also recently changed track coordinators, and the current line-up is:

<i>Andrea Baldi</i>	Advanced Matter and Energy Physics (AMEP)
<i>Nathalie Degenaar</i>	Astronomy & Astrophysics (A&A)
<i>Tina Pollmann</i>	Gavitation and AstroParticle Physics Amsterdam (GRAPPA)
<i>Imran Avci</i>	Biophysics and Biophotonics (BB)
<i>Raoul Frese</i>	Science of Energy and Sustainability (SfES)
<i>Jordy de Vries</i>	Theoretical Physics (TP)
<i>Ivo van Stokkum</i>	General Physics and Astronomy (GPA)

We are grateful to the outgoing track coordinators, Erik van Heumen, Phil Uttley, Shin'ichiro Ando, and Edan Lerner, for the great care they took of their tracks over the past years!

### Accreditation

Every five years, our educational programme is reviewed by an external committee, and our accreditation renewed. The regular moment for this was postponed from 2025 to 2028 as a result of the Covid pandemic. During the '24-'25 academic year we instead conducted a midterm review, which included meetings with an external assessor and the vice-chair of the programme committee. Based on this review, the NVAO has approved an extension of our accreditation until 2028.

