

PhD Students' Questionnaire 2023/2024

Dear respondent,

PER GLI STUDENTI DI 1°, 2° E 3° ANNO: We inform you that completion of the questionnaire is compulsory in order to finalise enrolment for the academic year 2024/2025.

PER GLI STUDENTI DI 4° ANNO: We inform you that completion of the questionnaire is compulsory in order to obtain your final examination certificate.

With this questionnaire, SISSA gives you the opportunity to provide your informed feedback on the quality of SISSA training and research activities. Your feedback is valuable to us to learn how we are doing and where and how we can improve to make living and working in SISSA better and better with time.

We fully trust your feedback, and for this reason your responses are collected and analysed in a completely anonymous manner. Specifically, the results are made available exclusively to the members of the Student-Professor Joint Committee and the Evaluation Committee in aggregate form by course year (separate questionnaire links for each yearly cohort) and PhD course, a procedure that rules out any possibility of cross-correlating answers.

The members of the mentioned committees are bound to confidentiality and provide the results of their analysis in the form of public reports. You can consult the latest reports at the following link [Documents | Scuola Internazionale Superiore di Studi Avanzati \(sisa.it\)](#). Examples of the salient actions that SISSA has taken on the basis of the reports are summarized [here](#).

Finally, kindly note that the Questionnaire refers to the latest completed academic year, i.e. 2023/2024.

Please note that you can save the form and resume it later.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Privacy Policy

This survey is addressed to the PhD Students and aims to collect anonymized feedback on the quality of SISSA training and research activities.

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, UE 2016/679, 27/04/16), we specify that: data are collected by means of the open-source software “Limesurvey” managed by SISSA, and they will be treated to ensure the privacy protection.

The questionnaire is anonymous, and the data are collected for legitimate purposes.

Y - The questionnaire is anonymous. The results will be made available in an aggregate form by course year and PhD course, thus without the possibility to correlate answers, exclusively to the members of the Student-Professor Joint Committee and the Evaluation Committee, who are bound to confidentiality.

I have read and understood

CONTINUE
DO NOT CONTINUE

Please note that, even if you choose the option “Do not continue”, the questionnaire is still considered valid and therefore completed.

Y1 - Would you like to share with us the reasons for opting out of the questionnaire?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was ‘do not continue’ at question ‘Y’ (The questionnaire is anonymous. The results will be made available in an aggregate form by course year and PhD course, thus without the possibility to correlate answers, exclusively to the members of the Student-Professor Joint Committee and the Evaluation Committee, who are bound to confidentiality. I have read and understood)

Please write your answer here:

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Basic information

Answering the following few questions will ensure that you will be presented only with relevant queries in the subsequent parts of the questionnaire.

A1 – Which Ph.D. course were you following latest academic year (2023/24)? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Mathematical Analysis, Modelling & Applications
Astroparticle Physics
Astrophysics and Cosmology
Cognitive Neuroscience
Functional and Structural Genomics
Geometry & Mathematical Physics
Neurobiology
Statistical Physics
Physics and Chemistry of Biological Systems
Theoretical Particle Physics
Theory and Numerical Simulation of Condensed Matter
Theoretical and Scientific Data Science

A2 - Year of course? (latest completed academic year 2023/24)* - SISSA database suggests that in the latest academic year 2023/24 you were enrolled in the first/second/third/fourth year.

Choose one of the following answers Please choose only one of the following:

1
2
3
4

A3 – Nationality? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Italian or EU country
Non EU country

General questions

B1 – What were your major problems when you arrived at SISSA? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was '1' at question 'A2' (Year of course? (Latest academic year 2023/24"))

Check all that apply.

Please choose **all** that apply:

Finding a permanent accommodation
Insufficient knowledge of English
Getting the permit of stay ("permesso di soggiorno")
Difficulty in establishing social contacts and interactions
Other:

B2 - Which of the following services are you actually aware about? *

Check all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

SISSA Statute and PhD rules
SISSA contributions (housing, laptop, etc.)
Housing Service
ARDISS card to get meal discounts and the process to obtain them (ISEE)
Psychological Assistance
Students@sisssa wiki
Students' representatives
SISSA Club Activities
CUS (Trieste university sport activities organizing committee)
Social welfare benefits regulation (health and medical expenses, Allowance for new mothers, SISSA Kindergarten ...)
CUG (Guarantee committee for equal opportunities, employee well-being and non-discrimination at work)
Ombudsperson
Valorisation & Innovation Office (formerly Technology Transfer Office)

Life at SISSA

We remind you that for any issue concerning your professional and personal wellbeing there is a network you can reach at SISSA.

A) The confidential counsellor (dr. Francesca Pidone, fpidone@sisssa.it.) who gives advise and assistance in case of discrimination harassment, dignity violation or mobbing,

B) The ombudspersons (Profs. Giovanni Noselli gnoselli@sissa.it, Giuseppe Santoro giuseppe.santoro@sissa.it, and Sergia Adamo adamo@units.it) who give advice for solving controversies within research group and/or with one's supervisor,

C) The psychological counselling service (dr. Erica Costantini and dr. Diletta Viezzoli sissacare@sissa.it) that provides support for personal, professional and psychological issues,

D) The wellbeing and equal opportunities committee (Comitato Unico di Garanzia – CUG - cug@sissa.it, <https://www.sissa.it/innovation/equal-opportunities-and-wellbeing>) that coordinates the activity of the wellbeing network and that is open to any request of help or suggestion on how to improve the school's quality of life.

All the above services are offered in both English and Italian, are confidential, informal and free of charge.

C1 - On average, how many hours per day do you work during the week? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

0-6
6-8
8-10
>10

C2 - On average, how many hours per day do you work during the week-end?*

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

0
1-4
4-8
>8

C3 - How would you judge the quality of teaching equipment in lecture rooms (e.g. projectors, etc...)? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Not at all satisfying
Rather unsatisfying, with room for improvement
Satisfying enough
Extremely satisfying

C4- How would you rate your wellbeing (e.g. being happy, healthy, motivated, comfortable) at SISSA?*

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Very poor
Poor
High
Very high

C4comment – Would you like to share with us the reasons for your answer?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'very poor' or 'poor' at question 'C4' (How would you rate your wellbeing (e.g. being happy, healthy, motivated, comfortable) at SISSA?)

Please write your answer here:

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C5 - While at SISSA, in the latest academic year have you ever felt discriminated based on your appearance, ethnicity, gender, religion?*

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No

C5comment - If answer is yes, could you provide details?

Please consider that, given the anonymous nature of the questionnaire, only general actions can be taken based on it. We remind you that in SISSA there is a number of figures that can help and counsel you about how to best deal with any specific and sensitive issue that you may have encountered. Depending on the specific problem, this could be: your supervisor, coordinator of your PhD program, CUG, confidential counsellor, ombudspersons, psychological counseling, all bound by confidentiality.

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'C5' (While at SISSA, have you ever felt discriminated based on your appearance, ethnicity, gender, religion?)

Please write your answer here:

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C6 - While at SISSA, in the latest academic year have you witnessed episodes of discrimination based on appearance, ethnicity, gender, religion?*

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No

C6comment - If answer is yes, could you provide details?

Please consider that, given the anonymous nature of the questionnaire, only general actions can be taken based on it. We remind you that in SISSA there is a number of figures that can help and counsel you about how to best deal with any specific and sensitive issue that you may have encountered. Depending on the specific problem, this could be: your supervisor, coordinator of your PhD program, CUG, confidential counsellor, ombudspersons, psychological counseling, all bound by confidentiality.

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'C6' (While at SISSA, in the latest academic year have you witnessed episodes of discrimination based on appearance, ethnicity, gender, religion?)

Please write your answer here:

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C7 - How would you judge the efficiency of the Psychological Support Service? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Not at all efficient
Rather inefficient, with room for improvement
Efficient enough
Extremely efficient
Not applicable

C7comment - Do you have comments or suggestions regarding on the Psychological Support Service

Please write your answer here:

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Students' Representatives

D1 - Which of the following activities of the students' representatives are you actually informed about? *

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Not at all informed	Somewhat informed	Informed enough	Extremely informed
Representation in your Area Council				
Representation in the Academic Senate				
Representation in the Administrative Council/Board of Directors				
Representation in the ARDISS Committee				
Representation in the Student-Professors Joint Committee ("commissione paritetica")				
Representation in the Evaluation Unit ("nucleo di Valutazione")				
Representation in the Guarantee Committee for equal opportunities, employee well-being and non-discrimination at work (CUG)				
Representation in the Quality Assurance Unit ("presidio di qualità")				

D1comment - You can make a free comment on the work done by the students' representatives if you want.

Please write your answer here:

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D2- How do you get informed about the activities of student representatives?*

Check all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

Word-of-mouth
Posters and flyers
Social media
Direct communication from the student representatives
Email
Telegram

Other:

Scientific environment

E1 - How well informed are you about the scientific activities of other groups in SISSA? *

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Not at all informed	Somewhat informed	Informed enough	Extremely informed
Other research groups in your Area				
Other research groups in other Areas				

E2- Do you think the SISSA colloquia offer adequate cross-disciplinary stimuli? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No
I don't have an opinion

E2comment - Why do you think so?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'No' or 'I don't have an opinion' at question 'E2' (Do you think the SISSA colloquia offer adequate cross-disciplinary stimuli?)

Please write your answer here:

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Teaching

F1 -Did you attend any course offered by your PhD program in the 2023/24 academic year? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No

F2 - What do you think of the average teaching quality of the courses that were organized for your PhD program? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'F1' (Did you attend any course offered by your PhD program in the 2023/24 academic year?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Extremely poor
Rather poor, with room for improvement
Good enough
Extremely good

F3 - How would you judge the logistics (e.g. timetable, number of lectures, number of courses, programs, didactic materials) of the courses organized in your PhD program? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'F1' (Did you attend any course offered by your PhD program in the 2023/24 academic year?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Extremely poor
Rather poor, with room for improvement
Good enough
Extremely good

F3comment - You can briefly comment on your answer to the previous two questions.

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'F1' (Did you attend any course offered by your PhD program in the 2023/24 academic year?)

Please write your answer here:

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F4 - Was the level of the exams appropriated to the level of the corresponding courses? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'F1' (Did you attend any course offered by your PhD program in the 2023/24 academic year?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Not at all
Rather inappropriate
Appropriate enough
Absolutely
Not applicable

F5 -Do you think the set of courses offered by your PhD course is adequately complete? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was '1' at question 'A2' (Year of course? (Latest academic year 2023/24))

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No

F5comment - If no, why?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'No' at question 'F5' (Do you think the set of courses offered by your PhD course is adequately complete?)

Please write your answer here:

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F6 - Have you attended courses that were organized by other SISSA PhD programs? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'F1' (Did you attend any course offered by your PhD program in the 2023/24 academic year?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

No
Yes just 1
Yes more than 1 less than 5
Yes 5 or more

F7 -Have you attended courses or seminars in other institutions outside of SISSA during the academic year 2023/24?*

Check all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

Yes, in another research institute in Trieste (e.g., ICTP, ICGEB)
Yes, at the University of Trieste
Yes, in an institute outside of Trieste
No

F8 -How helpful for strengthening your scientific background would you judge the courses you attended during your PhD career? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was greater than '2' at question 'A2' (Year of course? (Latest academic year 2023/24))

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Not at all helpful
Rather unhelpful
Helpful enough
Absolutely helpful

Seminars

G1 - Which activities do you think that are/have been/would be useful for your research activity: *

Check all that apply

Please choose **all** that apply:

Seminars
Schools
Group Meetings
Journal Clubs
Senior Students Tutorials
Other:

G2 - On average, how many seminars do you attend at SISSA per year? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

<5
6-10
11-20
>20

G3 -How many Conferences or Schools (not in Trieste) per year do you attend? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

0
1
2-3
4-5

>5

G3comment - Why do you attend only few Conferences?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was '0' or '1' at question 'G3' (How many Conferences or Schools (not in Trieste) per year do you attend?)

Please write your answer here:

G4- During your PhD, did SISSA student allowance grant you enough funds to attend Conference/School you were interested in outside Trieste? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No

Research

H1 - Did you participate in any Talent Valorization activity proposed by the Valorisation & Innovation Office (formerly Technology Transfer Office) such as Job Fairs, personal branding, application for job position, soft skills training, knowledge transfer seminars, etc. ? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No

H2 - How would you judge the efficacy of the activities carried out by the Valorisation & Innovation Office (formerly Technology Transfer Office) you have attended? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Not at all efficient
Not particularly efficacious, with room for improvement
Efficacious enough
Absolutely efficacious
Not applicable

H3 - Do you currently have a research project? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No

H3_1 - Is your main supervisor a researcher within SISSA or outside SISSA?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

A professor within SISSA
A professor outside SISSA

H4 - How did you choose your research project?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

It was suggested by my supervisor
It was suggested by my me
I did not choose my research project
We chose it together
Other

H4nocomment- If you didn't choose your project, why?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'I did not choose my research project' at question 'H4' (How did you choose your research project?)

Please write your answer here:

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H5 - Does the project you are working on reflect the quality expectations that you had when you entered SISSA? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Not at all
More no than yes
More yes than no
Absolutely

H6- Do you think you had adequate opportunities to become informed of the different research activities in your PhD program before choosing your research project? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Not at all
More no than yes
More yes than no
Absolutely
Not applicable

H7 - To what extent are you allowed to develop your personal ideas while carrying out your project? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Not at all

To a limited extent
Enough
Completely

H8 -Were you free to choose your supervisor? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No
My project is paid on external funds associated to a specific PI

H8nocomment - If no, why?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'No' at question 'H8' (Were you free to choose your supervisor?)

Please write your answer here:

H9 - Are you satisfied with the amount of time you spend with your supervisor? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Not at all
More no than yes
More yes than no
Absolutely

H10 - How would you judge the availability of your supervisor in helping you on your project? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Not at all available
Less available than what I would like
Available enough
Always available

H11- In case it was necessary for your research project, has your supervisor ever encouraged you to seek additional supervision from different mentors or collaborators? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No
I've never felt I needed additional mentors

H12- If yes, did they suggest someone? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H11' (In case it was necessary for your research project, has your supervisor ever encouraged you to seek additional supervision from different mentors or collaborators?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

No
Yes, a researcher within my research group
Yes, a researcher in my Area
Yes, a researcher outside SISSA
Other

H13- How would you rate the amount and the quality of feedback you receive from your supervisor on your work? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

I never receive feedback
I receive some feedback, but not enough
I receive enough feedback, but I would appreciate more
I regularly receive feedback

H14- To what extent does any of the following figures support you in your research activity? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Upon request, I received no support	Upon request, I received little support	Upon request, I received enough support	Upon request, I received full support	Never requested/Not applicable
My supervisor					
A senior researcher (post-doc)					
Other professors at SISSA					
Other professors outside of SISSA					
Technicians					
Other students					

H15- Regardless of who has been your main mentor, how would you rate the supervision on your research project? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Completely unsatisfactory
Rather unsatisfactory
Satisfactory enough
Completely satisfactory

H16comment- If you want you can briefly comment on your answer to the previous questions on the supervision you receive.

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'H3' (Do you currently have a research project?)

Please write your answer here:

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Lab facilities

I1- Are you involved in experimental activities (i.e. do you use lab equipment or lab facilities)? - Please do not consider computer laboratories *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No

I2- How would you rate the availability of laboratory resources necessary for your project (in terms of facilities, consumables and equipment)? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'I1' (Are you involved in experimental activities (i.e. do you use lab equipment or lab facilities)?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Completely unsatisfactory
Rather unsatisfactory
Satisfactory enough
Completely satisfactory

I3 - How well have you been trained for your lab activities? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'I1' (Are you involved in experimental activities (i.e. do you use lab equipment or lab facilities)?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Although needed, I received no training
Although needed, I received only some training
I received enough training, but I could have had more
I received all the necessary training

I4- How would you rate the support of the Neuroscience Area Technical Staff? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'I1' (Are you involved in experimental activities (i.e. do you use lab equipment or lab facilities)?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Completely unsatisfactory
Rather unsatisfactory
Satisfactory enough
Completely satisfactory
Not applicable

I4comment- Free comments about the support of the Neuroscience Area Technical Staff

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'I1' (Are you involved in experimental activities (i.e. do you use lab equipment or lab facilities)?)

Please write your answer here:

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Safety

L1- How would you rate the safety level in the lab environment? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'I1' (Are you involved in experimental activities (i.e. do you use lab equipment or lab facilities)?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Completely unsatisfactory
Rather unsatisfactory
Satisfactory enough
Completely satisfactory

L2 - You can give suggestions to improve safety conditions in the labs.

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'I1' (Are you involved in experimental activities (i.e. do you use lab equipment or lab facilities)?)

Please write your answer here:

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L3- How would you rate the safety conditions at SISSA in general? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Completely unsatisfactory
Rather unsatisfactory
Satisfactory enough
Completely satisfactory

L4comment- Feel free to give suggestion to improve safety conditions in SISSA.

Please write your answer here:

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L5 - Have you ever needed/asked the support/action of the Health and Safety staff? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No

L6 - How would you rate the support of Health and Safety Service Staff? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'L5' (Have you ever needed/asked the support/action of the Health and Safety staff?)

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Completely unsatisfactory
Rather unsatisfactory
Satisfactory enough
Completely satisfactory

L7comment -Free comments about the support of the Health and Safety Service Staff

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Yes' at question 'L5' (Have you ever needed/asked the support/action of the Health and Safety staff?)

Please write your answer here:

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Phd Programs –Outcome

M1- Please assess the effectiveness of the PhD program in helping you to develop the following skills: *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was '4' at question 'A2' (Year of course? (Latest academic year 2023/24))

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Not at all effective	Not entirely effective	Effective enough	Completely effective
Critical thinking, independence				
Technical skills relevant to your field of choice				
Knowledge of the relevant literature in your field of choice				
Developing a network of contacts				

M2- What are your career plans after completing PhD programme?

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Keep on with a scientific career in academia
Research and Development in the private sector
Teaching in schools
Other:

M3- Could you provide details about the choice for a career path outside academia?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was 'Other' or 'Teaching in schools' or 'Research and Development in the private sector' at question 'M2' (What are your career plans after completing PhD programme?)

Please write your answer here:

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M4 - Was your supervisor helpful in guiding your search for a position after the PhD? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met: Answer was '4' at question 'A2' (Year of course? (Latest academic year 2023/24))

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes
No
Not Needed

Free comment

N1- Overall, how would you rate your experience in SISSA? *

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Completely unsatisfactory
Rather unsatisfactory
Satisfactory enough
Completely satisfactory

N2comment - Your general free comment

Please write your answer here:

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