

Ph.D course in Cognitive Neuroscience

Head of the Ph.D course: Prof. Mathew E. DIAMOND
Web site: [Cognitive Neuroscience](#)
Research lines:

- Main topics in cognitive neuroscience
- Neuronal bases of Visual perception
- Neuronal bases of Time perception
- SISSA Explorations into the Neuronal foundations of Sensory Experience (SENSEx)
- Neuronal bases of multimodal communication
- Neural computation approaches to memory and brain organization
- Computational bases of perception and cognition

Fellowships available: 6 funded by SISSA

Admission: Academic and scientific qualifications + essay + oral exam (remote)
Beginning of the Courses: 1 October, 2026

Evaluation of academic and scientific qualifications + essay: 50 points

Access to Oral Exam: minimum mark of 35/50

Evaluation of Oral Exam: 50 points

Total Evaluation: 100 points

To be considered eligible, candidates must pass both phases (academic and scientific qualifications and interview) with a minimum mark of 35/50.

First Session

Deadline for online submission of applications: 20 March, 2026
Oral Exam: 13th – 14th April, 2026

Second Session (only if there should still be places available after the first one)

Deadline for online submission of applications: 20th August, 2026
Oral Exam: 7th – 8th September, 2026

Results of all evaluations and the final ranking will be notified by email.

ESSAY PROMPT

Please tell us about your experience with cognitive neuroscience, or neuroscience in general. Consider the following questions: How did you first get interested in neuroscience? How did you turn that interest into active engagement? That is, describe the research project you have been involved with that you have found to be most inspiring. In doing so, you may use figures and plots and equations – these will not count towards the word limit. Document your ideas with citations – just like the plots and equations, citations do not count towards the word limit. If you have not done a structured research project, you may alternatively describe intensive coursework that you have followed, or even a set of publications that you have read with particular interest. You may present information redundant with your academic record, submitted separately. Keep in mind that although you might have submitted a thesis or manuscript as part of the application, the commission might not have read it as thoroughly as we would have liked to.

Next, imagining that there were no logistical constraints, outline the research project that you would most love to do for your PhD thesis. This may overlap the research lines in the SISSA Cognitive Neuroscience PhD, but it is not a problem for the committee if you feel most excited by a problem not currently covered in our program.

Finally, what would you like to be doing in 10 years? Feel free to take the essay in directions not specifically indicated above -- tell us about anything else that you think might be relevant to your suitability for this PhD program.

All the above, taken together, should fit within a limit of 2,500 words. Less is fine, as we appreciate brevity and succinctness. Please use Times New Roman 12 pt, 1.5 line spacing. This personal research statement is assessed along with your academic record and anonymity is not required.