

# Membership of Swiss Astronomers in the International Astronomical Union (IAU)

*Swiss Commission for Astronomy*

The Swiss Commission for Astronomy (SCFA) met in Bern on April 4 and September 8, 2008, to approve the following rules for membership of Swiss astronomers<sup>1</sup> in the *International Astronomical Union (IAU)*. These rules complement rules given in the IAU Statutes (St), the IAU Bye-Laws (BL), and the IAU Working Rules (WR), and are effective immediately. The IAU Working Rules specify that “professional scientists whose research is directly relevant to some branch of astronomy are eligible for election as Individual Members of the Union.” Further, “the term *Professional Scientist* shall normally designate a person with a doctoral degree (Ph.D.) or equivalent experience in astronomy or a related science, and whose professional activities have a substantial component of work related to astronomy.” The IAU further states that “Individual Membership is open to scientists with a proven record of independent research (i.e., first authorship of a number of astrophysical publications) during some years after their PhD or equivalent.”

## 1. Nomination for IAU Membership

The SCFA nominates Swiss candidates for IAU membership and submits a candidate list to the General Secretary of the IAU no later than five months before the subsequent IAU General Assembly, for review by the IAU Nominating Committee and election as IAU members by the IAU Executive Committee, according to IAU WR III, 3-11.

## 2. Requirements for Nomination by the SCFA

Requirements for nomination for IAU individual membership by the SCFA include,

- a doctoral degree (Ph.D.) or equivalent (WR III.3);
- successful *professional* work in astronomy or closely related fields (e.g., astronomical instrumentation) conducted during at least 3 years after receipt of the Ph.D. (or equivalent degree) and until present, by the beginning of the subsequent IAU General Assembly (GA);
- acceptable prospects for continuation in professional astronomy after the IAU membership nomination deadline.

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<sup>1</sup>The expression “Swiss astronomers” will be used to include all professional astronomers presently working in the field of astronomy or a closely related field at an institution in Switzerland, regardless of their nationality. Swiss nationals abroad will adhere to IAU membership rules in the respective country of temporary or permanent residence.

### 3. Reconsideration of IAU Membership

The following rules for reconsideration of IAU membership apply to members accepted by the IAU as Individual Members in 2009 or later:

Before a nomination round, the SCFA will contact, in writing, Swiss IAU members who may no longer be active in professional astronomy, as judged by

- a. the absence, during the past 5 years, of a professional astronomy publication record, or lead in professional instrument/software development, or significant professional activity in astronomy education;
- b. an evident change in profession that has no promise for further activity in professional astronomy.

Inactive members will be asked at least two months before the nomination deadline to agree to deletion (WR III.6) of their membership, and to provide corresponding written consent no later than 1 month before the nomination deadline, or an earlier date defined in the SCFA letter. In the absence of a written reply, the SCFA will assume agreement. In the case of disagreement, the member must justify and defend his/her membership according to the IAU membership rules (St, BL, WR) and the SCFA rules.

### 4. Retired Members

An IAU Individual Member who has retired from all professional activities, his/her last professional activity being acceptable for IAU membership, can remain an Individual Member unless he/she suggests deletion of his/her membership (St V, 11).

### 5. Exceptions

Exceptional cases (e.g., maternity leave) will be discussed and decided on by the SCFA following general guidelines of the IAU (St, BL, WR).

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Zürich, 10 November 2008  
on behalf of the Swiss Commission for Astronomy  
Manuel Güdel, ETH Zürich  
Swiss Delegate of the International Astronomical Union