



2025 IAF EMERGING SPACE LEADERS (ESL) GRANT PROGRAMME HANDBOOK

- Please read the following guidelines carefully before beginning the application process -

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1 What is the 2025 IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme?

The 2025 IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme offers up to 30 grants to participate in the International Astronautical Congress (IAC) 2025 in Sydney, Australia, from 29 September – 3 October 2025.

The application is open to students and young professionals between the ages of 21 and 35 on 1 January 2025. Please note that no exceptions will be made to these criteria. Candidates who meet these criteria may apply regardless of their home country or current residence. While all applications will be considered, through this programme the IAF seeks to encourage applications from candidates in nations with emerging space capabilities and interests **who would otherwise not be able to attend an International Astronautical Congress**.

Successful applicants will be expected to present at least one paper (orally or in interactive format), and/or to participate as a panellist in the Next Generation Plenary as well as to participate in the Congress' technical sessions, plenary events, and other activities. Successful applicants will be provided a schedule of mandatory attendance events. Student and young professional participants will also:

- Be assigned a student/young professional advisor by the IAF.
- Receive invitations to participate in the activities of the IAC Student Programme (organised by the International Space Education Board and restricted to students) and the IAF Young Professional Programme (restricted to young professionals) respectively, both of which are conducted during the Congress.
- Take part in the Cross-Cultural Communications and Presentation Workshop.
- Participate in the Space Generation Congress organized by Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC) held just prior to the IAC or the UN/IAF Workshop for emerging space countries which is held during the week prior to the Congress as well. **Please note that only a few selected Emerging Space Leaders will be able to participate in the 2025 Space Generation Congress. To be considered as a possible Space Generation Congress participant, please fill out the SGC Delegates Application Form available on the SGAC website. The selection will be made following the SGC delegates selection criteria available on the SGAC website.**

After the Congress, alumni will be eligible to maintain participation in IAF student and young professional activities through the IAF website and related programmes.

Please note that applicants are applying for the 2025 IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme only. Participant must guarantee their ability to attend the congress taking into consideration the event's dates, location, visa requirements, and logistical aspects. If an applicant is selected for the programme but is unable to attend, the applicant must reapply for the 2025 or future IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programmes in order to receive the grant.

Please note that successful applicants are required to read and to agree to the [IAF CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT](#).

2 Who can apply?

The 2025 IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme application is open to individuals who fulfil the following **mandatory** criteria (no exceptions will be made):

- 21 to 35 years old on 1 January 2025



- Students currently attending a recognized university or Young Professionals currently employed in a space-related field
- Submission of at least one paper (orally or in interactive format), and/or to be a candidate to be a panellist in the Next Generation Plenary.

3 How can I apply?

To be considered for the grant programme, the following materials must be submitted online through the dedicated [PLATFORM](#) by **14 February 2025 15:00 Paris time UTC + 1:00**:

- A completed online application form that contains information about the candidate's personal background, education, employment experience and that includes an "endorsement" that certifies the statement to be factual by at least one organisation (the candidate's university, employer, an interested government agency, space or science society or similar organisation).
- Two recommendations from employers, university teachers or other individuals who are familiar with the candidate and who have reviewed his/her application.
- An essay discussing your contributions in academia and/or as a young space professional to date and a list of benefits that this potential opportunity would bring to you in regard to:
 - Your contributions in academia and/or as a young space professional to date
 - What you hope to learn/achieve during this event
 - The potential relevance of participation to IAC 2025 to research/job/networking opportunities
 - How you will use this experience when returning home and how you plan to share what you have learned during this experience. Please include details relating to what presentations you plan to give and to whom and what communication methods you will use to write about your experience (i.e., articles, blogs, social media, etc.).
 - An abstract submitted on the IAF website (<https://iafastro.directory/iac/account/login/>) for a paper that the candidate intends to present - either orally in a technical session or as an "interactive" paper - during the IAC. **Please note that the selection process of the abstracts is independent from the IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme application.**
- Instead of submitting an abstract, or in addition to submitting an abstract, you may apply to the IAF WD-YPP Committee proposed Next Generation Plenary; the Call for Applications will be available on the IAF website. A successful application for this programme will be considered equal to the submission of an abstract. **Please note that the application and selection process is independent from the IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme application.**
- A short video sample in English to demonstrate the applicant's linguistic proficiency and presentation skills.

Completed applications including endorsement, abstract, essay, applicant's declaration and signature, along with the video sample and reference letters must be available online no later than 14 February 2025 15:00 Paris time UTC +1:00. Please note that any materials received after this time will not be considered for the 2025 IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme.

4 How is the selection made?

The selection will be made based on the following point system (rating grid). The maximum score one applicant can achieve is **140 points**.

1. **Country of citizenship (5-20 points)**



Students and young professionals from nations across the world are encouraged to submit a grant request. However, while all applications will be considered, the IAF seeks to support candidates from nations with emerging space capabilities and interests.

- **Citizens (passport)** of a country belonging to the **European Union** or being member of the **European Space Agency**¹, the **USA, Canada, Australia, or Japan** will be given **5 points**.
- **Citizens (passport)** of a **country not cited above and not belonging to the UN list** of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states, and transition countries² will be given **10 points**.
- **Citizens (passport)** of a **country appearing on the UN list** of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states, and transition countries² will be awarded **20 points**.

2. English Language Proficiency and Presentation Skills (0-15 points)

All applicants must provide a video sample and appear on screen, speaking English. This video will not be more than 1 minute in length.

- **High level of linguistic proficiency and presentation skills** (can make her/his ideas understood) will be awarded **15 points**.
- **Negligible level of linguistic proficiency and presentation skills** will be awarded **0 points**.

3. Abstract for Technical Session or Interactive Presentation Session and Participation in the Next Generation Plenary (0-40 points)

Note: To be eligible for an IAF Emerging Space Leaders grant, an applicant's abstract must be selected for inclusion in a technical session or Interactive Presentation session, or the applicant must be selected as a participant in the Next Generation Plenary, otherwise his/her application won't be considered.

- **Abstract has been accepted** and included in an IAC technical session as **oral or interactive presentation** – **20 points**
- **Abstract has been accepted** in an IAC technical session as oral or interactive presentation **as back-up** – **10 points**
- **Abstract has been rejected** – **0 points**
- Participant has been selected to **participate in Next Generation Plenary** – **20 points**
- Participant has been selected as a **back-up** participant in **Next Generation Plenary** – **10 points**
- Participant **has not been selected** to participate in Next Generation Plenary – **0 points**

4. Essay – Citizen of the Space Community (0- 60 points)

Applicants are asked to provide an essay outlining their contributions in academia and/or as a young space professional to date and provide a list of benefits this potential opportunity would bring.

- Their contributions in academia and/or as a young space professional to date – 0 to 15 points
- Their knowledge base (what they expect to learn/achieve during this event) – 0 to 15 points
- Research/job/networking opportunities – 0 to 15 points

¹ Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

² UN list of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states, and transition countries: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia.



- Their use of this experience when returning home and contributions to their community, as they commit to sharing their experience with others in their homeland – 0 to 15 points

5. Attendance at the International Astronautical Congress (1-5 points)

- Applicant has never attended the IAC – 5 points
- Applicant has attended the IAC on one or more occasions – 1 point

Please note that the IAF Secretariat will verify the accuracy of the facts. Any falsification of information will result in automatic disqualification of the application.

5 Step by Step Application Guide

- Please fill in the Application form on our website: <https://www.iaf-grant-programme.org/>

Please note that we will only consider complete, signed applications that are validated from the online application system **no later than 14 February 2025 15:00 Paris time UTC + 1:00**.

Abstract

Please note that your abstract needs to be copied into the application system **and uploaded on the IAF website** (<https://iafastro.directory/iaf/account/login/>). To upload your abstract on the website, please follow these steps:

- Login or create an account, visiting the IAF Website at www.iafastro.org and clicking on the “Sign In” button
- You will be taken to the restricted area, where you will find on the bottom of the menu “My Papers”.
- Click on “My Papers” and then on “Add new abstract”.
- Select the appropriate Symposium and Session.
- Please insert paper title and abstract content (maximum 400 words).
- If you are a student, check the appropriate box.
- Click “Ok”.

Please note that you must upload your abstract on the IAF website by **14 February 2025** or you will not be considered for the 2025 IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme.

Please note that you may apply for participating in the IAF WD-YPP Committee proposed Next Generation Plenary instead of submitting an abstract, or you may submit both an application for the Next Generation Plenary and an abstract.

Video

All candidates must provide a video that demonstrates their English language abilities and presentational skills. The video may not be longer than 1 minute. Videos longer than one minute will not be considered.

- Tape yourself on video presenting yourself, the theme of your abstract or presentation at the Next Generation Plenary and answer the question why you should be chosen for the 2025 IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme
- You must appear talking on screen in the video for the full duration of the video.



Endorsement Document

Have your application reviewed and endorsed by a professor, employer, supervisor or responsible official in a university, company, or professional society.

Please download the endorsement document template available on the application platform and have it filled in by the person who will review your application. The endorsement needs to be signed and stamped. Then, scan the signed endorsement in pdf, jpeg or png format and upload it in the appropriate field.

Reference Letters

All applications must be accompanied by two recommendations from professors, employers, or responsible officials who are familiar with the candidate and who have reviewed his/her application.

Please download the reference letter template available on the application platform and have your references filled in, signed, and stamped, scan the forms and upload in the appropriate field.

Please note that both reference letters must be uploaded on the online application system by **14 February 2025 15:00 Paris time UTC + 1:00** for your application to be considered.

The IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme Subcommittee (composed of experienced IAF volunteers) will carefully review all applications and recommend individuals considering the above rating system. The IAF's Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme Subcommittee will select up to thirty award grant recipients.

Applicant's Declaration

Please download the applicant's declaration template available on the application platform, copy the text in your own handwriting, sign the document, scan, and upload it in the appropriate field.

Please note that your declaration must be uploaded on the online the application system by **14 February 2025 15:00 Paris time UTC + 1:00** for your application to be considered.

6 Selection Schedule

- Announcement of the call, application form and related documents are posted on the IAF website: **November 2024**.
- Completed applications and related documentation must be submitted on the application platform no later than **14 February 2025 15:00 Paris time UTC + 1:00**.
- Grant recipients will be notified by the **beginning of May 2025**. Selection will also be announced publicly on the IAF website.

7 Responsibilities of Successful Applicants

1. Confirmation of Attendance

After you have been notified of your selection for the programme, you will send a copy of your valid passport by **14 May 2025 and your flight proposition to and from Sydney, Australia**. Please note that your passport needs to be valid at least until **14 May 2026**. Successful applicants who are not able to provide this by **14 May 2025** will be **taken off the list of grant recipients**.



The registration for the IAC and related activities will be **handled and paid** by the IAF Secretariat. Grant recipients will have two weeks following notification to submit to the IAF Secretariat their proposed flights to and from Sydney, Australia. These proposed flights must be **low cost** and **consider visa requirements in transit countries**. **You shall arrive in Sydney on 24 September 2025 and depart on 4 October 2025**. If the proposed flights are acceptable to the IAF, flight tickets will be **booked and paid** for you by the IAF Secretariat. All expenses before **24 September 2025** and after **4 October 2025** shall be undertaken by the recipients. **The IAF will not be responsible for these additional expenses.**

Successful applicants will be featured on the IAF website, IAF newsletter and IAC Final Programme and shall provide a short summary of their experience and achievements as well as their perspectives on space and international cooperation and a recent headshot by **14 May 2025**. The summary shall not exceed 250 words. The photo shall meet the following requirements: resolution of 150 dpi, colors or black and white, jpg format.

2. Visa

Please note that it is the applicant's responsibility to **become familiar with the visa requirements applicable to Australia as well as in transit countries**, to start the visa process in **due time** and to provide the necessary documentations.

The IAF Secretariat will provide an invitation letter from the Host (SIAA) and a subvention letter. The IAF Secretariat will **book and pay** for hotel rooms (budget accommodation) and provide a booking proof to the recipients.

The IAF will not take over any costs related to obtaining your visa such as travel insurance, vaccinations, visa fees, transit visa fees, travelling costs to the embassy, etc.

You shall inform the IAF Secretariat before **14 May 2025** if you require a visa to attend the IAC 2025 in Sydney, and give an update of your visa status by **27 June 2025**.

3. Insurance

The recipients shall be responsible for acquiring insurance covering health insurance, medical emergency, emergency evacuation, repatriation of remains, trip cancellation or interruption, etc.

The recipients shall provide a proof of the insurance to the IAF Secretariat by **31 July 2025**.

Failure to submit the required documents within the specified deadlines will result in the revocation of your application.

8 Benefits of the ESL Grant Programme

1- Registrations

The recipients of the 2025 ESL Grant Programme will be registered to the following events:

- Space Generation Congress (SGC), if selected by SGAC, or UN/IAF Workshop
- Cross-Cultural Communications and Presentation Workshop (CCCPW)
- IAC 2025 including Young Professional Programme (for young professionals only), student programme (for students only), plenary events, exhibition, technical sessions, Global Networking Forum, Opening and Closing Ceremony, and Welcome Reception.

The registration to the IAC will be handled and paid by the IAF Secretariat.

Please note that only a few selected Emerging Space Leaders will be able to participate in the 2025 Space Generation Congress. To be considered as a possible Space Generation Congress participant, please fill out the SGC Delegates Application Form available on the SGAC website. The selection will be made following the SGC delegates selection criteria available on the SGAC website.



2- Onsite programme

Cross-Cultural Communications and Presentation Workshop (CCCPW)

The Workshop is designed for both native English and non-native English speakers and provides Emerging Space Leaders grantees and IAC Next Generation plenary speakers with the opportunity to rehearse and review their presentations. **This event is mandatory for the Emerging Space Leaders.**

3- Mentors

The IAF will organize a virtual event with the winners of the IAF Young Space Leaders Recognition Programme beginning of June to help you select your IAC programme. Another informal meeting with the IAF Young Space Leaders will also be organized in Sydney prior to the IAC to help you understand what an IAC is, which benefits you can get from it, etc.

4- Per Diem

The IAF Secretariat will provide you per-diem equivalent for the duration of your stay starting the day of your arrival in Sydney to cover extras unforeseen by the grant.

5- Social Events and Technical Tours

Social events, technical tours and Gala Dinner tickets will be available at IAC 2025. Their costs are not foreseen in the grant programme.

6-Flight and accommodation

The IAF Secretariat will take care of booking and paying for the flight tickets and accommodation from **24 September – 4 October 2025** in Sydney. **Once the tickets are booked, the IAF will not be able to process any changes.**

9 Frequently Asked Questions

Q: My 21st birthday will be on 1 March 2025. Can I still apply?

A: Sorry, but we cannot make any exceptions.

Q: The abstract submission deadline for the IAC 2025 is 28 February 2025. Do I really have to submit my abstract by 14 February 2025?

A: You need to submit your abstract on the IAF website: <https://iafastro.directory/iac/account/login/> by the **14 February 2025**.

Q: Do I have to submit an abstract in order to participate in Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme?

A: If you have applied for the IAF WD-YPP Committee proposed Next Generation Plenary, you do not have to submit an abstract. However, you will increase your chances to be chosen for the Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme if you submit both an abstract and an application for the Next Generation Plenary.

Q: I just heard about the Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme and the Next Generation Plenary. Can I submit only one application video for both programmes?

A: No. Both videos are different in content and length.

Q: Do I have to be the sole author of my abstract?

A: No, you do not. You may have co-authors, but you must be the primary author.

Q: Can I submit an abstract for a paper that has been previously published/presented at a professional conference?

A: No. Participants in the Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme are expected to prepare and present papers that have not been previously published or submitted for publication.



Q: I am a student from one country currently studying in another country. From which country's professors do I have to submit references?

A: You may submit reference letters from professors in either country, or both.

Q: I am a young professional. May I still submit a reference letter by a former university professor?

A: The reference letters may be written by people (professors or employers) who know you and your current academic or professional work well enough to comment on your qualification for the Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme.

Q: I have recently changed jobs. May I submit a reference letter from my former employer?

A: You may ask a former employer if that person is still familiar with your current work. An employer that you worked for several years ago and with whom you have not been in contact since might not be able to submit the best reference.

Q: I have participated in a previous IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme. May I apply again?

A: Applications from previous participants in the IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme will not be considered for the 2025 Programme selection.

Q: Can the same person endorse my application and submit a reference letter?

A: Yes.

Q: I have applied for funding through other sources than the IAF Emerging Space Leaders Grant Programme. Does this influence my application?

You are welcome to apply for other funding to attend the IAC alongside the IAF Emerging Space Leader Grant Programme. However, upon receipt of funding from a third party source, it is your responsibility to inform the IAF about the form of sponsorship (cash/flights/accommodation) and the amount of sponsorship you have received. The Federation will, in these cases, adjust its own awarded grant accordingly.

You could not find an answer to your question?

Please review all the application materials to make sure your question is not answered! If not, please address your questions and requests for additional information/clarifications to:

E-mail: ESLGRANTS@IAFASTRO.ORG