IWF Graz. Leading Austria into Space. Since 1971

The Space Research Institute (IWF) with about 100 employees from twenty nations, is one of the largest institutes of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW). The institute is located in the Victor Franz Hess Research Center of the OeAW in Graz and hosts eight research groups on the astrophysics of the solar system, exoplanets, and space instrumentation. The IWF also operates a world-leading satellite laser ranging station at the Lustbühel Observatory.

Principal Researcher (f/m/x) in Space Plasma Physics

Job ID: IWF038PR126

The Space Research Institute in Graz invites applications for a position as

Principal Researcher (f/m/x) in Space Plasma Physics

(Full-time employee)

(Office)

IWF has a long-standing track record in space plasma physics research in the Solar system covering near Earth, planets and small bodies and interplanetary space. The IWF is participating in more than ten ongoing and adapted future Solar System missions of ESA/NASA/JAXA/CAS as major contributors in form of instrument (co)leads or working group chairs. We are involved in two M7 mission concepts, incl. Plasma Observatory, and explore possible contributions to ESA's L4 mission to the icy moons in the outer solar system.

The institute invites applications for the position of a Principal Researcher (or a Distinguished Researcher according to the ÖAW's career development plan) to lead the Space Plasma Physics Group as Junior Group Leader (or Group Leader). They will lead the IWF's space plasma mission activities, develop and expand the Space Plasma Physics Group into new forefront research directions (for example, high-energy particle environments) that support and strengthen the IWF's core research pillars: diversity of planets and planetary systems, uniqueness of Earth, and responsibility for earth and our space environment. The research group is a mix of permanent and non-permanent staff, and close links to other IWF research groups exists and need to be fostered. The IWF actively implements ML/AI as new technology tool across all its research groups.

Your Tasks

- Lead and coordinate scientific activities at IWF related to current, upcoming, and future space missions investigating space plasma processes in the solar system, in close collaboration with the institute's flight instrumentation teams.
- Take the leading role in the conception and proposal of new international space missions, in collaboration with the global space plasma physics community.
- Develop and conduct innovative research projects resulting in high-impact publications in peer-reviewed journals and presentations at major international conferences.
- Secure competitive external funding by coordinating proposals to major funding bodies incl. ERC and other EU funding.
- Leadership and staff management within the area of experimental and theoretical space plasma physics.
- Supervise early-career researchers and PhD students, fostering the next generation of scientists in the field.

- Contribute actively to the strategic development of the institute as a committed and collaborative member of the Group Leader team.

Your Profile

- PhD in Physics, Astrophysics, or a closely related discipline, ideally with a Habilitation or equivalent qualification in space plasma physics or a related field.
- Internationally recognised with an outstanding publication record in the field of space plasma physics.
- Demonstrated experience in space missions involving plasma and/or field measurements, with the capability and willingness to scientifically support future instrument proposal.
- State-of-the-art expertise in numerical modelling of plasma processes and environments to support an expand IWF's core competences in scientific data interpretation.
- Expertise in conducting research with data from in-situ measurements.
- A strong track record of scientific excellence, including peer-reviewed publications, invited conference contributions, and successful acquisition of competitive third-party funding.
- Proven leadership, communication, and collaboration skills, with the ability to coordinate and inspire an international and interdisciplinary research team.

Our Offer

The appointment may begin as early as January 1, 2027 for initially 4+2 years with the option for permanent employment after a successful tenure assessment. More senior applicants can be offered the position of a group leader for an initial duration of 6 years with a tenure option. We offer an annual gross salary of € 76.952,12 for the position of a Principal Researcher (as Junior Group Leader) according to the collective agreement of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Distinguished Researchers (as Group Leader) may expect a higher remuneration.

Applicants must include a cover letter, their curriculum vitae, a list of publication (highlighting ten most important publications), a statement of their research experience (max. 3 pages), a research plan (max. 3 pages) including a strategy for ML applications, and their certificates of their full academic record. Please send the application with three reference

letters no later than July 6th, 2026. Inquiries about the position should be directed to Cosima Muck. Find more information at: https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/iwf/research/research-groups/space-plasma-physics

APPLY NOW

The Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW) pursues a non-discriminatory employment policy and values equal opportunities, as well as diversity. Individuals from underrepresented groups are particularly encouraged to apply. The OeAW cooperates with NEBA and is a member of MyAbility in order to provide appropriate workplace structures, in particular for persons with disabilities.

Contact

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