



# House Rules

Sirius A - Study Association Astronomy

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## Preface

What follows in this document are the House Rules of Sirius A - Study Association Astronomy. They describe amendments, rules, definitions and procedures, that are not, or not entirely covered by the statutes of the association. In the event of a contradiction between the house rules and the statutes, the statutes take precedence. The house rules and any future amendments or alterations must be approved by the GMA.

## List of abbreviations and concepts

Association:	Sirius A - Study Association Astronomy
GMA:	General Member's Assembly
HR:	House Rules
CIA:	Commissioner of Internal Affairs
CEdA:	Commissioner of Educational Affairs
CEA:	Commissioner of External Affairs

## **1 Members**

### **1.1 General Members**

General members are those that are enlisted for the BSc or MSc study Astronomy at the University of Groningen or those that are doing their PhD at the Kapteyn Institute as part of the University of Groningen and have registered themselves as members and are admitted by the board of the association. If someone is not admitted by the board of the association, someone can still become a member by means of the GMA, provided that the person is subject to the requirements stated above and in the statutes.

### **1.2 Honorary Members**

Honorary members are those that, on the grounds of special achievements for the association as donor or board member, are appointed by the GMA and have accepted this title. Also non-members can become honorary members if they accomplished something special for the association. Examples that grant honorary membership include, but are not limited to (all through a proposal of a member at the GMA), exceptional work during his/her time as a board or committee member, and being a member of the establishing board.

### **1.3 Members of Merit**

Members of Merit are those that, on the grounds of special achievements for the association as members, are appointed by the GMA and have accepted this title. Examples that grant the title Member of Merit include, but are not limited to exceptional dedication throughout multiple years, or having a leading role in important changes for the association.

### **1.4 Donors**

The status of donor is given to non-members that have donated an amount equal or higher than the normal membership fee (currently €10). The title of donor lasts for the financial year in which the donation is made. Donors can be present during the GMA but do not have a vote.

### **1.5 Direct Debit Mandate**

All members are required to complete a SEPA direct debit mandate which allows Sirius A to subtract debts owed by its members on a monthly basis. This includes the annual contribution, events and payments for the annual trip.

Those who are unable to complete this form will be required to pay in some other method agreed with the treasurer within a period of five working days after the money is owed.

### **1.6 Ending membership**

Ending the membership is done accordingly to Article 6 of the Sirius A Statutes.

## **2 Board**

### **2.1 General**

The board is in charge of the association. A new board is appointed in September each year by the means of the GMA. This new board may consist of old board members.

## 2.2 Description of functions

### 2.2.1 Chair

The Chair is in charge of leading the association. They guide the entire board into fulfilling their tasks and are responsible for the associations activities. The Chair is in charge of leading board meetings and GMA's.

### 2.2.2 Secretary

1. The Secretary will make the minutes of the GMA and the board meetings. The minutes of board meetings should be accessible to all board members (uploaded to a cloud service) within a 24 hour time frame. The minutes of the GMA need to be ready and sent to all members at least 7 days before the next GMA.
2. If the Secretary finds themselves unable to make minutes during a meeting, they will appoint another board member, whom is not the Chair or another board member leading that particular meeting, to make minutes.
3. The Secretary will send a newsletter once a month to all members. This is done on the last day of every month. If a member no longer wishes to receive the newsletter, they can unsubscribe by a link at the end of the newsletter.
4. The Secretary will take care of the digital and physical members administration. Keeping track of the digital members administration means that the Secretary will add or remove members (or move them to the alumni administration) and keep the personal information in the digital list up-to-date. Once a year, an email with all personal information is sent out to all members and donors. Members can reply if any information is incorrect and this will make sure that the members administration is kept up to date. Every adjustment of personal information within the digital members administration is noted down in a digital logbook. The physical members administration contains the sign up sheets of all members, numbered with the member's number. The physical members administration also contains a list of the names of all alumni and their email address.
5. The Secretary takes care of the alumni administration. If an individual's membership has ended, their personal information is removed from the members administration and moved to the alumni administration, where an individual's information is stored for a maximum of one year. After this period of one year, the information, except for the individual's name and e-mail address, are removed from the alumni administration, unless this individual has given permission for Sirius A to store their personal information. The information can be removed at any time if the individual submits a request to the Secretary.
6. The Secretary will send minutes to the advisory board if they request so.
7. The Secretary is in charge of contacting members via email.

### 2.2.3 Treasurer

1. The Treasurer manages the funds of the association. The Treasurer collects money from members, donors, sponsors and subsidies and does payments for the association.
2. The Candidate-Treasurer comes up with a new budget for the coming financial year and presents this at the transition GMA.
3. The Treasurer establishes the balance for the association and presents this during every GMA.

4. The Treasurer is responsible of arranging regular meetings with Audyssey, which must take place at least 3 times a year and before an expenditure larger than 500 euros is made. Also, the Treasurer and Audyssey should meet at least 2 weeks before every GMA to discuss the funds of the association.
5. The Treasurer presents the finances for the first half of the financial year during the second GMA.
6. Preferably, the Treasurer automatically moves into Audyssey after their board year.

#### **2.2.4 Commissioner of Internal Affairs**

1. The Commissioner of Internal Affairs (CIA) is responsible for promotion of Sirius A events. This includes all promotion via email, Facebook, posters and other means.
2. The CIA's aim is to promote personal contact between members. If members have questions for the board of the association these will generally be answered by the CIA.

#### **2.2.5 Commissioner of External Affairs**

1. The Commissioner External Affairs (CEA) is responsible for sustaining good communication with external parties, meaning other associations within the faculty and university but also all contacts outside the university network like companies, sponsors and alumni.
2. It is the CEA's responsibility to maintain sponsorships and find new sponsorships during the time they are in function.

#### **2.2.6 Commissioner of Educational Affairs**

1. The Commissioner of Educational Affairs (CEdA) is responsible for all educational affairs. The CEdA is the contact person for all faculty activities related to education.
2. Preferably the CEdA is a member of the Kapteyn Learning Community (KLC) and ensures good communication between the committee and the board.

#### **2.2.7 Commissioner of Public Relations**

1. The Commissioner of Public Relations (PR) is responsible for the association's image in the public eye. The PR manages the image of the association both online, through social media, and in real life, during events.
2. The PR is also responsible for promoting the association's events on social media and within the official Announcements Chat. Their aim is to showcase the identity of the association towards the general public, as well as making the promotion of events as enticing for members as possible.

#### **2.2.8 Vice-Chair**

1. The Vice-Chair is chosen out of the board, excluding the Chair. This choice will be made by the incoming board.
2. The Vice-Chair takes on the tasks of the Chair in case of absence of the Chair.

### **2.2.9 Website administrator**

1. The Website administrator is chosen out of the board. This choice will be made by the incoming board.
2. The Website administrator is tasked with the maintenance of the Sirius A website, with an emphasis on its data security, as well as advising other members of Sirius A on how to use the Sirius A website.

### **2.3 Sustainability Officer**

1. The Sustainability Officer is chosen out of the board. This choice will be made by the incoming board.
2. The Sustainability Officer is tasked with the observation of the sustainability of activities undertaken by Sirius A and the leading of improving Sirius A's sustainability.

### **2.4 Application Procedure**

1. The board of the association will select a board application committee every year. The committee should consist of at least one member of a previous board, one current board member and an external person.
2. This committee will organize interviews with applicants and nominate a new candidate board member for a specific board function for the following board year.
3. These nominations are sent to the board. The board must then formally respond to the committee within 5 working days, with their advice.
4. If the application committee wishes so, it can then change their initial proposal in any of the following ways:
  - (a) Interchanging the proposed positions of candidates
  - (b) Completely replacing one, more or all candidates
  - (c) A combination of (a) and (b)
5. The current board can respond to any number of proposals that the application committee decides to make.
6. Should the committee fail to provide a candidate board, the current board may propose applicants directly to the application committee.
7. The application committee will at all times have the final say in the nomination of the new candidate board.
8. In all circumstances, any and all correspondence between the selection committee and the current board shall be held in the strictest confidence and shall be permanently deleted upon the acceptance by the current board of a nominated candidate board.

## 2.5 Advisory Board

1. The Advisory Board generally consists of the members of the board immediately preceding the Current Board and is generally constituted at the transition GMA. Where necessary, or in the case of a vacancy, a position on the Advisory Board may be filled by the nomination of a member of another previous board on an interim basis, subject to confirmation at the next GMA.
2. The goal of the Advisory Board is to give advice to the board of the association and all other affairs surrounding the association. Each member of the Advisory Board is responsible for overseeing the position they previously held on the Board. In the case of filling a vacancy as outlined in article 2.4.1, consideration will be given in the first instance to previous board members with experience in the vacated position.
3. If in the view of the Advisory Board the Current Board are not discharging their responsibilities appropriately in accordance with the statutes and these house rules, the Advisory Board will in the first instance give an unsolicited, written advisement of a remedial course of action in relation to the specific issue(s) in question.
4. Following this advice, if in the view of the Advisory Board, the Current Board do not rectify the issue(s) at hand in a reasonable period of time, the Advisory Board can gather ten percent of the members and send the board a written notice to call a GMA to discuss or vote on the issues, conform article 16.2 of the Statutes
5. If there is a material change in circumstances between the issuing of a written advisement and the time at which said advisement is to be voted on by the GMA, the Advisory Board have the right to update their advisement to reflect this change in circumstances until the time of the vote.
6. The Advisory Board and Current Board generally meet every two months, but at a minimum no less than twice a year. In particular, such a meeting should take place at least four weeks before a scheduled GMA to discuss plans and activities.
7. Should the Current Board deem it necessary, they may request assistance from the Advisory Board in the discharging of their responsibilities, subject to the statutes, these house rules, the privacy policy and any applicable laws.

## 2.6 Audyssey

1. Audyssey oversees the management of the funds of the association and advises the current Treasurer of the Board.
2. Audyssey is appointed at the GMA and contains at least one previous Treasurer of the association.
3. Audyssey consists of at least two members, preferably previous board members of Sirius A.
4. Audyssey can request the full account book and flag transfers for which they want to see the corresponding invoice, which the Treasurer must provide. This will be done once or twice per financial year, at random moments in time.
5. During meetings between Audyssey and the Treasurer, Audyssey can request access to the bank account, which the Treasurer must provide.

6. Audyssey and Treasurer generally meet every two months, but at a minimum of four times a year. In particular, such a meeting should take place at least two weeks before a scheduled GMA to discuss the finances.
7. Expenses not in line with the budget above a limiting threshold should be approved by Audyssey. This limit is €200. The treasurer presents the proposed expenses and clearly states the urgency of the expenses and what alternatives have been explored.

### **3 Committees**

#### **3.1 General**

1. It is advised that all Sirius A committees consist of at least one board member.
2. Constituting or dissolving a committee is done by the board, per article 10.4 of the Statutes. The GMA can call for the constitution or dissolution of a committee, to be voted on by simple majority.

#### **3.2 Activities**

1. Activities organized by the various committees are to be determined by themselves in consolidation with the board. At the transition GMA, the candidate board will present a brief outline of the various committee activities they have planned for the upcoming board year.

#### **3.3 Changes to Committees**

1. Naming or changing the name of committees can be done by means of the GMA where at least 1/2 of the votes of the present members are in favor of the new name.
2. Changing the logo of committees can be done by means of the GMA where at least 1/2 of the votes of the present members are in favor of the proposed logo.

#### **3.4 Applications**

1. Applying for a committee membership can be done by either contacting the committee directly or contacting the board of the association. If this application is made in the period June-August, this person will automatically be put on the list as new committee member for the upcoming academic year (from September) in the committee they desire. If this application is made outside of the June-August period, the committee can choose to allow them in as a member of the committee in consolidation with the board of the association.
2. If a first year student applies for a committee in the September-October period they will automatically become a member of this committee unless the board deems this unfavorable. For example in the case of too many committee members or any other reason.
3. If there is a large request for joining a committee and the board deems the interest group too large, the board is allowed to arrange an application committee consisting of at least 2 board members. They are then required to choose the new committee members but also try to aid members who have applied for a particular committee into possibly joining other committees. In particular, for Parallax Complaints Committee, specific requirements for applications apply as mandated by the University of Groningen's Code of Conduct. For this committee, any persons in Sirius A committees, the Sirius A board or Confidential Contact Persons are not allowed to apply. Persons not member or donor of Sirius A are allowed to

apply. At least one member of Parallax Complaints Committee is required to not be a member or donor of Sirius A.

## **4 Disputen**

1. A Dispuut is a sub-structure within a study association of a group of like-minded people.
2. The constitution and dissolution of a Dispuut has to be agreed on with a majority vote by the GMA.
3. A Dispuut is led by a board. The members of the board of a Dispuut need to be member or donor of the association. The board of a Dispuut are hammered in and out by the GMA of the association. Dispuut board members are considered active members of Sirius A.
4. The board of the Dispuut decides who is part of the Dispuut.

## **5 GMA**

### **5.1 Clothing of Board Members**

1. During the transition GMA, the board is required to wear their (preferably matching) suits and (candidate) ties unless they find themselves unable to do this for any reason.
2. During other GMA's the board is preferred to be present in casual clothing but should wear their ties unless they find themselves unable to do this for any reason.

### **5.2 Pieces and Agenda**

1. All the pieces which are to be voted on and the agenda should be sent to the members at least 7 days before the GMA takes place by the Secretary of the association.

### **5.3 Motions**

1. Motions are non-binding proposals that request the board to uphold or install a certain policy. Motions can be filed during a GMA and must be taken to a vote during that same GMA. The timing of the vote is left to the discretion of the chair of the GMA.

### **5.4 Right to Vote**

1. All members of Sirius A have a right to vote during the GMA unless they have been expelled or suspended as a member for any reason.

### **5.5 Making decision by Voting**

1. Voting is used as a tool for making decisions throughout all parts of the association.
2. During a voting round, those with the right to vote may vote 'for', 'against', 'blank' or abstain from voting. The Chair decides if voting is done by show of hands or by paper.
3. In general, the Chair will not vote on any decision during a GMA, they will only use their vote as a casting vote.

4. In the case of a split vote on the election of two people, article 5.5.3 does not apply. In this case, as stated in Article 13.5 of the statutes, fate decides.
5. A vote has passed if it has an absolute majority, unless stated otherwise. An absolute majority is reached if more than half of the total number of votes is in favour of the decision.

## 5.6 Cake

1. As approved by the GMA of March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019, it is compulsory to have cake at every GMA.

## 5.7 Coronation

1. The board will pursue the acquisition of Sirius RegAlia (i.e. crown jewels), which will be handed on to boards to come.
2. The crown jewels include *both* the E.T. hand and the wand, as well as a crown and/or tiara of to be decided expense.
3. During the transition GMA, the prospective Chair will be crowned by the current Chair.

# 6 Finances

There are different methods how Sirius A can obtain funds and these are all discussed in the following paragraph. The board will try to invest all the yearly income back into the association except for a small saving to keep the bank account stable over the years.

## 6.1 Income

1. The association's membership contribution is €10 per academic year. Members are debited an amount corresponding to the membership contribution if they are a member on the first Monday of November. If they become a member after this date, the membership contribution will be processed at the first subsequent debit.
2. The membership fee will be collected through an automatic debit.
3. A change of the contribution fee for members and donors would be determined at the GMA and added to the HR.

### 6.1.1 Donations

1. A donation is a voluntary gift of money to the association without expected favors or compensation. There is no minimum for donations.
2. All donations are checked and have to be accepted by the board.

### 6.1.2 Subsidies

1. Subsidies involve funds obtained from organizations that have a specific prerequisites.
2. Subsidies are applied for by the board or are awarded by the organizations themselves.

### 6.1.3 Sponsorships

1. A sponsorships is a funding by a company or an organization that is granted in return for a sponsorship contract.
2. Each sponsor is given a contract so that both parties can sustain their agreement and know what is expected from them.
3. The party other than the association can present itself to its members during, for example: events, field-trips, merchandise or talks. These specifics are to be determined by the board of the association together with the other party.

## 7 Changing the House Rules

1. A change or addition to the House Rules can only be implemented via a vote at the GMA.
2. Those who would like to change the HR during the GMA, should mention this to the board at least 10 days before the GMA takes place with a written notice, in which the change is described. This proposal should then be sent to all members by the board at least 7 days before the GMA takes places.
3. The house rules can only be changed if at least  $\frac{2}{3}$  (rounded up) of the members present at the GMA decide to vote in favor of the changes or additions to the HR.
4. Section 2 of this article is not applicable if every member of the association is present during the GMA.
5. The members of the board are obligated to send an authentic act of the change of the house rules and a copy of the new house rules after the change to all members via email.

## 8 Safety

### 8.1 Events after 19:00

1. After 19:00, a member of the Kapteyn staff - with a UG contract (including PhD students) — must accompany any Sirius A function held within the Faculty of Science of Engineering.

### 8.2 Emergency Response Officer

1. For every Sirius A activity after 18:00 at University grounds, at least one Emergency Response Officer (ERO, Dutch: “*Bedrijfshulpverlener*”) should be present.
2. If the activity is outside of University grounds, an ERO should be present at any time. This rule does not apply if the event is organized at a public place.
3. If an activity has more than 50 participants present or the activity can be considered a health risk (e.g. sporting activities) at least two ERO’s should be present.
4. For every extra 50 members over the first 50 another ERO should be added. For example, an event with 100-149 present members should have at least 3 ERO’s present.

### 8.3 Consumption of alcohol and/or other drugs

1. Alcohol consumption is strictly forbidden under legal drinking age as set by Dutch Law. At the moment of writing this is 18 years of age. Sirius A does not supply alcohol to minors and the board and committee members are responsible for making sure this rule is enforced.
2. If someone under legal drinking age is caught drinking alcohol, they will receive an official warning.
3. Alcohol will not be consumed before 16:00 during events organized at the University of Groningen. Failing to comply will result in an official warning.
4. At the second official warning, a member will be suspended as member of Sirius A until the next GMA. As a result, this person will not be able to join any events organized by Sirius A in the meantime up to the following GMA. At the following GMA the case and further consequences will be discussed.
5. Sirius A maintains a no-tolerance policy on the consumption of any soft or hard drugs (as specified by Dutch law) during events organized at the University of Groningen. Failing to comply will result in immediate termination of membership.
6. For events organized at external locations (locations which are not part of the grounds of the University of Groningen), Sirius A follows rules as set by the laws applying to the specific location. For example, for an event organized on grounds of the National Forestry Service (Staatsbosbeheer), their rules and the laws of the Dutch Government apply. For foreign events, foreign laws apply.

### 8.4 Blaauw Observatory

1. The Blaauw Observatory will only be used for scientific and educational purposes, guided tours and other outreach activities.
2. All activities that happen in the observatory will be properly planned with the secretariat and a designated supervisor (in case of educational purposes: Marc Verheijen, Scott Trager or Reynier Peletier at present) or the outreach coordinator (at present Marlies van de Weijgaert). This is done in advance to make sure that there is proper supervision from these parties, and that at all times they are informed about activities in the observatory.
3. All entries to the observatory will be guided by a supervisor with permission to access, such as a designated supervisor, teaching assistant or observatory assistant.
4. Alcohol and the consumption of alcohol is strictly forbidden in the observatory, for professional users, assistants, students, visitors and all others.
5. Failing to comply with any of the aforementioned rules regarding the Blaauw Observatory will result in immediate suspension of Sirius A membership until the following GMA. As a result, this person will not be able to join any events organized by Sirius A up to the following GMA. At the following GMA, the case and further consequences will be discussed. A vote will be cast on either re-installment as a member of Sirius A or termination of membership for a period of at least one year starting from the day the GMA takes place.
6. If a board member of the association fails to comply with any of the aforementioned rules, they will be released from their position as board member and their Sirius A membership will be suspended as described in point 7.4.5.

To ensure that members of Sirius A are aware of the regulations related to the Blaauw Observatory, the following regulations apply for board members of Sirius A.

1. During the early first year activities of Sirius A (like the guided tour and our First Years' Evening) the board will mention the rules that apply to the observatory and its terrace as specified in the Sirius A house rules such that all students are aware of the regulations.
2. A short reminder will be given in newsletters during the start of the academic term in which students have courses that involve the observatory. A reminder like this will also be placed at the description of events in the observatory (i.e. stargazing nights).

## 8.5 Complaints

To ensure that all members of Sirius A can feel heard, the option to submit anonymous complaints has been added on the Sirius A website. These anonymous complaints are one of four types of feedback forms, which are all sent to different recipients. The types of feedback forms and their recipients are outlined below. Any of these recipients can share the feedback at their discretion:

1. Complaints. These forms are only sent to Parallax Complaints Committee.
2. Website feedback. These forms are only sent to Cosmic Web.
3. Board feedback. These forms are only sent to the board.
4. Members room feedback. These forms are sent to Houston and the board.