Rochester Institute of Technology

Astrophysical Sciences and Technology

Graduate Student Handbook



Reviewed and approved by: Dr. Michael Zemcov

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Introduction

Astrophysical Sciences and Technology offers programs of graduate study and research leading to the degrees of Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy. Students have opportunities to undertake research in a wide range of topics selected from the fields of detector development, observational, computational and theoretical astrophysics.

The research work is funded by grants and contracts, mainly issued by governmental agencies such as NASA and NSF. A limited number of Graduate Teaching Assistant stipends are available for qualified students entering the PhD program.

This handbook is intended to provide a ready reference to the basic information you need to navigate successfully through the AST graduate program. Though it is still a work in progress, we hope you will find it useful. Suggestions for improvement and additional content are always welcome.

AST Program Contacts

	Office	Email	Office Tel.
Dr. Michael Zemcov *Program Director*	ENG-3177	mbzsps@rit.edu	(585) 475-2338
Dr. Jeyhan Kartaltepe *Graduate Program Coordinator*	CAR-1268	jsksps@rit.edu	(585) 475-7514
Janice Ferger *Sr. Staff Assistant*	CAR-1260	jzfsps@rit.edu	(585) 475-7156

Who to Ask

Topic	Example(s)	Person(s)
General Program Matters	Non-standard course choices; milestones; requirements, etc.	Faculty Mentor, Mike, or Jeyhan
Research Project	*"I can't get this code to work properly 😕"*	Faculty Mentor, Research Advisor, Peer Mentor
Admin Matters	Course registration; stipend payments; reimbursement; etc.	Janice
Career Advice	Preparing applications; job search strategy; etc.	Faculty Mentor, Research Advisor, Mike, Jeyhan
Student – advisor relations	Communication issues, personality conflicts, misunderstandings	Mike, Jeyhan, Peer Mentor(s)
General support/advice	All kinds of things	Faculty mentor, Peer Mentors, Mike, Jeyhan
Coursework	Stuck on homework assignment!	Course instructor, classmates
Personal difficulties	Own health, safety; worries about other students etc.	Faculty Mentor, Mike, Jeyhan, peer mentors, RIT resources
TA assignments	Assignment request or queries	Becky (SoPA Admin) or Janice
Discrimination/harassment	If experienced or observed	Any Faculty/Staff member, Title IX coordinators or RIT confidential resources (e.g. Ombuds office)
Anything at all		Mike, Jeyhan, Janice

Student Directory

The list of current AST students (as of October 2026) with contact information and their topics of research can be found here.

Statement of Purpose

The Astrophysical Sciences and Technology department at RIT believes in the creation of an inclusive space based on fundamental respect and empathy for each other regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and all the things that make us unique as individuals. Professional behavior is expected at all times. We are also committed to fostering a supportive environment that emphasizes mutual support over competition and does not participate in "weeding out." We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or disrespectful behavior of any kind.

RIT Non-Discrimination Statement

RIT does not discriminate. RIT promotes and values diversity within its workforce and provides equal opportunity to all qualified individuals regardless of race, color, creed, age, marital status, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, veteran status, or disability.

The Title IX Coordinator has overall responsibility for the university's institutional compliance with Title IX. Any person with a concern about the university's handling of a particular matter related to sex or gender-based discrimination or harassment should contact:

> **Stacy DeRooy, sadcpsa@rit.edu**
> Director of Title IX and Clery Compliance, Title IX Coordinator
> 585-475-7158 | www.rit.edu/titleix

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by

any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Reports may be made regardless whether the person reporting is the alleged victim of any conduct that could constitute sex or gender-based discrimination or harassment. Reports may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by calling the telephone number noted above, by electronic mail, by mail to the office address listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by filing a report online with RIT's Title IX Office.

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is a federal agency responsible for ensuring compliance with Title IX. OCR may be contacted at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100, (800) 421-3481.

Organization

The Astrophysical Sciences and Technology Program resides within the School of Physics and Astronomy (SoPA), which in turn is an academic unit of the College of Science. AST is a multidisciplinary program and draws its faculty from several academic units, currently including the Chester F. Carlson Center for Imaging Science, the School of Mathematical Sciences, the National Institute for the Deaf, in addition to SoPA.

For more information on AST programs, see the official RIT websites here: AST M.S. and AST Ph.D.

Research Centers and Labs

The AST program at RIT operates three centers where students conduct their research:

(1) the Laboratory for Multiwavelength Astrophysics (LAMA),
(2) the Center for Computational Relativity and Gravitation (CCRG), and
(3) the Center for Detectors (CfD).

Incoming students are assigned a faculty mentor, who often (but not necessarily) transition to being the student's research advisor. By the end

of their first year, AST students are expected to finalize their research topic and select an advisor. At the start of their second year, they will be officially affiliated with one of the three research centers based on their advisor's affiliation.

Affiliation

The recommended affiliation for AST students on publications, posters, and other forms of presentation is: ***School of Physics and Astronomy, Rochester Institute of Technology.***

A second affiliation (LAMA, CCRG, CfD) can also be added, e.g., ***School of Physics and Astronomy and Center for Computational Relativity and Gravitation, Rochester Institute of Technology.***

Incoming Students

In the first few weeks of your acceptance, you will receive a Welcome Letter from the AST Program Director. This letter will include a brief overview of the program, key contacts, dates, events, and a summary of what is reviewed here.

Events

AST has many different events throughout the year, including, but not limited to:

Yearly Events

- **SoPA Welcome Picnic:** mid to late summer, typically the Saturday prior to the start of classes. This event is an opportunity for faculty and current students to meet the incoming class.
- **AST Research Jamboree:** every Fall semester, typically the last Friday in October. An informal, one-day research symposium at which all AST students, except those presenting their qualifying work or about to defend a thesis, are expected to give a presentation summarizing progress made during the preceding year. *If you have*

defended your Master's thesis during that Fall or the previous summer, you are not required to present.

- **Unawards:** first or second Friday in December. This event is an award ceremony for the AST paper plate awards (or, for fans of The Office, the Dundees), as nominated by the students and faculty!

Biweekly Events

- **AST Colloquia:** Every other Monday from 4:00-5:00pm, preceded by cookies and tea outside the auditorium. On alternate Mondays, the University of Rochester typically hosts an astronomy colloquium during the same time slot, which AST students can attend if interested. These are announced via email every week.
- **AST Graduate Student Lunch with Colloquium Speaker:** correspond with AST Colloquia, pending colloquium speaker availability. A great chance for AST students to network and ask the colloquium speaker questions in a more informal environment.

Weekly Events

- **ASTea Time:** Every Wednesday before journal club (3:15-4:00pm). This is a time for people to socialize, relax, drink some tea, and eat snacks. No research talk allowed.
- **Journal Club:** Every Wednesday from 4:00-5:00pm. Typically consists of 3-4 individuals reviewing recent literature relevant to AST. First-year students are required to attend, and present a certain number of times per semester.
- **Friday Socials:** Every Friday evening, the student, postdoc, or faculty member who volunteers as host chooses a restaurant and makes a reservation for everyone who has signed up on the Google Sheet maintained by Jeyhan. These are a great opportunity to socialize within the department, have some drinks and dinner, and enjoy each other's company. Hosts should ensure that the restaurant they choose can accept separate checks.

AST Stipends and TA Assignments

If you are entering the PhD program, you will receive an RIT stipend during your first academic year, which in most cases will be in the form of a

Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA). For more information on the stipend, please send questions to your advisor or the Program Director.

Under a GTA, you are expected to work a maximum of 20 hours per week (including classroom time, preparation and grading) as a Teaching Assistant. Assignments will be made a week or so before the beginning of the Semester. Usually, you will be assisting a senior (Faculty) instructor in introductory undergraduate courses.

If you are entering the MS program and would like to be considered for a SoPA TA assignment, please let the program director know at least two weeks before the start of the semester.

Keep in mind that the process of allocating GTA/TA assignments sometimes spills over into the first week of classes, so don't be too concerned if you don't have your assignment by the end of Orientation Week.

Timelines, Checklists, and Flowcharts

The following document is a yearly checklist for all graduate students in AST. It allows you to keep track of any important forms you might need to fill out: Grad Student Semester/Yearly Checklist

PhD Candidacy to Defense Flowchart

The following document will give you a breakdown of your PhD tasks by semester: PhD Flowchart

PhD Timeline

The following document will give you an idea of where you should be during your PhD:

- AST Dissertation Checklist
- AST PhD Timeline

MS Timeline

The following document will give you an idea of where you should be during your MS.

- AST MS Thesis Checklist

Expectations for Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs)

The general expectation of RIT and the AST Program is that during normal ”business hours” students in receipt of GRA appointments will be working on their research projects, studying, or pursuing other development opportunities, such as attending conferences or meetings. This includes the Summer terms, if you have a Summer Term GRA appointment.

You are entitled to take time off (e.g., for vacation) during break weeks between terms (e.g., Summer and Fall) and during official holidays observed by the University. Check the RIT academic calendar for these dates.

However, if you wish to take a vacation at other times during the term, or want to take additional time off, you must seek permission from your advisor who must assess the impact on the project and has discretion to grant or deny such requests. Keep in mind that GRA stipends are usually funded by external grants and your advisor is responsible to the funding agency for ensuring that the project is conducted efficiently. The relevant RIT guidance can be found here.

This also states that your stipend cannot be reduced for approved sick leave or vacation. On the other hand, it is your responsibility to discuss any travel or vacation plans with your advisor well in advance so that they can determine if such requests are manageable and reasonable within the scope of the project and your progress towards your thesis/dissertation.

Advisors are asked to be as flexible and sympathetic as possible in considering reasonable vacation requests.

As a general matter of courtesy, you should always inform your mentor or advisor if you are going to be traveling and/or otherwise out of communication at any time.

Program Requirements and Important Information

General Information

Good Standing**:** All graduate students must achieve a GPA of 3.0 or better (assessed at the end of each semester) to remain in good standing in the program.

Residency**:** Students must register for a minimum of 9 academic credits in each of 2 consecutive terms excluding summer and intersession to establish residency. A full-time academic load is defined as a minimum of nine academic credits per semester or an equivalent amount of research as certified by the AST Program Director.

MS Program

You must earn a total of 30 credit hours. This includes at least 18 course credits and 8 research credits, distributed as follows:

Course Credits		**Research Credits**	
Core Courses:	6	**Graduate Seminar:**	2
Electives:	Minimum of 12	**Research:**	Minimum of 6

A summary of the credit and course requirements for the MS degree can be found here.

Thesis Information

Those in the Masters program must complete and defend a Master's thesis. The Master's thesis will be more limited in scope and depth than a PhD dissertation but must still contain original work of publishable quality.

Committee

The M.S. Thesis Research Committee has at least three members: your research adviser (or mentor) and two additional members who hold a PhD in a field relevant to the student's research. At least two of the committee members must be AST Program Faculty. It's your responsibility, in consultation with your research advisor, to recruit the other two committee members. This should be done at least 2-3 months before the target date for your defense. The MS Thesis Committee will review and evaluate the thesis draft and conduct the final examination of the thesis.

Final Examination/Defense

When you and your advisor agree that your thesis is on track to be completed in a known time frame you can schedule the Thesis Defense. You must distribute a complete draft of the thesis document to your committee for examination at least two weeks prior to your defense.

You must notify the Program Director and AST Staff Assistant of the date of your thesis defense at least 6 weeks in advance so that it can be properly advertised.

The final examination of the thesis is open to the public and is primarily a defense of the thesis research. The examination consists of an oral presentation by the student, followed by questions from the audience. Suggested length for the MS thesis presentation is 30-40 minutes, and for the PhD is 45-50 minutes. The Thesis Committee will then privately question the candidate following the presentation. The Thesis Committee will caucus immediately following the examination and thereafter notify the

candidate and the AST graduate coordinator of the result of the examination.

The Committee will certify the outcome of the defense and provide the candidate with a written statement of any required changes to the thesis.

The Master's thesis must be submitted two weeks before the planned date of defense, as well as the title, abstract, and list of committee members.

MS to PhD Transfer

Depending on progress in your coursework and research project, you may be allowed to be considered for PhD candidacy, so long as you've met the credit and grade requirements and successfully defended the Master's thesis. Please speak with the Program Director for more information on this transition.

PhD Program

You must earn a total of 60 semester credit hours. This includes a minimum of 24 course credits and 24 research credits. Students take a common set of core courses and select other courses based on personal interest and working with their Faculty advisors/Research mentors.

Course Credits		Research Credits	
Core Courses:	6	**Graduate Seminar:**	2
Electives:	Minimum of 18	**Research:**	Minimum of 24

A summary of the credit and course requirements for the PhD degree can be found here.

Grade Requirements

AST program policy requires that all PhD students must receive a B or better grade in the two core courses. You must also complete the Graduate Seminar sequence and the masters-level research project/thesis.

PhD Qualifier

Those in the PhD program must complete a masters-level research project report, which they can choose to turn into a full Master's thesis. Both options include a defense. You must prepare a substantial written report describing your research and "defend" the project. The defense will take the form of a 40-minute public presentation, followed by a closed question and answer session with the Qualifying Exam Committee.

The Qualifying Exam Committee will be chaired by the student's research advisor and will include two other AST faculty members. The Committee will make a pass-fail recommendation based on its evaluation of the quality of the student's research report, presentation and overall performance in the oral examination. If the student's overall performance is considered unsatisfactory, the committee may require the student to re-submit an improved research report and possibly also repeat the defense, within a specified time limit.

Alternatively, you may opt to submit a Master's Thesis and defend it to earn "on-the-way" Master's Degree. The procedure is the same as for a terminal Master's Degree.

RIT policy requires that students complete the PhD qualifier before starting Year 3. This means any time before the end of the summer of your second year.

Proposal Review

Once you have passed your qualifier, you will start developing your PhD project. The next milestone is the PhD Proposal Review when you recruit your PhD committee and present your proposed plan of work for the degree. The expectation is that you pass this milestone sometime in the fall semester of your 4th year, though delays beyond this are acceptable on a case-by-case basis. RIT policy states that you must pass this milestone at least 6 months before you plan on defending your PhD thesis, which sets the upper limit. Some things to remember about the proposal are:

- You don't need results to defend your proposal; it is mostly a check on the scope of work you propose to undertake
- You should be able to demonstrate deep understanding of the tasks and analyses your project will need to include to be successful

You need to submit both a written research proposal, and give a 30-minute oral presentation to the Committee, who will provide constructive feedback on the project plan. The proposal needs to contain enough information to convince the committee that:

- The work (when finished) will satisfy the requirements for the Ph.D. (broadly speaking, sufficient in scope, depth and originality for publication in a leading journal)
- That the remaining work is tractable within the proposed timescale.

Typically, proposals consist of

- An introduction explaining the current state of the field and the motivation for the work in that context
- A summary of work completed & results obtained to date
- An outline of any further work planned for completion of the dissertation
- A discussion of the expected contribution to the field
- A timeline for completion of the dissertation

6 Month Rule

It is RIT policy that the final examination of the dissertation may not take place until at least 6 months have elapsed from the date on which the PhD proposal was approved by the Dissertation Committee. The AST recommendation (as in the section above) is to finish the PhD proposal at least 12-18 months before the defense, and ideally more.

The purpose of this rule is to ensure that the PhD Dissertation Committee has agreed to the scope of work and maintains proper oversight of the development of the dissertation so that any problems can be identified in good time for remedial action to be taken.

PhD Dissertation Information

Your PhD dissertation must contain original work of publishable quality, which in the judgment of the Dissertation Committee contributes significant new knowledge to the field.

A minimum of three years of full-time study or their equivalent in part-time study is required.

Committee

Once you've passed the Ph.D. qualifying exam, a Dissertation Research Committee will be appointed to oversee and ultimately examine your Ph.D. research. It's your responsibility, in consultation with your research advisor, to recruit the members of the committee and submit a request for approval to the Program Director. This should normally happen during the Fall Semester of Year 4 as part of the PhD Proposal Review process. The committee must have at least four members including:

- Your advisor
- An independent Committee Chair
- A member of the AST Faculty (other than the advisor)
- An external (to RIT) expert in a related field of research

You may recruit additional members if that is useful, but 5 is the recommended maximum.

The Committee Chair must hold a Ph.D. and be a tenured member of the RIT faculty, but *cannot* be a member of the AST faculty. The appointment of the external chair is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, via a request initiated by the Program Director. It is important you communicate the identify of the Chair to the Program Director when they agree to take on the role.

The external expert should be familiar with the topic of your research, will normally be a professor or senior scientist not affiliated with RIT and should not be a close collaborator working with either the PhD candidate or their advisor. Potential conflicts of interest must be identified to the Program Director who will mediate any potential problems.

When you have identified the members of your committee (and confirmed their agreement to serve), forward the list of names to the Program Director for approval.

The duties of the PhD Dissertation Committee include:

- Guiding the candidate through the PhD proposal review process.
- Providing guidance and advice on the project as needed.
- Reviewing the dissertation draft and conducting the final examination of the dissertation.

Final Examination/Defense

As your dissertation project nears completion, you and your advisor should determine a target date for completion of the dissertation and work with your Dissertation Committee to schedule the final defense.You must distribute the copy of the dissertation to the committee and make the dissertation available to interested faculty, at least four weeks prior to the dissertation defense.

You must notify the Program Director of the date of your dissertation defense at least 6 weeks in advance so that it can be properly advertised.

The final examination of the dissertation is open to the public and is primarily a defense of the dissertation research. The examination consists of an oral presentation by the student, followed by questions from the audience. The Dissertation Committee will normally privately question the candidate following the presentation. The Dissertation Committee will caucus immediately following the examination and thereafter notify the candidate and the AST graduate coordinator of the result of the examination.

The Committee will certify the outcome of the defense and provide the candidate with a written statement of any required changes to the dissertation.

Time Limitations

All candidates for the Ph.D. must maintain continuous enrollment during the research phase of the program. Normally, full-time students complete the course of study for the doctorate in approximately four to five years. A total of seven years is allowed to complete the requirements after first attempting the qualifying defense.

For the M.S. degree, successful completion of all course work and the thesis is required within seven years of the time of initial registration for graduate study.

For more information, see the RIT policy page here.

Templates, Forms, and Resources

MS Program Resources:

- Master's Defense Form (records outcome of defense)
- Master's Certificate of Approval (must be signed by Committee to certify approval of submitted dissertation)

PhD Program Resources:

- PhD Proposal Template: This is the latest version (as of June 2026) of the AST PhD proposal template for LaTeX. Feel free to edit fonts, etc., but generally, try to keep the same format. You can download it as a zip file and upload it directly to a LaTeX editor, such as Overleaf.
- PhD Proposal Review (records outcome of Proposal Review)
- PhD Defense Form (records outcome of defense)
- PhD Certificate of Approval (latest version included in the above LaTeX template)

Templates:

- MS/PhD Dissertation LaTeX Template: This is the latest version (as of October 2026) of the RIT/AST PhD Dissertation template for LaTeX. It has been updated with RIT's current title page requirements and the AST program requirements. You can download it as a zip file and upload it directly to a LaTeX editor, such as Overleaf.

Other:

- Sample Thesis Dissertation Announcement

Courses

Scheduled Core and Elective Courses

Core and elective courses offered by AST can be found here. You will also find brief course descriptions and a suggested list of courses offered by other RIT graduate programs that may be counted as electives for AST. You can register online for scheduled courses.

Independent Study

You can also take an independent study (reading) course with a faculty member in a topic of interest and benefit to you. You will need to recruit a member of the AST Graduate Faculty to supervise your studies. This need not be your mentor or research advisor. With your supervisor, you design

your own course of study around a specific topic, and work towards a set of predefined outcomes, meeting agreed upon assessment criteria.

In order to register for Independent Study, you will need to complete the form "Independent Study Contract," have it signed by the supervising faculty member, the AST Program Director, and submit it to the AST Staff Assistant, who will register you for the course. The credits you earn for Independent Study are course credits, not research credits.

Research Credits

With the agreement of your Faculty Mentor, or your research Advisor, you may also elect to take research thesis credits. The procedure for registering for research credit differs depending on whether you are doing a Master's level project or your PhD Dissertation. For Master's or pre-qualifier PhD students, you must fill out a research contract, found here.

Establishing Full-Time Status

Your registered course credits, registered research thesis credits, and your graduate course equivalent credits must total at least 9 in each of the fall and spring semesters for you to qualify as a full time student at RIT.

If you have enrolled in fewer than 9 credits in a given semester (excluding summer) you will need to fill out a Graduate Student Full-time Equivalency Form. This establishes with RIT that you are a full-time student regardless of the registered credits, which is typically necessary later in a PhD course of study. In addition to course and research credits, you may claim "Graduate Course Equivalent" credits if you are employed as a GTA or GRA at a level that you determine in conjunction with your mentor/advisor. These credits only count towards establishing full-time status, they do NOT count towards the MS or PhD requirements.

The AST Staff Assistant will email every AST student before the end of the semester as a reminder to fill this out. Please note that this form will *usually*

be required for PhD students that have finished all course requirements, but not other classes of students. Once you receive the email from the AST Staff Assistant with instructions, please fill-out and submit ASAP, as this form will allow RIT to process your stipend! The AST Program Director must also sign the form, so make sure they are CC'd in your response.

Plan of Study

A Plan of Study is necessary to track your progress through your degree, and is the primary document the program uses to understand your academic progress. Some things to keep in mind:

- The Plan of Study will always be a work in progress. It can and should be altered as your studies develop. At minimum it is expected that you will review the plan with your advisor at least annually and revise it as necessary.
- When filling out the form, include all courses and research credits that you have already accumulated.
- If you are in Years 1 or 2, it is not necessary to define your entire program from day one to thesis defense. Consider the plan in two phases:
    - Entry to qualifying exam or Master's defense
    - Promotion to PhD candidacy to PhD defense

The Plan of Study forms below have multiple worksheets: two are the blank forms for the MS and PhD respectively, and the others are filled out examples with annotations. Develop your plan in consultation with your advisor, then complete the form, have your advisor sign it, and submit it to the Program Director. This plan must be reviewed annually and submitted to the Program Director if any changes have accrued.

- AST MS Study Plan
- AST PhD Study Plan

COS Guidelines for Participation in Graduation

BS/MS and MS

M.S. and B.S./M.S. students who are expected to complete all degree requirements by the end of the summer term may participate in graduation. M.S. and B.S./M.S. students may only participate in graduation and be listed in the commencement booklet one time.

PhD

Ph.D. students who are expected to complete all degree requirements, including the dissertation defense, by the end of the summer term may participate in the spring term graduation ceremonies. Those not having completed the dissertation defense with at least a conditional pass on or before April 1 and not having completed all other degree requirements as of the end of the spring term must have their likely summer-term completion documented by April 1 in letters of request to the COS Dean from their dissertation advisor and school head. The Dean will then make all final decisions regarding participation in commencement ceremonies. Ph.D. students may only participate in graduation one time.

Research Ethics

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with responsible and ethical research practices. Training in such practices is increasingly required by major funding agencies. For example, NSF requires graduate students and postdocs to undergo online training. These issues will be covered in Graduate Seminar, but students are encouraged to explore these resources compiled by RIT's Sponsored Research Services: Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research.

Travel Policies

Students undertaking travel that is related to their PhD or MS programs or otherwise Sponsored by RIT must familiarize themselves with and adhere to the RIT Travel Policy.

In particular, here are some College of Science policies that MUST be adhered to

- Students MAY NOT receive a per diem and **must** provide itemized receipts to receive meal reimbursement.
- Students MAY NOT receive a travel advance. Prebooking of lodging, airfare, registration fees, etc. allows charges to be put on a department card rather than the student as much as possible.

Examples might include trips to conferences or meetings, research visits to collaborators at other institutions, observing trips, etc. Please note in particular:

1. No matter the trip, please make sure to fill out the Itinerary for Student Travel and Emergency info document and send it in to the Sr. Staff Assistant before you travel.
2. For any trips outside of “the Rochester regional area that involve overnight stays,” the student’s mentor/advisor should ensure that the student signs and returns the appropriate Release Form to the Sr. Staff Assistant.
3. In addition, if the student is traveling abroad, then the RIT International Travel Policy also applies. In the case of AST students, trips to destinations not subject to State Department warnings or alerts require advance approval from the AST Director. Permission to travel to countries that are subject to State Department warnings or alerts must be sought from the Provost.
4. RIT students have access to an emergency Travel Assistance Service for a nominal fee that will be paid by the AST program. Please inform the AST Director of your travel details well in advance, so that you can be enrolled before leaving.

Resources

- Mental Health Resources Guide AST/RIT
- Fellowships
  - NSF GRFP
  - GEM Fellowship Program
  - NASA FINESST (2026)
- Career resources
  - AAS Job Register

Change Log

Prepared by	Date	Notes
Nikki Noughani and Andy Robinson	October 2024	Original version
Liza Matrecito Salcedo and Andy Robinson	October 2025	Updated and revised throughout
Zoe Rosenberg and Michael Zemcov	October 2026	Updated and revised throughout, including linked forms