



ASTROCAMP 2026 REGULATIONS

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. AstroCamp is an academic excellence program in the field of astronomy and physics, intended for students of the last 3 years of pre-university education and organized by the Centro de Investigação em Astronomia/Astrofísica da Universidade do Porto (CAUP), located at Rua das Estrelas s/n, 4150-762 Porto, and holder of the Portuguese NIPC 502216450.

1.2. The AstroCamp aims to:

- Provide its students with high quality training and mentorship;
- Promote scientific knowledge, particularly in the areas of astronomy and physics;
- Stimulate the students' curiosity and skills of critical thinking, team work and group responsibility;
- Stimulate networking opportunities between students with different backgrounds and life experiences but common interests.

1.3. The AstroCamp's working language is English. Apart from duly identified exceptions, all the AstroCamp related activities will be carried out in this language.

1.4. Selected students will enter the program by participating in a summer school in August of the calendar year in which they complete the 10th grade of the Portuguese education system (or its equivalent in other countries).

1.5. Students with a sufficiently good performance in all the activities of the school in article 1.4 can, if they so wish, remain in the program and participate in subsequent remote (or, occasionally, in person) scientific and mentorship activities for the rest of their secondary education.

1.6. The 2026 edition of the summer school, hereafter denoted AstroCamp 2026, will be held from 30 July to 13 August 2026 at CEIA - Centre for

Environmental Education and Interpretation of the Corno de Bico Protected Landscape (Paredes de Coura municipality).

2. APPLICATIONS AND SELECTION

2.1. AstroCamp 2026 will accept applications from students who are citizens of and are studying in one of the following 45 countries: Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uruguay.

2.2. AstroCamp 2026 will accept applications from students who in the academic year 2025-2026 are matriculated in the 10th grade of the Portuguese education system (and will finish secondary school in 2028, i. e., in principle those born in 2010), or its equivalents in other eligible countries.

2.3. The applications period is from 1 to 30 April 2026.

2.4. The application to AstroCamp 2026 consists of filling out and submitting, within the period mentioned in article 2.3, an online form available at <https://astrocamp.astro.up.pt/en/candidaturas.html>, including the documents specified therein.

2.5. The application will only be considered eligible if it is received within the applications period and contains all the required elements:

- Motivation letter, necessarily written by the student in English;
- Letter of recommendation from the student's current physics teacher, written in Portuguese or English;
- Official school certificate of the student's latest available (usually 2nd term) grades, together with a translation thereof, or an explanation of the grading system if appropriate;
- Optionally, certificates of participation in relevant scientific activities, such as finals of domestic or international Olympiads;
- Authorization of parents or legal guardians, filled in Portuguese or English.

2.6. In the application form the candidate provides the contact details of the teacher who will write the letter of recommendation. Upon submission of the application by the candidate, the teacher will automatically receive an e-mail with instructions on the content of the letter of recommendation and its upload.

2.7. The teacher's letter of recommendation must also be received by the same deadline, i.e., it must be uploaded according the received instructions by the end of April 30.

2.8. The original (paper) version of the parents' authorization form must be simultaneously sent by ordinary mail, and it must arrive in CAUP until 15 May 2026, failing which the application will be irreversibly excluded.

2.9. Participation in AstroCamp 2026 is limited, and will consist of a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 students. The exact number will be decided depending on the quality of applications and the available budget.

2.10. The selection of the students will be done by the AstroCamp's Scientific Director as follows:

- 1 place for a student of the Paredes de Coura secondary school, to be selected, from the applications received from this school under the conditions of articles 2.1 to 2.8, upon nomination of the school's director, as agreed in a separate memorandum;
- 9 to 19 places selected from all applications received under the conditions of articles 2.1 to 2.8.

2.11. Students will be selected according to their academic merit, maturity and potential. The final stage of the selection process consists of an interview (to be carried out in English), to be held at CAUP (at Rua das Estrelas s/n, 4150-762 Porto) on Saturday 30 May 2026, or in Lisbon's Pavilhão do Conhecimento (at Largo José Mariano Gago, nº1, Parque das Nações, 1990-073 Lisbon) on Sunday 31 May, or via Zoom.

2.12. The interview is mandatory for all candidates, except for the student awarded the Paredes de Coura secondary school place.

2.13. The accepted students will receive the offer of a place by email, by 5 June, and must confirm their participation by 10 June 2026, failing which their place will be assigned to another student.

2.14. All the students accepted for the summer school must necessarily participate in the full activity. Except for cases of expulsion or withdrawal, the participation in only part of the AstroCamp 2026 activities will not be allowed.

2.15. The process of confirming participation includes the signing of an Acceptance Agreement and an Image Gathering Authorization Form, by the student and its legal representatives, specifically pertaining to photos and video, in the context of the program's activities, as well as their possible use to advertise future editions of the initiative. Further documentation may be

required for students coming from other countries, according to the applicable national legislation.

2.16. In the Acceptance Agreement each student must appoint an external Contact Point, who can be contacted in possible emergency situations arising during the AstroCamp 2026.

2.17. For the accepted students who are matriculated in schools in Portugal, participating in the activities of the AstroCamp 2026 will have no costs (with the possible exception of small running costs).

2.18. For accepted students matriculated in schools in other countries, the maximum cost of participation will be 400 Euro. The exact amount will be confirmed at time of offer of a place, and must be paid by bank transfer until 30 June 2025. These students can try to get financial support from our international partners or other local entities.

3. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

3.1. Medical assistance is understood to mean any preventive activity, activity performed with first aid equipment, any simple treatment performed by a first-aid trained camp monitor, as well as transportation to any hospital.

3.2. The camp will have an identified first aid monitor (preferably a medicine student), who will also be responsible, together with the camp coordinators (cf. Article 5.1), for the implementation of any applicable health and safety measures in the camp.

3.3. Each participant is covered by personal accident and liability insurance.

3.4. Whenever an accident occurs, the coordinator of AstroCamp 2026 will report it to the parent or legal guardian.

3.5. It is the students' (and their legal representatives') responsibility to inform the organization (at the time of application or confirmation of attendance) of any physical and/or functional limitation, of any special dietary needs or any other health conditions that may require specific care.

4. ASTROCAMP 2026 LOGISTICS

4.1. The meeting point for the trip to CEIA is the Train/Bus Station in Viana do Castelo (except for the student of the Paredes de Coura municipality). The students must arrive at this meeting point before 16:00 on 30 July 2026. The return to the meeting point will take place around 12:00 on 13 August 2026.

4.2. Travel expenses between their residence and the meeting point (for students living in mainland Portugal who successfully complete the camp activities) or between Porto airport and the meeting point (for other students) will be reimbursed by the organization if they are made by public transport, and upon submission of the travel tickets and the corresponding receipts containing CAUP's name and tax number.

4.3. If there are students from the Azores or Madeira, the organization will try to obtain financial support (from the regional governments or other entities) for their flights.

4.4. For students from other countries, the cost of travel to Porto airport should be covered by the students, or by the local entities from which they obtain financial support.

4.5. The AstroCamp 2026 team will consist of 2-3 teachers and 4-6 monitors. The CEIA team will also provide support to the camp's activities.

4.6. For students whose point of arrival in mainland Portugal is Porto airport, one of the monitors will meet them at the airport terminal and accompany them on the trip between the airport and the meeting point and vice-versa.

4.7. The AstroCamp teachers must be active researchers holding doctorates in areas relevant to the scientific goals of the activity, and will stay in the camp for a minimum period of one week.

4.8. The monitors must be enrolled in university degrees, at any Portuguese or foreign university, in the academic year 2025-26. All monitors will stay in the camp for the full 2 weeks. Preference will be given to AstroCamp alumni, and to those aged 21 or older.

4.9. All the students (including the one from Paredes de Coura), monitors and teachers will be accommodated in CEIA.

4.10. The students' contact with the outside world is limited and provided through the monitors and, except in emergency situations, allowed only on specific days and times. All monitors will have mobile phones whose numbers will be provided to parents/contact points, allowing a direct contact in case of any emergencies.

4.11. The mobile phones of the students will be stored during the AstroCamp, properly identified and switched off. During the designated contact periods the students can temporarily have their phones back, returning them at the end of these periods.

4.12. The CEIA premises are to be kept neat and clean. The space will be shared by all and must be respected. Teachers, monitors and students must ensure the proper maintenance of all the facilities, and in particular of the hygienic conditions thereof.

4.13. Meals (breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack and dinner) will be provided by the CEIA team according to a previously agreed schedule. Unsupervised student access to the CEIA kitchens is not allowed.

4.14. The CEIA facilities include a washing machine. A laundry schedule will be set up for AstroCamp participants in accordance with the instructions provided by the CEIA team.

4.15. Students are not allowed to use any personal gadgets at any time during the AstroCamp. If the students bring them, they will be confiscated, safely stored, and returned only at the end of the camp. In the contact periods, students can only use their mobile phones.

4.16. The scientific director reserves the right, after information to the parents and/or the contact point, to decide the expulsion of any student who by its behavior harms significantly or persistently the functioning of the activities of AstroCamp 2026.

4.17. The AstroCamp 2026 will have a policy of zero tolerance with regard to the possession or consumption of alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances. Any violation of these rules will lead to the immediate expulsion of the student from AstroCamp 2026.

4.18. Any student leaving AstroCamp 2026 prematurely, due to expulsion, withdrawal or health reasons, will be accompanied by a camp monitor to a convenient meeting point or to Porto airport. In such cases the cost of participation will not be refunded.

4.19. The students are expected to bring: some practical/sports clothing; slippers for the showers; comfortable walking shoes; sunscreen; cap or hat; beach towel and bathing suit; waterproof jacket; small backpack for outdoor activities; personal toiletries; notebooks and writing material for the classes.

4.20. The organization is not responsible for any misplacement of goods belonging to the students. It is recommended that students bring their belongings properly identified.

4.21. Optionally, students may deposit at the 'Camp Bank' the money (and/or personal documents) they bring. In this case students will give the money to the scientific director, who will record it in individual dedicated sheets and handle its

movements. For students not doing so, guarding and managing the money they bring will be their own responsibility.

5. RIGHTS AND DUTIES AT ASTROCAMP 2026

5.1. AstroCamp 2026 will be coordinated by the Scientific Director (from CAUP) and by the head of CEIA. It's incumbent upon the coordinators to:

- prepare the schedule of activities, consulting when appropriate with the teachers and monitors;
- ensure compliance with the schedule and the camp regulations (both for scientific and leisure activities) and the previously defined objectives;
- change the schedule of activities due to weather, logistical or any other reasons that so warrant;
- ensure compliance with health, hygiene and safety regulations;
- determine the expulsion from the camp of any participants who does not comply with its rules.

5.2. The AstroCamp 2026 teachers have the following rights and duties:

- supervise the training of the students and promote scientific knowledge;
- teach their courses and carry out the corresponding examinations, in accordance with the rules of the Portuguese university grade scale and the camp's internal procedures;
- be a role model for the students;
- ensure the safety of the students;
- report any violations of the AstroCamp rules to the scientific coordinator;
- refer to the coordinators and monitors for support in solving any problems.

5.3. The AstroCamp 2026 monitors have the following rights and duties:

- accompany students when necessary in the camp activities;
- support the teaching the practical classes, according to the planning of the teacher responsible for each course;
- be a role model for the students;
- be the first point of contact between the students and the outside world;
- ensure compliance with the Astrocamp rules, and with all applicable health, hygiene and safety regulations;
- report any violations of the AstroCamp rules to the scientific coordinator;
- ensure a proper group environment among the students;
- refer to the coordinators for support in solving any problems.

5.4. The AstroCamp 2026 students have the following rights and duties:

- have permanent monitoring of teachers and/or monitors;
- actively participate in all individual and group activities;
- have proper health and safety conditions for all activities;
- respect the AstroCamp 2026 regulations;

- obey the schedules established for the various activities, and the indications of the coordinators, teachers, monitors and the CEIA team;
- adopt a professional, dignified and respectful behavior towards the other participants in the camp and the CEIA team;
- report any violations of the AstroCamp rules to the scientific coordinator;
- be responsible for any damages caused.

6. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AT ASTROCAMP 2026

6.1. Students at AstroCamp 2026 will have to take two of the available courses. All the courses will be taught in English, and each will have 21 hours of theoretical and/or practical classes and 4 hours of written exams.

6.2. At the time of confirmation of participation the students will indicate an ordered list of their course preferences. It can't be guaranteed that each student can take the two courses indicated as their first options.

6.3. During the month of July the students will receive a list of suggested preliminary readings, in order to prepare the courses and other camp activities. It is the students' responsibility to dedicate the necessary time to these activities.

6.4. AstroCamp 2026 will include a scientific expedition to Spain, to observe the 12 August 2026 total solar eclipse. The expedition should leave CEIA around 7:00 on August 12 and will be back to CEIA about 24 hours later. Transportation will be by bus, provided by the Paredes de Coura municipality. The exact destination of the expedition will be decided on 11 August, depending on the weather forecast.

6.5. AstroCamp 2026 will follow a continuous assessment format with exam periods and other examinable activities distributed over several days. All of these will count towards the students' course grades.

6.6. At any point in the camp the scientific director may, if considered appropriate, send individual progress reports or other information to the contact points of some students.

6.7. At the end of the AstroCamp each student which successfully completes all activities will receive a diploma of participation, which shall include the grades obtained in the Portuguese scale of 0 to 20.

6.8. The students with a sufficiently good performance will be entitled to participate in the complementary activities mentioned in article 1.5. Such students (and their parents) should confirm, until 30 September 2026 their intention to do so, in which case they will be assigned a mentor.

6.9. Regardless of article 6.7, the student with the best performance will be entitled to a two-week internship at CAUP, on mutually convenient dates in the period between October 2026 and July 2027. It might be possible to cover part of the student's food and accommodation expenses during this internship.

6.10. AstroCamp 2026 will have an alumni weekend. The number of participants will be limited, and decided by 30 June 2026 depending on the camp's activity schedule.

6.11. Some of the leisure activities at AstroCamp 2026 may have components in Portuguese. In that case the teachers or monitors will ensure the necessary translations.

6.12. AstroCamp 2026 will include a cycle of 10 public lectures (with different topics), which will be webcast. These lectures may, exceptionally, be given in Portuguese, but will in any case include English support materials.

6.13. For the AstroCamp 2024 and AstroCamp 2025 students who remain in the program, there will be an in person activity at CEIA immediately before or after AstroCamp 2026, which will be planned in the students concerned.

7. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

7.1. Any issue arising during the course of AstroCamp 2026 or its applications stage which is not addressed in these Regulations shall be decided by the AstroCamp 2026 scientific director.