

MASS e-NEWSLETTER

Fourth Issue: June 30th 2025

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Present status of MASS

The Master MASS activities are operating at full steam for the year 2024-2025 with the first Edition students having completed their Master theses, and the second edition on their way to completing within 3 months. The third edition is preparing to enter their second year, being split among the four universities. Meanwhile the selection of the fourth and final edition students has been completed.

Program and Curriculum Enhancements

Several new optional courses were opened at UniCA: In *Statistical Methods*: an introductory course on machine learning applied to cosmology. In *Data Processing and Experimental Astronomy*: an experimental astronomy course held as a one-week mini internship at the Calern Observatory, where students had the opportunity to observe with two 1-meter telescopes on topics related to spectroscopy and photometry. This course was very popular among the students, all of whom chose to take it.

Edition-2 students conducted their 6 ECTS internships at their host institutions in order to prepare their S4 thesis projects, and these were presented during the Winter School 2025 in Rome. They are near to finalising their Master thesis projects which will be defended in September 2025. Several students are currently applying for a PhD and eight have already been accepted: 3 in Germany, 3 in France, 1 in Spain, and 1 in the US.

The First Mass Graduations took place in the period from December 2024 to March 2025. The first 13 students graduated from the program and their master theses are published in the Dissemination and Outreach section of the [MASS website](#). Eight of these students have continued to pursue a PhD; 3 continuing in Italy, 2 in Germany, 1 in Denmark, 1 in the UK and 1 in the USA. A further two students are currently applying for PhD positions.

Fourth intake of students

The fourth and final call for applications was open from 25th October 2024 to 14th February 2025. A total of 517 applications were received, comprising 279 eligible applications from a total of 54 countries, with a gender balance of 64%/35%/1% for male/female/non-binary. The selection committee worked to rank them with a score depending on academic achievements, CV and experience, quality of motivation letter, and reference letters. The final selection resulted in offers of 25 full scholarships (19 EMJM, 5 NDICI and 1 ASI) and 10 fee waivers to the highest ranked candidates.

