

Group for Astroparticle Physics - Charter

The Group for Astroparticle Physics (GAP) shall function jointly under the auspices of the Australian Institute of Physics (AIP) and the Astronomical Society of Australia (ASA).

Functions and Goals of the GAP

1. Support the professional development of the astroparticle physics community within Australia:

Groups studying astroparticle physics throughout Australia are many and diverse. The GAP provides a mechanism for these researchers to interact on topics of mutual interest, and benefit from interaction and the exchange of ideas and techniques. In particular, these studies span both the AIP and ASA, and GAP aims to facilitate cooperation between the AIP and ASA on topics relevant to astroparticle physics. GAP also aims to support the careers of those in this community. GAP is concerned with the visibility of individual work within large collaborations, in particular that of ECRs.

2. Promote the discipline of astroparticle physics:

Astroparticle physics probes many aspects of our Universe and the physics behind it from the fundamental particle perspective. Astroparticles play a key role in the physics governing many astronomical sources, from early-Universe particle physics, particle cosmology, cosmic relics, galaxy evolution, to particle acceleration in a variety of settings such as around the Sun, in supernovae, around compact objects, and in relativistic jets. They also allow tests of particle physics – from masses of Standard-Model neutrinos to beyond-Standard-Model concepts such as the nature of dark matter and other cosmic relics - in regimes inaccessible from Earth-based laboratories. It is the role of the GAP to inform the wider community of these broad applications of this research, and to encourage integration of traditionally astroparticle experiments with both the astronomers and physicists. It is also the role of GAP to link Australian researchers with the larger international community, and to promote their roles therein.

3. Linkage with the national and international astroparticle community:

Worldwide, astroparticle physics is represented by Commission C4 of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP), which organizes the international cosmic ray conference (ICRC). Other countries and regions also have well-established astroparticle physics communities with their own roadmaps. The GAP will promote the attendance of Australian researchers at the ICRC and other key international conferences in the field (such as CosPA, TeVPA, TAUP, COSPAR, IAU Division D "High Energy Phenomena and Fundamental Physics" etc), and support the hosting of such conferences in Australia. It will support the integration of astroparticle topics with the International Astronomical Union, and the hosting of dedicated symposia. It will also seek ways to aid Australian researchers to overcome the 'tyranny of distance' and collaborate with such international organisations.

4. Advise the AIP and ASA on matters relating to astroparticle physics engagement strategies.

The GAP can be called upon to provide advice to the AIP and ASA regarding strategies to support Australia's involvement in astroparticle physics activities. This can include position statements for the Australian Decadal Plans for Astronomy and Physics, as well as in response to specific requests (national and international) as they arise.

5. Research and Education: engagement with facilities

Experimental work in astroparticle physics produces unique data sets that are traditionally governed by large collaborations with limited usability for outsiders. GAP will aim to promote the accessibility of these datasets to the Australian community, including – but not limited to – hosting dedicated data usage workshops. GAP will also promote the representation of Australian researchers and organisations with the governing bodies of these large facilities.

Organisation and Governance

1. GAP Steering Committee

The organisation and running of the GAP shall be overseen by a Steering Committee comprising the following positions:

Co-Chairs (one from each of the AIP and ASA)

Immediate Past-chairs

Members x 5 maximum (including Secretary and Treasurer - see below)

Student members x 2 maximum

AIP Executive representative (if requested by AIP, non-voting)

ASA Council representative (if requested by ASA, non-voting)

The voting Steering Committee positions are elected for a period of two years with the exception of Student Members who are elected for one year. Term lengths may be altered (plus or minus one year) in order to stagger the replacement of personnel on the committee. The Steering Committee shall, as much as possible, represent a balance of people from the AIP and the ASA, gender and other aspects of diversity such as geographic origin and field of expertise. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be drawn from the committee Members. The Secretary's roles include the recording of minutes, correspondence, and organisation of elections. The Treasurer's roles include managing the finances of the GAP and reporting on these finances to the AIP Executive and ASA Council. There is a limit of two consecutive appointments of any of the steering committee positions.

Nominations for steering committee positions shall be announced by March 1 each year as necessary. A ballot of AIP and ASA members is conducted by March 15 and the result shall be declared so that new steering committee members can take up their roles by April 1.

The Steering Committee should meet at least three times per year. A quorum for Steering Committee meetings shall be at least five voting Steering Committee members including at least three from the Co-Chairs, Immediate Past Chairs, Secretary and Treasurer.

2. Membership of the GAP

The GAP is a body jointly run under the auspices of the AIP and ASA. As a result, membership of the GAP requires membership of at least the AIP or the ASA. There are two categories of membership in the GAP: (1) Full membership of the GAP is available to full members of the AIP and/or the ASA; (2) Student membership of the GAP is available to student members of the AIP and/or the ASA.

3. Authority

The GAP has no authority over its Steering Committee members as they are subject to the authority of their home institutions. It is however expected that steering committee members will conduct their tasks diligently and in a professional manner. Members of GAP will also abide by all conduct and ethical standards set down by their parent societies (AIP/ASA).

Charter Additions or Amendments

Additions or amendments to this charter require acceptance by a two-thirds majority of the GAP membership who vote on any proposed change. A minimum of one-third of the total GAP membership must participate in any such vote for it to be valid. Final approval of the changes must be given by the ASA and AIP Executive committees.