

**GURPS**

Fourth Edition

**Traveller**

# PSIONICS INSTITUTES



*An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS® Traveller® from Steve Jackson Games*  
**Based on the award-winning Traveller science fiction universe by MARC MILLER**

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# INTRODUCTION

The official *Traveller* setting has two basic approaches to psionic powers: the Third Imperium and its allied client states officially suppress them, but secretly support psionic training institutes and the undercover use of psions. The Zhodani Consulate and its allied clients embrace psi powers, and promote psions to the highest levels of

their government. *Psionics Institutes* enables *Traveller* players and gamemasters to explore both approaches in their games, in greater detail than ever before. The book covers the institutes and types of institutional training available in both the Consulate and Imperium, as well as character templates and character creation information. It gives several sample

institutes, as well as psi-using corporations, mercenary units, and psi-friendly societies, worlds, and government agencies. Underground pro-psi societies (both within and outside the Imperium) are detailed. Using *Psionics Institutes*, players and game masters can add a sixth sense to their campaign.

## ABOUT THE CREATORS

Amanda Dickerson has played *Traveller* for years, and *GURPS Psionics* for much longer than that. After several articles she wrote for the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* were published, she moved on to roleplaying books. Her first book, *Dead Sea Murder*, is a complete RPG campaign for the *FUDGE Terra Incognita* game. More information is available from her website at [www.angelfire.com/md/meadowlark](http://www.angelfire.com/md/meadowlark).

Amanda lives in Ohio with her husband. Together they care for a dog (who apparently suffers from attention deficit disorder) and three cats (who have yet to find an earthly use for the dog). Her lifelong interest in the paranormal led to her hobbies of tarot reading, magick, and psychic research. Her obsession with the latter finally found an outlet in this book.

Loren Wiseman has worked with *Traveller* in all its forms since the game's creation in 1977. He is currently *GURPS Traveller* line editor for SJ Games, and editor for the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, and was recently inducted into the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design's Hall of Fame.

The image shows a screenshot of a web browser displaying the website for the Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://jtas.sjgames.com/>. The website's main heading reads "ABOUT THE JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY". Below this, a paragraph states: "For several years, Steve Jackson Games has published the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* located online at [jtas.sjgames.com/](http://jtas.sjgames.com/). In addition to the current issue, subscribers can access the extensive archive of previous articles. From the JTAS website subscribers can talk with each other, guest speakers, and the staff in Brubek's, the live internet chat room, or using the online discussion boards." The main content area of the website features a dark background with a glowing blue and white graphic. On the left side of this graphic is a vertical menu with links: "About JTAS", "Subscribe", "Login", "Sample Issue", "Advertising", "Writing for Us", and "Feedback". The central text on the graphic reads: "Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society" followed by a paragraph: "The *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* is the official online magazine of *Traveller*. Each bi-weekly update includes news and articles; new *Traveller* material will be reviewed as it appears. JTAS supports all versions of *Traveller* and welcomes reader participation as we keep the flame of *Traveller* alive and burning brighter!"

## ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be

reached by e-mail: [info@sjgames.com](mailto:info@sjgames.com). Resources include: *Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid/](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/)). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers the *d20* system, *Ars Magica*, *BESM*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and

many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Transhuman Space*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also get opportunities to playtest new *GURPS* books!

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**GURPSnet**. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of **GURPS**. To join, point your web browser to [mail.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l/](mailto:mail.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l/).

## PAGE REFERENCES

**GURPS Compendium I** lists all the title abbreviations for **GURPS** titles.

Wherever a page reference includes a GT, it refers to a page in **GURPS Traveller**; e.g., p. GT54 refers to page 54 of **GURPS Traveller**. P refers to **Psionics**, B to the **Basic Set**, T:AI to **Traveller: Alien Races 1**, T:FT to **Traveller: Far Trader**, T:GF to **Traveller: Ground Forces**, T:RF to **Traveller: Rim of Fire**, T:SM to **Traveller: Star Mercs** and T:ST to **Traveller: Starports**.

# RESOURCES

The foundation for every **GURPS Traveller** campaign builds on the information in **GURPS Basic Set**, **GURPS Compendium I**, and **GURPS Traveller**.

The following are recommended: **GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1** includes information on the psionically gifted Zhodani race and the initial detailed look at psionics in the **Traveller** universe. **GURPS Psionics** is the complete resource for creating and playing psionic characters.

Additional useful resources: **GURPS Traveller: Rim of Fire** discusses the Imperium's psionics institutes and the psionically empowered society on the Red Zone planet Heironymus. Depending on the type of campaign, **GURPS Traveller: Star Mercs**, **GURPS Traveller: Starports**, **GURPS Traveller: Ground Forces**, or **GURPS Traveller: Far Trader** may be useful.

For inspiration from fiction, there are many psi-themed SF novels to choose from. This brief list is a good starting point:

- A Thousand Words For Stranger*, Julie E. Czerneda.
- Mind Game*, Christine Feehan.
- Shadow Game*, Christine Feehan.
- Mind of My Mind*, Octavia E. Butler.
- Kinsman's Oath*, Susan Krinard.
- Forge of the Titans*, Steve White.
- TNT: Telzey and Trigger*, James H. Schmitz.
- Gates of Hell*, Susan Sizemore.

*The Stars My Destination Aka Tiger! Tiger!*, Alfred Bester.

Additionally, these series are recommended:

- The *Pegasus* Series, Anne McCaffrey.
- The *Rowan* Series, Anne McCaffrey.
- The *Darkover* Series, Marion Zimmer Bradley.
- The *Commonwealth* series, Alan Dean Foster.
- And several novels of the *Babylon 5* series.



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# CHAPTER ONE

# FINDING A PSIONICS INSTITUTE

Finding a psionics institute depends on who you are, where you are, and what year it is. Children of the psionically gifted Zhodani noble and indentant classes (see p. GT 78-80) begin psionics training soon after they learn to speak and receive a comprehensive psionics curriculum in their schools. Although average Zhodani citizens (called proles) may possess latent psionic abilities, they do not receive training. Upward mobility is possible for prole children who demonstrate considerable psionic aptitude during standard testing. These fortunate few are adopted into an indentant family, and with that comes all the rights and responsibilities of that class.

Even within the Imperium prior to the PsionicSuppressions (800 to 826), finding an institute for psionics was no more challenging than locating any mundane college. During the Suppressions, institutes lost their charters and their

leaders were imprisoned. Whole families faced persecution and many fled to more sympathetic worlds outside the Imperium or to the Zhodani Consulate. The psions that remained in the Imperium went underground, changing their names, their occupations, and living double lives. In the nearly 300 years since, the use of psionics has remained ostensibly illegal and psionics institutes officially banned. However, the Imperium secretly established two psionics institutes of its own, disguising them as military installations, and continues the covert use of psions.

Worlds outside the Imperium and the Consulate vary from oppression to acceptance of psis, and everything in between.

A few isolated worlds within the Imperium developed cultures tolerant – or even supportive – of psionic abilities, despite the official ban on psionics.

These worlds are socially isolated (by choice or by tech level) from the Imperial community. In these cases, the Imperium often interdicts these systems, declaring them Red Zones.

The underground psionic community within the Imperium established many secret psionics institutes shortly after the end of the Suppressions. Citizens of the Imperium hear rumors of such facilities from time to time, but very few know where they are. Just as psions in the Imperium are searching for a place to learn and belong, the psionics institutes are searching for their next crop of students. The first of many challenges for a psion in the Imperium is to locate a psionics institute, a quest on which only the most persistent succeed (see p. GT:AR1 137). Those who fail must develop their talents in some other way – or not at all.

## PRIMARY SOURCES

The first step is to find someone who knows where a psionics institute is located. Primary sources have direct knowledge either of an institute's location or how to contact its representatives.

### IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY

Scientists believe there may be a genetic factor determining who has psi potential. The existence of families with several generations of psions is evidence that this is true. For those lucky enough to be born into one of these bloodlines,

the matter of finding a psionics institute to attend is vastly simplified.

Traditionally, youngsters attend the alma mater of their gifted relative. Like-minded institutes pool resources so their students and graduates are aware of some of the other programs. Children of psionic families in the Imperium are sheltered from the hostilities faced by most psions. They are encouraged from a young age to discover and develop their unique capabilities, and trained in hiding their talents from their persecutors.

The most powerful and prestigious families are known in the psionics

community as *kites*. Kites created the first post-Suppressions psionics institutes and they remain one of the central influences regarding curriculum, protocols, and policies. One or two kites generally dominate the board of directors of any given institute. It is common for most of the faculty of an institute to be related by blood or marriage to the controlling kites.

In less blessed families, a relative who is secretly psionic watches the younger generation for signs of psionic talents. That relative will approach such a child at the right moment to guide them toward one of the institutes.