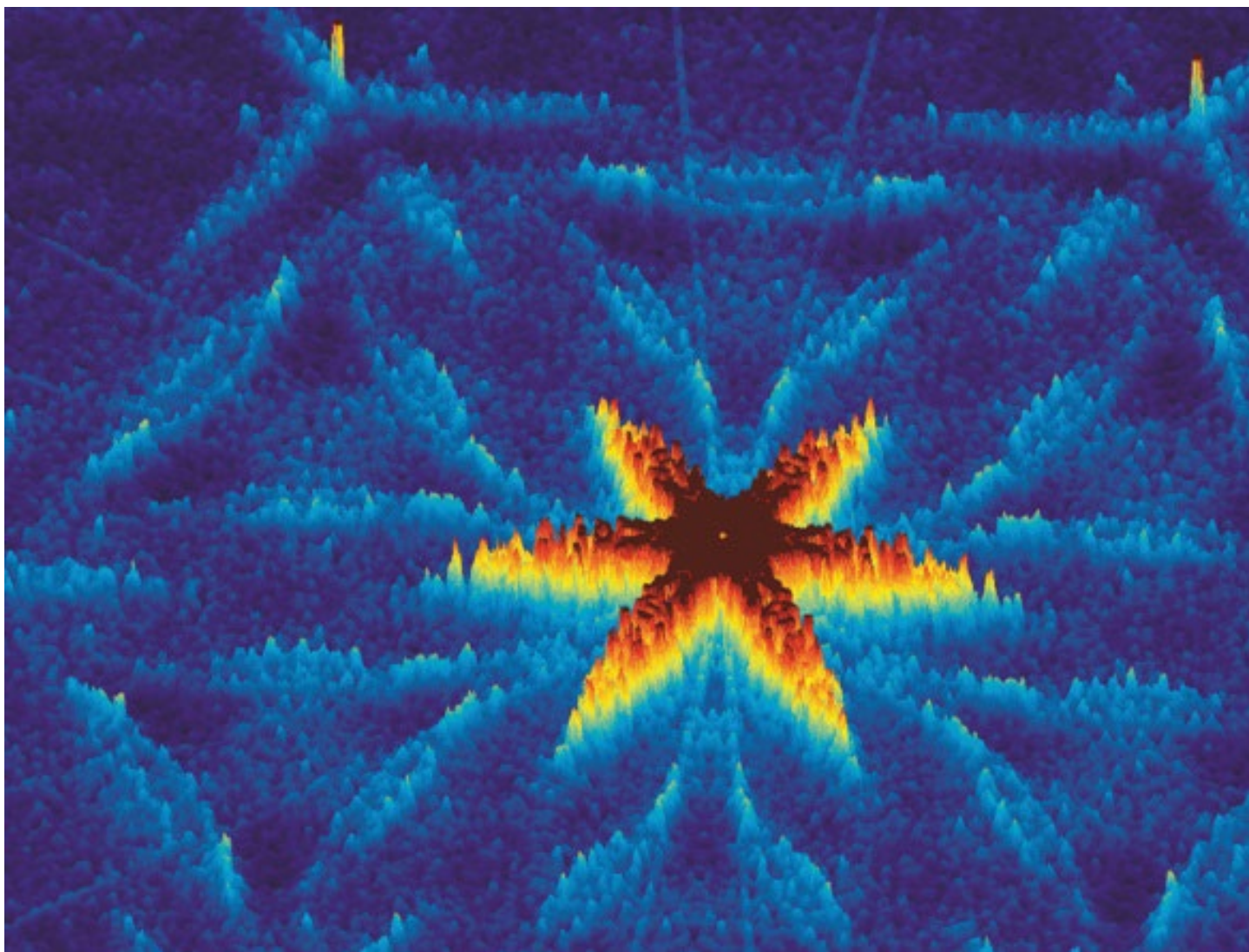




GRADUATE HANDBOOK



COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Department of Physics and Astronomy

401 Nielsen Physics Building
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-1200

PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

Contents

Welcome from the Department Head	2
Introduction to the Program	3
Admission Requirements.....	3
Financial Support.....	3
Graduate Assistantships	3
Graduate Teaching Assistants.....	4
Graduate Research Assistants.....	4
Fellowships	4
Employment and Departmental Honors	4-5
Travel Support	5
Getting Started.....	5
Diagnostic Examination.....	5
Graduate Advising	5
Colloquium.....	5
General Administrative Items.....	5
The Physics Community	5
Disability Statement.....	5
Fields of Study.....	5
The Master's Program.....	6
The PhD Program	7
BS/MS Program with a Minor in Physics.....	10
Intercollegiate Graduate Programs.....	10
Degree Progress, Standards, Evaluations, Problems, and Appeals.....	11
Proper Relationships with Students	11
Leaving the Program.....	11
Physics Career Resources.....	11
Contact Information	12
Pertinent Websites for Graduate Students	13

EEO Statement: The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment and admission without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, veteran status, and parental status.

Indicia Statement: The university name and its indicia within are trademarks of the University of Tennessee.

Cover Image: A quasi-particle interference spectrum of a monatomic superconducting tin layer on a silicon substrate. Courtesy Professors Steve Johnston and Hanno Weitering; research published in Nature Physics and featured on the April 2023 cover.

Welcome from the Department Head



Dear Graduate Students,

Welcome to the Graduate Program in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. The department has a long-standing tradition of excellence in physics research and education, and currently employs over 30 professors. Our faculty and students work on-campus, at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and at other major laboratories around the world. Research in our department is primarily carried out by the graduate students and encompasses all major areas of physics, including interdisciplinary fields such as materials research, biophysics, and energy science. Our research output and graduation rates have increased significantly over the years and we are now among the 40 to 50 largest graduate physics programs in the United States. Needless to say, we are very proud of our graduate program and of our graduate students.

This graduate handbook for the Department of Physics and Astronomy will provide you with all the information you need to know specifically about our graduate program in physics. It is a very important supplement to the university's Graduate Catalog. Together these two documents should be able to provide you with answers to most of your questions or concerns

concerning graduate studies in physics at the University of Tennessee. But as always, we will be more than happy to talk with you and to help you to be successful here in our department.

Adrian Del Maestro
Professor and Head

Introduction

To serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee, information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provided for all graduate students. Based on best practices offered by the Council of Graduate Schools, it is important that detailed articulation of the information specific to the graduate degrees offered in each department/program be disseminated.

This handbook outlines degree requirements, student responsibilities, and research and teaching opportunities in the UT Department of Physics and Astronomy. Although general descriptions of both university and departmental requirements are provided in this handbook, they do not deviate from the established Graduate School policies as outlined in the [Graduate Catalog](#). Rather, this handbook details the specific ways in which those policies are carried out. Graduate students are expected to be familiar with and comply with all requirements in Academic Policies and Requirements for Graduate Students as outlined in the catalog.

All graduate students are advised to periodically review the MS and PhD degree guidelines as set forth in the catalog to keep up with the most recent requirements. Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university.

The Graduate School website provides links to the Graduate Catalog, [Hilltopics](#), and the Graduate Student Appeals Procedure. Students are notified of any changes in departmental requirements by internal memoranda and announcements. A contact list of physics department faculty and staff members involved with the graduate program is included on page 12.

General Duties & Responsibilities

Graduate students must assume full responsibility for knowledge of rules and regulations of the Graduate Council and departmental requirements for the chosen degree program. All graduate students are expected to make a full commitment to their graduate studies and complete their degree requirements in a timely fashion, in accordance with all Graduate School policies.

Admission Requirements

Admission procedures for the Graduate School are outlined in the Graduate Catalog and on the [graduate admissions website](#).

Please note that the physics department cannot formally make an offer until an application for admission has been received and accepted by the Graduate School.

A student who enrolls in graduate study with the intention of attaining an advanced degree in physics will have completed an undergraduate major in physics or its equivalent. Physics 311- 312, 321, 361, 431-432, 421, 461, and 411-412 constitute the minimum courses prerequisite to graduate study. A student who intends to present physics as a graduate minor will have completed an undergraduate minor in physics or its equivalent. Physics 311 and 431-432 constitute the minimum course work prerequisite to a minor in physics. Applicants can also optionally submit scores from the Graduate Record Examination (general and subject).

Financial Support

Graduate Assistantships

The department offers graduate students the opportunity to gain valuable experience while offsetting tuition costs with teaching and research assistantships. Teaching and research assistants are appointed for 12-month periods with the authorized stipends paid in 12 equal checks and the remission of fees for the semesters covered by the period of appointment. Teaching and research assistantships also cover several fees charged by the university. Both teaching and research assistants are expected to register as full-time students as outlined in the Graduate Catalog (9 hours/semester until they complete the core curriculum; 6 hours/semester afterward if engaged in research). If engaged in research:

- » If working on research for a master's degree, take Physics 500 (Thesis).
- » **Once admitted to PhD candidacy:**
 - » If working on research for a PhD, take Physics 600 (Doctoral Research and Dissertation). Note: once registration for 600 has begun, the student must register for at least three hours of 600 every semester until the dissertation is accepted.

- » If the student is doing research that will not be applied to a thesis or dissertation, the appropriate course number is Physics 501 (Graduate Research Participation).
- » Depending on your circumstances and your advisor's recommendation, options other than regular coursework may be available to help meet registration requirements. These may include Physics 593 (Independent Study), Physics 599 (Seminars), or Physics 594 (Special Topics). Please note that Physics 502 (Use of Facilities) cannot be used to meet full-time enrollment requirements for international students and can only be used in permitted circumstances for domestic students.

Students should consult the Graduate Catalog for a more thorough discussion of graduate assistantship rights and responsibilities, evaluation, etc.

A full-time assistantship plus graduate course work constitutes a full-time load of approximately 40 hours per week. A full-time assistantship accounts for 50% or 20 hours of this time. A half-time assistantship accounts for 25% or 10 hours of this time. The remaining hours are allocated to the student's course work, including any research participation or dissertation credit hours that they are enrolled in. The Department's expectation is that a student will dedicate approximately 3 hours per week for every credit hour they are registered for. In other words, the expected workload for a 3-credit hour course is 9 hours/week, including time spent in lectures.

Students may not hold outside employment during the academic year. Violation of this statute will result in termination of the assistantship. Students under severe financial stress should consult with their advisors.

Graduate Teaching Assistants

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are normally expected to teach either laboratory or recitation sections in general physics and/or grade for their assigned courses. A 50% (25%) appointment requires students work no more than 20 (10) hours per week on their assigned duties. Working beyond these hours would require a reduction in the number of academic hours and would likely extend the duration of their degree.

The graduate teaching assistantship offers a stipend for 9 months, paid over a 12-month period. Teaching assistants who wish to work during the summer term must apply to the director of

undergraduate laboratories. Summer appointments are not guaranteed, although priority is given to students enrolled in summer courses and who have demonstrated excellence in teaching.

Graduate Research Assistants

A Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) is expected to conduct research. A 50% (25%) appointment requires students to spend 20 (10) hours per week on their assigned research project(s). Usually, the decision concerning the percent time is reached by mutual agreement between the student and the research group leader. Generally, a student with a full GRA position would have a 50% percent appointment together with an academic load 6 to 9 credit hours per semester. Note, when a student takes 6-credit hours of a research course (e.g., Physics 500 or 600), they are expected to work 18 hours a week on research in addition to their GRA duties. Students at the university on F1 or J1 visas must follow work hour limits of Immigration and Naturalization Services.

Fellowships

Outstanding applicants may be offered fellowships from the department, the College of Arts and Sciences, or the University.

On-Campus Employment

Refer to the Graduate Catalog for policies.

Departmental Honors

Current graduate students are eligible for a number of departmental honors. Traditionally, announcement of these awards is made at the honors day ceremonies each spring. The UT chapter of the Society of Physics Students screens all physics students for initiation into Sigma Pi Sigma, the physics honor society. Any interested graduate students must have met Sigma Pi Sigma requirements at their respective undergraduate institutions, or must satisfy the following prerequisites:

- » Must have completed one full year of graduate study in physics with 6 graduate level courses in physics completed. Seminar, thesis, and independent study courses are excluded from the 6 hours.
- » Must have a minimum GPA of 3.5 for all physics courses
- » Must have a minimum GPA of 3.25 for all graduate courses

Faculty members nominate and select graduate students for the following departmental awards:

The Paul H. Stelson Fellowships in

Physics: Established by the Stelson family to assist aspiring physicists and continue the strong research tradition between UT and ORNL. One award goes to a first-year student exhibiting professional promise and one goes to a student who has excelled in graduate research.

The Joe Fowler and Jerry Marion Outstanding Graduate Student Award:

Recognizes outstanding achievement by a graduate student.

Outstanding GTA Award: Given to the GTA with the best record of teaching, as indicated by student evaluations.

Robert Lide Citations: Recognition of students who make exceptional contributions to the undergraduate physics laboratories.

Wayne Kincaid Award: Named for the late Wayne Kincaid, an alumnus of the department and a research associate with the astrophysics group. The award honors a student who shares his love for astronomy and astrophysics education and who has made exceptional contributions to educational technology, astronomy education, or scientific writing.

Travel Support

Graduate students in physics who travel for research purposes, meetings, etc., are typically supported by the department in the forms of grants or donor-supported funds. The university also has a [Graduate Student Travel Fund administered by the Graduate Student Senate](#).

Getting Started

The physics department offers a rewarding intellectual program as well as a congenial environment for the development of professional and personal relationships. To help graduate students realize their potential, the department has established certain general requirements to set them on the best course of study and incorporate them into the physics community.

Diagnostic Examination

A graduate placement examination (diagnostic exam) is required of all first-year graduate students. This exam, administered strictly for advising purposes, covers material from undergraduate physics and is given during the fall registration period. The exam gives students and faculty a clear idea of students' aptitude and accomplishments in

physics as they begin graduate work.

Graduate Advising

Beginning graduate students will be advised by the Graduate Advising Committee until they secure a faculty research advisor. Students must inform the graduate program assistant of any change of advisor status (see contacts on page 12).

Colloquium

The physics department holds a weekly colloquium to spark the exchange of ideas and encourage interaction among scientific colleagues. **Graduate students are required to attend the colloquia** as a means of learning about future directions in physics research and developing relationships with faculty members and other students. Students should register for Physics 503: Physics Colloquium. Doctoral students must register for the course five times; master's candidates, twice. The colloquium is traditionally held on a Monday afternoon, with the speaker list, time, and date circulated in advance by email.

General Administrative Items

The physics office resources (copier, fax machine, etc.) are available to all graduate students. Information on e-mail accounts and other technology resources is available from the [Office of Innovative Technologies](#).

The Physics Community

Graduate students are an important part of the physics department's social and professional structure. A graduate student liaison committee meets periodically with the department head to discuss issues relating to graduate requirements, responsibilities, etc. Graduate students are also encouraged to participate in various departmental affairs, including the annual spring picnic and guest lectures. The Graduate Physics Society also plays an active role in sponsoring social events and informational sessions.

Disability Statement

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library at 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Fields of Study

The physics department offers several opportunities for graduate students to pursue specific scientific interests. Graduate students may emphasize study in the following fields:

Master's Degree Concentrations

- » Astrophysics
- » Atomic, molecular, optical, and low-temperature physics
- » Biophysics
- » Chemical physics
- » Condensed matter and surface physics
- » Elementary particle physics
- » Geophysics
- » Mathematical and computational physics
- » Nuclear and relativistic heavy ion physics
- » Theoretical physics
- » Minor or Simultaneous MS in Statistics (Interdisciplinary Graduate Statistics Program)
- » Intercollegiate Graduate Minor in Computational Science

Doctoral Degree Concentrations

- » Astrophysics
- » Atomic, molecular, optical, and low-temperature physics
- » Biophysics
- » Chemical physics
- » Condensed matter and surface physics
- » Elementary particle physics
- » Energy science and engineering
- » Mathematical and computational physics
- » Nanomaterials concentration
- » Nuclear and relativistic heavy ion physics
- » Theoretical physics concentration

Students are encouraged to contact faculty members working in areas of interest to them to learn more about opportunities in specific fields.

The Master's Program

The department offers three programs to complete the MS degree: a thesis option, a project option, and a course only with comprehensive exam option. Candidates for the MS degree may not at the same time be candidates for a PhD degree.

The Thesis Option

The course requirements for the thesis option include 30 hours of physics courses beyond the bachelor's degree. Required courses include 12 credit hours taken from Physics 506, 513-514, 521-522, 531, 541, 571, and 573. Each candidate must present an acceptable thesis, 6 hours of Physics 500, and pass an oral examination on course material and thesis.

The department also offers an MS thesis program with a concentration in geophysics. Program requirements are: 12 credit hours selected from geology (GEOL), geophysics (PHYS), and/or physics (PHYS) as approved by the major professor and/or committee; the presentation of an acceptable thesis, 6 hours of Physics 500, and the passing of an oral examination on course material and thesis.

The university requires candidates in the thesis MS program to earn at least 6 semester hours of Physics 500 (Thesis Registration) while the student is preparing the thesis. A student must be registered for course 500 each semester during work on the thesis, including a minimum of 3 hours the semester in which the thesis is accepted by the Graduate School.

Before registering for Physics 500, students must decide with whom they wish to work and discuss research possibilities with that professor. Students should notify the graduate program assistant of their respective thesis directors before registering for Physics 500. The student and their research director will then choose the student's committee. The university's thesis/ dissertation consultant is available to help students meet UT thesis requirements (see contact list on page 12).

The Project Option

The course requirements for the project option include a minimum of 30 hours of graduate credit in courses composed of Physics 513-514; 9 hours from Physics 411-412, 421, 431-432, 461, 507, 521-522, 531, 541, 555, 571, and 573 (at least 3 hours above the 500 level); 6 credit hours which may come from physics or from a single minor field outside of the Physics Department, such as computer science (COSC), mathematics (MATH), engineering, chemistry (CHEM), biology (BCMB, EEB, MICRO, CBE), education, business, or law (LAW), selected in consultation with the major professor and guidance committee; and 6 hours from Physics 593, 594 for a Project in Lieu of Thesis.

The candidate must pass an oral examination on course material and on the project representing the culmination of an original research project completed by the student. **The exam should be scheduled through the physics department at least two weeks prior to the examination.** An announcement of the scheduled examination should be made to the department, usually via e-mail sent by the graduate program assistant. A written report must be approved and accepted by

the physics graduate committee and the department head. An electronic version of the written report must also be submitted to the permanent electronic archive of the department available on the internet.

The Course Only with Comprehensive Exam Option

Students seeking this option must apply to the director of the graduate program for permission to enroll under this program. The requirements are the satisfactory completion of 30 hours of coursework composed of 18 hours from Physics 506, 513-514, 521-522, 531, 541, 571, 573; 6 additional hours from physics or a minor field; and 6 hours from other courses numbered above 400 (preferably of advanced laboratory nature.) At least 20 hours must be taken at the 500-level or above. In addition, candidates must pass a written examination administered by their committee.

Policies & Procedures for MS Students

Committees: The M.S. committee comprises at least three persons with the rank of assistant professor or above, usually with the research director as chair. In the case of a master's committee, the members will normally all be from the department, if there is no minor. If the student has a minor, one member of the committee must be from the minor department. All members must hold an official appointment with the university. Student should check with their professor to decide upon the committee and see that the appointments are made.

Admission to Candidacy: Admission to candidacy indicates that the student has demonstrated ability to do acceptable graduate work and that satisfactory progress has been made toward a degree. This action usually connotes that all prerequisites to admission have been completed and a program of study has been approved. The application for the master's degree is made as soon as possible after the student has completed any prerequisite courses and 9 hours of graduate course work with a 3.0 average or higher in all graduate work. The Admission to Candidacy form must be signed by the student's committee and list all courses to be used for the degree, including transfer course work. The student must submit this form (with original signatures) to the Graduate School no later than the last day of classes of the semester preceding the semester in which he or she plans to graduate.

Thesis (if applicable): A draft of the thesis in a form approved by the student's major professor should be submitted to all committee members **at least two weeks before the date of the final oral examination.** The exam must be scheduled through the physics department office at least two weeks prior to the defense. The Graduate School supplies information as to the format of theses and deadline dates for these examinations each semester. [Support for the preparation of theses and dissertations](#) is available from the Graduate School's Coordinator of Student Services. An electronic copy of the thesis must be accompanied by one original approval sheet, signed by the members of the master's committee. The approval sheet reflects the final format for submission. The approval sheet certifies that the committee members have examined the final copy of the thesis and have found that its form and content are satisfactory. In addition to the university's copy of the thesis, the student is required to give the physics department one unbound copy, including a copy of the approval sheet, for the departmental file.

Graduation: A student planning to graduate must submit an application for graduation no later than the last day of classes of the term prior to the term he or she intends to graduate. Students who expect to complete degrees should inform the graduate program assistant at the beginning of the final semester. (See the [steps to graduation](#).)

The PhD Program

All doctoral students are expected to take the graduate core curriculum in physics consisting of the following courses: Physics 521-522, 531, 541, 551, and 571. They must also take a minimum of 24 hours of Physics 600.

A minimum of 15 hours of 600-level courses with 6 of these hours in their concentration area with approval of the student's Doctoral Committee, OR a minimum of 12 hours of 600-level courses with 6 of these hours in their concentration area and a minimum of 3 hours of 500-level courses in their concentration area with approval of the student's Doctoral Committee.

For the Energy Science and Engineering Concentration, students should take ESE 511, ESE 512 (3+3 credits), at least 3 hours from the Knowledge Breadth Curriculum (a list of courses is available from the Graduate Program Director) and 3 credit hours (1+1+1) of topical seminars in the focus area of [Bredesen Center for Interdisciplinary](#)

Research and Graduate Education.

To be admitted to PhD candidacy, students must: a) fulfill all general requirements by the Graduate Council, b) pass the qualifying process, c) have at least a 3.0 GPA on the graduate curriculum in physics, d) form a doctoral committee and e) pass the comprehensive examination.

The Qualifying Exam

All Ph.D. students are required to complete a qualifying process that ensures they possess adequate general knowledge of fundamental physics.

Students entering the program in Fall 2026 or later are required to pass five subject tests. These tests correspond to the final examinations of the graduate-level core courses: Classical Mechanics (Physics 531), Electromagnetic Theory (Physics 541), Quantum Mechanics I and II (Physics 521/522), and Mathematical Methods in Physics 1 (Physics 571). Each student must achieve a passing grade on each exam within one year of completing the respective course. Students may retake a subject exam once during the final exam period of the subsequent year. Course letter grades and qualifying exam scores are recorded separately [and the passing grade for the purposes of qualification is set by a committee]. A second attempt at the final exam does not affect the original letter grade unless the student is retaking the course for credit (see the Graduate School's policies on retaking courses for credit). Students will have access to a repository of representative problems to facilitate preparation.

Students entering prior to August 2026 must complete a written qualifying exam consisting of two parts, administered on consecutive days. Passing performance corresponds to a mature command of the undergraduate physics major curriculum. Ideally, the qualifying exam should be passed after the student's first year of study; however, all students may take a second attempt, if needed, which must be completed no later than the end of the second year.

Once a student has completed their qualifying examination(s), the faculty will decide if the student will be allowed to continue in the PhD program. This decision will consider the student's performance on the qualifying examination(s), their coursework, their performance as a GTA, and any optional research participation.

The Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive examination is designed to test the student on specific knowledge and skills in the

areas essential to the student's research program; on capability to successfully complete the doctoral dissertation; and on general knowledge of the graduate core curriculum. The most essential component of this examination is the presentation and defense of an original research proposal. This should be a 15-to-20 page document describing the proposed research topic (What?), the motivation for the proposed research (Why?) and the proposed methods (How?). The document must include relevant factual material and a literature review. The document must be given to each member of the student's committee **AT LEAST ONE WEEK** before the oral part of the examination.

The dissertation topic will be chosen with reference to one of the fields in which research facilities can be made available either at UT laboratories in Knoxville; Oak Ridge National Laboratory; or at other research facilities used by the University faculty.

The oral part of the examination consists of two parts. Part 1 is an oral presentation and defense of the research proposal. Part 2 consists of questions by committee members about any aspect of the student's preparation for the proposed research and may include fundamental questions about the foundations of the physics. The oral part is public and must be announced **AT LEAST ONE WEEK** in advance.

The student must pass both the written and the oral part of the comprehensive exam. If the student passes, the written part (i.e., the research proposal) will be submitted to the physics department archive and will become a public document. The comprehensive examination must be passed prior to admission to candidacy and must be passed before the end of the third year of study. The exam is conducted by the student's doctoral committee and an additional faculty member appointed by a department head.

Policies & Procedures for PhD Students

Committees and Major Advisor: Students are required to find a research advisor and form a doctoral committee before the end of the second year of study. This committee is responsible for advising the student and monitoring their progress toward the doctoral degree. This committee comprises at least four UT faculty members holding the rank of assistant professor or above, including adjuncts, three of whom (including the chair) must

be approved by the Graduate Council to direct doctoral research. At least one member must be from an academic unit other than that of the student's major field.

In general, the chair of the committee is a regular faculty member in the department and is the student's primary research advisor. Occasionally students want to work on research at Oak Ridge National Laboratory with an ORNL scientist as the primary advisor. The ORNL scientist usually is a research, adjunct, or regular faculty member. If that scientist has faculty status in the department and is approved to direct doctoral research, then that person can serve as one of the four members of the doctoral committee and will have the title of primary research advisor. If the proposed research director does not have such official UT status, then that person will be added to the committee as a fifth voting member and will have the title of primary research advisor. Additional members internal or external to UT can be appointed to the committee as friends, but will not have voting rights.

The department requires that a candidate's committee meet with him or her at least once per academic year. The student also can request a meeting without the presence of both the committee chair and the primary research advisor. The student has the right to request this type of meeting at any time. The committee is set up to help the student, who is urged to consult its members when technical, procedural, or other problems arise, and to keep them informed of their progress.

Admission to Candidacy: Admission to candidacy indicates agreement that the student has demonstrated the ability to do acceptable graduate work and that satisfactory progress has been made toward a degree. This action usually connotes that all prerequisites to admission have been completed and a program of study has been approved. A student may be admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree after passing the comprehensive examination and maintaining at least a B average in all graduate coursework. Each student is responsible for filing the admission to candidacy application, which lists all courses to be used for the degree, including courses taken at UT or at another institution prior to admission to the doctoral program, and is signed by the doctoral committee. **Admission to candidacy must be applied for and approved by the Graduate School at least one full semester prior to the date the degree is to be conferred. The candidacy application must be submitted with original signatures.**

Doctoral Research: Students should not register for Physics 600 until they are admitted to candidacy. They are admitted to candidacy when they pass the comprehensive exam. So, **students should not register for Physics 600 until they have passed the comprehensive exam.** Students who wish to register for Physics 600 (Doctoral Research and Dissertation) are requested to notify the graduate program assistant of the name of their research director. The student must register continuously for course 600 (minimum of 3 hours) from the time the doctoral research proposal is approved, admission to candidacy is accepted, or registration for course 600 is begun, whichever comes first, including summer semester and the semester in which the dissertation is approved and accepted by the Graduate School. A minimum total of 24 hours of course 600 is required before the dissertation will be accepted. A student who will not be using faculty services and/or university facilities for a period of time may request leaves of absence from dissertation research up to a maximum of six terms (including summer terms). The request, approved by the major professor, will be submitted by the student and filed in the Graduate School. A student should be registered for the number of dissertation hours representing the fraction of effort devoted to this phase of the candidate's program. Thus, a student working full time on the dissertation should register for 12 hours of course 600 per semester.

Submission of Dissertation: Upon completion of doctoral dissertation research, a candidate will submit a draft of their dissertation to the committee chair. The department recommends that this draft be available to the professor in charge six weeks before the expected date of graduation. The committee chair will then set a date for the final oral examination. A physics department regulation specifies that draft copies of the dissertation be made available to the entire committee at least three weeks prior to the date of examination. An electronic copy of the dissertation (prepared according to university regulations) must be submitted to and accepted by the Graduate School on behalf of the Graduate Council. Each dissertation must be accompanied by an approval sheet signed by all members of the doctoral committee. The approval sheet reflects the final format for submission. The approval sheet certifies to the Graduate School that the committee members have examined the final copy and found that its form and content demonstrate scholarly excellence. A Doctoral Dissertation Agreement Form, Survey of Earned Doctorates, and Abstract form are also submitted at this time.

Final Examination: The final oral examination must be held in Knoxville. This rule allows examinations to be open to all members of the faculty. The exam must be scheduled through the Graduate School at least one week prior to the exam. This final examination may cover the student's dissertation, special field, and other fields as the student's faculty committee may specify. This examination must be passed at least two weeks before the date of submission and acceptance of the dissertation by the Graduate School.

Graduation: Students planning to graduate must submit an application for graduation no later than the last day of classes of the term **prior to the term** they intend to graduate. Students who expect to graduate at the end of a given semester should notify the graduate program assistant in the first two weeks of the semester.

Five-Year BS-MS Program

Qualified students completing a BS degree from a department of the Tickle College of Engineering or the College of Arts and Sciences who have added a physics minor by completing the requirements listed under the Five-Year BS with Physics Minor-MS program in the *Undergraduate Catalog*, must apply to the department's graduate committee for permission to enroll under this program. Six credit hours of 400-level courses required for a minor in physics combined with a BS engineering degree may be applied toward a master's degree (project option or non-thesis option) in physics during a fifth year following the award of the BS. This program is designed for students attending the University of Tennessee for the Master of Science degree because other universities may not accept these courses for graduate credit since they were used to satisfy requirements for an undergraduate program. Significant components of the program are:

- » Students must have an overall GPA of 3.4 in required course work. Conditional admission may be granted after completing the required 100- and 200-level requirements for the minor while full admission is granted after enrolling in the final semester of courses required for all BS and minor course requirements with a minimum overall GPA of 3.4.
- » Students must at least be conditionally admitted to the program prior to taking graduate courses for both their minor and master's degree. All courses taken for graduate credit must be approved by the graduate program director. Students admitted to the program must request

permission from the Graduate School to take approved courses for graduate credit.

- » Students admitted to the program must also follow the normal procedure for admission to the Graduate School. Admission of students into this program must be approved by the department and the Graduate School. Students will not be eligible for assistantships until they are enrolled as graduate-level students in the Graduate School.

Five-Year Program Project Option

The requirements for the project option are Physics 411, Physics 412, Physics 593, Physics 594, and 12 hours (four courses) chosen from any 500-level physics courses. Examination and reporting requirements are the same as for the standard physics major MS project option.

Five-Year Program Non-Thesis Option

The requirements for the non-thesis option are Physics 411, Physics 412, and six courses (18 hours) chosen from Physics 513, Physics 514, Physics 521, Physics 522, Physics 531, Physics 541, Physics 571, and Physics 573. Examination requirements are the same as for the standard physics major MS non-thesis option.

Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor | Computational Science

The Department of Physics and Astronomy participates in the interdisciplinary graduate minor in computational science (IGMCS) program. Any student pursuing a master's or PhD with a major in physics can receive a minor in computational science by completing the appropriate IGMCS requirements. For further information, see the description of the IGMCS listed under the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science or visit the [website](#). The physics department also contributes courses to the IGMCS program curriculum.

Intercollegiate Graduate Statistics Program

The Department of Physics and Astronomy also participates in the [master's in statistics program](#), a formal University of Tennessee academic program established to enable students to earn either a minor or an MS in Statistics simultaneously with a master's or doctoral degree in another department.

Degree Progress, Standards, Problems, And Appeals

Students are required to follow the Graduate School's standards regarding grade point average, degree progress, research compliance, and academic honesty, as outlined in the Graduate Catalog. Until they have a committee, the director of the physics graduate program will provide a **written evaluation** for students after each academic term to insure they are making sufficient progress toward their degrees in terms of academic progress and meeting their responsibilities as a teaching or graduate assistant. Once a student has a committee, the chair will conduct evaluations. Students will be alerted to any deficiencies or problems. The department follows university guidelines regarding all [appeals and complaints](#).

early withdrawal, you should contact the Bursar's office to inquire about the financial ramifications for early withdrawal.

Physics Career Resources

Several resources are available to help students explore career options. The following are some starting places:

- » [American Physical Society Career Page](#)
- » [Physics Today Jobs](#)
- » [UT Center for Career Development](#)
- » [PhysicsWorld Jobs](#)

Proper Relationships with Students

If a graduate student, as part of their employment at UT, has any kind of power over another person, he or she should NOT have any kind of romantic relationship with that person. Power might consist of being a supervisor, advisor, or teacher at any level, and therefore applies to administrators, supervisors, faculty, lecturers, teaching assistants, etc. [The Faculty Senate](#) has outlined policies regarding appropriate relationships with students that would also apply to graduate students. The university's [Title IX website](#) outlines UT's policy on issues including dating and sexual harassment.

Leaving the Program

If, for any reason, a graduate student terminates study in the physics department, that student must see Showni Medlin-Crump to follow proper checkout procedures. Failure to comply with this policy will result in a hold on any outstanding paychecks issued to the student, as well as a hold on academic transcripts from the university.

Early Termination/Withdrawal

If a student is terminated or withdraws from a program prior to the end of the semester, the student will be responsible for payment of tuition and other fees from the termination/withdrawal date until the end of the semester. The responsibility for paying tuition and fees will apply to all students, including those who have tuition waivers during the semester in which they are terminated/withdraw early. Please see the graduate catalog for additional information about early termination/withdrawal. If you are considering

Contacts

NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION	RESPONSIBILITY
Dr. Adrian Del Maestro Professor and Head	Adrian.DelMaestro@utk.edu 974-3342 401 Nielsen Physics	Meets with the graduate liaison committee
Dr. Steve Johnston Professor	sjohn145@utk.edu 974-7837 502 Nielsen	Director of the graduate program in physics
Dr. Marianne Breinig Professor and Associate Head	mbreinig@utk.edu 974-7842 202 Nielsen Physics	Assistant director of the graduate program in physics
Dr. Anthony Mezzacappa Professor	mezz@utk.edu 974-2621 206 South College/ORNL	Chair of graduate curriculum committee
Dr. Christine Cheney Director of Undergraduate Labs	ccheney@utk.edu 974-2631 404B Nielsen Physics	Teaching assistant assignments and TA training/supervision
Dr. Norman Mannella Professor	nmannell@utk.edu 974-6123 210 Nielsen Physics	Chair of the graduate advising committee
Showni Medlin-Crump Senior Administrative Services Assistant	smedlin@utk.edu 974-2633 401 Nielsen Physics	Keys, copier codes, and employment paperwork
Yvonne Reall Administrative Specialist Graduate Program Assistant	yreall@utk.edu 974-3342 401 Nielsen Physics	Changes in advising status, notification of graduation, etc.
Abby Sherman Coordinator of Student Services (The Graduate School)	thesis@utk.edu 974-2475 111 Student Services Bldg.	Advises students on Graduate School policies and procedures as well as thesis and dissertation formatting requirements

Pertinent Websites

International Students

- » [International Student and Scholar Services](#)
- » [International House](#)
- » [ITA Testing Program](#)

Professional Development & Training

- » [Office of Graduate Training and Mentorship](#)
- » [UT Libraries Services and Resources for Graduate Students](#)
- » [Center for Career Development](#)
- » [Tennessee Teaching and Learning Innovation](#)
- » [Experience Learning](#)

Funding

- » [Costs and Funding Opportunities](#)
- » [Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards](#)
- » [Financial Aid](#)
- » [NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program](#)
- » [DOE Computational Science Graduate Fellowship](#)

Student Resources

- » [Department of Physics and Astronomy](#)
- » [College of Arts and Sciences](#)
- » [Student Counseling Center](#)
- » [Graduate School](#)
- » [Graduation Deadlines](#)
- » [Graduate School Forms](#)
- » [Graduate Catalog](#)
- » [Graduate Student Rights and Obligations](#)
- » [Graduate Student Senate](#)
- » [Office of Graduate Admissions](#)
- » [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#)
- » [Office of Equal Opportunity and Accessibility](#)
- » [Office of Title IX](#)
- » [Office of Campus Culture and Community](#)
- » [Research Integrity & Assurance](#)
- » [Thesis/Dissertation Support](#)
- » [Office of Innovative Technologies](#)