

MS in Physics

About the Master of Science

The master of science degree in physics prepares students for a variety of scientific careers. Since physics is the most fundamental of the physical sciences, graduate-level studies in the field provide essential knowledge for application in many areas. Students with strong backgrounds in physics, as well as in areas ranging from biology to engineering, are encouraged to consider a personalized MS program in physics. Graduates have many job opportunities in a variety of areas.

Degree Requirements

In general, students must present at least 30 credit hours for the MS degree, including at least 15 hours in courses at the 8000 level. The program must include at least 15 hours of physics courses. There is no foreign language requirement.

Physical Science Option - The master of science (physical science) degree is designed for those preparing to teach more than one science or for those broadening their foundation in science before proceeding to the doctoral degree. It emphasizes broad training in physics, chemistry and mathematics. No thesis is required.

The MS Degree requires completion of a minimum of 30 course hours beyond the Bachelor's Degree (at least 15 hours of those in 8000 level courses) with a grade of 3.0 (B) or better, and completion of the Departmental Qualifying Examination at least at the MS pass level. The basic residency requirement stipulates that 24 hours of this work be courses taken at MU (i.e., no more than 6 hours may be transfer credits). In a normal program, this requirement is met by the end of the second year at MU. The required courses for a Master's Degree are:

PHYSICS 8610	Classical Mechanics	3
PHYSICS 8620	Electrodynamics I	3
PHYSICS 8660	Methods in Mathematical Physics	3
PHYSICS 8680	Thermodynamics and Statistical Mechanics	3
PHYSICS 8710	Quantum Mechanics I	3

Other additional courses may be taken from 7000 and 8000 level courses in astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, biology, engineering, and physics to make a total of 30 hours of course work. In some cases, a student who is a transfer graduate student or who has a particularly strong undergraduate background may have had course work which satisfies the requirement of one or more of these core courses. Exemption from taking these courses at MU may be granted upon written application to the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee.

Research

It is essential for the MS degree that the students carries out some research. Three hours of research, PHYSICS 8090, should be taken, but not more than nine hours of reading and research courses may be included in the 30 hour requirement. (Note: This 9 hour limitation is a departmental requirement and is more restrictive than the Graduate School requirement.) A formal MS thesis is not required in Physics. The student, in consultation with his/her advisor, can choose to write an MS thesis as an option (MU Graduate School thesis guidelines (<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/academics/thesis-dissertation/diss-thesis-guideline/>)).

Qualifying Examination

The student must pass the Departmental Qualifying Examination at least at the MS pass level. Upon completion of the qualifying examination, the student fills out the form M3, "Report of the Master's Examining Committee" and gathers the signatures of the Qualifying Examination Committee members. This form is then signed by the Director of Graduate Studies and forwarded to the Graduate School Dean.

After performing satisfactory work for the first year, the student with the advisor's assistance completes the form M1, "Plan of Study for the Master's Degree," an outline of the course of study for the student's graduate program, and forwards the application through the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee to the Dean of the Graduate School. The plan of study form must be filed no later than the session preceding the session in which the student expects to receive the degree. Upon approval of the M1 form by the Dean of the Graduate School, the student is a candidate for the degree.

The program for the Master's Degree must be completed within a period of eight years beginning with the first semester of enrollment, not including time spent in the armed services. For any extension of this time limitation, the student must petition the Graduate School Dean. Such petitions must be received in the Graduate School Office prior to the expiration of the normal period and must be approved by the advisor, the Departmental Director of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate School Dean. The Graduate School will notify the advisor in writing of the final decision.

The candidate must be enrolled at the MU campus during the semester in which the program of study, outlined in the "Plan of Study for the Master's Degree", is expected to be completed. During the first six weeks of this semester, the candidate must personally confirm with the Graduate School for all graduation arrangements.

Application Process

We welcome applications from students who have successfully completed a 4-year undergraduate degree in physics or closely related fields. International students who have gone through a 3-year undergraduate degree program need to have an MS degree to become eligible for admission.

Applications for admission for graduate study in physics have to be completed online. Your online application should include the following material (to be uploaded in electronic format):

- University of Missouri Graduate School Application. Use the online application system to fill out the application form and upload the required documents.
- The results of the general GRE Test (required).
- The results of the GRE Advanced Physics Test, if available (not mandatory, but strongly recommended).
- For international applicants, the results of the TOEFL Test. The minimum total TOEFL scores for graduate admission into the MU Physics program are 550 (paper-based), 213 (computer-based) or 80 (internet-based). The IELTS test with a minimum score of 6.5 is an acceptable alternative to the TOEFL.
- A statement of purpose, in which you tell us a bit about yourself (e.g. your motivations, career goals, and research interests, and why you chose to apply at the University of Missouri).
- Three letters of recommendation from three of your professors who are familiar with you and your work.

- Official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions applicant has attended.

Admission Criteria

Fall deadline: February 1 for full consideration

Spring deadline: Rolling (target date: October 1)

Minimum GRE score: none set

International applicants must submit results of the TOEFL test.

Internet-based test (iBT)	Paper-based test (PBT)
80	550

- MU institutional code for GRE and TOEFL: 6875
- GRE department code: 0808
- TOEFL department code: 76