



Applying to Physics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This information sheet explains how to select the Physics degree program best for you.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign offers a **premier** education and research program in Physics. We are ranked 2nd nationally in Engineering Physics, which is our core undergraduate curriculum. Our graduate research program is ranked 9th nationally, with only one other public institution ranked higher. We feature the #1 ranked graduate program in Condensed Matter Physics, plus strong programs in Atomic/Molecular/Optical Physics, Biological Physics, Astrophysics/Cosmology, High Energy Physics, Nuclear Physics, and Physics Education Research.

At Illinois, the **Department of Physics** is in the **College of Engineering**. That alignment is

- *Historical* — The Department of Physics was established as part of the College of Engineering in 1889 on the principle that physics is the scientific basis for all engineering disciplines.
- *Unconventional* — At most universities, Physics is in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.
- *Advantageous* — The alliance of physics and engineering provides a unique perspective for our program that positions our faculty and students to solve fundamental problems in science, develop technological applications, and address key societal issues.

The Department of Physics offers several degree programs. Our core program is

Engineering Physics

Engineering Physics is a rigorous program in fundamental Physics, offering courses in theoretical and experimental physics, advanced laboratory courses, and opportunities for undergraduate research. It is also a flexible curriculum, allowing electives that can be used to create custom programs combining Physics with other disciplines and providing training in technical areas and capabilities.

Students interested in pursuing graduate school and careers in Physics or other STEM fields should apply to the College of Engineering at Illinois for an *Engineering Physics* degree.

We are in the process of creating a NEW *Applied Physics* curriculum that will combine fundamental physics with technical training, participation in design projects, involvement in entrepreneurial activities, and opportunities for internships with industrial partners. We anticipate enrollment in this program opening within the next two years.

For students who wish to combine a background in Physics with other disciplines and interests, we offer three cross-college programs managed by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences:

Physics Concentration in LAS Science and Letters

The *Physics concentration in the LAS Science and Letters* curriculum provides a basic training in physics while allowing room for electives to create a physics-based educational program in a wide variety of interdisciplinary fields.

Specialized Physics Curriculum

The *LAS Specialized Physics* degree expands the Science and Letters curriculum through additional physics courses to provide a comprehensive exposure to foundational and advanced physics.

Physics Teaching Concentration

In addition to providing a firm foundation in physics, mathematics, and basic laboratory techniques, the *Physics Teaching Concentration* incorporates training in modern STEM-subject teaching pedagogies. Completion of this concentration will fulfill state certification requirements to teach both physics and general science.

Myths about Physics at the University of Illinois

“It is more difficult to get into Engineering Physics.” This is **not** true. The Department of Physics sets identical admissions standards for all of our programs. In fact, the acceptance rate over the last several years has been highest in Engineering Physics.

“It is less expensive to enroll in LAS Physics, because those students do not pay the College of Engineering surcharge.” This is **not** true. All Physics majors pay the same surcharge, but only the surcharge funds paid by Engineering Physics students flow to the Department of Physics to support advanced laboratory courses, undergraduate research opportunities, and career placement services.

“Engineering Physics is designed just for students interested in an engineering career.” This is **not** true. Our Engineering Physics degree is so-named to identify it as being in the College of Engineering. It is not an ABET-accredited program. We are developing a new Applied Physics degree that will provide a solid base of fundamental physics coupled with exposure to technical and computational coursework, design opportunities, and entrepreneurial activities that will position students for careers in industry and applied sciences.

For information on **Physics Illinois**, visit our website at <https://physics.illinois.edu>.

To apply for admission, visit <https://physics.illinois.edu/admissions/undergraduates/>.

To speak to an academic advisor, contact Merissa Jones at majones2@illinois.edu.

To arrange a visit, contact the Department of Physics office at 217-333-3761.