

APPLIED PHYSICS PHD

Degree Requirements

The following requirements are in addition to, or further elaborate upon, those requirements outlined in The Graduate School Policy Guide (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/academic-policies-procedures/>).

Master's

The Applied Physics Program does not offer a terminal master's program, and only students who intend to pursue the PhD are admitted. However, PhD students who satisfactorily complete the first year of classes and pass a comprehensive examination are eligible to receive a Master of Science degree.

PhD

The formal requirements for a PhD in Applied Physics are:

- The core courses
- The oral qualifying exam
- The teaching experience
- The prospectus or thesis proposal
- The thesis defense

Core Courses

Total Units Required: 10

Course	Title
Core Courses	
MAT_SCI 401-0 or PHYSICS 416-0	Chemical & Statistical Thermodynamics of Materials Introduction to Statistical Mechanics
PHYSICS 412-1 & PHYSICS 412-2	Quantum Mech and Quantum Mechanics
PHYSICS 411-1	Methods of Theoretical Physics
GEN_ENG 519-0 or CHEM 519-0 or PHYSICS 519-0	Responsible Conduct for Research Training ^{required but not for credit} Responsible Conduct of Research Training Responsible Conduct of Research Training
PHYSICS 414-1	Electrodynamics
MAT_SCI 405-0 or PHYSICS 422-1	Physics of Solids Condensed-Matter Physics
Computational Methods of Applied Physics course ^{See list of course options below.}	
Experimental Methods of Applied Physics course ^{See list of course options below.}	
Elective 1 (Graduate level class)	
Elective 2 (Graduate level class)	

List of course options for Computational Methods of Applied Physics

Course	Title
CHEM 448-0	Computational Chemistry
CHEM_ENG 451-0	Applied Molecular Modeling
ES_APPM 446-2	Numerical Solution of Partial Differential Equations
MAT_SCI 458-0	Atomic Scale Computational Materials Science
MECH_ENG 417-0	Multi-scale Modeling and Simulation in Solid Mechanics
MECH_ENG 418-0	Multi-Scale Modeling and Simulation in Fluid Mechanics
MECH_ENG 423-0	Intro to Computational Fluid Dynamics
MECH_ENG 426-1	Advanced Finite Element Methods I

MECH_ENG 426-2	Advanced Finite Element Methods II
ELEC_ENG 435-0	Deep Learning: Foundations, Applications, and Algorithms (Cross listed with DATA_SCI 423-0)
ELEC_ENG 463-0	Adaptive Filters (Must complete computational project for approval)
ELEC_ENG 475-0	Machine Learning: Foundations, Applications, and Algorithms (Cross-listed with DATA_SCI 423-0)
ELEC_ENG 495-0	Special Topics in Electrical Engineering (Approval is for Optimization techniques for machine learning and deep learning and for Deep learning from scratch)
PHYSICS 430-0	Nonlinear Dynamics & Chaos
PHYSICS 441-0	Statistical Methods for Physicists and Astronomers
PHYSICS 465-0	Advanced Topics in Nonlinear Dynamics
COMP_SCI 449-0	Deep Learning

List of course options for Experimental Methods of Applied Physics

Course	Title
MECH_ENG 433-0	Advanced Mechatronics
MAT_SCI 460-0	Electron Microscopy
MAT_SCI 461-0	Diffraction Methods in Material Science
MAT_SCI 465-0	Advanced Electron Microscopy & Diffraction
MAT_SCI 466-0	Analytical Electron Microscopy

Oral Qualifying Exam

Students are required to pass a qualifying exam before advancing to the second year of the program. This exam takes the form of a short presentation made to an examining committee, followed by a closed question session before the committee. There is no written qualifier.

Teaching Experience

One quarter of teaching experience is required by the Graduate School. Since AP is a graduate-only program, our students gain this experience by serving as TAs in a variety of undergraduate departments.

Prospectus or Thesis Proposal and Defense

Students must submit and defend their thesis proposal before the end of the spring quarter of the third year.

This includes a written proposal and a 30 mins defense followed by questions from the faculty committee.

Thesis Defense

Each PhD candidate must pass a Thesis Defense based on the work presented in the candidate's dissertation. The faculty committee assembled previously for the thesis proposal and defense conducts the examination. The examination involves a mandatory open and publicized oral presentation and discussion during the first hour, followed by a closed examination with only the faculty committee.