

Applying to Graduate School A Panel Discussion

**Nina Abramson
Harvey Leff
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Applying to Graduate School

I. Graduate school or no graduate school?

II. Ph.D. or M.S. degree?

III. Field(s) of physics & related areas

IV. Geographical area restrictions

V. Financial considerations

VI. Ways to identify suitable schools.

VII. Application procedure

VIII. Visiting prospective schools

IX. Timetable

X. Final decision

I. Graduate School or No Graduate School?

A. Why go to graduate school?

Learn more physics

Do high-level research

Obtain credentials for research or university position

B. Differences between graduate and undergraduate experiences

Course work - advanced courses (C is failing)

Qualifier exams - written & oral

Research - dissertation

Creativity and *independent* work

C. Read: *Planning for Graduate Study* - AAPT

<http://www.aapt.org/Resources/Planning-for-Graduate-Studies.cfm>

See also:

<http://dept.physics.upenn.edu/undergraduate/gradschool.html>

Check out local graduate schools

**From: Stephan Haas <shaas@usc.edu>
Date: October 10, 2004 11:03:31 AM PDT
To: Harvey Leff <hsleff@csupomona.edu>
Subject: Re: Cal Poly Physics Seminar - Oct. 15, 2003**

Thanks for this announcement. Although I won't be able to come to this presentation, I am interested because I direct the graduate program and admissions at USC's Physics & Astronomy Department. If there is an interested group of upper division physics majors, I would gladly meet them sometime, either inviting them to USC or coming for a visit to Cal Poly. Please let me know whether this sounds good to you.

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UCR Graduate School Information



Department of Physics

<http://physics.ucr.edu>

**Graduate School
Preview Day**

Friday, November 5th 11:30AM to 4PM

- ✓ **Admission Requirements**
- ✓ **Fellowships**
- ✓ **Research Programs**
- ✓ **Tour of Research Labs**



RSVP to Prof. Kenneth Barish
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Tel: (951)827-5023

Refreshments provided, some travel assistance available.

II. Ph.D. or M.S. degree?

A. Time Considerations

B. Money Considerations

C. Career opportunities

III. Field(s) of physics & related areas

A. Related areas (partial list)

Chemistry

Medicine, dentistry

Patent law

Engineering

Computer science

History, philosophy

B. If physics, which type?

Experimental physics?

Theoretical physics?

Computational physics?

C. Specific research field?

Partial list

AMOP	Quantum optics	Elementary particles
Astrophysics	Biophysics	Relativity & gravitation
Nuclear physics	Condensed matter physics	Applied physics
Space physics	Low-temp physics	Polymer physics
Surface physics	Statistical physics	Chemical physics
Electronics	Electromagnetism	Computational physics
Plasma physics	Atmospheric physics	Physics education
Nonlinear dynamics & chaos	Medical physics	Energy sources & environment
Acoustics	History of science	Accelerator & beam physics
Fluids & rheology	Space physics	Geophysics

IV. Geographical area restrictions

A. Inside and/or outside California?

B. Climate restrictions, allergies, ...

C. Urge to travel

V. Financial considerations

A. Tuition and other costs

B. Travel for visits

C. Financial need

D. Graduate teaching or research assistantships

E. Fellowships (local and external -- e.g., NSF)

VI. Ways to identify suitable schools.

A. AIP Directory

Online searching

<http://www.gradschoolshopper.com/>

B. Cal Poly faculty

C. Recent graduates

VII. Application procedure

A. How many schools? (Application cost: \$60 - \$120 per school)

B. GRE (<http://www.gre.org>)

1. General \$115 - Dates: *Oct 23, 2004*, Mar 12, 2005, Jun 11, 2005

2. Physics \$130 - Dates: *Nov 13, 2004*, Dec 11, 2004, April 2, 2005

C. Letters of recommendation

D. Neatness and punctuality

VIII. Visiting prospective schools

A. Admissions people

B. Physics faculty

C. Visit classes

D. Facilities

E. Living accommodations

F. Physics graduate students

IX. Timetable

A. Junior Year

Begin to investigate summer research opportunities

Nov-Jan: Complete applications for summer research

B. Summer Between Junior & Senior Years

Prepare for GRE & decide when to take it

Build relevant bookmarks for grad schools

C. Senior Year

Fall: Obtain/complete applications for grad schools

Take GRE subject exam

Winter: Plan school visits

Firm up visitation plans as acceptances arrive

Spring: Compare list of possible schools

X. Final Decision

A. What's most important?

School reputation

Research fields

Department size

Geographic location

Other considerations

Potential advisors

B. Discuss with others

c. Decide!

The End

<http://www.csupomona.edu/~hsleff/ApplyingGradSchool.pdf>