Program Information

Mission Statement
The Doctor of Philosophy degree in Physics will prepare students for research-oriented careers in government, industry, and academia. Students in this program develop strong analytical, quantitative, and problem solving skills, including a deep appreciation for connections between physics and scientific computing, physics and engineering, or physics and mathematics, that serve to expand their career options in computer hardware/software companies, large semiconductor industries, including many non-STEM job sectors such as finance, business and health care.

General Information
The PhD is typically a five-year degree program available to qualified individuals possessing a bachelor’s degree in Physics from an accredited college or university. Students with a bachelor’s degree in other related subjects—e.g. Mathematics, Chemistry and Engineering—also will be considered.

The first two years of the program are very similar to the non-thesis MS program. Under normal circumstances, PhD students will meet the requirements for the MS degree after two years of study. The remaining three years will be dedicated primarily to research leading to the required dissertation.

Graduate Assistantships
For the first two years of the program, qualified students will be considered for Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs). As part of the educational experience, GTAs perform certain undergraduate teaching responsibilities in exchange for a stipend and full tuition remission. In most cases, support for the remaining three years of study is via Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) provided by extramural faculty research funding.

Admission Requirements
Departmental requirements for admission are as follows:

- A baccalaureate degree with at least 24 credit hours in Physics, or the equivalent.
- A minimum quality-point standing of 3.0 (base 4.0) in physics courses.
- Mathematics coursework through differential equations. (MATH 405 or equivalent).
- Submission of the (general) Graduate Record Examination (general) scores. The Physics subject GRE is preferred, but not required.

For general information concerning admission to graduate programs at the University of Louisville consult the application directions on the Graduate School website (http://louisville.edu/graduate/apply).
Each student is required to take nine (9) credit hours of elective courses. Courses outside the department are acceptable if approved by the student’s thesis advisor and the department Graduate Program Director.

### Qualifying Examination

In order to demonstrate proficiency in knowledge of Physics and the ability to apply that knowledge, students will be required to pass a qualifying exam. The qualifying exam will have a written and oral component.

#### Written Component

To satisfy the written component, the student will take a written exam composed by members of the faculty of the department. The exam will cover basic and intermediate problems in the areas of mechanics, electricity and magnetism, quantum mechanics, thermal physics, and special topics in contemporary physics. It will be administered twice yearly with advance notice, typically in September and January. Students are required to pass all areas of the exam. For full-time students, this must normally be achieved by the end of their fourth semester and in all cases by the end of their sixth semester. Special arrangements may be made for part-time students. A total of four attempts at the exam will be permitted. Once a subject area part of the exam is passed, that part does not need to be retaken. Under certain circumstances, in order to confirm their familiarity with a particular subject, a student may be extended the opportunity to take an oral examination in that subject.

#### Oral Component

To satisfy the oral component the student must pass an oral exam, in the form of a presentation to the PhD committee of his or her proposed research. The student is expected to take the exam before the end of their sixth semester as a graduate student. The test may be taken at most two times and must be passed by the end of the sixth semester.

### Candidacy

Having passed both parts of the qualifying examination the student will register for degree candidacy and continue with their dissertation research.

### Dissertation

A doctoral dissertation is required of each student.