

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Please contact the Physics Graduate Admissions Coordinator at soto@ucf.edu if you have additional questions that were not answered here.

Q: I am interested in being considered for admission to your program, should I submit a pre-application directly to the department?

A: Pre-applications are strongly encouraged. First, we may be able to give some feedback to the student on the application, before consideration of the formal online application. Second, there is often a strong possibility that the department can find fellowship opportunities, UCF or non-UCF fellowships, that either pay additional stipend money or even cover the full cost of the graduate degree program. Finally, we often invite top domestic applicants for a site visit at our expense (when funds are available). Pre-applications help us to arrange those visits.

Q: What does a pre-application include?

A: Pre-applications include a CV/Resume, Statement of Purpose, and Unofficial Transcripts.

Q: How do I submit a pre-application? What is the pre-application submission deadline?

A: Submit pre-applications via e-mail to soto@ucf.edu by November 30th for the following Fall term.

Q: I am interested in applying to your graduate program. What are the minimum admission requirements and where do I go to apply?

A: UCF minimum admission requirements can be found on the College of Graduate Studies website, Admissions page at <http://www.admissions.graduate.ucf.edu/>
To apply, go to <https://application.graduate.ucf.edu/#/>

Q: If my application materials are not completed by the priority deadline of January 15th, will my application still receive full consideration?

A: We strongly encourage the full application to be submitted by the priority deadline of January 15th (Note: The Fall priority deadline for applicants to the Planetary Sciences Track is December 15th), including all the supporting materials and transcripts. However, partially completed applications, and even late applications, may still be considered for admission. There is no guarantee that a late application will receive full consideration. For international students, the priority deadline is the application deadline. Applicants that would like to be considered for assistantship and/or fellowship opportunities must apply by the priority deadline of January 15th (Note: The Fall priority deadline for applicants to the Planetary Sciences Track is December 15th).

Q: When can I expect to find out about the status of my application?

A: The decision deadline is mid-April. However, the department may still contact applicants after April's deadline if there are available funding opportunities.

Q: Should I first submit an application to the M.S. program instead of the Ph.D. program?

A: If your ultimate goal is to graduate with a Ph.D. in physics, you are strongly encouraged to apply to the Physics Ph.D. program. Applications to the M.S. program does not make acceptance more likely, and most of our students do not transition from the M.S. program to the Ph.D. In addition, we generally do not offer financial assistance to M.S. students except in some rare instances. PhD. students may request to receive a Master's Along the Way once they have completed all the M.S. program requirements.

Q: My application status says I was accepted. How do I know if I will receive financial assistance to attend?

A: If you have been admitted, you may receive financial support in the form of a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA). A smaller number of students are supported in the first year on a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA). Finally, some students find support through UCF or non-UCF fellowships. The financial offer generally comes after the notification of acceptance to the program. We make every effort to offer financial support to all admitted students, including tuition remission (tuition waiver or tuition payment) and health insurance coverage. However, financial support will depend on the availability of department or advisor funds and may vary from \$20,000 to \$33,245 annual stipend. The students are responsible to pay their fees, unless the fees are paid by the faculty advisor.

Q: What is level of financial support in the first year?

A: Students on a graduate teaching assistantship receive an annual stipend of \$22,307, while students on a graduate research assistantship receive an annual stipend ranging from \$20,000 - \$33,245 to cover the cost of living expenses. The department covers tuition (in the manner of a GTA tuition waiver or GRA tuition payment by a faculty advisor), and all fees are the responsibility of the student (unless paid by the advisor). Health insurance is free while the student is on a full-time (0.50 FTE or 20 hours per week) graduate assistantship. Financial support beyond the first year is not guaranteed. It is the responsibility of the student to seek an advisor who will provide financial support beyond the first year.

Q: How many students are supported on Graduate Teaching Assistantships and Graduate Research Assistantships?

A: This varies from year to year. About 15 new students may be supported by the department through Graduate Teaching Assistantships.

Q: How do I know if the UCF Department of Physics has the right opportunities to match my interests?

A: Our department covers a wide range of research interests, with many active and well-funded faculty. The prospective students are encouraged to directly contact any faculty they might be interested in working with. In addition to that, and depending on available funds, we often work to arrange a site visit at our expense for domestic applicants. This is another opportunity to meet faculty, students, and other prospective students.

Q: If I already have financial aid or a fellowship, what should I do?

A: In this case, it would be helpful to let us know that you already have financial support. We expect that all of our students have financial support. This is usually provided by the department. By letting the department know that you have a fellowship or other source of financial support, it allows us to use the financial resources we have to support other students.

Q: What is the cost of living in Orlando Florida?

A: Information about the cost of living in Orlando, FL can be found online. You may also contact our graduate organizations for assistance and information about cost of living expenses, transportation, housing, etc.

Graduate Society of Physics Students (GSPS) at ucf.gspss@gmail.com

Women in Physics Society (WiPS - formerly PWS) at ucfwips@gmail.com

U.S. News and World Report <https://realestate.usnews.com/places/florida/orlando>