

Welcome to the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Maine.

This document is to clarify our expectations of you as a graduate student in one of our degree programs.

1. During your first semester you must visit at least five (5) physics faculty members and discuss their research and opportunities for you to get involved in the research. You may download a form to be signed by the faculty member. When completed, by **November 25**, turn the signed form into Dr. McClymer (Graduate Coordinator). Please keep a copy for yourself.
2. During your 2nd semester you shall form your graduate committee consisting of your adviser(s) as chair (co-chair) and members of the Graduate faculty. PhD committees require five (5) members, at least two of whom must be in the Physics department and one must be from outside of physics. You may form your committee with only three members to start.

Master committees require three (3) members at least one of whom must be a member of the physics department.

Everyone must:

- a. Hold a committee meeting for the express purpose of filling out a Program of study (POS). POS form is available from the Grad school website. There is a version for PhD and MS degrees. ME students should use the MS form. (Due April 15)
- b. Bring a partially filled out Graduate Student Progress form (available from Dept. website) to the committee meeting and review expectations.
- c. Prepare a research plan for the summer and have approved by adviser. (Due April 15)

Turn these forms into the Graduate Coordinator (retain a copy for yourself)

The above items are required to guarantee summer support.

If you receive summer support there is the expectation that you will make significant research progress. This research progress will be reviewed in your Fall committee meeting. Meet with your adviser to determine the appropriate amount of effort /progress required in the summer in addition to your teaching responsibilities.

You will hold a committee meeting each subsequent semester focusing on research progress, satisfactory (B or better) performance in your classes and fulfilling any TA/RA responsibilities. Students should bring a partially filled out Graduate Student Progress Report Form (available on Departmental web site). A 10-30-minute PowerPoint® type presentation is recommended to discuss research progress.

You will be assigned a period in which you should hold your meeting (you may hold your meeting earlier than the assigned period). You are responsible for inviting your committee members to the meeting and finding a room. A Doodle® type poll is useful and rm 114 may be reserved through the Departmental Office.

If you are making inadequate progress in any of the three areas that apply to you (research, classes, teaching) you may receive a “Poor”. The Committee will list the actions you need to take to change your “Poor” to a “Satisfactory”. Two consecutive “Poor” evaluations will result in no guarantee of summer or academic year support. Continued “Poor” evaluations, even if not consecutive, may result in loss of support or termination from the program. You may lose support or be terminated from the program for other serious problems independent of the Committee Meeting review process.

Failure to hold a committee meeting in the assigned period will count as a “Poor”. If you are having trouble scheduling your meeting, please contact the Graduate Coordinator and/or Department Chair.

Written exam and oral comprehensive exam

All students, Master’s and PhD, must take the written exam each time it is offered until they pass the exam (or graduate). PhD student must pass the written exam by their second attempt, not including the “free try”. Students admitted in the Spring do not get a “free try” and have a total of two attempts. If the exam is not passed the student will be moved to a Master’s program and given a maximum of one year of financial support to complete the degree. The student should meet with their committee as soon as possible to plan the transition.

Students in the Master’s Degree programs who do not pass the written exam shall not be considered for admission into the PhD program. This prohibition does not prevent students from requesting to be moved from a Master’s to PhD program while they are still attempting to pass this exam.

After passing the exam you should meet with your committee to plan your thesis proposal and oral exam. This exam must be completed by the end of your 7th semester. While it may be possible to hold the exam during the summer you should not plan for a summer exam as faculty schedules may not allow the exam to be held. *Failure to pass the defense by the end of your seventh semester shall count as a “Poor” and may result in loss of support or removal from the program.*