INTRODUCTION TO THE MAJOR

Physics is the study of the universe, from the very large (star formation, cosmic microwave background radiation) to the very small (nanotechnology, atomic cooling and trapping, string theory), and everything in between (biophysics, and the physics of solid state devices).

Students studying physics develop strong mathematical and analytical skills, good laboratory skills, effective written and oral communication skills, and a solid understanding of the fundamental laws that govern the universe.

“\nThe physics skillset fosters acumen in modeling and understanding diverse systems, reducing complexity into intuition."

– Physics Major

THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

Our undergraduate program begins with courses designed to help you build a strong foundation, regardless of your prior background in physics. Upper division work deepens your understanding of the basics while introducing more modern and advanced topics. The program culminates in our upper division lab course, where you have a unique opportunity among physics departments nationwide to choose from many different experiments, ranging from classic Nobel Prize winning work (e.g., Optical Pumping or the Mossbauer Effect), to areas of current research interest (nonlinear dynamics and laser manipulation of atoms, among others).

AMPLIFY YOUR MAJOR

- Join a Physics student organization to help build community and foster leadership.
- Transfer students: enroll in PHYSICS 153 to connect to resources at Cal.
- Pursue opportunities for research with faculty and peers.
- Write an honors thesis or execute an independent study project.
- Add a Teaching Concentration to your major and join CalTeach to prepare for a career in education.
DESIGN YOUR JOURNEY

PHYSICS
Bachelor of Arts

FIRST YEAR
Explore your major
- Meet with your major and college advisor to discuss your academic plans.
- Review major and college requirements.
- Map out a 4-year plan on CalCentral.
- Visit physics.berkeley.edu/academics/tutoring to learn more about options for tutoring.

Connect and build community
- Complete the MPS Scholars and PA Scholars registration forms for physics mentoring and community-building opportunities. Contact a physics advisor for more information.
- Get in mentoring with Berkeley Connect in Physics and L&S Mentors Program.
- Be sure to explore membership in Physics student organizations and STEM programs.

Discover your passions
- Discover new interests in a Freshman Seminar or student-run DeCal course.
- Visit the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarships.
- Learn about research opportunities for Physics majors.
- Get introduced to research via Undergraduate Laboratory at Berkeley.

Engage locally and globally
- Explore study abroad options now, so you can start planning your upcoming semesters.
- Check out volunteer opportunities on campus, such as those offered by the Public Service Center.
- Contribute to a community organization with an American Cultures Engaged Scholarship course.
- Engage in STEM education and mentorship of local youth with Bridging Berkeley: Expand Your Horizons, or SENDforC.
- Consider a Berkeley Global Internship in the United States or abroad.

SECOND YEAR
Complete lower division prerequisites and declare the major.
- Review major guidelines for study abroad.
- Join a student organization such as Society of Physics Students or Society of Women in the Physical Sciences.
- Sign up for the Physics email list and start attending department events.
- Get to know professors during office hours and events like Faculty-Student Lunches.

Focus on upper division requirements and electives.
- Review your degree progress with your major and college advisors.
- Ask the major advisor about the Physics honors program.

THIRD YEAR
Give back by becoming a Physics peer tutor, PHYSICS 153 transfer student mentor, or PA Scholars mentor.
- Become a Golden Bear Orientation Leader and welcome students to the UC Berkeley campus and community.
- Join the UC Berkeley Physics group on LinkedIn.

Join a professional association such as the American Institute of Physics.
- Connect with alumni groups and build your network as you prepare to graduate.

FOURTH YEAR
Meet with your major advisor and with your college advisor to verify your completion of all major and college requirements.
- Register for the department and campus-wide commencement ceremonies.

Hone your leadership skills with the Peter E. Haas Public Service Leaders program.
- Explore service opportunities after graduation, such as Peace Corps, Teach for America, or U.S. Department of State.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH MY MAJOR?
We believe a Physics degree represents strong training for a broad range of careers. Approximately half of our recent graduates have continued to graduate school in Physics and related fields; others have taken jobs in high tech industries or as management consultants, and still others have entered medical school or law school.

Jobs and Employers
- Data Scientist, SeatGeek
- Process Engineer, DiCon fiber optics
- Research Asst., Lawrence Berkeley Lab
- Senior Software Engineer, LimeBike
- Software Quality Ops. Assoc., Waymo
- Technical Consultant, Bridgopoint Consulting

Graduate Programs
- AI & Robotics, Masters
- Astronomy, PhD
- Astrophysics, PhD
- Electrical Engineering, PhD
- Law, JD
- Operations Research, Masters
- Physics, PhD

Examples gathered from the First Destination Survey of recent Berkeley graduates.

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