

# Department of Physics

## Physics Graduate Programs

Details of Physics graduate program and department overview can be found at [www.physics.montana.edu](http://www.physics.montana.edu)

Physics Graduate Program Overview (<http://www.physics.montana.edu/grad>)

Physics Graduate Admissions & Application (<http://www.physics.montana.edu/grad/gradapp.htm>)

## Degrees Offered

**M.S. Physics:** The Department of Physics grants the Master of Science Degree under two options: Plan-A (thesis required), and Plan-B (without thesis).

**Ph.D. Physics:** The Physics Ph.D. degree has an option to obtain an M.S. degree en route to a Ph.D.

## Department Head

Yves Idzerda, Ph.D

*Professor, Department Head & Graduate Program Coordinator*  
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## Research

Research programs in the Department of Physics are currently focused in several areas: optical science and laser technology, condensed matter physics, gravitational physics, astrophysics, solar physics, and science education. The MSU Gravity Group studies extreme astrophysical phenomena, such as the inspiral and merger of black holes and neutron stars, to further our understanding of astrophysics and fundamental physics. Our programs in astrophysics and relativity are directed toward a fundamental understanding of the behavior of matter and energy on the astrophysical scale. Our solar physics group studies phenomena such as solar flares and prominences associated with the star nearest us, the sun. Our research in the physics of lasers and condensed matter systems - such as magnetic and dielectric materials, semiconductor and metal surfaces and thin films, microwave photonic devices, laser materials and superconducting solids - enlarges the knowledge base on which future advances in technology are founded. Our research in science education aims to improve the understanding of how students can best learn science in the schools, colleges, and universities. Faculty working with the most advanced techniques on current topics carry their research experience into the classrooms at all levels.

Our research groups foster interactions among the faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, research scientists, visiting scientists, and other departments and centers. Our research facilities at the Engineering and Physical Science (EPS) Building include state-of-the-art laboratories and equipment. External collaborations bring national and international experts to the department and open opportunities for research to be conducted at other world-class laboratories around the globe. On-campus, interdisciplinary research include collaborations with the departments of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and several research centers and institutes on campus including the Space Science and Engineering Laboratory (SSEL), the Imaging and Chemical Analysis Laboratory (ICAL), Montana Space Grant Consortium (MSGC), the Optical Technology Center (OpTeC), and the Spectrum Lab and interdisciplinary academic programs, such as Material Science and Optics and Photonics undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Research collaborations with local industries are numerous and actively pursued. For more information on each research program, look at the

departmental Research and Programs (<http://www.physics.montana.edu/research/resgroups.htm>) page.

## Application Deadline & Financial Assistance Information

Fall admission: May 1st of each year. New graduates are accepted for Fall term only. Applications received before January 1st will be acted upon and notification of admission given by April 15th. Applications received after January 1st will be treated individually on a "space-available" basis.

Most physics graduate students demonstrating satisfactory progress are awarded financial aid throughout their graduate program in the form of research and teaching assistantships, and tuition and fee waivers.

## Masters in Optics

The M.S. Degree in Optics and Photonics is an interdisciplinary, cooperative program managed by the Optics Program Committee on behalf of the three participating departments: Physics, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Chemistry and Biochemistry. Students apply directly to the Optics and Photonics Graduate Program and are admitted through one of the participating departments, selected based on advisor affiliation and student interest.

The Optics and Photonics degree is distinct from the other graduate degrees offered by the participating departments because it requires interdisciplinary coursework involving at least two of the departments. The interdisciplinary program of study allows students to emphasize optics theory and applications in more depth than is possible through degrees in the traditional disciplines. Each optics student will be mentored by a graduate advisor from the faculty of one of the three participating departments, and a graduate supervisory committee made up of faculty from at least two of the three departments in the cooperative program.

Optics and Photonics graduate students are required to pass the optics qualifying examination at the end of their first year of enrollment. Students who fail the qualifying examination may have a second chance to pass the exam the second year, but in that case financial assistance may not be available the second year. Optics and Photonics graduate students will defend their thesis or professional paper in an oral examination.

## Ph.D. in Material Science

MSU is part of a collaborative Ph.D. program with UMT and MTech in materials science (MatSci). At MSU, the Ph.D program involves multiple departments, faculty, courses, and research infrastructure. Research specialties are focused in biomaterials; electronic, photonic, and magnetic materials; materials for energy storage, conversion, and conservation; and materials synthesis, processing, and fabrication. The curriculum integrates a broad range of physical science and engineering disciplines with an even broader range of applications: from health and medicine to nanotechnology to energy, environment, and natural resources. Each student will complete original, independent research culminating in a dissertation.

## Degrees Offered

- M.S. in Physics (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/letters-science/physics/ms-physics>)
- Ph.D. in Physics (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/letters-science/physics/phd-physics>)
- Ph.D. in Materials and Science (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/letters-science/chemistry-biochemistry/phd-materials-science>)

- M.S. in Optics Plan A (thesis) (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/engineering/electrical-computer-engineering/ms-optics-plan-a>)
- M.S. in Optics Plan B (professional paper) (<http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/engineering/electrical-computer-engineering/ms-optics-plan-b>)

### **Font Notice**

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Adobe Garamond Pro.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.