

Application Instructions

MSU Graduate Program in Physics and Astronomy

October 2016

1. Complete the MSU Graduate Application at <http://grad.msu.edu/apply>.
 - Follow the instructions, and be sure to write down your six-digit application ID and password.
 - For major preference, list either: (3838: PhD in Physics) or (3924 PhD in Astronomy and Astrophysics). We do not offer support to students seeking a terminal MS, so if your ultimate goal is to earn a PhD, choose one of the above. If you seek a terminal MS degree, enter 3836 for Physics or 3923 for Astronomy.
 - For first semester to enroll, pick Spring or Fall. If you want to begin in the Summer, go ahead and list the Fall. Unless you would be coming with your own funding, list "Require Assistantship" where the form asks you for proof of financial resources. We provide support to all students we accept, usually in the form of a teaching assistantship. All students will be considered for special recruiting fellowships regardless of what they enter here. Consideration for recruiting fellowships is also not contingent on whether you designate an interest in financial aid.
 - Personal Statement: If you have overcome any challenges or barriers to get to the point where you can enter graduate school, please list them here. If you would be the first in your family to graduate college, or have had to pay or work your own way through school, please make a note of this. Also, please list any activities or experiences that might reflect on your character.
 - Academic Statement: Be sure to list/address the following:
 - a) What subfield(s) do you want to study? (*e.g.*, nuclear, high-energy, condensed matter, astronomy) and do you wish to pursue theoretical or experimental research. The more detail, the better.
 - b) What is your research experience? Be sure to note what amount of time was invested on each project. (*e.g.*, worked full-time during Summer of 2016...).
 - c) List any publications, talks, or posters given in any professional scientific meetings.
 - List all institutions of higher education you have attended. Be sure to click the "save" or "submit" buttons at the top of the page.
 - Ignore the request to send reference letters or request information from the Department. Instead, you will register the names and contact information of your references into the electronic system at **beaspartan.com**. See below.
2. Go to <http://www.beaspartan.com> and log on using your applicant ID and password that you gave for the MSU application. On the control panel page you will find a link for registering your references. We strongly prefer to have letters submitted through the on-line system.
3. At this site you can also upload any additional documentation you might like considered for your application. For example, if you are having trouble getting either transcripts or GRE scores forwarded on time, you can upload unofficial copies here.

4. Have GRE scores sent to MSU. The Institution Code is 1465 and the Department Code is 0808 for Physics and 0801 for Astronomy. In addition to the general exam, the GRE Physics Subject Exam is required, but may be waived in exceptional circumstances.
5. International students are required to take the TOEFL exam. The iBT (internet-based test) is preferred, as it contains a speaking test. Graduate school English Language requirements can be found at <https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/apply/EnglishLanguageRequirements.pdf>. For the TOEFL the Institution Code is 1465, and the Department Codes are 76 for Physics and 61 for Astronomy.

Chinese students have the option of taking the [MSU SPEAK test](https://grad.msu.edu/tap/speak) (for info, see <https://grad.msu.edu/tap/speak>) in Beijing or in Shanghai. The SPEAK test focuses on speaking, and we use this exam to see whether a student can qualify to teach a laboratory class. Without a good SPEAK test result, international teaching assistants are only eligible for grading assignments. Taking the test is not required, but a good score strengthens the candidate's chances of gaining acceptance. The dates for 2017 are January 14th for the Beijing test and January 16th for the Shanghai test. Details for applying for the SPEAK test (in both English and Chinese) may be found in this http://www.pa.msu.edu/grad/SPEAK_2017.pdf file.

6. Official transcripts should be mailed directly to the Department. The address is:

Director of Graduate Studies
Dept. of Physics and Astronomy
Michigan State University
Biomedical Physical Sciences Bldg.
567 Wilson Road, Room 1312
East Lansing, MI 48824 USA

If you have fewer lines in your form, you can try:

Director of Graduate Studies
Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, M.S.U.
BPS Building, 567 Wilson Road, Room 1312
East Lansing, MI 48824 USA

You can also upload unofficial transcripts or GRE scores at <http://beaspartan.com>. We can use unofficial copies to make the admissions decision, but should you be accepted and should you agree to come, we will need official copies at that time.

If you have ANY questions, please don't hesitate to contact:

Kirsten Tollefson
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or for procedural questions about applying:

Kim Crosslan
Graduate Secretary
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