Declaration Process

Physics at UW Seattle is a “minimum requirement” major. There are currently no caps on the number of majors, nor is admission competitive. Our goal in setting these minimum requirements is to ensure that students have the prerequisite interest, skills, and knowledge base to succeed in the major. A petition process is available for anyone who has other measures that predict success.

Physics offers four degree options, or “tracks”: Comprehensive, Applied, Teacher Preparation, and Biological Physics. They are summarized here, and a list of requirements is available here. The Catalyst WebQ that you must fill out prior to applying for admission is at https://catalyst.uw.edu/webq/survey/olmsstd/357941

As you consider declaring a physics major at UW, please think about the following:

- **Goals and objectives:** Why do you want to major in physics, and not one of the well over 100 other choices (see list)? Note that “because DEPT X turned me down” may be a reason not to major in DEPT X, but that is not, by itself, a reason to major in physics.

- **Past academic performance:** What has gone well for you? What has not? What is your assessment of what makes a difference? Were you hampered by inadequate high school preparation? Did you have significant non-academic time commitments? Were you excited about the material? Is your current skill set matched to physics courses?

- **Successes not on your transcript:** What leadership, family, volunteer, or work accomplishments are you proud of? How will these help you navigate the physics major?

- **Support network:** What academic and social resources will you use to support your future success in the physics major?

**Process**

Students may be admitted to the physics major at the University of Washington, Seattle, either (1) through transcript-based admission or (2) through petition. Students who meet the requirements for transcript-based admission may be admitted to the physics major upon request to the undergraduate advisor, Margot Nims.

In brief, transcript-based admission requires students to be enrolled in a UW-Seattle core physics class (or have just completed one, if there is not an appropriate physics class for which they meet the prerequisites) and to have completed at least one core physics class and one additional core physics or math class with a grade of 2.6 or higher during the previous two quarters (three, if you took a quarter off). Students must also complete a graduation plan and discuss it with the advisor and fill out this catalyst form. Students may not declare a major within the first two weeks of any quarter unless they have a hold on their registration for that quarter due to the lack of a major.

Students wishing to major in physics who do not meet the minimum criteria, but who believe they can successfully complete a physics degree, are encouraged to use the petition process for admission. To be guaranteed an admission decision before the end of a given quarter, students must begin the petition process by the end of the fifth week of that quarter.

The requirements for a Physics B.S. may be found in the general catalog. A chart summarizing these requirements for the different degree options is at the bottom of the Requirements page. More detailed information about the different degree options and how to
choose among them is available under Declaring a Physics Major.

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