Petition Based Admission

Students wishing to major in physics who do not meet the criteria for transcript-based admission, but 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. If you need to declare a major in order to register, you may request that the department grant you extended premajor status while your petition is being considered. It is highly recommended that you meet with the Undergraduate Faculty Advisor (Prof. Olmstead) before assembling your petition. You do not need to be a physics major to get on our email distribution lists about department events. Please see here for more information.

Requirements for Petition-Based Admission

1. At least one qualifying course (see below) should have been completed at UW Seattle during a qualifying quarter (see below). Proposed exceptions to this criterion (e.g., you are currently enrolled in, but have not recently completed, any qualifying courses) must be strongly supported in your personal statement.

2. Personal Statement: This statement should address:
   - Goals and objectives: Why do you want 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?
   - Successes not on your transcript: What leadership, family, volunteer, or work accomplishments are you proud of?
   - Support network: What academic and social resources will you use to support your future success in the physics major?

3. Graduation Plan: Complete a quarter-by-quarter, realistic course schedule that will result in a physics B.S. in your chosen degree option (Applied, Biological, Comprehensive, Teacher Preparation) in a reasonable period of time. Please enter this into MyPlan; you may also print and fill out the form linked below.

4. Interview: Meet to discuss your Personal Statement and Graduation Plan with the Undergraduate Faculty Advisor (Prof. Olmstead) or her designee. The Personal Statement and Graduation Plan must be submitted to the UFA (Prof. Olmstead’s department mailbox or ufaphys@uw.edu) a minimum of two working days before this interview.

5. Final decisions on admission to the physics major will be made by the Undergraduate Advising Committee. Students may reapply after passing an additional qualifying course.

Qualifying courses: Physics 121, 122, 123, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 328, 329; Math 124, 125, 126, 134, 135, 136, 307, 308, 309, 324, Appl Math 301, 351, 352, 353, 401

Qualifying quarters: The two quarters immediately preceding the student’s application to the major. If a student was not enrolled during one of those two quarters (e.g., summer, internship or study abroad), then it will be based on the three immediately preceding quarters.

Department of Physics
University of Washington
Physics-Astronomy Building, Rm. C121