

Credit: Ron Payne Photography

## Graduate School Timeline 2015/16

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Today, we'll talk about some upcoming deadlines for applying to graduate school.

N.B. As of today (7 Aug 2015, some of the dates in this presentation have not been updated from last year, because the home websites have not been updated yet.

***DOUBLE-CHECK ALL DEADLINES, repeatedly.***

## 1. The GRE Physics Subject Test

Registration deadline has already passed for the September test; September 19 is the deadline for the October test

Check the GRE website for current information

Register early! Test centers fill up quickly

Register under the name EXACTLY as shown on your photo ID

Download the practice book and get busy  
([http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/practice\\_book\\_physics.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/practice_book_physics.pdf))

Review the APS webinar, “Acing the Physics GRE” for good studying and test-taking strategies  
(<http://www.aps.org/careers/guidance/webinars/greprep.cfm>)

When registering, use the name **exactly** as it is shown on the identification documents you will present at the test center. (That is, don't register as “Katie Elliott” if your driver's license says “Katherine T. Elliott.”)

If the names don't match exactly when you present your credentials on the day of the test, you will not be permitted to take the test and your test fee will be forfeited.

A penalty is assessed for late registration, and a further penalty is assessed for changing your test center.

The American Physical Society hosted an “Acing the Physics GRE” several years ago; you can download the slides or watch the video.  
<http://www.aps.org/careers/guidance/webinars/greprep.cfm>  
You may be asked to “register” to access the video.

## **2. The GRE General Test**

**Scheduled (online) first three weeks of each month  
(Sept through Jan)—mornings, afternoons, evenings,  
and Saturdays**

**Computer-based only**

**“Prometric Testing Center”  
Turner Student Services Building  
610 East John Street, Champaign**

**For more information or to schedule, (217) 244-1342**

### **3. Fellowship Applications**

**Check eligibility requirements carefully**

**Start early!**

**Some require GRE scores—check**

**Start early!!**

**All require letters of reference**

**Start early!!!**

**Most require submission of multiple documents**

**Start early!!!!**

**Come to our workshop in September (stay tuned)**



S. Lance Cooper,  
Sept. 18 class

## **4. Grad School Applications**

**Each school has its own rules and deadlines—hew to them witlessly**

**Some deadlines are as early as Nov 30 (Ohio State) and as late as Feb 15 (Iowa State)**

**Some programs differentiate between “physics” and “applied physics” and have different deadlines (e.g., Cornell and Stanford)**

**Some programs combine physics and astronomy—others have separate departments**

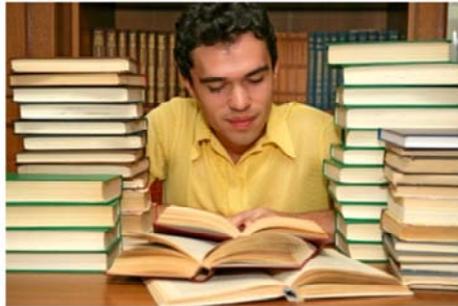
**Some schools allow you to apply to multiple depts, some require separate apps (and fees!) for each dept, some allow you to apply to only one dept per year**

Some programs have earlier deadlines for consideration of your application for fellowships or research assistantships. In general, the earlier you get your applications in, the more careful consideration your application will receive.

## 5. Special cautions for internationals

**Some programs have different (earlier) deadlines for international students**

**Some programs waive TOEFL tests if you receive a bachelor's degree from a US institution, but many don't—check to see if you'll need the TOEFL or equivalent score**



N.B. If you are an international student (i.e., studying in the United States on a student visa), you probably will be considered an “international” applicant, even though you will have received your bachelor’s degree from the University of Illinois. You will probably have to comply with all requirements for an international applicant, including requirements for TOEFEL, TSE, or other tests of English fluency.

If you are applying for graduate admission and expect to be supported by a teaching assistantship, you may have to pass more stringent fluency tests of spoken English for some programs.

Some programs have earlier deadlines for international students—*check!*

## 6. Start making decisions now

Where you're going to apply—have a range of prospective programs and at least two or three “safety-net” schools on your list

What schools you plan to visit

Whom to ask for recommendation letters



Start thinking now about who your letter writers will be. In a few weeks, we'll talk about writing letters of recommendation, but start preparing your “application packets” for your letter writers now.

Include in each packet the following:

- Your complete legal name, as you are putting it on the application
- The names of the schools that you need letters for, along with the instructions for how and where to submit each letter and the deadline when each letter is due.
- Your CV (more about that later in the class)
- Three or four sentences, in bullet points, about your aptitudes or experience that make you a particularly attractive candidate for that program
- If you are not applying for a physics graduate program, what you've done to prepare for success in (electrical engineering, materials science, atmospheric sciences...)

## **7. Ask early—ask often**

**Talk to your professors**

**Talk to grad students and postdocs in your research group**

**Talk to your Physics mentor**

**Talk to Professor Cooper, associate head for graduate programs**

**Make sure your decisions are *informed***

## **A great resource for you**

**“An Anecdotal Reference for Applying to Graduate Schools in Physics and Related Sciences—2012”**

**A personal reflection and “how-to” from a former student**

**Lives in the Undergraduate Lounge**

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