

Honors Track in Physics at Notre Dame

The goal of this Honors track is to give our most talented students an exceptional background in Physics research. Participation in this program will increase their level of commitment and productivity while preparing them for successful postgraduate work.

The track will accept Physics majors in good academic standing in the Spring of their Sophomore year, who have identified their research advisor in the Physics Department and have already completed one semester of undergraduate research. Acceptance will be based on a research statement and transcript. At acceptance into the track a formal agreement will be set up between the student and the advisor.

To graduate with this honor, students will have to complete:

1. Typically at least three semesters and one summer of independent research either at Notre Dame or another university or research laboratory. Alternate research/internship venues and opportunities must be approved in advance by the DUS or Department Chair. Students are expected to apply for REU, COS-SURF or other summer funding as appropriate.
2. A substantial thesis that needs to be approved by the advisor (a manuscript submitted for publication can substitute only if the student has made substantial contributions to the work).
3. A presentation at a national or regional meeting, or at the Notre Dame COS-JAM conference.
4. Successful completion of all requirements for one of the Physics concentrations, or completion of the Physics in Medicine degree.
5. A GPA of at least 3.33 in College of Science courses.

Thesis Requirements

The final draft of the thesis will be written under the supervision of the advisor, and will be submitted by April 1. Each thesis will be reviewed by one member of the Undergraduate Research Committee. If the thesis is not approved, a second committee member will read the thesis and confer. The students will be notified by April 15 if a rewrite is needed. The rewrite will be due May 1.

The thesis is intended to support and develop each student's independence, scientific communication skills, critical review skills, and understanding of their research in the context of the larger field. It will have the added benefit of helping students prepare for graduate applications and fellowships.

The student's transcript will carry the notation "Honors Physics" to distinguish it from the Glynn Family Honors Program. If the student is also in the Glynn Family Honors program, the thesis presented in that program could be considered for the Honors Track in Physics, but would need approval by the Physics Undergraduate Research Committee.

During the first year under which this Honors track is approved, the track will accept Senior Physics majors in good academic standing through the Fall of the Senior year, provided they have identified their research advisor in the Physics Department and are already making appropriate progress towards completing all requirements of the Honors degree.