

Applying to Caltech's Applied Physics PhD Program - 2023/2024

THE BASICS

- This application is for prospective PhD students only. Caltech Applied Physics does not have a master's-only program. Students may receive their master's degree on their way to the PhD.
- You must have received your BS degree by fall 2024 in order to apply in the 2023-24 admissions cycle.
- The Caltech Applied Physics PhD program is fully funded. Provided you maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree, tuition and fees will be completely covered by Division fellowships, teaching assistantships, and your advisor's grants. You will receive a monthly stipend for all basic needs. With good budgeting you will not need to take out loans during the duration of your PhD Program.
- At Caltech you can work with ANY advisor, independent of your degree program. Some students in the Applied Physics PhD program are working with faculty with appointments in Materials Science, Physics, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and more.
- You do not need to have an advisor at the time of application, nor do you need to contact faculty ahead of your application submission. In Caltech Applied Physics you will have until the spring term of your first year to find an advisor/join a research group.
- Application Deadline is December 15th. Your application will not be reviewed until all items have been received, including all 3 letters of recommendation.

WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE

- **GPA:** The majority of admitted students have a GPA above 3.5/4.0. Did you have an illness or another personal issue that might have affected your performance for a term or more? It is much better to address low grades in your personal statement than to hope the Admissions Committee won't notice. They will notice.
- **Coursework:** The Admissions Committee looks closely at what classes were taken. If your school had limited options for high-level STEM classes, please comment on this in your personal statement.

WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE (CONT'D)

- **Personal Statement/Research Experience:** Show the Committee who you are and what you are passionate about. For example, what is the most influential science or engineering experience you've had? You might address how your background has equipped you to work within diverse communities (diverse in culture, gender, race, expertise, or economics) or situations where you have had to overcome a challenge. Feel free to be specific about which Caltech faculty members you might want to work with and research projects you are interested in. Although there is not an official page limit, we recommend ~2 pages for the personal statement.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Make sure your letter writers know you well. If you are able to have recommenders from more than one institution, you may do so, but feel free to use 3 great recommenders at your home institution. Note that your application will not be reviewed until all 3 letters are received. The application portal allows you to see which of your recommenders have submitted their letters. It is your responsibility to follow-up with them about submitting their letters.
- **GRE Scores:** For the 2023-24 admissions cycle GRE scores are optional. GRE scores can provide students from less traditional backgrounds a chance to stand out, but not submitting scores will not hurt your chances of admission. Note that over the past few admissions cycles, about 1/3 of admitted Applied Physics students submitted GRE scores.
- **TOEFL Scores:** For the 2023-24 admissions cycle, International students must submit scores from TOEFL, PTE or IELTS. Note that if you are an International student but received a degree (BS or master's) from a school where the language of instruction was English, you are exempt from this requirement.
- **Application Fee:** Your entire application package can be submitted without the application fee. Please check the box marked fee waiver if paying the fee presents a hardship. The Committee does not see who has requested a waiver. You will be contacted by the Caltech Graduate Office if more information is needed regarding your waiver request.

CONTACTS FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS

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