

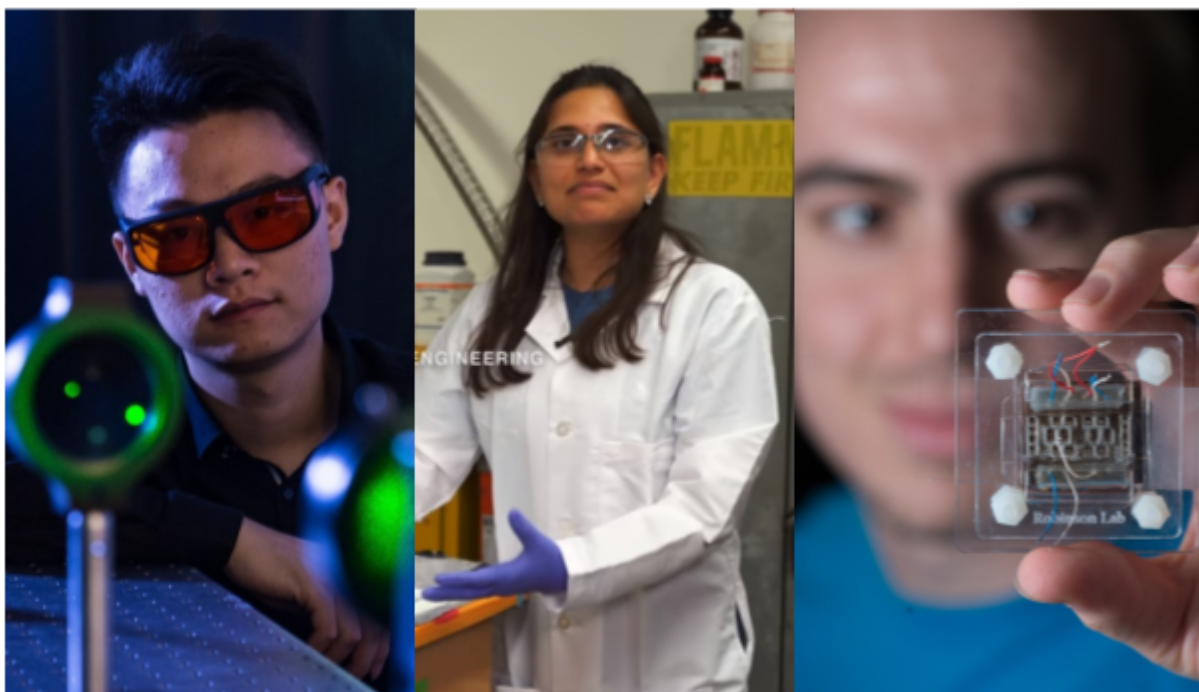


RICE UNIVERSITY
Smalley-Curl Institute
Applied Physics Graduate Program

Applied Physics Graduate Program

2022-2023 Graduate Student Handbook

Graduate Degree Requirements and Procedures



This handbook provides general guidelines for Applied Physics graduate students. In addition to being in agreement with the regulations stated in this program handbook, students must also be in agreement with the [General Announcements](#) (GA) and the [Code of Conduct of Rice University](#). Students are responsible for meeting all program requirements and all the university requirements.

In case there is conflicting information, university-wide regulations take precedence over the institute and program regulations, which take precedence over research group-wide regulations.

In doubt, students should seek help first at the program level ([graduate administrator](#), advisor, program chair) and then at the central administration level ([Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#)).

Revisions or additions of this handbook may be made from time to time. A current version is available at <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/graduate-student-handbook>. Students should keep a personal file containing this document, future memos about rule changes and other departmental matters, and documentation related to graduate progress.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Applied Physics Graduate Program (APP) of Rice University! Your admission to Rice is the latest milestone in an exemplary academic career. At Rice, researchers and faculty members at the forefront of their fields will guide your progress to receiving a doctoral degree. You will be taught to think creatively, be a part of a network of knowledge, and redefine your own limits.

The Ph.D. program prepares students for research careers in academia and industry. Students admitted to the Ph.D. program with a bachelor's degree are required to complete at least 90 hours of credit (typically 27 hours of coursework and 63 hours of research).

Graduate education is a unique mixture of instruction, training, mentorship, and scientific collaboration. In our program, we want each student to get the most out of their experience, contributing to the advancement of science and engineering through outstanding original research, while at the same time preparing for a professional career. Our students have gone on to outstanding, diverse professional careers, including academic research, government research and service, technical careers with companies ranging from large corporations to exciting startups, in fields as diverse as the oil industry, consulting, education, and more.

Institute and Program Members

Applied Physics (APP) Faculty & Staff

Chair, Applied Physics	Junichiro Kono
Program Administrator ¹	Laura Livingston

Applied Physics Curriculum Committee (APCC)*

Naomi Halas	Junichiro Kono [^]
Christy Landes	Robert Raphael
Thomas Senftle	Ming Yi
Yuji Zhao	

Applied Physics Admissions Committee (APAC)*

Alessandro Alabastri	Songtao Chen
Kaden Hazzard	Shengxi Huang
Junichiro Kono [^]	Kevin Slagle
Hanyu Zhu	

* For committee updates or changes, please visit <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/people/apac-admissions> or <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/people/apcc-curriculum>.

[^] Program Chair

Smalley-Curl Institute (SCI)

Director	Naomi Halas
Executive Director	Alberto Pimpinelli
Program Administrator ¹	Laura Livingston
Financial Specialist	TBD

¹The Program Administrator is part of both the Applied Physics Program and the Smalley-Curl Institute
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Faculty

Faculty members have a myriad of responsibilities, including the advisement and mentoring of students, research in their areas of interest and expertise, managing the financial aspects of their labs, and instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The primary faculty contact for first-year Ph.D. students is the APP Chair. Once students have affiliated, the primary point of contact becomes the advisor. Students may continue to seek the guidance of the APP Chair as well as other members of the APCC. The APCC is responsible for program development and coordination of activities related to the graduate program, including assessment of progress. Specific duties include the consideration of all proposed new courses, curricular modifications, and program activities. The APCC also facilitates resolutions to complaints involving academic or administrative decisions that may interfere with the students' academic and research progress. Additionally, the committee reviews student petitions. Students must petition the APCC for exceptions to academic requirements (e.g., course substitutions, transfer credits, waivers, etc.). Details of how to submit a petition are listed under the **Course Waiver Requests** section on page 13 of these guidelines.

Academic Program Support Staff

The Program Administrator oversees the academic administrative functions of the academic program and should be the first point of contact for any administrative issues. The SCI Financial Administrator is also available to assist with administrative questions or concerns when the Program Administrator is unavailable.

Laura Livingston, Program Administrator
301C Space Science | LL55@rice.edu | 713-348-6008

TBD, Financial Specialist
301 Space Science | 713-348-5362

Academics: Overview

The SCI offers the APP leading to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Applied Physics. The program does NOT offer a standalone thesis Master of Science (M.S.) degree; students admitted to our Ph.D. program with a bachelor's degree are required to earn the thesis M.S. within the program before proceeding to the Ph.D. in lieu of a formal qualifying exam.

Students admitted with an approved previous M.S. degree will need to discuss specific requirements with the APP Chair for acceptance of that degree. Previous M.S. degrees are approved or denied contingent upon the approval of the APP Chair. Some courses may still be required as core courses cannot be waived. Non-acceptance of previous M.S. degrees requires the student to obtain a Rice Applied Physics M.S. degree before continuing on to the Ph.D. degree.

Graduate Application

The online application for admission is located at <https://gradapply.rice.edu/>.

The application process is opened beginning on September 1. Admissions are for the fall ONLY, and the deadline is **December 31**. Late applications will NOT be considered.

The application fee is waived for all 2021-2022 applicants.

Successful applicants to the Ph.D. program must have a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. The general GRE is not required for admission to the APP. If applicants have taken the GRE test, then scores can be indicated on the application.

Minimum TOEFL scores for international applicants are 600 (paper), 250 (computer), 90 (iBT), and 620 (ITP Plus Exam). The minimum IELTS score is 7.0. TOEFL and IELTS requirements for the Ph.D. program may be waived for students who have received a degree from a university where English is the official language of communication.

For international students admitted to the program, proof of financial support is also required.

Our average admitted students obtain a 3.63 GPA (on a 4-point scale). The average TOEFL iBT score for admitted international students is 100, and the average IELTS score is 7.5.

Degree Program

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program are funded by the APP for the first semester with a monthly stipend and full tuition waiver. The Ph.D. program is full-time only with a minimum of 9 credit hours during the spring, summer, and fall semesters.

At the end of their first semester (by December 1) and continuing throughout subsequent years, APP students will select a faculty advisor and affiliate with that research group, who is then responsible for funding of the student's stipend and research expenses. (See **Academic and Research Advisors** on page 10 for additional details.) They are also hosted in the advisor's department of primary affiliation and enjoy day-to-day association with faculty and students in that department.

Ph.D. students might be required to fulfill one or more semesters of grading or teaching as required by their advisor but are not specifically obligated or required to perform any grading or teaching as part of our program's doctoral degree requirements.

A 3.0 GPA (B) must be maintained, and all classes that count toward the degree must be taken as a standard letter grade course. Only courses in which a grade of B- or above is achieved will be counted towards the M.S./Ph.D. degrees. Students whose term GPA falls below a 2.5 will be placed on academic probation by the program. Students whose term GPA falls below 2.33 or cumulative GPA falls below 2.67 will be placed on academic probation by the university. For more information see the [Academic Discipline section of the General Announcements](#).

Research Groups

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the APP, there are a number of research groups in Engineering and Natural Sciences, as well as the Texas Medical Center (TMC), available to students.

Some of the thematic areas include:

- Photonics and Plasmonics
- Nanomaterials and Nanodevices
- Quantum and Ultracold Matter
- Neuroengineering and Biotechnology
- Theory and Computation

During the summer before the first semester as well as during the first month of the first semester, we organize Brown Bag Lunch seminars (also known as BB Talks) hosted by faculty that have research openings across a broad range of disciplines. These seminars allow students to meet the faculty and learn about research being done at Rice University that is pertinent to the APP and are hosted by APP as well as the Department of Physics & Astronomy. These seminars will help students find an area of interest, research group, and advisor. Exploring a range of research areas is important because not all faculty members have resources or openings for additional students in any particular year.

The student should make every effort to speak with the most likely faculty mentors and the current students in their research groups. An informed choice requires consideration of many issues: Where are graduates of that group employed? Is funding adequate? What is the typical duration of a Ph.D. in that group? What journals does the group publish in and how often? And most importantly, is the research interesting to you?

It is the responsibility of the student to talk with faculty about the likelihood of joining a particular research group. Students should begin these discussions as early as possible. Any faculty member in the Schools of Engineering and the School of Natural Sciences can advise APP students, and some of the active members are listed at <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/people/advisors>.

Academic and Research Advisors

By the end of the first semester, students should be actively engaged with a research group and confirm affiliation with the advisor. No later than December 1 of the first semester, APP students will complete the official paperwork associated with affiliation. Paperwork for affiliation should be turned in as early as possible after finding an advisor, at the latest on December 1. Late affiliation requires discussion and **prior** approval permission from the APP Chair. Starting on January 1 at the start of the second semester, and continuing throughout subsequent years, the advisor is then responsible for funding of the student's stipend and research expenses. Students desiring to work with faculty in the TMC may do so **only** with the permission of the APP Chair.

Should a student choose an advisor in the TMC, the student should first attempt to contact the faculty member in the TMC. If no response is received, the student can request the APP Chair to send an introductory email to the faculty. The APP Chair or the SCI Executive Director will act as the student's Rice advisor to serve as the Rice liaison on things such as the thesis committee.

At this time, the students should complete the [Research Proposal & Affiliation form](#), including a brief description of their planned research, which must be reviewed and approved by the prospective advisor and the APP Chair. Once the advisor has been chosen, students will be hosted by the same department as their advisor. Grading or TAing is not required as part of the Ph.D. program, but students may be asked to grade/TA, depending on the preference of the host department and the advisor.

After affiliating with a research group, stipend decisions are determined by the advisor and/or the host department. Students are responsible for discussing salary issues with their respective advisors. Initial salary discussions should be held **before** officially affiliating with a research group.

Advice on Changing Research Groups or Host Departments

After affiliation in the first semester, students are required to have a research advisor to remain in good standing. Rice recognizes that research interests may change after a student enters a graduate program. If a student feels his/her interests and talents could be better served working with a different advisor or in another research group or department, a change can be accommodated. Although each case is unique, following are guidelines for making an advisor/group/department switch:

- Discuss issues with the current advisor. Often an adjustment of research topic may resolve the problem.
- If issues are insurmountable, speak with faculty members whose research interests are more in line with the student's and who have the funding for support.
- When an alternate faculty member agrees to replace the current advisor, obtain permission from the APP Chair, then proceed to the Program Administrator, who will process the documentation required for the exchange. A Change of Affiliation form will be required, along with a new research proposal.

In order to remain in good standing, the student must secure affiliation with the new advisor *prior to leaving* the previous advisor.

If the advisor wants to terminate financial support and a research advising relationship with a student that has officially affiliated, this requires a timely warning and a written justification to both the APP Chair and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS). The procedures are outlined in the GA under [Dismissals](#). A student may appeal such a dismissal through the [petition and appeal process](#).

Honor System and Student Code of Conduct

All incoming Rice students agree to abide by the [Rice University Honor System](#). The Honor System, one of the oldest and proudest traditions at Rice, is administered by the Honor Council, whose student members are elected each year by the student body. Students at Rice, through their commitment to the Honor Code, accept responsibility for assuring the validity and integrity of all examinations, assignments, products of their research, and public dissemination of their results. The Honor Council is responsible for investigation of all reported violations and for trial in those cases where the facts warrant.

Graduate students are expected to observe the provisions of the Rice University Honor Code both in their academic and research duties. Violations may result in serious penalties, including a failing grade in the course and suspension from the university.

The faculty will state the restrictions applying to various forms of class work. If there is doubt about the conditions for a particular assignment, it is the student's responsibility to contact the faculty member in charge of the course.

Plagiarism is a particularly thorny issue. Never explicitly or implicitly claim someone else's work as your own. See http://gpsdocs.rice.edu/orientation/Plagiarism_Hewitt_document.pdf for important details.

Please refer to the Rice University General Announcements for the [Honor System](#) and [Student Code of Conduct](#) for more information.

Research and Scholarly Activities

Please refer to the Rice University General Announcements regarding [Research and Scholarly Activities](#), as well as the following Rice policies: 324 [Research Misconduct](#), 326 [Human Research Protection Policy](#), 333 [Patent and Software Policies](#), and 334 [Copyright Policy](#).

Program Learning Outcomes

Students graduating in the program will:

1. Acquire and demonstrate advanced knowledge in the foundational applications of physics including familiarity with past and current scientific literature in their specialization.
2. Develop the ability to conduct independent applied physics research including the aptitude to identify, formulate, and overcome challenging scientific and engineering problems in this endeavor.

3. Make an original and significant technical contribution in their chosen specialization area.

Email as a Formal Mode of Communication

Recognizing the increasing need for electronic communication with students, the APP recognizes and utilizes email as **the official means of communication** with students. The program will routinely send official communications to students via their **university email address**. Because email is a primary mechanism for sending official communications to students, and certain communications may be time-sensitive, students should check their email at least daily. ***Failure to read official university communications sent to the student's official Rice email address does not absolve students from complying with the content of said emails.*** Students are expected to communicate official business with the institute and program using their Rice email accounts. Non-Rice email systems (e.g., Gmail, Yahoo! Mail, Hotmail) are not acceptable for official business.

Coursework

Course Registration

University policy requires students to maintain their student status throughout their career at Rice University. APP Ph.D. students are considered full-time students and expected to register for 9 hours of “Graduate Research and Thesis” (APPL 800) during the summer semester unless special arrangements for an internship are made in advance with their advisor. Students are responsible for registering for at least 9 hours of courses each fall and spring semester to maintain full-time status.

First-year students may **not** register prior to orientation. Time will be provided to register for courses at the end of the program orientation. Representatives from the Applied Physics Graduate Student Association (APGSA) will be available to provide technical assistance. Academic advice will be provided by the APP Chair and faculty from the APCC or APAC. If students require academic assistance/advising after their first semester, they should seek advice from their faculty advisor and ensure that the advice is in alignment with APP requirements.

Students register for courses online through their Esther account. For a list of registration deadlines, consult The Office of the Registrar’s website at <https://registrar.rice.edu/>. Current and upcoming academic calendars can be found at <https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars>.

Core and Elective Requirements and Course Waiver Requests

The Ph.D. program prepares students for research careers in academia and industry. Students admitted to the Ph.D. program are required to complete 90 hours of credit for coursework and research, beyond the bachelor’s degree. Four semesters of full-time study at Rice are also required.

A first-year student should consult with the APP Chair, an APCC member, an APGSA representative, and the graduate student mentor to determine first semester coursework. The first year consists of a minimum of 18 hours of coursework and research hours. Students will meet with their advisors to plan coursework for the second semester and all subsequent years.

For the Ph.D. degree in Applied Physics, the student must fulfill the University requirements set forth in the catalog under which he/she entered or any subsequent catalog. The semester hour requirements may be fulfilled both by classroom hours and research hours. Nine one-semester graduate level courses of no less than 3 credits hours or higher are required, divided into **4 Core and 5 Elective courses**.

The Master of Science (M.S.) degree is offered only as a precursor to the Ph.D. degree. It requires at least 36 semester hours of credit beyond the bachelor's degree. At least 21 of the hours must be course credit (Core and Elective courses) and the remaining hours in APPL 800, Research and Thesis, credit.

If a similar M.S. has already been earned under another school/program, candidates may petition the APP Chair to waive the M.S. requirement, though curricular requirements must still be fulfilled. If during the student's previous thesis M.S. study one or more of the Core courses were not taken, these must be completed before a Ph.D. degree can be awarded.

Similarly, if the APP Chair determines that not enough total courses were taken for the previous thesis M.S., completion of a certain number of additional elective courses may be required of the student.

Core Courses:

- **Classical Mechanics: PHYS 515**
- **Mathematical Methods: PHYS 516**
- Quantum Mechanics I: PHYS 521 or CHEM 530
- Quantum Mechanics II: PHYS 522 or CHEM 531
- Statistical Physics: PHYS 526 or CHEM 520
- Electrodynamics: PHYS 532
- Solid State Physics: PHYS 563

- Fluid Mechanics: CHBE 501
- Physico-Chemical Hydrodynamics: CHBE 602
- Thermodynamics: CHBE 611
- Physical Biology: BIOE 502

Elective Courses:

Five courses may be selected from a list of approved courses offered by different departments in Natural Sciences and Engineering. These are chosen according to the research directions of the student. The up-to-date list is maintained at <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/curriculum>. Other courses may be considered to count as electives on a case-by-case basis by petitioning and obtaining approval from the APCC. See Appendix A for a list of suggested specialization curricula. Courses offered at institutions in the TMC may also be counted for elective credit (via transfer credit) if the advisor recommends the course.

Course Credit Transfers and Elective Credit Requests:

Particular Core course requirements may be transferred for students who have had similar courses elsewhere and who demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the material in the course at Rice. To receive a course transfer credit, the course cannot be part of the credits for a previous degree (unless for a previous M.S. and approved by the APP Chair), a copy of the official transcript must be provided, a copy of the class description from the syllabus must be provided, and the Graduate Transfer Request for Credit must be completed. (Visit the Office of the Registrar's website for university guidelines at http://registrar.rice.edu/students/grad_transfer/). The concurrence of the faculty member teaching the relevant course at Rice and the APP Chair must be obtained in writing.

For elective classes completed at Rice and not on the [Approved Electives list](#), the approval of APCC is required. Elective courses must be no less than 3 credit hours to be eligible. Elective credit requests should be submitted

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prior to taking the course. To make a request, send an email to sciapp@rice.edu with the Course Number (e.g., APPL 750), Title, Instructor, Term (e.g., Fall 2021), Description, and any restrictions, prerequisites, and corequisites, noting that the request is for credit for an elective not on the approved list. The course information can be found at <https://courses.rice.edu/courses/swkscat.main>.

No courses may be used for fulfilling both Core and Elective requirements. Due to overlap of curricula, only one from each of the pairs PHYS 521/CHEM 530, PHYS 522/CHEM 531, and PHYS 526/CHEM 520 may be used for the nine required courses. No courses previously used to fulfill the requirements of a bachelor's or professional master's or other degree will be accepted as course electives, and in the case of acceptance of a core, then a substitute course must be chosen in its place to meet the full 27 credit hours required.

Qualifying exams of the host department will **not** be required of the APP students. ***However, for the students' own benefit, we strongly advise that they enroll in any required seminar courses required by the advisor once they affiliate with a research group.***

Grades, Department Duties, Employment, and Academic Status

Grades:

University guidelines state that to graduate, students must achieve at least a B– (2.67) GPA in each course counted toward the graduate degree. Some programs and departments have more stringent standards. For the APP, the overall GPA of all Core and Elective courses must be a B (3.0) or better, with a grade of at least B– (2.67) in all courses. A Core course may be repeated once to bring the grade up to this level, applicable to a maximum of 2 Core courses. Any course in which a grade of C+ or lower is received must be repeated. For repeated Core courses, the GPA calculation for satisfaction of this requirement will not include the first grades of repeated Core courses.

To compute GPAs, the credits attempted in semester hours for each course and the points for the grade earned (from A+ = 4.33 to F = 0.00) are multiplied, then the products (one for each course) are added together, and the sum is divided by the total credits attempted. Please note that the GPA for courses is calculated separately from seminars and research & thesis courses.

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory:

Some departments may assign a grade of Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U). Students should be aware that while a grade of S or U does not affect their GPA, no credit will be awarded if a grade of U is received. Courses with a grade of S will count towards total credits earned but not towards the Core and Elective course requirements.

Incompletes:

Instructors report this designation to the Office of the Registrar when a student fails to complete a course because of verified illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control that occur during the semester. For an incomplete received in the fall semester, students must complete the work by the end of the fourth week of the spring semester or an earlier date as defined by the instructor, and instructors must submit a revised grade by the end of the fifth week. For an incomplete received in the spring semester, students must complete the work before the start of the fall semester or an earlier date as defined by the instructor, and instructors must submit a revised grade by the end of the first week.

Audit:

The grade designation of Audit (AUD) is used for people auditing a course, and specifically when the auditing student has met the audit requirements of the course. A grade designation of NC is given to students who do not meet the audit requirements. Requests to audit a class or to change from audit to credit or vice versa must be done by the end of the second week of the semester. Audit classes do not count toward the Core and Elective course requirements.

Departmental Duties Required by the Doctoral Advisor

In most research degree programs, students may be asked to complete a limited amount of teaching or perform other services as part of their training. Assigned duties should not entail more than 10 hours per week, averaged over the semester, or extend over more than eight semesters. APP students may be requested by their advisor as part of their graduate education to perform some teaching and/or grading. The precise duties are set by the advisor's primary department, which subsequently provides written certification of fulfillment of teaching/grading responsibilities to the APP.

Academic Status

The student's research advisor and the APP Chair will review the student's research progress and academic status each semester to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress in the program. Satisfactory progress is defined as completing the course and research requirements, as detailed in the degree timeline (page 14-15), maintaining a term GPA of at least 2.67, and submitting annual progress reports by the deadline; students are strongly encouraged to complete the M.S. degree by the end of the third year with an approved exception no later than 4 years. The student and advisor are required to complete an annual online progress report. (See **Annual Reviews** on page 22 for additional details.)

The APP Chair will review the grades and affiliation process to determine progress of first-year students. Any problems regarding the student's performance will be discussed at this time.

Students must maintain continuous program involvement and enrollment unless granted an official leave of absence. See [Leaves and Withdrawals](#) in the General Announcements for more information.

Host Department Seminars, Classes, and Qualifying Exams

Qualifying exams of the host department will NOT be required of the Applied Physics students. Applied Physics students achieve the M.S. thesis degree in lieu of any qualifying exam.

Applied Physics students will follow the requirements of the program (4 Core and 5 Elective courses) and not the requirements of the host department.

However, for the students' own benefit, we strongly advise that they enroll in any required seminar courses and classes requested by the advisor.

Timelines and Procedures, Candidacy and Defense

Degree Timeline

Year One

- Complete at least 6 courses (Core and Elective courses, research credit) over Fall and Spring semesters
 - o Register for at least 3 hours of APPL 800, Graduate Research & Thesis for Spring
- Attend Brown Bag Lunches to learn about research opportunities

- Begin meeting with potential research advisors
- Meet with APP Mentor at least once per month until affiliation; continue to meet in Spring, as well
- Officially affiliate with advisor/research group no later than December 1
- Complete Annual Progress Review in early May
- Summer: Register for 9 hours of APPL 800 unless on internship or other leave

Year Two

- Continue required coursework during Fall and Spring semesters
- Register for APPL 800, Graduate Research & Thesis (minimum of 3 hours)
- Continue research
- Grade/teach if requested by host department/advisor
- Take any seminar or other courses requested by the advisor
- Complete Annual Progress Review in early May
- Summer:
 - o Register for 9 hours of APPL 800 unless on internship or other leave
 - o Work with advisor to determine M.S. Thesis Committee
 - o Submit M.S. Petition for Candidacy by August 15

Year Three

- Complete required coursework during Fall and Spring semesters
- Register for APPL 800 each semester (minimum of 3 hours)
- Continue research
- Grade/teach if requested by host department/advisor
- Take any seminar or other courses requested by the advisor
- Complete Annual Progress Review in early May
- Defend M.S. Thesis by August 15
- SUMMER:
 - o Apply for M.S. Degree conferral for summer
 - o Register for 9 hours of APPL 800 unless on internship or other leave

Year Four and Beyond

- Apply for M.S. Degree conferral (if not completed during previous summer)
- Summer:
 - o Register for at least 9 hours of APPL 800 for Fall, Spring, and Summer
 - o YEAR 4:
 - Work with advisor to determine Doctoral Thesis Committee
 - Submit Ph.D. Petition for Candidacy by August 15
- Continue research
- Grade/teach if requested by host department/advisor
- Take any seminar or other courses requested by the advisor
- Complete Annual Progress Review in early May of each year, including final year
- Defend Doctoral Thesis within 6 years (final timeline to be determined with advisor)

NOTE: The Applied Physics requirement is achievement of the Ph.D. within 6 years of the B.S. degree and 4 years with an accepted previous M.S. degree. Year 8 is the university deadline for defense and completion of the Ph.D. before the end of the Spring semester. Students should make every effort to complete their degrees sooner.

M.S./Ph.D. Timelines and Procedures

Barring a written exemption from the APCC, the M.S. must be completed within 3 years of entering the program, and the Ph.D. from B.S. within 6 years. If you have a previous master's degree accepted by the APP Chair, the Ph.D. should be achieved in 4 years. The program does NOT offer a stand-alone thesis M.S. degree; students admitted to our Ph.D. program with a bachelor's degree are required to earn the M.S. within the program before proceeding to the Ph.D.

NOTE: approved previous M.S. degrees will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the APP Chair. (See **Core and Elective Requirements, Course Waiver Requests** on page 13 for more information.)

Petitioning for Candidacy

Candidacy marks a midpoint in the course of graduate education. Achieving candidacy for the Ph.D. signals that a graduate student has: (a) completed required course work, (b) demonstrated the ability for clear oral and written communication, and (c) shown the ability to carry on scholarly work in his/her subject area.

Master's students must be approved for candidacy before the beginning of their fifth semester of enrollment at Rice; Ph.D. students must be approved for candidacy before the beginning of their ninth semester of enrollment. Students who are approaching or who have passed their deadline to candidacy must submit an [extension of candidacy request](#) to the [Office of GPS](#). Students who exceed their time boundaries without an approved extension request **will be charged a fee of \$125** for reinstatement to good standing.

Before candidacy is approved, a thesis committee consisting of **at least** three tenured or tenure-track faculty or research fellows is selected by the student and advisor. At least two of those members should have an appointment at Rice University.

The chair of the thesis committee is either the advisor* or in the host department of the student, and is affiliated with the program. The second member of the committee is affiliated with the program. The third committee member must **not** be affiliated with either the student's graduate program or the department where their advisor has their primary appointment. Thesis committee make-up is approved by the APP Chair, with final approval given by the Office of GPS. See the [General Announcements](#) for the formal structure of the thesis committee.

*If the advisor is outside of Rice University, then the committee chair must be the student's Rice advisor (either the APP Chair or the SCI Executive Director). The non-Rice advisor can serve as the Thesis Director.

M.S. Candidacy and Defense

When a student has completed the requisite hours (36 from within the Ph.D. course plan), has established a committee, and has performed research, the [Petition for Approval of M.S. Candidacy form](#) is submitted to the Program Administrator by August 15 after the end of the fourth semester (second year). The Program Administrator will provide the statement of applicable department requirements, a copy of the transcript, and the student's checklist to candidacy. The form requires the APP Chair's signature and approval by the Office of GPS, which will be obtained by the Program Administrator.

For guidelines on writing the thesis, visit the following websites for information.

- [Thesis Template Documents](#)
- [Thesis Format Guidelines](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

When the student is ready to defend, the student then receives an initialed Approval of Candidacy form, which is signed by members of the student's committee upon passing the M.S. defense. One week prior to defending (a minimum of 7 full days), the student must submit the following information to the Office of GPS, via the [Rice Events Calendar](#): defense date, time, location, title, and abstract, as well as the names, titles, and departments of committee members. The confirmation of submission and the abstract should then be emailed to sciapp@rice.edu. The student must also submit a draft thesis to the thesis committee and sciapp@rice.edu **a minimum of 7 days in advance of defending.**

The Approval of Candidacy form is copied to the student's file and submitted to GPS. Once the student defends the Master's thesis, the student has six months to submit his/her final signed thesis to GPS, at which time the student becomes a Master's Degree Candidate. Students must satisfactorily complete all required coursework prior to submitting a final thesis. Candidacy will not be approved until all coursework requirements are completed. Additionally, if a student plans to defend and submit a thesis for the next degree conferral, students must file their applications for approval of Ph.D. and M.S. candidacy in the Office of GPS by the end of October for December degree conferral and by the end of February for May degree conferral.

For full information, visit <http://graduate.rice.edu/thesis/> and https://registrar.rice.edu/students/degree_apply.

Ph.D. Candidacy and Defense

In order to petition for Ph.D. degree candidacy, a student must have completed 72 semester hours of advanced studies as approved by the program and achieved at least a 3.0 (B) average in Core and Elective courses, and earned a M.S. degree from Rice University, or have an equivalent M.S. degree, as decided by the APP Chair.

The Petition for Approval of Ph.D. Candidacy form is then submitted to the Program Administrator before the start of the ninth semester (fifth year). The Program Administrator will provide the statement of applicable department requirements, a copy of the transcript, and the student's checklist to candidacy. The APP Chair's signature is required on the petition, which is then submitted to the Office of GPS for approval.

For guidelines on writing the thesis, visit the following websites for information.

- [Thesis Template Documents](#)
- [Thesis Format Guidelines](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

When the student is ready to defend, the student then receives an initialed Approval of Candidacy form that is signed by the student's committee members upon passing the Ph.D. defense. The student must also have completed any grading requirements for the host department and notify the Program Administrator with the details at sciapp@rice.edu. **Two weeks prior to defending (a minimum of 14 full days)**, the student must submit the following information to the Office of GPS and the [Rice Events Calendar](#): defense date, time, location, title, and abstract, as well as the names, titles, and departments of committee members. The confirmation of submission and the abstract should then be emailed to sciapp@rice.edu. The student must also submit a draft thesis to the thesis committee and sciapp@rice.edu **a minimum of 14 days in advance of defending.**

The Approval of Candidacy form is copied to the student's file and submitted to the Office of GPS. Once the student defends the Ph.D. thesis, the student has 6 months to submit a signed thesis to the Office of GPS, at which time the student becomes a Doctoral Degree Candidate.

Additionally, if a student plans to defend and submit a thesis for the next degree conferral, students must file their applications for approval of Ph.D. and M.S. candidacy in the Office of GPS by the end of October for December degree conferral and before the end of February for May degree conferral.

For full information, visit <http://graduate.rice.edu/thesis/> and https://registrar.rice.edu/students/degree_apply.

Degree Candidate Status

Degree Candidate Status indicates that the student has completed all requirements for the degree and all that remains is degree conferral in December, August, or May.

Visit <https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars> for important deadlines by semester.

Financial Support and Time Off

Financial Support

Students accepted by the APP receive a stipend from the program for the first semester, along with a full tuition grant. Compensation is calculated and paid semi-monthly from August 16 to December 31.

By the first week of the second semester, students should be affiliated with a research group. Paperwork for affiliation is due to the Program Administrator no later than December 1. Starting on January 1 at the beginning of their second semester, and continuing throughout subsequent years, the faculty advisor is then responsible for funding of the student's stipend and research expenses. After affiliating with a research group, stipend decisions are determined by the faculty advisor and/or the host department. Students are responsible for discussing salary issues with their respective advisors **before** officially affiliating with the research group. Once the student affiliates, the advisor's department of primary affiliation will become the student's **host department**.

If the student is funded by an external fellowship, scholarship, training grant, or other source of external funding which covers all or a portion of a student's stipend, then that will override the advisor-paid stipend or first-year fellowship. Students are required to notify and provide documentation to the Program Administrator at sciapp@rice.edu of any external fellowships or scholarships they receive immediately upon receiving the award, including awards received prior to matriculation. Contact the Program Administrator if you have any problems with financial support.

Support Limitations

The normal limit of financial support for graduate students is dependent upon the advisor and the host department. Students should consult with the advisor for confirmation of support limitations. If the student anticipates taking longer than the limitation set by the advisor/host department, the student may consult with the APP Chair in conjunction with the advisor.

Students whose funding has terminated may continue so as to finish any written publications, such as thesis and papers, but may not perform work in the laboratory environment.

If a student fails to continue to make acceptable progress, he or she is subject to partial or complete loss of financial support.

External Fellowships/Scholarships

Students are encouraged to seek external fellowships and awards. The Office of GPS has a list of fellowships at <https://graduate.rice.edu/fellowship-opps>. The Office of Proposal Development (<http://opd.rice.edu/grad-student-postdoc-fellowship>) has a list of fellowships as well and offers an extensive array of proposal development services when developing and writing proposals for federal grant agencies and other entities to seek funding for their research projects.

If a student receives an external award, the following apply:

- If the total amount of the fellowship, including stipend, insurance, etc., is below the current stipend, the student should discuss supplemental support with the advisor. The host department policies will dictate supplements.
- If the student's external support ends or is revoked during the student's studies at Rice and the student is achieving satisfactory performance, reasonably progressing toward the degree, and funding is available, the student will receive stipend support from the advisor.

Internships

Occasionally, industrial internship opportunities arise for doctoral students. Pursuit of an internship while remaining a doctoral student must be approved in advance of the relevant semester by the advisor. For domestic students, the main concern is that the internship not delay timely progress toward the graduate degree. For foreign students, there can be considerable complications regarding the visa status – this requires detailed discussions between the student, the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS), and the advisor, and there are strong requirements that the topic of the internship be integral to the student's doctoral research in order to be approved.

In case of external fellowship support, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that an internship does not conflict with the conditions of such a fellowship.

Students participating in internships do not receive a graduate stipend during the period of the internship. Financial arrangements must be finalized with the advisor and the Program Administrator prior to the internship, in time for necessary procedures to be completed (generally April 15 for a summer internship). Students must provide documentation of the internship to the Program Administrator for record keeping.

Details for international student internships with regard to Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Curricular Practical Training (CPT) are located at <http://oiss.rice.edu/opt>.

Time Off

Vacation and Holidays

During the first year of study, graduate students observe the same [holiday schedule as other students](#) engaged in course work. Beginning in the second semester, doctoral students engaged in research follow the [staff holiday schedule](#), including winter break when the university is officially closed.

Rice is not officially closed during fall midterm recess, spring recess, or spring break. Ph.D. students do not automatically receive these dates as time off. All requests for vacation time, including fall or spring recess or spring break, must be approved in advance by the student's advisor. Students should also discuss paid vacation time policies with their respective advisors. If the requested leave is not granted, the student can discuss the situation with the APP Chair.

Unscheduled Time Off

Ph.D. students must actively participate in required academic activities, including laboratory work, as a basic condition of financial support. Absences, other than medical and family emergencies, must be approved by the advisor in advance. In the case of medical and family emergencies, notification is expected in as timely a manner as possible, depending on the specific situation.

Students who are not present and carrying out required academic activities for more than one week, without approval of the absence, will receive an immediate written warning from the advisor or the APP Chair.

Students who are absent from required program activities for a contiguous two weeks without permission and without mitigating circumstances may be subject to termination of financial support. Such absences may be taken as an indication that inadequate academic progress is being made.

Interruptions of Study and Withdrawal

Leaves of Absence

A leave of absence (LOA) may be granted only by GPS and is granted only to students in good standing. Leave must be approved in advance of the academic semester in question. A LOA will not be granted after the student has registered for courses or after the registration period has passed. Normally, a LOA is granted for no more than two consecutive semesters. No work toward a degree may be completed at Rice (or involve Rice faculty/facilities) during a student's LOA. Students must pay a reinstatement fee of \$125 upon their return from an official leave.

The LOA form can be found at <http://gpsdocs.rice.edu/forms/LOA-request.pdf>. The form should be completed and submitted to the Program Administrator.

Short-Term Medical and Parental Release

If a graduate student cannot fulfill the duties of his or her appointment due to a medical emergency or the adoption or birth of a child, the student may be temporarily released from their academic responsibilities. Enrollment and stipend support may be continued for up to six weeks or until the appointment expires (whichever occurs first). A student may apply for short-term medical (STMR) or parental (STPR) release at any time during the semester. See <https://graduate.rice.edu/leaves> for additional details. The form for completion can be found at http://gpsdocs.rice.edu/forms/Parental_STML_Request_Form.pdf.

Nonmedical Withdrawal and Readmission

Students who wish to withdraw from Rice during the semester, for any nonmedical reason, are to notify the APP Chair in writing. Failure to register for any period without an LOA granted by the Office of GPS constitutes a de

facto withdrawal. Students who later wish to resume study after a voluntary or de facto withdrawal must petition for readmission to the university. Readmitted students must pay a readmission fee of \$350.

See <https://graduate.rice.edu/leaves> for additional details and <http://gpsdocs.rice.edu/forms/WithdrawalForm.pdf> for a copy of the withdrawal form.

Medical Withdrawal and Readmission

Graduate students may request a medical withdrawal from the university by applying in writing to the Office of GPS at any time during the semester, up until the last day of classes; the withdrawal does not take effect until approved in writing. Email communication is considered to be “in writing.” Graduate students who wish to seek readmission following a medical withdrawal must submit to the Office of GPS a written petition for readmission no later than June 1 for the fall semester and November 1 for the spring semester after the medical withdrawal.

Visit <https://graduate.rice.edu/leaves> and http://gpsdocs.rice.edu/medical_withdrawals/medical_withdrawal_readmission_petition.pdf for details; the withdrawal form can be found at <http://gpsdocs.rice.edu/forms/WithdrawalForm.pdf>.

Best Practices in Mentoring, Progress Reviews, and Program Effectiveness

First-Year Mentorship and Guidance

At the start of the fall semester, students will meet with members of the APGSA and the APP Chair to help them determine which courses to take in the first semester and beyond. During the fall semester of the first year, Brown Bag Lunch seminars (also known as BB Talks) will be held. These seminars allow students to meet faculty and learn about research being done at Rice University that is pertinent to the APP as well as help students find an area of interest, research group, and advisor.

During the first year, students will also be assigned a senior Applied Physics student to assist with course selection, finding an advisor, introduction to the APGSA, familiarization with Rice, and life in Houston. Students should meet with their mentors at least once per month during the first year.

Presenting and Publishing Research

Rice University is a graduate research institution, where students are expected to publish research papers and present at national/international conferences in the students’ respective fields. In addition to this, the students will have an opportunity to present on campus in the annual SCI Transdisciplinary Symposium and/or annual SCI Summer Colloquium as well as host department seminars, symposiums, and colloquia.

Annual Reviews

Students and advisors complete a progress report in May of each year to discuss the academic and research progress made in the program towards the awarding of the doctoral degree. These reviews are collected and evaluated by the APP leadership and are kept confidential. If there is any difficulty with a student progressing in the program, the APP Chair will discuss separately with the student and advisor. If needed, a meeting between the student, advisor, and the APP Chair will occur each semester until such issues can be resolved.

Graduating Students and Alumni

Graduating Applied Physics students are asked by GPS to complete an exit interview, and occasional surveys are sent to alumni to obtain their continued feedback and overall perspectives on the program. Graduate students can also apply for an alumni email at <https://riceconnect.rice.edu/login?bm=1527637879>.

Graduate Student Associations

[The Graduate Student Association \(GSA\)](#) comprises degree seeking graduate students at Rice University. The GSA mission is to enrich the graduate experience and to represent, support, and promote graduate student interests and values. An integral and essential part of the Rice community, the GSA provides programs and services in aiding in recruitment and retention of graduate students, represents graduate student interests to the University administration, and builds a strong sense of community both on and off campus.

Each department on campus has its own GSA, and although APP is not its own department, it has a non-voting branch. The Applied Physics Graduate Student Association (**APGSA**) was founded in 2011 to represent the interests of Applied Physics students at Rice. The primary functions and goals of the APGSA are to promote professional growth of graduate students, to serve as a representative in voicing the concerns of its members, and to promote professional and personal relationships amongst graduate students, faculty, and the community. Contact the Program Administrator or visit <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/apgsa> for APGSA details.

General Information

ESTHER (Employee and Student Tools, Help, and Electronic Resources)

The ESTHER system is a web application used by all students, faculty, and staff. For information on how to use ESTHER, visit http://registrar.rice.edu/students/ESTHER_FAQs/. Student resources in ESTHER are listed below:

- Update your contact information
- Register
- Add and drop courses
- View your course schedule
- Access your final grades
- View and print your unofficial transcript
- Obtain enrollment verifications
- View time boundaries
- Print your degree application
- View course and instructor evaluation comments for previous semesters
- Identify holds on your account
- View financial aid information
- View your employment information, such as pay stubs
- Review charges and payments
- Pay your account online

- Changes to forms (W4 and direct deposit information)
- Download W2 forms

Campus Mail Service

All mail delivered to you using a Rice campus address should include your mail stop. The mail stop for Applied Physics is 100. First-year graduate student mailboxes can be found in 300 Space Science in the 3rd floor kitchen to the right of the elevator. After affiliation, students may elect to keep their mailbox with Applied Physics or move the location to the host department. To keep your mailbox with APP, send an email request to sciapp@rice.edu.

Host Department	Mail Stop	Mailbox Location
Applied Physics	100	300 Space Science (kitchen to the right of the elevator)
Bioengineering	142	BioScience Research Collaborative (BRC), suite 1030
CTBP	654	BioScience Research Collaborative (BRC), suite 1005
Chemistry	60	Space Science, 1 st floor
Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering	362	Abercrombie Hall, 2 nd floor
Labs in Space Science	306	Space Science, 2 nd floor
Electrical & Computer Engineering	378	Brockman Hall, 3 rd floor
Labs in the BRC	656	BioScience Research Collaborative (BRC)
Materials Science & NanoEngineering	325	George R. Brown Hall, West, 2 nd floor
Physics & Astronomy	61	Brockman Hall, 2 nd floor
Statistics	138	Duncan Hall, 2 nd floor

Computing

All new students are assigned a Rice Net ID username and password, which gives them access to Rice email and other resources; you can manage your account at <https://mynetid.rice.edu/>. See the Rice IT web pages at <https://oit.rice.edu/> for more information about computing resources.

Many research groups maintain their own specialized computing facilities. They will become available to the student after affiliating with the research group.

Study Areas, Building Access, Office Space, and Telephone Service

First-year students will have an office on the third floor of the Space Science and Technology building, and after-hours access to the building will be provided (via Rice ID). After affiliation, students should have an office with the other students in the advisor's research group. Check with the host department administrator or coordinator to obtain an office key, gain after-hours building access, determine convenient study areas, and learn telephone policy.

Purchasing and Expenditures

After affiliation with a research group, you may be asked to make purchases or incur other expenses on behalf of your research project. University accountants are very stringent in their interpretation of federal, state, local, and university rules that control such expenditures. Please take careful note of those policies and consult with a staff member before incurring any expense. Under no circumstances are personal items to be charged to any university or research account.

Procurement

Procurement regulations change frequently. You are advised to consult the purchasing coordinator in your host department before attempting to make any purchases for their specific department guidelines.

Office Supplies

Office supplies purchased by the department or research grants may not be used for any personal purpose, including course work. All costs of thesis preparation, defense, and submission are the responsibility of the candidate. This specifically includes paper and printing or copying costs for drafts, defense, and library versions.

Copying Services

First-year students will be provided access to print/copy in the Smalley-Curl suite, limited to 30 black-and-white pages per month.

After affiliation, check with your host department for the location and usage of copiers available for research and departmental use as needed. You may be given a charge code for the appropriate machine.

Note that government funds cannot be used to prepare an application for a government grant and that personal use of copies is not allowed.

There is a large-format (36" wide) color printer located in Geology. Geology department staff can provide access on how to access this unit. Large format printing is also available through IT (in the MUDD building) at lower cost.

Mailing and Shipping

All items to be mailed or shipped must be routed through the main department office. Department staff will help you arrange an appropriate carrier and payment.

Travel

Student travel must be authorized by the principal investigator of the project to which the travel will be charged. The host department may be able to provide supplemental funds for students presenting papers at meetings, but only for one trip per year. Contact the host department administrator or coordinator to request assistance with travel and for rules and regulations regarding travel.

[Rice University Travel Policy](#) applies to all Rice University employees, students, and guests.

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office (GPS)

Graduate Student Policies

Visit <https://graduate.rice.edu/policydoc> to review the graduate student policies that all graduate students are expected to abide by while at Rice University. Contact the Program Administrator prior to visiting GPS.

Guidelines for Dismissals, Petitions, Appeals, Grievances, and Problem Resolution

The goals of these guidelines are to obtain compliance with Rice's policies while striving to uphold standards and raise the quality of graduate programs, as well as to provide graduate students with an environment that has high standards, clear assessments of their achievements, and fair and transparent procedures for handling cases of inadequate academic progress. See <https://ga.rice.edu/undergraduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/judicial-discipline/> and <https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/rights-responsibilities/dispute-resolution/> for details. Exceptions to the rules will be handled on an individual basis.

Leaves or Withdrawals

[Leaves or withdrawals](#) include short-term medical and parental release, leaves of absence, medical and non-medical withdrawal, and involuntary withdrawal. Readmission and non-enrollment restrictions are also included.

Funding and Stipends

Most graduate students are provided with stipends of one kind or another for the duration of their graduate study at Rice, and many departments offer multi-year financial assistance to students who are making normal progress towards a graduate degree. For more information, visit <https://graduate.rice.edu/current-students/stipends>.

Please note that ALL vacation requests must be pre-approved by your advisor. If your day-to-day advisor works outside of Rice University, you must also notify the Program Administrator to ensure that all Rice requirements and guidelines are met.

Time Boundaries

Individualized time boundaries can be found in Esther. General time boundaries are as follows:

Master's Candidacy Petition submitted before the start of the 5th semester

Master's Defense completed by the end of summer after the 3rd year

Doctoral Candidacy Petition submitted before the start of the 9th semester

Doctoral Defense completed by the end of the 6th year

Thesis Information

Read the information at <http://graduate.rice.edu/thesis> for achieving candidacy, defending, and submitting your thesis.

Graduate Form Library

The [Graduate Form Library](#) contains a list of up-to-date forms for graduate students, including:

- Candidacy Petitions
- Requests for Extension of Time to Candidacy
- Defense Announcements
- Requests for Extension of Time to Defend
- Thesis Submission Forms
- Degree Conferral Forms
- Commencement

Digital Scholarship Archive

Rice Digital Scholarship Archive (<https://scholarship.rice.edu>) is Rice's institutional repository, a website where the university's intellectual output is shared, managed, searched, and preserved. Most materials come from Rice faculty members' research, electronic theses and dissertations, and digitized collections of rare or unique books, images, musical performances, and manuscripts.

Office of the Registrar (OTR)

Academic Calendars - <https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars>

Course Schedule - <https://courses.rice.edu/courses/swkscat.main>

Forms for Current and Graduate Students - https://registrar.rice.edu/online_forms#GR

General Announcements (GA)

Rice University General Announcements - <https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/>

The GA includes information about academic opportunities, academic policies and procedures, student services and organizations, student rights and responsibilities, and more. Be sure to review the Regulations and Procedures for All Graduate Students at <https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/>.

Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS)

International Students- <https://oiss.rice.edu/student>

Includes the following:

- Obtaining I-20 for F-1 visa
- Short-term Visiting Research Students
- Pre-Arrival Information
- Orientation
- Maintaining Status
- Academic Resources
- Employment
- Students on OPT
- Travel
- Applying for a Social Security Number (generally eligibility is at the end of the first year)

Student Health Insurance and Services

Health Insurance

Rice University requires all students to have health insurance coverage. Therefore, students may enroll in the Rice Student Health Insurance Plan by completing a Health Insurance Application or request a Waiver of insurance if comparable coverage is in place with another insurance provider. Visit <http://studenthealthinsurance.rice.edu/> for more information.

Student Health Services

The Rice Student Health Services provides preventive and outpatient clinical care for the students of Rice University. Student Health is located on-campus and is dedicated to meeting the unique needs of undergraduate and graduate students, with an emphasis on prevention. Their website is <https://health.rice.edu/>.

Students may not register for classes until the [Health Data Form](#) has been properly completed and submitted to Student Health Services.

The Rice Wellness Center

The [Rice Wellness Center](#) website offers a variety of resources to help you navigate your well-being journey, from topics on common student concerns, to opportunities for more involvement in wellness, and more. It also includes information on the [Rice Counseling Center](#).

Title IX

Rice encourages any student who has experienced an incident of sexual, relationship, or other interpersonal violence, harassment or gender discrimination to seek support. There are many options available both on and off campus for all graduate students, regardless of whether the perpetrator was a fellow student, a staff or faculty member, or someone not affiliated with the university.

Students should be aware when seeking support on campus that most employees are required by Title IX to disclose all incidents of non-consensual interpersonal behaviors to Title IX professionals on campus who can act to support that student and meet their needs. The therapists at the Rice Counseling Center and the doctors at Student Health Services are confidential, meaning that Rice will not be informed about the incident if a student discloses to one of these Rice staff members. Rice prioritizes student privacy and safety, and only shares disclosed information on a need-to-know basis.

If you are in need of assistance or simply would like to talk to someone, please call Rice Wellbeing and Counseling Center, which includes Title IX Support:

Extension 3311 or 713-348-3311

Policies, including Sexual Misconduct Policy and Student Code of Conduct, and more information regarding Title IX can be found at <http://safe.rice.edu/>.