



RICE UNIVERSITY
Smalley-Curl Institute
Applied Physics Graduate Program

Applied Physics Graduate Program

2026-2027 Graduate Student Handbook

Graduate Degree Requirements and Procedures



This handbook provides general guidelines for Applied Physics graduate students. The Rice University General Announcements (GA) is the official Rice curriculum and policy reference. In addition to complying with the regulations stated in this program handbook, students must also comply with the General Announcements (GA), the Code of Conduct of Rice University, and all applicable university policies. 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 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 director) and then, if the problem persists, at the central administration level (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, GPS).

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 the Smalley–Curl Institute (SCI) at 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 careers in academia, national laboratories, industry, and government agencies. 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, electronics, energy, consulting, education, and more.

Institute and Program Members

Applied Physics Faculty & Staff

Program Director	Alessandro Alabastri
Program Administrator ¹	Laura Livingston

APC - Applied Physics Committee for Curriculum & Admissions

Alessandro Alabastri, *Electrical and Computer Engineering*[^]

Raudel Avila, *Mechanical Engineering*

Kushal Bagchi, *Chemistry*

Vir Bulchandani, *Physics*

Songtao Chen, *Electrical and Computer Engineering*

Nai-Hui Chia, *Computer Science*

Anna-Karin Gustavsson, *Chemistry*

Shengxi Huang, *Electrical and Computer Engineering*

Junichiro Kono, *Electrical and Computer Engineering*

Hae Yeon Lee, *Materials Science and NanoEngineering*

Lan Luan, *Electrical and Computer Engineering*

Xuedan Ma, *Materials Science and NanoEngineering*

Ming Yi, *Physics and Astronomy*

Hanyu Zhu, *Materials Science and NanoEngineering*

[^] Program Director

For committee updates or changes, please visit <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/people>

Smalley-Curl Institute

Director	Junichiro Kono
Institute Programs Manager*	Laura Livingston
Administrative Director	John Marsh
NRT Coordinator	Uxua Astigarraga
Financial Specialist	Wilfredo Balza
Marketing & Events Coordinator	Eda Morita

*The Programs Manager is part of both the APP and the SCI

Faculty

Faculty members have a myriad of responsibilities, including the advising 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 Director. Once students have affiliated, the primary point of contact becomes the advisor. Students may continue to seek the guidance of the APP Director as well as other members of the Applied Physics Committee, which is responsible for program development and coordination of activities related to the graduate program, including assessment of progress, as well as recruitment and admissions of new students. Specific duties include the consideration of all proposed new courses, curricular modifications, and program activities. The Committee 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 Committee 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 in this handbook.

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 NRT Coordinator is also available to assist with administrative questions or concerns when the Program Administrator is unavailable.

Laura Livingston, Institute Programs Manager
301C Space Science | LL55@rice.edu | 713-348-6008

Academics Overview

The SCI supports the APP in guiding students to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Applied Physics. Students affiliate with advisors in the School of Natural Sciences, the School of Engineering & Computing, or the Texas Medical Center. The program does not offer a standalone thesis Master of Science (M.S.) degree; students admitted to our 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 a previous thesis-based M.S. degree may request that the degree be considered for acceptance toward APP degree progression. Previous M.S. degrees are reviewed in accordance with APP and Rice University requirements. More information about a previous M.S. degree may be found in the **Course Requirements and Waiver Requests** section.

NSF NRT-CQED Program

The Applied Physics Graduate Program hosts the NSF Research Traineeship in Cavity Quantum Electrodynamics (NRT-CQED), an interdisciplinary training program at the intersection of quantum information science and engineering, photonics, and materials science. NRT trainees complete additional coursework, communication, writing, mentoring, professional development, and research-exchange activities according to the NRT-CQED coursework and training overview provided by the program. NRT requirements are program-specific and apply to appointed NRT trainees. APP students who are not NRT trainees may be invited or encouraged to participate in selected NRT activities when appropriate.

Selected NRT-CQED activities, such as seminars, workshops, communication-training sessions, research-exchange events, and outreach activities, may also be open or recommended to broader APP student participation when appropriate. Participation expectations for appointed NRT trainees are communicated separately through the NRT-CQED program.

Graduate Application

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

Applications open 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 applicants.

Successful applicants to the Ph.D. program will 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, scores may be indicated on the application, if desired.

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. A minimum Duolingo score of 115 may also be accepted.

Language 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. Students must be enrolled full-time with a minimum of 9 credit hours during the spring, summer, and fall semesters.

At the end of their first semester, APP students will affiliate with a research group and a faculty advisor, who is then responsible for funding of the student's stipend and research expenses. (See **Affiliation Policy** and **Academic and Research Advisors** sections for additional details.) The advisor's department of primary affiliation will be the student's Host Department, and the student will be involved in day-to-day association with faculty and students in that department.

Research Groups

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the APP, there are a number of research groups in The School of Engineering & Computing, and The School of Natural Sciences, as well as in the Texas Medical Center (TMC) that are available for student affiliation.

The current five thematic areas, or tracks, are:

- Photonics and Plasmonics
- Nanomaterials and Nanodevices
- Quantum Science and Engineering
- Neuroengineering and Biotechnology
- Theory and Computation

To facilitate affiliating with an advisor and research group, incoming students are encouraged to research and reach out to faculty of interest, even before their arrival on campus. Incoming students are also required to enroll in APPL 500 which includes Brown Bag Lunch seminars (also known as BB Talks) hosted by faculty who have research assistant openings in their groups across a broad range of disciplines. Students will also participate in a series of mini lab rotations. These activities allow students to meet faculty and to learn about research being done at Rice University that is pertinent to the APP and help students find an area of interest, research group, and advisor. Exploring a range of research areas is important because not all faculty members may have resources or openings for additional students in any particular year.

Each 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? 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 & Computing and the School of Natural Sciences can advise APP students. Many faculty in the Texas Medical Center (TMC) also hire APP students. Faculty who are currently advising APP students are listed at <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/people/advisors>.

If a student is interested in working with 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 that the APP Director send an introductory email to the faculty. The APP Director will act as the student's Rice advisor to serve as the Rice liaison on things such as the thesis committee.

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. Students desiring to work with faculty in the TMC may do so only with the permission of the APP Director. Students are expected to complete and submit the official affiliation paperwork by December 1 of the first semester, unless directed otherwise. Late affiliation requires discussion and prior approval permission from the APP Director.

To formalize affiliation, students should complete the Research Proposal & Affiliation form, accompanied by a brief description of their planned research, which must be reviewed and approved by the prospective advisor and the APP Director. Once the advisor has been finalized, students will be hosted by their advisor's home

department. Please refer to the **Affiliation Policy and Timeline** section for the program's definitions, expected timeline, and procedures (including steps if a student needs additional time to affiliate).

Starting on January 1 at the start of the second semester, and continuing throughout subsequent years, the advisor is responsible for funding of the student's stipend and research expenses. APP students will be paid at the APP program rate or at the rate of their host department, whichever is higher. **Affiliation Policy and Timeline**

The Applied Physics (APP) graduate program supports new students during an initial exploration period to identify an appropriate research group and faculty advisor ("affiliation"). Timely affiliation is essential to ensure strong research progress and on-time degree completion and to ensure responsible stewardship of program financial support.

Definitions

- **Affiliation (official):** A student is considered *officially affiliated* when a faculty advisor (PI) confirms in writing (i.e., signing the affiliation form) their agreement to advise the student and to provide research support (i.e., providing funding source) and the program acknowledges the affiliation
- **Rotation:** A time-limited research trial with a faculty group, typically ~3-4 weeks (extendable only upon reasonable request), intended to evaluate a mutual fit and establish a path toward affiliation.

Standard Expectation (First-Semester Affiliation)

APP provides program support for the first semester while students complete rotations (typically three). The expected outcome is that students affiliate with a research group by December of the first year (end of the Fall semester). For the occasional student who enters the program outside of the Fall semester due to deferral, etc, the same time limit applies, though not aligned with the semester names.

If Not Affiliated by Mid-December (Extended Rotation Period: Spring)

Some students may need additional time or may determine that initial rotations were not a good fit. In these cases, students may continue rotating during the Spring semester, typically for about 4 weeks per rotation, up to the end of the Spring semester. Students who remain unaffiliated after the Fall semester must submit to APP Leadership a written list of faculty advisors they plan to contact and/or rotate with for Spring (and the tentative order/timeline if known). This list may be updated as rotations progress.

During extended rotation, the following requirements must be observed to avoid surprises and identify early if a rotation is not progressing toward affiliation:

- **Weekly student update to APP:** Unaffiliated students must provide a brief weekly progress update (research activities, meetings, outcomes, and next steps) via email to APP Leadership (Program Director, Program Administrator).
- **Week 2 PI check-in:** For each rotation, the faculty advisor hosting the student is expected to provide a brief update to APP Leadership around week 2, describing rotation progress and the likelihood/timeline of affiliation.
- **Active communication requirement:** Students must promptly inform APP Leadership of any changes in rotation plans, advisor targets, or anticipated timelines.

Last Opportunity (Summer)

If a student does not affiliate by the end of the Spring semester, the student has a final opportunity to affiliate by the end of the Summer semester with rotations of approximately one month in length, using the same structured process outlined above (weekly student update; 2-week PI check-in) Students must continue to keep APP Leadership informed of rotations, changes in plan, and the likelihood of affiliation.

One-Year Limit and Withdrawal

Most incoming students affiliate within the first semester; a few need additional time. If the rare situation arises where a student is unable to secure an official affiliation (or does not have an affiliation plan in place previously approved by the APP Leadership) by the end of the Summer semester of the first year (Fall + Spring + Summer), they will be required to withdraw from the APP graduate program. This policy reflects the program's need to ensure that students are progressing toward a defined research path and to avoid indefinite periods of program-funded enrollment without research placement.

Funding and Compliance Expectations During the Unaffiliated Period

Program financial support beyond the initial semester is intended to facilitate active rotations and timely affiliation. Continued support during the unaffiliated period is contingent upon students:

- participating in active rotations or documented advisor outreach
- submitting required weekly updates
- timely communication of changes in rotation plans

Failure to comply with the reporting and communication expectations may result in a program review and potential changes to the student's funding plan.

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. However, Rice recognizes that research interests may change after a student enters a graduate program. If a student feels their 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, the 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 the APP Director and then 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, the students should obtain permission from the APP Director, and then proceed to the Program Administrator, who will process the documentation required for the change. A Change of Affiliation form will be required, along with a new research proposal, which must be reviewed and approved by the APP Director.

See the **Re-affiliation After Leaving a Group** section below for more details and requirements.

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

Re-affiliation After Leaving a Group (Extension Policy)

If a student officially affiliates with a group (including being supported by the PI) and later leaves that group for any reason, the program may provide a limited extension of APP support while the student seeks a new advisor.

- **Extension principle:** A portion of the time spent officially affiliated may be credited toward an extension of the "one-year unaffiliated support window," recognizing that the student had previously progressed within an affiliated group.

- **Maximum extension:** In all cases, such an extension will not exceed *three (3) months* of additional program support, except in documented emergency circumstances.
- **Case-by-case review:** Each situation will be evaluated individually by APP Leadership, considering factors such as academic standing, documented progress, professional conduct, funding circumstances, and the feasibility of timely re-affiliation.

Students seeking re-affiliation are expected to follow the same communication and rotation procedures described above, including weekly updates and faculty check-ins during rotations.

Recommended Rotation Structure (Best Practice)

To promote clear expectations and efficient decision-making, APP strongly recommends that each rotation begin with a brief written understanding (email is sufficient) between the student and hosting PI, including:

- rotation start/end dates
- project scope and expected deliverables (as appropriate)
- meeting cadence and supervision expectations
- criteria and timeline for an affiliation decision

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 GA for the [Honor System](#) and [Student Code of Conduct](#) for more information.

Research and Scholarly Activities

Please refer to the Rice University GA 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

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 SCI and APP using their Rice email accounts. Non-Rice email systems (e.g., Gmail, Yahoo! Mail, Hotmail) are not acceptable for official business.

Coursework & Academic Requirements

Course Registration

University policy requires students to maintain their student status throughout their tenure at Rice University. Students are responsible for registering for at least 9 hours of courses each fall and spring semester to maintain full-time status. During the summer, APP Ph.D. students are expected to register for at least 9 hours of their advisor's section of APPL 800 "Graduate Research and Thesis" unless special arrangements for an internship are made in advance with their advisor. See more in the **Internships** section.

First-year students may not register prior to orientation. Time will be provided to register for courses at the end of the program orientation where representatives from the Applied Physics Graduate Student Association (APGSA) will be available to provide technical assistance. A first-year student should consult with the APP Director, an Applied Physics Committee member, an APGSA representative, and/or their graduate student mentor to help determine their first semester coursework. Students will meet with their advisors to plan coursework for the second semester and subsequent years to ensure that the coursework 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>.

Course Requirements and Waiver Requests

The Ph.D. program prepares students for research careers in academia and industry. For the Ph.D. degree in Applied Physics, the student must fulfill the University requirements set forth in the catalog under which they 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 fewer than 3 credits hours or higher are required, divided into **4 Core and 5 Elective courses**. No courses may be used to fulfill both Core and Elective requirements.

Even when students have satisfied APP course requirements through prior graduate study, approved waivers, or transferred coursework, they are strongly encouraged to follow their faculty advisor's recommendation to take

any additional course considered important for their research training. In consultation with the advisor, such courses may be taken for full credit or audited, as appropriate.

Program-level course substitutions, waivers, and elective approvals require approval through APP Leadership and/or the Applied Physics Committee (APC). When a substitution or exception affects an official curricular requirement listed in the General Announcements, approval by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) may also be required.

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program are required to complete 90 hours of credit for coursework and research, beyond the bachelor's degree. A minimum of four semesters of full-time study at Rice is also required. The 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.

Previous M.S. degree

For students with a thesis-based M.S. previously earned under another school/program or at another institution, they may petition the APP Director to waive the M.S. requirement, and subsequently, to waive core and elective course requirements. The thesis and transcript (including English translations, where necessary) should be sent to the APP Director for consideration, preferably before the beginning of a student's first semester. The Director will evaluate submissions and notify the student, if approved. If the previous M.S. degree is not accepted, the student must earn the Rice Applied Physics M.S. degree before proceeding to the Ph.D. If a student wishes to earn a Rice Applied Physics M.S. degree in addition to their previous degree, they must still fulfill all original requirements, including coursework.

For incoming students who do not yet have an advisor and whose M.S. has been accepted and coursework waived, they may register for 6 hours of the APP Director's section of APPL 800 in addition to APPL 500, if desired, in their first semester.

APPL 500

Since Fall 2022, APPL 500 "Introduction to Applied Physics" is a required course for all incoming first-year students and is typically taken in the fall term or during the student's first semester. Students will have the opportunity to attend BB Talks from hiring faculty, participate in a series of mini lab rotations to facilitate affiliation, and engage in professional development instruction. This course counts toward the total number of credit hours required for the degree and is in addition to the 4 Core and 5 Elective course requirements. The APP Director may waive this requirement where appropriate.

NRT-CQED Requirements

NRT-CQED trainees should also consult the separate NRT-CQED coursework and training overview for additional NRT-specific coursework, seminar, writing, communication, mentoring, and professional development expectations.

Core Courses

Students are required to take four core courses, shown below and listed online at <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/current-students/core-courses>. Any courses taken beyond the first four will be counted towards the elective credit. 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.

- PHYS 515 Classical Mechanics
- PHYS 516 Mathematical Methods
- PHYS 521 or CHEM 530 Quantum Mechanics I
- PHYS 522 or CHEM 531 Quantum Mechanics II
- PHYS 526 or CHEM 520 Statistical Physics
- PHYS 532 Electrodynamics
- PHYS 563 or ELEC 653 Intro to Solid State Physics
- PHYS 572 Fundamentals of Quantum Optics and Cavity Quantum Electrodynamics
- CHBE 501 Fluid Mechanics
- CHBE 602 Physico-Chemical Hydrodynamics
- CHBE 611 Thermodynamics
- BIOE 502 Physical Biology

Elective Courses

Five courses should be selected from a list of approved courses offered by different departments in the School of Natural Sciences and the School of Engineering & Computing. These are chosen according to the research directions of the student. The current list is maintained at <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/current-students/elective-courses>. Other courses may be considered to count as Electives on a case-by-case basis by petitioning and obtaining approval from the Applied Physics Committee. 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 courses may be transferred for students who have completed 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 used to achieve a previous degree. Copies of the official transcript and the class description from the syllabus must be provided along with the completed Graduate Transfer Request for Credit form. (Visit the Office of the Registrar's website for university guidelines at http://registrar.rice.edu/students/grad_transfer/). The APP Director will evaluate for approval; the faculty member teaching the relevant course at Rice may also be consulted.

For elective classes completed at Rice and not on the [Approved Electives list](#), Committee approval is also required. Elective courses must be at least 3 credit hours to be eligible.

All requests for elective courses should be submitted *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 2024), description, and any restrictions, prerequisites, and corequisites, noting that the request is for credit for an elective course not on the approved list. The course information can be found at <https://courses.rice.edu/courses/swkscat.main>.

No courses previously used to fulfill the requirements of a bachelor's or professional master's or other degree will be accepted as Elective courses, and in the case of acceptance of a Core course, then a substitute course must be chosen in its place to meet the full 27 credit hours required.

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. **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** to 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](#).

A Core course may be repeated once to bring the grade up to a B– (2.67), applicable for a maximum of 2 Core courses. Students may also choose to take a different Core course (from the list) to replace an unsatisfactory grade. For repeated (or replaced) 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.

Incomplete

Instructors report an INC 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. Students must coordinate with the instructor and comply with the current Rice University deadlines for completion of work and submission of revised grades. Current INC deadlines and consequences for missed deadlines are governed by the General Announcements and the Office of the Registrar.

Audit

The grade designation of Audit (AUD) is used for students auditing a course who have met the audit requirements of the course. A grade designation of (NC) is given to students who have not met the audit requirements. Requests to audit a class or to change from audit to credit or vice versa must be completed by the applicable deadline published in the Rice Academic Calendar. Audited 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 to 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 to perform some teaching and/or grading as part of their graduate education. The precise duties are set by the advisor's primary department, which would provide written certification of fulfillment to the APP. However, APP students are not specifically obligated or required to perform any grading or teaching as part of our program's doctoral degree requirements.

Academic Status

The student's research advisor and APP Leadership will review the student's research progress and academic status annually to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress in the program. Satisfactory progress in APP includes maintaining good academic standing under Rice University/GPS requirements and meeting APP-specific program requirements. These include timely completion of coursework; maintenance of APP grade standards for Core and Elective courses; timely affiliation with a research advisor; submission of annual progress reviews by the announced deadline; progress toward the M.S. thesis, Ph.D. candidacy, and Ph.D. defense milestones; and continued research progress as assessed by the advisor and APP Leadership.

APP academic standards may be more stringent than the university minimums. GPS academic probation and dismissal procedures follow the General Announcements.

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

Host Department Seminars, Classes, and Qualifying Exams

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

APP students follow APP degree requirements, including the 4 Core and 5 Elective course requirements, and are not required to complete the qualifying examinations of the host department. However, students may be required by their thesis advisor and/or host department to complete additional seminars, courses, training, or other activities relevant to their research appointment or host-department expectations.

Timelines and Procedures, Candidacy and Defense

Degree Timeline

Year One

- Register for APPL 500 to attend BB talks to learn about research opportunities and to utilize mini lab rotations to meet with potential research advisors
- Complete at least 6 courses (APPL 500, Core/Elective courses, research credit) over Fall and Spring semesters
- Register for at least 3 hours of APPL 800 for Spring
- Meet with APP Mentor at least once per month until affiliation; continue to meet in Spring, as well

- Work toward official affiliation with an advisor/research group by the end of the Fall semester, following the Affiliation Policy and Timeline. Students who require additional time must follow the extended rotation and reporting process described in that section.
- Complete Annual Progress Review in April
- 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 each semester (minimum of 3 hours)
- Take any seminar or other courses as requested by the advisor
- Complete Annual Progress Review in April
- Summer:
 - Register for 9 hours of APPL 800 unless on internship or other leave
 - Work with advisor to determine M.S. Thesis Committee
 - Submit M.S. Petition for Candidacy by August 1

Year Three

- Complete required coursework during Fall and Spring semesters
- Register for APPL 800 each semester (minimum of 3 hours)
- Take any seminar or other courses requested by the advisor
- Complete Annual Progress Review in April
- Defend M.S. Thesis by August 15
- Summer:
 - Apply for M.S. Degree conferral for appropriate semester
 - 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 year)
- Complete any remaining coursework, if needed
- Register for at least 9 hours of APPL 800 for Fall, Spring, and Summer
- YEAR 4:
 - Work with advisor to determine Doctoral Thesis Committee
 - Submit Ph.D. Petition for Candidacy by August 1
- Take any seminar or other courses requested by the advisor
- Complete Annual Progress Review in April of each year, including final year
- Defend Doctoral Thesis within 6 years (final timeline to be determined with advisor)
- Complete APP exit survey and interview

While the Rice University requirement is that students complete the Ph.D. within 8 years, APP expects students to complete the Ph.D. within 6 years of entering with a B.S. degree and within 4 years if a previous M.S. degree has been accepted, unless a written exemption is approved by the Applied Physics Committee (APC). University doctoral time boundaries and time-to-degree rules are governed by the General Announcements and GPS.

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

Barring a written exemption approved by the Applied Physics Committee (APC), the M.S. should be completed within 3 years of entering the program; the Ph.D. from the B.S. should be completed within 6 years. A student

with an accepted previous M.S. degree is expected to achieve the Ph.D. in 4 years. The program does not offer a stand-alone thesis M.S. degree; students admitted to the Ph.D. program with a bachelor's degree are required to earn the M.S. within the program before proceeding to the Ph.D.

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 candidacy deadline must submit an [Extension of Candidacy Petition](#) request form to [GPS](#). Students who exceed time boundaries without an approved extension may be subject to GPS action in accordance with the General Announcements and current GPS procedures.

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.

Thesis Committee

The thesis committee must include at least three members and is subject to approval by APP and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS). Students may also select a fourth committee member who does not conform to the requirements below, subject to approval. Thesis committee changes must be approved in writing by APP and GPS before the defense. Students should consult the General Announcements and GPS thesis committee requirements for the official university rules and approval process.

- **Thesis Director / Committee Chair** – typically the student's advisor. If the primary advisor is outside Rice University (TMC), they may serve as Thesis Director if approved through the appropriate Rice/GPS process, and the Committee Chair may be the APP Director or another appropriate APP faculty member, as approved by APP and GPS.
- **Member within the program** – another APP faculty member, inside or outside the student's host department
- **M.S. committee:** member inside or outside APP or the host department, as approved by APP and GPS
- **Ph.D. committee:** member outside the host department

Co-Advisors

Students who are co-advised may list advisors as co-advisors, co-chairs, or individually as Thesis Director and Committee Chair. The second advisor may also serve as the committee member within the program, so still only a total of three committee members are required, though additional may be added.

University records do not automatically have a system to indicate that a student is co-advised. However, when a student submits their thesis, they may indicate that they are co-advised and Rice will make a note that adds that information to the student's transcript.

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 1 after the end of the second year (after the fourth semester, not including

summers). 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 Director's signature and approval by the Office of GPS, which will be obtained by the Program Administrator. Note that the Program Administrator can provide a checklist of tasks and deadlines for defense.

Preparing for Defense

When the student is ready to defend, they should confer with committee members to determine a date, reserve a space, and notify the APP Program Administrator. The M.S. oral defense must be registered and publicly publicized at least 7 calendar days in advance through the Graduate Students Thesis Defense Announcement process, in accordance with GPS/GA procedures. 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 defense*.

Before the defense, GPS will issue the Approval of Candidacy form via Adobe Sign to be completed by the student and thesis committee, following current GPS instructions.

After Defense

Following the defense, students must submit the signed approval of candidacy/defense form and a copy of the defended thesis to GPS within *one week* after the oral examination, following current GPS instructions. Then, the student has six months to submit their final thesis and the signed cover page to GPS. Students must also meet the applicable thesis submission deadline for the desired degree conferral semester as listed in the Rice Academic Calendar.

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; achieved at least a 3.0 (B) average in Core and Elective courses; and defended their Master's thesis or earned a M.S. degree from Rice University (or have an equivalent M.S. degree approved by the APP Director).

The Petition for Approval of Ph.D. Candidacy form is submitted to the Program Administrator by August 1 before the end of Year 4 (counted as 8 full-time fall/spring semesters, not including summers, and in all cases before the beginning of the 9th semester). 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 Director's signature is required on the petition, which is then submitted to the Office of GPS for approval. Note that the Program Administrator can provide a checklist of tasks and deadlines for defense.

Preparing for Defense

When the student is ready to defend, they should confer with their committee members to determine a date, reserve a space, and notify the APP Program Administrator.

The Ph.D. oral defense must be registered and publicly publicized at least 14 calendar days in advance through the Graduate Students Thesis Defense Announcement process, in accordance with GPS/GA procedures. 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 at ***least 14 calendar days in advance of the defense***. At least one week prior to defending (a minimum of 14 full days, excluding holidays), the student must submit the following information to the Office of GPS, via the [Rice Events Calendar](#): defense date, time, location, title, and abstract. 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 full calendar days in advance of defense.

Before the defense, GPS will issue the Approval of Candidacy form via Adobe Sign to be completed by the student and thesis committee, following current GPS instructions.

After Defense

Once the student defends their Doctoral thesis, students must submit the signed approval of candidacy/defense form and a copy of the defended thesis to GPS within *one week* after the oral examination, following current GPS instructions. Then, the student has six months to submit their final thesis and the signed cover page to GPS. Students must also meet the applicable thesis submission deadline for the desired degree conferral semester as listed in the Rice Academic Calendar.

Dissertation Format and Policy

For university-wide formatting and submission guidelines, visit the following websites for information:

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

The Applied Physics Program (APP) allows two dissertation formats. In both cases, the dissertation must remain a *cohesive, self-contained scholarly document* that can be read and evaluated as a complete work.

Track A (recommended): Integrated dissertation

Students may reuse and adapt content from their peer-reviewed publications (text, figures, methods, and results), provided that the material is integrated into coherent dissertation chapters with appropriate edits for consistency of narrative, notation, and formatting across the full dissertation.

Track B (allowed): Paper-based dissertation

Students may include full papers, verbatim (e.g., as dissertation chapters and/or appendices), provided that the dissertation includes sufficient original “bridge” content so the overall document is self-contained, readable, and clearly connects the included papers into a single unified dissertation.

Minimum Requirements (apply to both tracks)

1. Original framing chapters

The dissertation must include an *original* chapter that provides Introduction/Background/Motivation (scope, context, and problem statement). The dissertation must also include an *original* chapter that provides Synthesis/Conclusions/Future Work (integrating outcomes across chapters/papers, summarizing contributions, and outlining future directions).

2. Bridge content for each paper included as a unit (chapter or appendix)

For each included paper (especially if included verbatim), the dissertation must include ~1–2 pages of original bridge text that states the problem addressed and why it matters, explains how the paper connects to other dissertation chapters/papers, and summarizes what is new/important about the work in the context of the dissertation.

3. Citation and author-contribution statement

Immediately before each included verbatim paper (or paper-based chapter), the dissertation must provide: the

full bibliographic citation and publication status (published / in press / submitted / under review), and a brief author-contribution statement describing the student's role and contributions to the work.

4. Copyright, permissions, and version compliance

Students are responsible for ensuring that any reused or reproduced material complies with the publisher's copyright and reuse policies (including which version may be included—e.g., accepted manuscript as needed), Rice thesis submission requirements, and any university repository rules. Advisors are expected to guide students on appropriate compliance and documentation.

Notes

- The dissertation committee may request edits (including additional bridge text or integration) if the dissertation is not sufficiently cohesive or self-contained.
- The choice of track should be discussed with the advisor early to ensure a consistent plan for structure, transitions, and compliance.

Degree Conferral

For degree conferral (graduation), students must first submit an Application for Degree form (accessible in ESTHER) with the Office of the Registrar by the deadline for the appropriate term, typically at the beginning of the semester. See more at See more at: <https://registrar.rice.edu/students/degree-application#grstudents>

Students must then submit their final thesis before the applicable submission deadline. Students should consult GPS thesis submission instructions, the General Announcements, and the Rice Academic Calendar for current deadlines and procedures.

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, which can be conferred in May, August, or December (depending on when the student submits the Application for Degree).

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

Financial Support and Time Off

Financial Support

Students accepted by APP receive a stipend from the program for the first semester, along with a full tuition waiver. Compensation is calculated and paid bi-weekly. Students may see the payroll calendar on the Controller's webpage at <https://controller.rice.edu/payroll-calendar>.

Starting on January 1 at the start of the second semester, and continuing throughout subsequent years, the advisor is responsible for funding of the student's stipend and research expenses. Students should complete affiliation documentation as soon as an official affiliation is confirmed. Please refer to the **Affiliation Policy and Timeline** section for affiliation expectations, deadlines, and procedures. Students may communicate with the APP Leadership if additional time may be needed.

After affiliating with a research group, APP students will be paid at the APP program rate or at the rate of their host department, whichever is higher. Students are responsible for discussing salary issues with their respective advisors. Initial salary discussions should be held *before* officially affiliating with a research group. Once the student affiliates, the advisor's department of primary affiliation will become the student's host department.

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 Director in conjunction with the advisor.

Students whose funding has terminated may continue 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, they may be 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 also has a list of fellowships 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 research projects. See more at <http://opd.rice.edu/grad-student-postdoc-fellowship>

If a student is funded by an external fellowship, scholarship, training grant, or other source of external funding that covers all or a portion of a student's stipend, then they are expected to accept that funding in place of program or advisor funding.. 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.

Funding Stipulations

If the total amount of the fellowship, including stipend, insurance, etc., is less than the current stipend, the student will receive funding to sufficiently bring them up to the standard stipend amount, funded either by the Program (for incoming or unaffiliated students) or from the student's advisor, once affiliated.

APP students with outside funding may also be eligible for an additional incentive. To qualify, the fellowship must be external to the university, independent of grants made to Rice or to Rice faculty, and be obtained principally through the efforts of the student. Eligible students would receive an increase in stipend equal to 20% of the annual amount of the external funding during each year the fellowship is received, not to exceed \$5,000 additional per year and paid by the student's advisor, pending approval. Exceptions to this recommendation may be required to comply with fellowship rules or other funding limitations. The final determination of the stipend supplement is the responsibility of the research advisor, who should be consulted in advance.

Some host departments also have financial incentives for students who secure outside funding. When applicable, students may elect to receive the highest bonus, though not both.

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 and the APP Director. For domestic students, the main concern is that the internship does not delay timely progress toward the graduate degree. For foreign students, there can be complications regarding the visa status – this requires detailed discussions between the student, the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS), and the advisor. There are also 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 by 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 [student holiday schedule](#) as other students engaged in coursework. 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. As such, 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 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. If the requested leave is not granted, the student can discuss the situation with the APP Director.

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 a written warning from the advisor or the APP Director.

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 their appointment due to a medical emergency or the adoption/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 Director and Program Administrator 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. See Withdrawal form at <http://gpsdocs.rice.edu/forms/WithdrawalForm.pdf>

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

During the first year, students will be assigned a senior APP 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.

At the start of the fall semester, incoming students can meet with mentors, members of the APGSA, and APP Leadership to help determine which courses to take in the first semester and beyond. Enrolling in APPL 500 also allows students to meet faculty and to 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.

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 Summer Colloquium as well as host department seminars, symposiums, and colloquia.

Note that APP students' official affiliation appearing in publications (including conference abstracts) should include the student's host department as well as the APP: *Applied Physics Graduate Program, Smalley-Curl Institute, Rice University, Houston, Texas 77005, USA*.

Annual Reviews

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

Graduating Students and Alumni

Graduating APP 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. After doctoral defense, APP graduates are also asked to complete a survey (to be sent via email) and to schedule an exit interview with APP Leadership within one month of graduation.

Graduate students can also apply for an alumni email at <https://riceconnect.rice.edu/>.

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 APP 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. For additional details, contact the Program Administrator or visit <https://appliedphysics.rice.edu/current-students/apgsa>.

General Information

See a list of many helpful directories and offices at Rice by visiting <https://graduate.rice.edu/resources>.

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:

- 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
- Review charges and payments
- Pay your account online

imagineOne (iO)

The imagineOne (iO) system is another web application used by students, faculty, and staff. For information on how to use iO, visit <https://io.rice.edu>. Student resources in iO are listed below:

- Update your contact information
- View your employment information, such as pay stubs
- Changes to forms (W4 and direct deposit information)
- Download W2 forms
- Receive reimbursement

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. 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	Space Science Technology, 301 (SCI Suite)
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	Ralph S. O'Connor, Room 410
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.

Rice's Office of Information Technology also offers a Laptop Loaner Program if you need a computer due to your primary machine undergoing repair. See more at <https://kb.rice.edu/102837>

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

First-year students will initially have an office on the third floor of the Space Science and Technology building with after-hours building access 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 standard, reasonable print volume..

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 host department office. Department staff will help you arrange an appropriate carrier and payment. For personal services, students may utilize the on-campus post office, in the Police Annex building.

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.

Other Resources

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office (GPS)

The GPS office has many programs, personnel, and resources available. Some are shown below. Students can also [subscribe](#) to the *Grad Digest* newsletter.

- Thrive (for first-year students) <https://graduate.rice.edu/thrive/connect-with-us>
- Professional Development <https://graduate.rice.edu/resources/profdevelopment>
- Fellowship Opportunities <https://graduate.rice.edu/resources/search-fellowships>
- Fellowship Coaching <https://graduate.rice.edu/resources/fellowship-coaching>
- PhD career training platform <https://graduate.rice.edu/beyondprof>
- Grant writing & opportunities <https://libguides.rice.edu/c.php?g=45066&p=286600>
- Emergency loans <https://graduate.rice.edu/academics/finance/moseleyadams>
- Upcoming GPS events <https://graduate.rice.edu/resources/events>

The Center for Career Development

The [Center for Career Development \(CCD\)](#) supports graduate students at every stage of their career journey, from identifying professional goals to navigating the job market. CCD services include one-on-one career coaching, resume and CV review, interview preparation, and access to Rice's global alumni and employer network. Graduate students are encouraged to explore programming designed specifically for academic and non-academic career paths.

Log into [12twenty](#) today: 12twenty is your one-stop shop for your personalized career development journey.

Office of Research

The Office of Research seeks to sensibly improve Rice's research productivity and expand the impact of its discoveries on both scholars and communities alike. Students can find more information about facilities, projects, sponsored research, learning resources, and more at <https://research.rice.edu/about>

Rice Global

Rice Global drives Rice University's global strategy, fostering international research partnerships worldwide. Resources cover travel resources, including Rice's global travel assistance provider. More information at <https://global.rice.edu/travel-resources/> and <https://global.rice.edu/travel-resources/crisis24/>.

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 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>.

Time Boundaries

Individualized time boundaries can be found in ESTHER. General APP and university time boundaries include:

- M.S. candidacy: petition to be submitted before the end of Year 2, counted as 4 full-time fall/spring semesters, not including summers.
- M.S. defense: to be completed by the APP deadline, normally by the end of the summer after Year 3, unless an approved exception applies.
- Ph.D. candidacy: petition to be submitted before the end of Year 4, counted as 8 full-time fall/spring semesters, not including summers, and in all cases before the beginning of the 9th semester.

- Ph.D. defense: completed within APP time boundaries, normally within 6 years for students entering with a B.S. and within 4 years for students with an accepted previous M.S., unless a written exemption is approved by the Applied Physics Committee (APC). University doctoral time boundaries and time-to-degree rules are governed by the General Announcements and GPS.Thesis Information

Students should consult GPS instructions for candidacy, defense, and thesis submission, as well as the General Announcements and the Rice Academic Calendar for current deadlines and procedures.

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://repository.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)

The Office of International Students & Scholars is available to support all Rice internationals and the Academic Departments with all matters related to immigration, international compliance, and cultural adaptation.

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

Resources and activities include 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 after the first semester)

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/>.