Frequently-Asked Questions

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1. How can I apply for the M.S. program (in Physics)?

    You can apply online by filling up an application form at https://usm.edu/admission

You need to upload:

1) CV
2) three letters of reference
3) a statement of purpose
4) 4-year B.Sc and M.Sc. transcripts (for international applicants with a 3-year B.Sc. degree only)
5) a publication list (optional)
6) a valid TOEFL (for most international) and a GRE score
7) Any other additional information that you think might be useful to review your application.

2. What are the requirements for admission to the M.S. program in Physics?

    To apply for the M.S. Program (in Physics) you need to have a valid TOEFL and a GRE (general) score. In addition, you should have a 4-year undergraduate degree in Physical or Mathematical Sciences with a good academic standing.

3. Is it possible to apply for the program without a valid TOEFL score?

    For most international students, a valid TOEFL score is necessary. However, the following students are exempt from having a valid TOEFL score:
    a) International applicants who have a terminal degree from the US or any English-speaking country.
    b) Applicants whose native language is English.
    c) Applicants who have an equivalent IELTS score.

4. Can I send my CV and other materials to a faculty member in the department so that he/she can say if I would be accepted for the program or not?
While you are most welcome to initiate contact with a faculty member concerning your research interest and other queries, please understand that a faculty member cannot comment on whether you would be accepted in the program with a teaching assistantship or not. All applications must be reviewed by the admission committee before a decision can be reached.

5. Can I request a waiver for application fee?

An application fee must be paid, however, you may request a refund upon admission. Such requests are reviewed by the chair of the department on a case-by-case basis.

6. I need financial assistance. How can I apply for financial assistance?

You will be automatically considered for a teaching assistantship when you apply for the program.

7. What is the minimum TOEFL score that I need for application?

The minimum TOEFL score is about 80.

8. I do not have any valid TOEFL score but IELTS score. Can I apply? Is there a minimum score for IELTS?

Yes. Your IELTS score will be converted to an equivalent TOEFL score. The minimum IELTS score should correspond to the minimum TOEFL score. A TOEFL score, however, is preferred as this eliminates the need for converting your IELTS score to a TOEFL one and any possible ambiguities associated with the conversion process.

9. Can I apply for Spring semester (starting January)?

Yes. However, your application will be reviewed in the event a teaching assistantship position is available. Applicants who do not require financial assistance may apply for either in the Fall (August) or in the Spring semester (January).

10. I applied before but was not selected. Can you use my old application?

No. You need to apply again to be considered for the program.

11. Is there a deadline for submitting my application?

Yes. Your complete application should be received by the Graduate School by March 31 of the calendar year.

12. I have been accepted in the program without a teaching assistantship. Is there any way I can receive a teaching assistantship?

Teaching assistantships are awarded strictly on the basis of merit. The Admission Committee prepares a merit list of applicants to this end, and the available TA positions are offered to the
applicants according to their rank in the list. Since there are few assistantships available each year, we cannot offer TAs to all candidates selected for admission.

13. I have applied for the program. When will I get a decision of my application?

If your application is complete, a decision will be communicated to you by the end of April or early May of the Calendar year. If you do not hear from us by this time, please contact us.

14. I have a question that has not been answered in this page. To whom should I contact?

If your query is not answered here, you may contact the chair of the department of Physics (at chris.winstead AT-usm.edu) or the Admission Committee (at Ras.Pandey-AT-usm.edu, or at Michael.Vera-AT-usm.edu). Please replace 'AT-' by '@' in the e-mail addresses above.