

Virtual Open House

General Questions Submitted by Prospective Students

These questions may not be asked but were sent in at the time of the virtual open house invitation.

Question: Approximately what percentage of the incoming cohort has at least some informal agreement to join or "try out" a lab?

Question: On average, how long does it take for an experimentalist to obtain a PhD? What about a theorist?

Question: Last year, how many first-year students were supported by TA and how many were supported by RA?

Question: Do conference travel expenses get reimbursed? If so, are they covered by the mentor or the department?

Question: How are students funded over the summer?

Question: Can students find internships during the summer?

Question: Do the graduate students have to choose their respective PhD supervisors at the end of the first year necessarily? Or can they do so up to the end of second year?

Question: Is there an option for rotating RAships, i.e., a student works in a research group as RA for a certain period, then RA under another group for certain number of months, and then at the end of second year, choose their supervisor?

Question: Can a graduate student pass the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination without taking some of the core courses in physics?

Question: When will most students start to do research under the supervision of a faculty?

Question: Can students choose other department's courses? And if they do, do they pay the fees by themselves?

Question: Where did the students go after their graduation?

Question: Of the graduating class last year, how many found a postdoc position in academia? in a government lab? in the private sector industry? how many found a permanent position and where? How many remain unemployed?

Question: What percentage of incoming first years take undergraduate level courses to fill gaps in their education? How do 600 level physics courses differ from 700 level or 800 level physics courses?

Question: Are there publicly available examples of preliminary research presentations used for advancement to candidacy?

Question: Usually when do students join a research group? Is it normal to try a few of them before I made a final decision?

Question: Could you elaborate on how the qualifying exams work?

Question: I would like to take the qualifier in August before the first semester starts. Is there any specific requirement for it?

Question: I have still not decided between experimental and theoretical fields. Is it possible to work on both and decide later?

Question: With regards to students who have already completed a Master's and after waiving course requirements, please elaborate on the timeline for PhD. For example, I want to know whether we can directly join a research group after arriving at UMD or are we expected to wait for a semester or one year.

Question: When do students typically start research? Is it common for students to come to campus the summer before and start working in the lab?

Question: How is the connection to NIST Gaithersburg handled?

Question: Diversity of the graduate student community. How are students from underrepresented groups supported?

Question: What happens to me if my supervisor leaves the post at UMD during the program?

Question: How much influence will COVID-19 have on us admitted international students?

Question: What is in the financial support package for a PhD student? Would tuition be fully covered? How much is the stipend? Would health insurance be covered? How much do I need to pay for an academic year?

Question: How varied and diverse is the demographic? Do students have the opportunity to cultivate community with classmates?