

## NCS- PHYSICS PROGRAM PRACTICES

Questions 1A, 1B - Communication with Potential Doctoral Students

Questions 2A, 2B – Admission

Questions 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D – Orientation and Advisement

Questions 4A, 4B – Social Interactions

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>	
1A	When potential graduate students contact your department for information, who handles the inquiries? (Please provide the title rather than names)	Director of Graduate Programs
1B	What type of information is usually sent in response to such inquiries?	This depends on the nature of the inquiry and what is requested. Among the responses are: 1. Our website 2. Our CD 3. A personal e-mail from the Director of Graduate Programs 4. A personal e-mail from a professor 5. An invitation to visit our department 6. The name and contact information of an alumnus in the inquirer's area 7. The name and contact information of a faculty member at the inquirer's institution etc.
2A	Who in your department makes the decision about which applicants to admit (or to recommend for admission)? (Please provide the title rather than names).	The Director of Graduate Programs
2B	What criteria are used in making this decision?	The student's GPA The courses the student has taken The student's GRE scores The student's institution Letters of recommendation Any other information that we can find about the student's suitability to our program.
3A	How does your department orient new students to graduate study?	We have a one-day orientation in the fall.
3B	Who handles initial course	The director of Graduate Programs.

	advisement for new doctoral students, and how is that person selected?	
3C	Describe the process by which a student selects or is assigned a dissertation chair.	There is no prescribed process. We try to make students familiar with what research opportunities are available through a number of means. This includes weekly pre-colloquium discussion sessions with faculty members; numerous social events; discussions with advisors; and continual updating of our departmental webpage. Similarly we try to let the faculty know what students are available for research assistantships through a number of means. These include: an opening colloquium in the fall where the incoming class is introduced individually; an opening reception for faculty and the new class; and numerous social events. By having a strong sense of community in the department we need not have any formal selection process. Students and faculty find each other during students first few semesters on campus.
3D	Can students in your department change dissertation chairs? If so, how is that change accomplished?	Yes. Students simply inform the Departmental Secretary that the source of their RA has changed from one professor to another and the appropriate budgetary changes are made.
4A	Other than formal coursework, does your department offer, sponsor, or support activities designed to foster social support and/or collaborative learning among doctoral students? (E.g., study groups, student organizations, student-student mentoring programs) If so, please describe.	We require students to attend the weekly departmental colloquium. As an introduction to the 4 PM colloquium we sponsor a noontime pizza lunch where the students meet the speaker and his or her faculty host. The topic to be discussed in the later colloquium is introduced at a level the graduate students can grasp. In addition to making the colloquium more understandable, this has the additional advantage of allowing the students to get to know the faculty during the course of the school year. We also do our best to foster study groups by creating an environment where students can find space to study together in a pleasant space adjacent to their offices.

4B	Does your department hold regular social activities in which students can interact informally with faculty members and other students? If so, please describe	Yes. We have a weekly tea and a weekly pizza lunch. The Graduate Physics Student Association meets regularly and sponsors several social events each semester. The department has a welcoming reception for the new graduate class every fall, a fall picnic for the new gradate class, a Christmas party, a summer picnic, an annual dinner associated with a named lecture series, and an annual retreat where GPSA representation is present.
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