

The image features two large, thick black L-shaped brackets. One is positioned on the left side, with its vertical bar extending downwards and its horizontal bar extending to the right. The other is on the right side, with its vertical bar extending upwards and its horizontal bar extending to the left. These brackets frame the central text.

APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

Your Graduate School Resume

Your graduate application package contains a number of elements; the better each is the better graduate school you will attend.

- GPA
- Letters of Recommendation (know some professors)
- Essays (learn to write).
- Research (Papers are best, presentations are good too).
- Major awards (Goldwater etc.)
- Diversity (are you an Eskimo).
- General GRE Score
- Subject GRE Score

You Do Not Have to Go to Graduate School

- The PhD is for students who want to lead the creation process as part of their job. If this is not important to you, then the time to earn a PhD might not be worth it.
- It is also possible to stop at a masters degree (but don't tell anyone).
- It is very unlikely (6%) you will end as a professor where research is a primary component of your job.

Grades

- Generally only the top half of physics students (57%) attend graduate school of any kind, only about 30% graduate school in physics.
- Most graduate programs establish a minimum gpa of 3.0 for admission (at WVU the cut is 2.75).
- As such, you should attempt to maintain a minimum gpa of 3.5, preferably something above 3.7, if you want to get into a good graduate school.
- Extenuating circumstances are considered, for example if you have a lower gpa but have had good grades for an extended period.

General and Subject GRE

- The GRE comes in two pieces and most graduate schools require both.
- Many fields require the general GRE and there are quite a number of study materials for the test. You should select one and prepare.
- The subject test is a different matter. There are almost no useful preparation materials for the Physics Subject GRE.
- Both tests are administered by ETS, the Educational Testing Service.

What if you get a bad score?

- Use the option to see your scores before sending them to schools.
- There are many graduate schools who would love to accept WVU grads with good undergraduate GPA and research experience that do not require GRE scores.
- A bad score changes where you apply. Where you apply changes what professional goals you are pursuing.

Researching Graduate Schools

- Google “US News and World Report Graduate Physics Rankings” <https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-science-schools/physics-rankings>
- West Virginia University is 100 (up for 123 a few years ago).
- To be a professor at WVU you probably have to go to a graduate school in the top 40, preferably the top 25.
- The good news is that you will be paid to go to graduate school – no scholarship needed – and WVU students can get into excellent graduate schools.
- You are in an excellent position to apply to any graduate program with a degree from WVU.

The Top



Physics

Ranked in 2014 | Physics Rankings

Methodology

SPONSORED BY:

Click here for the  GRE study guide sponsored by

Graduate schools for physics typically offer a range of specialty programs, from quantum physics to relativity, as well as plentiful research opportunities to bolster a science education. These are the best physics schools. Each school's score reflects its average rating on a scale from 1 (marginal) to 5 (outstanding), based on a survey of academics at peer institutions.

Specialty

Rank	School name	Score
#1	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Cambridge, MA	5.0
#2 Tie	California Institute of Technology Pasadena, CA	4.9
#2 Tie	Harvard University Cambridge, MA	4.9
#2 Tie	Princeton University Princeton, NJ	4.9
#2 Tie	Stanford University Stanford, CA	4.9
#2 Tie	University of California—Berkeley Berkeley, CA	4.9
#7 Tie	Cornell University Ithaca, NY	4.7
#7 Tie	University of Chicago Chicago, IL	4.7
#9	University of Illinois—Urbana-Champaign Urbana, IL	4.6

Applying to Grad School

- Plan on applying to about 10 programs (it will cost about \$1000).
- Application deadlines begin as early as December 1st with many programs due January 1st.
- Make sure you have your letters lined up in advance.
- Decision day is April 15th , you have to choose a school by then.

WVU is not a reliable backup school

- Each year one or two WVU undergrads join the graduate program.
- You cannot count on acceptance to WVU.

Grad School Shopper

GradSchoolShopper.com is a service created by the American Institute of Physics to help physics students choose graduate schools.

Sort by research specialty or GRE requirements.



<https://www.gradschoolshopper.com>