

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The School of Physics and Astronomy Welcome Handbook

Table of Contents

Schedule of Upcoming Events.....	3
Checklist	4
Step 1: School of Physics and Astronomy	5
Step 2: Graduate School.....	8
Step 3: Boynton Health Services	9
Step 4: U Card Office	12
Other Important Information.....	13
Registration, Tuition and Billing	14
Graduate Written Exam.....	16
Summary of Important Links.....	17

Schedule of Upcoming Programs and Events

Physics Department Orientation and TA Training

Monday, August 19, 2013

9:00 a.m.

Room 435, Tate Laboratory of Physics

The Physics Department orientation is a required two week program that runs from Monday, August 19th - Friday, August 30th. You will receive a program schedule as well as an orientation packet.

NOTE: DO NOT sign up for the optional orientation conducted by the University. This orientation conflicts with our orientation.

Graduate Written Exam (GWE)

Tuesday, August 20th, 9:00am-1:00pm (Part I)

Wednesday, August 21st, 9:00am-1:00pm (Part II)

Room 150, Tate Laboratory of Physics

You are eligible, but not required, to take this exam in August. Students entering the graduate program in the Fall Semester must pass the GWE no later than the Fall exam of the next academic year. If you do decide to take the GWE during orientation and do not pass, it will not be counted against you.

Domestic TA's – Arrival Information Checklist

Domestic Students need to check in with the following offices:

- Step 1: School of Physics & Astronomy
116 Church Street SE
Room 138 Physics, East Bank Campus
- Step 2: Graduate School
101 Pleasant Street SE
309 Johnston Hall, East Bank Campus
- Step 3: Boynton Health Service
410 Church Street SE
N-323 Boynton, East Bank Campus
- Step 4: U Card (ID Card) Office
300 Washington Avenue SE
G22 Coffman Memorial Union, East Bank Campus

STEP 1: School of Physics & Astronomy

Check in with the Physics Graduate Program Administrator, Kari Schuster, in Physics room 148 to receive your keys, Physics Computer Account information, and New Employee Handbook.

Payroll Forms to Complete

You first need to go online and complete the I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form) at the Employee Self-Service website <http://hrss.umn.edu>. More information can be found in your New Hire Packet.

After filling out the I-9 you will need to meet with Mette Stewart in the Physics Financial Office. Room 136, Tate Laboratory of Physics. You can make an appointment to meet with her by emailing mette@physics.umn.edu or calling 612-626-6509.

You should bring ID cards along with you to verify your identity and employment eligibility for this. Some acceptable forms of ID are:

Identification Documents

- A U.S. Passport (unexpired) by itself
OR (one from each group)
 - A Driver's license or state issued ID card with photograph
 - School ID card with photograph
 - Voter's registration card
 - U.S. Military card or draft record
- AND
- U.S. Social Security card
 - Official birth certificate
 - U.S. Citizen ID card

You will complete the following forms:

- University of Minnesota Human Resource Information Form
- W-4 Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate
- Direct Deposit Authorization (highly recommended through website <http://hrss.umn.edu>)
- Graduate Fellowship Income Tax Withholding Request (if you are being supported on a fellowship and want taxes withheld)

Human Resources Employee Self-Service website

The Human Resources Employee Self-Service website at <http://hrss.umn.edu> allows you to view your pay statement online two days prior to payday. You will need your x500 ID to access this website. You can also change your W-4 at this address.

If you set up direct deposit to a checking or savings account, you will only be able to access your pay statement through this website. If you receive a paper pay check, you should pick it up on pay day in Room 136 Physics after 10:00 a.m.

The University of Minnesota operates on a biweekly, ten-day delayed pay cycle. Pay day is every other Wednesday

Fellowships

Fellowship appointments are considered non-service appointments and no taxes are withheld unless you complete the Graduate Fellowship Income Tax Withholding Request. Note that this withholding stays in effect with each new fellowship unless you change it. If you also hold a Teaching/Research Assistantship, you will receive two pay checks or pay statements since our payroll system cannot combine a non-service Fellowship payment with a for-service assistantship payment.

Physics Graduate Program Handbook

The Physics Graduate Program Handbook is located on the Physics website and can be found by going to this direct link: http://zzz.physics.umn.edu/graduate_handbook/home. The Handbook provides details on courses, progression through your program, policies and other important program information.

Physics Computer Account

This account is your Physics email and computer account and is separate from your University-wide computer account. You will be given your Physics email address and provided with an initial password and instructions on changing your password, using the system and Physics computer system policies.

You can access the Physics computer lab in Room 80 by swiping your U Card through the door. Your Physics Directory entry is automatically updated to include your U Card number to get you on the access list. Additional computing information can be found at <http://zzz.physics.umn.edu/computing>. The Physics Intranet, <http://zzz.physics.umn.edu/>, is the site to share information for all department faculty, staff and students.

Initiate your University computer account

If you have not already initiated your internet account you will need to do so as soon as possible in order to gain access to University Internet services, including the Graduate School's admitted student portal, the library system and email. Student Internet Account Initiation is at <https://www.umn.edu/initiate>. To initiate your computer account, you will be asked to provide your Internet (student) ID number (on the top of your admission letter), your date of birth, and your social security number. International students who don't have a social security number may

leave that field blank. If you have any difficulties with the initiation process, please call 1-HELP at (612) 301-4357 or send e-mail to help@umn.edu.

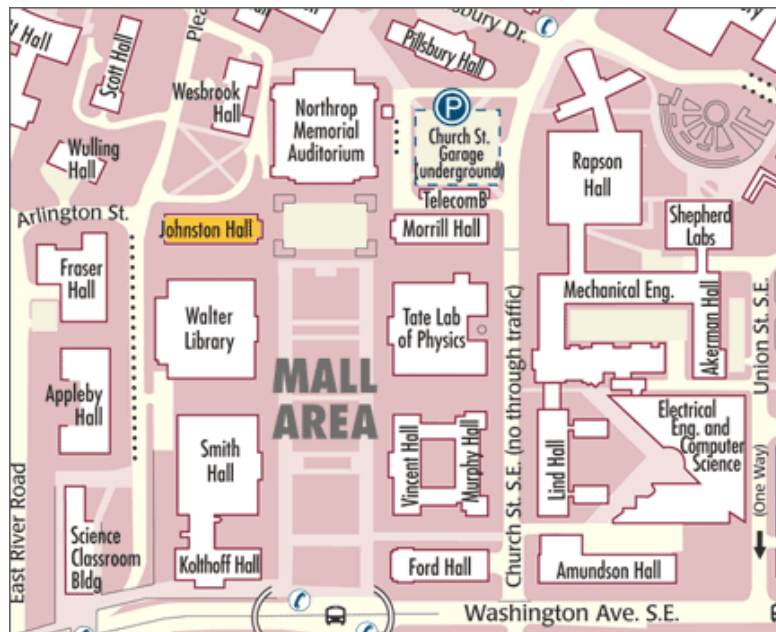
Once you have initiated your Internet account, you can access the admitted student portal. Return to <http://www.myu.umn.edu/> and login. Each time you sign in to MyU you will need to provide your Internet ID and password.

University-assigned email accounts

University-assigned student email accounts are the University's official means of communication with all students, it is your responsibility to ensure that you receive and read University e-mail messages, including attachments. If you prefer that official University communications be sent to your personal or departmental e-mail account, be sure to set e-mail forwarding.

STEP 2: Graduate School

Check in with the Graduate School, room 309 Johnston Hall, East Bank Campus to make sure your graduate admission is complete (see map below).



Legend:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Freshman Admissions Welcome Center | Public parking |
| Transfer & International Admissions Welcome Center | Public parking (events only) |
| Information centers | Code blue emergency telephones |
| Major intercampus bus stops with connections to intracampus circulators | Meter parking |

© 2005 by the Regents of the University of Minnesota
University of Minnesota Cartography Laboratory

Before you register for classes

The Graduate School requires a final official transcript showing receipt of your degree before you can register for classes. The transcript must be sent directly from your school in an official envelope to the Graduate School. If your school does not send transcripts, it should be presented to the Graduate School by the student in a sealed envelope.

You can check the status of your application materials online by logging back in to the same [ApplyYourself](#) admissions system you used to submit your Graduate School application. You will see the [Application for Admission](#) section (pictured on the next page), which contains important updates about the status of your application, recommendations, any standardized tests (like GRE or TOEFL), and your transcripts. You will also be notified periodically via email as your application is reviewed and a decision is made.

Questions regarding official transcripts should be directed to the Graduate School at gsquest@umn.edu or 612-625-3014

STEP 3: Boynton Health Service

Check in at Boynton Health Service located at N-323 Boynton, East Bank Campus, phone (612) 625-3222, to make an appointment for any immunizations you may need and to provide your immunization records (see map below).



Required immunizations

All students born after December 31, 1956, are required by Minnesota state law to be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, and rubella. You received a student immunization record with your admissions letter. You can also access it at: <http://www.bhs.umn.edu/immunization-requirements.htm>. If you are not adequately immunized, you must get immunized against the diseases listed above.

This State law does allow for some exemptions. Individuals who show proof of having had the disease or those who wish to conscientiously object may fill out the appropriate sections of the Immunization Form.

Complete the record and return it as soon as possible. Please note that Boynton can provide the immunizations, they are provided at a reduced cost. Part of the cost is covered by the student services fee.

- All Minnesota High School students who graduated in 1997 or later only need to complete the basic information on the immunization form. They do not have to turn in an immunization record.

- For those who are **not exempt**, you must turn in your immunization record in order to register for classes. However, you will get a one-semester grace period. It is highly recommended that you get your immunizations and turn in the record before you register for your first semester of classes.
- A hold will be placed on your record and you will not be allowed to register for your second semester of classes if you have not turned in the record.

Immunization requirement status

You can view your immunization requirement status online if you are an enrolled student by downloading your personalized immunization form. You can also see information about your immunization status and detailed information about your immunizations from the University of Minnesota website, called “my U”. Go to www.myu.umn.edu and click on the link called "my Toolkit." You will be asked to log into the portal using your University Internet ID and password. You will see your immunization information in your personal "To Do List" in the portal.

Graduate Assistant Medical Plan

As a graduate student with a graduate assistant appointment (teaching or research), you are covered by the Graduate Assistant Medical Plan. Visit Boynton's Student Coverage page at <http://www.bhs.umn.edu/health-care-coverage.htm> for more details about what services are available at Boynton Health Service. Your health insurance will start September 1 unless you had a summer appointment and signed up during the summer. You will receive more insurance information including an enrollment form you will need to complete and return to Boynton Health Service.

HealthPartners will be providing the plan network and claims administration services for the Graduate Assistant Health Plan on both the Twin Cities and Duluth campuses. If you have specific questions about the coverage, contact Health Partners at 952-883-7500 or 866-270-5434.

INSURANCE WAIVER

During registration you will have to “Declare Your Health Plan Coverage.” All Graduate Assistants will select the option “I already have health plan coverage...” and enter the following information:

- Name of Health Insurance Plan: **Graduate Assistant Health Plan**
- Health Plan Group Number: **24000**
- Member ID Number: **your student ID number**

You must also complete the Graduate Student Health Plan forms and submit them to the Office of Student Health Benefits. These forms are in that white insurance packet envelope you received.

All students can check if your insurance info is correct by logging into the Health Plan Coverage link found on the OneStop website at www.onestop.umn.edu

For coverage costs and information on your healthcare plan please visit the Office of Student Health Benefits website: www.shb.umn.edu.

You should check your student account early to be sure insurance premiums are paid on time.

STEP 4: U Card Office

The U Card (ID Card) Office is in room G22, Coffman Memorial Union, East Bank Campus (see map below).



Go to the U Card Office for your University student picture ID card. This card has many uses besides ID purposes. Some of the things you can use it for are:

- Access to the School of Physics Computer Lab in Room 80 Physics
- All your checking account needs (ATM card)
- Making Gopher GOLD purchases
- Checking out University library materials
- Entering the recreation center, golf course, other University computer labs, buildings, and residence hall dining rooms
- Cashing checks at the Bursar's Office

The U Card identifies you as a student of the Twin Cities campus. Your first U Card is free. If lost, additional cards are \$25.00. Bring your driver's license, state ID or passport and be prepared to have your picture taken.

The U Card never expires, so keep it even after you leave the University. If you ever return as a student, staff or faculty member, your card will still be valid. More information can be found at the following website: <http://www1.umn.edu/ucard/>

Other Important Information

Registration, Tuition and Billing

DO NOT REGISTER FOR CLASSES FOR FALL UNTIL YOU HAVE MET WITH YOUR ASSIGNED ADVISER DURING ORIENTATION.

UM Pay Electronic Billing and Payment Services for Students

Every University student has a student account. Your [student account](#) is used to view a summary of all financial transactions such as tuition, fees, on-campus housing and many other campus charges. You will be automatically credited for up to 14 credits a semester for tuition as part of your teaching assistantship.

Each time you register, cancel or add courses, or make a bookstore purchase with your U Card, a charge or credit is posted to your student account. Your student account is a record of your complete transaction history by date or by term. The student account always reflects your most current balance. You can also view bills and make online payments in your student account.

Your billing statement totals the amount due on your student account from any unpaid tuition and fee charges, University housing charges, charges from other University offices, and previously unpaid account balances. You may pay on your account at any time after your tuition has been calculated on your student account; however, your billing statement will show you the exact charges and credits applied to your account as of the date the bill was created. The balances on your monthly UM Pay statement and student account may not match due to recent account activity.

To view and/or pay your billing statement online, log in to your student account. In addition, you can obtain current balance and up-to-date information about other credits and charges at your student account.

All currently-enrolled students are sent an email to their University email address when billing statements are available online at your [student account](#). The University does not mail printed bills, except to non-enrolled and Senior Citizen Education Program participants. You may request an exemption for certain reasons, such as disability, by completing the [Electronic Billing Exemption Appeal form](#). Your appeal will be reviewed by a committee to determine whether your reason warrants producing paper bills on a temporary or permanent basis. You can download and print a paper copy of your billing statement online at your [student account](#).

Billing statements are sent to you monthly starting after the second week of the term. For more information on billing statements and due dates go to [Due dates & payment options](#) at [Billing Statements](#). If you have questions about your billing statement, please [contact One Stop Student Services](#) (612) 624-1111.

Please pay your bill on time to avoid cancellation of registration or additional charges, such as late payment fees and installment/re-billing fees. Payment options include online, U. S. Postal Service, campus drop box, or in person at the Bursars Office.

If you do not make the minimum payment by the due date on your most recent billing statement, a hold will be added to your student record that will prohibit you from registering for classes, charging books to your student account, and getting transcripts or diplomas. Any time you pay less than the minimum amount due as stated on your billing statement by the due date, you will be charged a \$30 late payment fee and a hold will be placed on your record.

A credit balance in your student account is created when you have excess financial aid remaining after all eligible charges on your account are paid in full. For example, when your financial aid amounts exceeds the total amount of tuition and fees billed to your student account. In this case, the credit balance would be remitted to you in the amount of the excess funds. If you cancel or withdraw from classes, your financial aid may be adjusted and you may owe some or all of your credit balance back to the University. If you have not paid your fees in full, any credit balance you are eligible to receive will be applied to your unpaid balance.

You are required by the University to sign up for direct deposit to your bank checking or savings account so your student account credit balance can be transferred to you electronically. Direct deposit is an easy, secure method that transfers your credit balance automatically. More information and the Direct Deposit Online form can be found by going to [Credit Balance and Direct Deposit](#). Once your authorization is processed, all credit balance funds will be automatically transferred into your designated checking or savings account within two to three business days. Be sure to confirm with your bank that your funds are available in your checking account before you begin to write checks, pay bills, or withdraw money.

Hours of operation for online payment access are Monday through Saturday from 5:30 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. and Sunday from 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.

Once logged into the Student Account, you can:

- view tuition bills and real-time balance information
- view billing and payment history
- set up a debit payment from a checking or savings account.
- charge a payment to your MasterCard, DISCOVER, or American Express credit card. (A service charge will be applied.)
- download and print a copy of the bill for sending check payments via U.S. Mail
- forward an email copy of the bill to parents, spouse, or others

Login requires a University student ID and password.

Additional information and answers to commonly asked questions can be found at <http://www.onestop.umn.edu/finances/pay/index.html>

Graduate Written Exam (GWE)

The Graduate Written Examination (GWE) will be given during the first week of orientation, from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm on August 20th (Part 1) and August 21st (Part 2). You are eligible, but not required, to take this exam. Students entering the graduate program in the Fall Semester must pass the GWE no later than the Fall exam of the next academic year. If you do decide to take the GWE during orientation and do not pass, it will not be counted against you. This is a chance to practice the test. If you do not take the exam your first semester, you are required to take it the spring semester of your first year. You are expected to have passed this exam by fall of your second year of graduate studies. Your next opportunity to take the GWE is January 2014, and you must take it then if you did not take or pass the exam in August.

Past GWEs given by our department are available as pdf files on our web site:

http://zzz.physics.umn.edu/dgs_advice/past_gwe

They include exams from 2000 until January 2013. They are a good resource for preparation too, although no solutions are provided.

If you intend to take the GWE in August 2013 you should be preparing for it already. Our experience is that if a student does not prepare intensely for the GWE it is most likely that the student will fail, and this can be disheartening. The pass line varies from one exam to another but is typically around 50%.

Please reply to Kari Schuster at grad@physics.umn.edu if you wish to take the exam in August.

Summary of Important Links

Physics Graduate Handbook: http://zzz.physics.umn.edu/graduate_handbook/home
(Program overview, policies, forms, etc...)

Advice from the DGS: http://zzz.physics.umn.edu/dgs_advice/home
(Course information, fellowships and grants, matriculation, etc...)

Graduate School: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/>
(Graduate School policies, forms, procedures, degree requirements)

Graduate School Catalogue: <http://www.catalogs.umn.edu/grad/>

Boynton Health Services: <http://www.bhs.umn.edu/index.htm>

Office of Student Benefits: <http://www.shb.umn.edu/>
(Information on health insurance coverage and how to enroll)

OneStop: <http://www.onestop.umn.edu/>
(Student Account, registration, financial, billing, University calendars, etc...)

MyU Portal: <http://www.myu.umn.edu/>

Office of Human Resources: <http://hrss.umn.edu/>
(I-9 information, employee self-service)

Graduate Assistant Employment Services: <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/>
(Tuition benefits, job vacancy postings, and policies)