Physics and Astronomy Program Handbook

Welcome
In the last decade, research programs at UNLV have been emphasized and strengthen. During this
time, UNLV has moved up in rank substantially (two levels) on the Carnegie Institute Classification to
“Research University-intensive”. In the last several years, UNLV has hired numerous new faculty
members and vigorously expanded its research programs in the sciences by adding new state-of-the-
art facilities and increasing the number of available degree programs. Since 2014, the Physics and
Astronomy department have added 5 new faculty members in astrophysics, condensed matter physics
and computational physics.

Our graduate program offers masters and doctoral degree in both physics and astronomy; the physics
and astronomy MS program requires a research thesis or course work (see sub plans in Graduate
College Catalog). MS students are expected to complete the program in two years while Ph.D.
students typically take 5 years. Ph.D. students have two attempts to pass the Ph.D. qualifying exam
(offered every Spring semester). Astronomy Ph.D. students have to pass an oral qualifying exam in
addition to a written qualifying exam.

Purpose
The purpose of this handbook is to provide program specific information that is not found in the
UNLV Graduate Catalog. Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and
procedures delineated in this document and the UNLV Graduate Catalog, as well as the NSHE Code,
UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed
to the Graduate College: valarie.burke@unlv.edu or Grad Associate Dean@unlv.edu.

Department Graduate Faculty
A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Faculty must
hold either associate or full graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For
up to date information regarding graduate faculty status in your department, visit the Graduate
Faculty status web page.

Program Information
MS – Physics (Subplan 1: Thesis Track)
MS – Physics (Subplan 2: Non-Thesis Track)
MS – Astronomy (Subplan 1: Thesis Track)
MS – Astronomy (Subplan 2: Non Thesis Track)
Ph.D. – Physics
Ph.D. – Astronomy

Contact Information
http://www.physics.unlv.edu

Department Chair
Stephen Lepp, BPB-207, lepp@physics.unlv.edu

Graduate Coordinator
Victor H Kwong, BPB-161, vhs@physics.unlv.edu

Department Main Office
Program Requirements
Program requirements regarding admission, coursework and culminating experience are found in the graduate catalog.

Advisory Committee Guidelines
Physics and Astronomy follows the guideline of the Graduate College. The role of the Advisory committee is described in the Degree Progression Policies & Procedures section in the graduate catalog.

Degree Program Benchmarks
This is described in the Graduate Catalog for the MS degree program and Ph.D. degree program.

Program Timeline
It is expected to take two years for MS degree program and three to five years for Ph.D. degree program. The general guideline is listed in the graduate catalog under the Graduate Study Timeline section.

Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines
UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the graduate catalog.

Annual Review Procedures
Students are required to make adequate yearly progress towards degree completion. The Graduate Advisory Committee that oversees the development of MS thesis research/Ph.D. dissertation research will meet at least once a year to review the progress of the student. This committee must be formed by the thesis/dissertation advisor during the first semester of the program. A written progress report will be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator/Graduate College for review.

Probation
If a student fails to successfully progress in their degree program, their department/school will recommend that the student be placed on probation by the Graduate College. Students on probation may be dismissed/separated from their program for failing to successfully meet the conditions of their probation by the deadline provided. Please see the Probation and Separation section of the Graduate Catalog for more information.

Additional Program Information
Colloquium, Seminar and talks are regularly scheduled in the department. They include Russell Frank Astronomy Lecture Series, Department Forum, Astronomy Journal Club and Astro Coffee. All graduate students are encouraged to attend. Graduate students are also expected to attend discipline meetings and workshops.

Discipline Resources
American Physical Society (aps.org), Optical Society of America (osa.org), American Astronomical Society (aas.org). Students are encouraged to join these professional organizations.

University Resources
Academic Success Center
The goal of the Academic Success Center is to help students do well academically and complete their studies on time. They offer or will refer you to such programs and resources as tutoring, advising, skills testing, career exploration and more. They guide students every step of the way to the many established resources created to ensure they complete their educational goals. Learn more about the programs and services the center currently offers.

Alumni Association
With an alumni base 90,000 strong, the UNLV Alumni Association offers a variety of services and opportunities in support of alumni and their families. UNLV alumni are encouraged to support the values of higher learning through advocacy, involvement, and giving.

Commencement Office
Located in the UNLV Registrar’s Office, the commencement office is the last step in the graduation process. Please check with the commencement office for information on the commencement ceremony and your diploma; for all other information about graduate student degree completion and graduation, including thesis/dissertation requirements and doctoral hooding, please contact the Graduate College.

Office of Diversity Initiatives
The vision of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to provide leadership and support for UNLV’s diversity mission: to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment. This Office also handles UNLV Title IX questions, inquiries, and reporting.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)
The DRC is committed to supporting students with disabilities at UNLV through the appropriate use of advocacy, accommodations, and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. The DRC is the university-designated office that determines and facilitates reasonable accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Graduate students with disabilities must disclose to the DRC in order to receive appropriate accommodations.

Office of International Student and Scholars
International Students and Scholars (ISS) ensures compliance with both SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) and federal law, so that the university can continue to be authorized by the U.S. federal government to enroll international students; host and hire international scholars; assist and advise employment eligibility and authorization relating to international students and scholars, and visa, travel, and immigration issues; provide critical and specialized services to the international students and scholars of the UNLV community; and facilitate their transition to the campus and the U.S.

Jean Nidetch Women’s Center
The Jean Nidetch Women’s Center is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women’s Center has informational resources, brochures, and flyers for a variety of on and off campus organizations to help empower and protect yourself, and learn about your options. They also provide free tampons, pads, and condoms.

UNLV Libraries
UNLV Libraries has always been more than books; they are about encouraging students and creating quality programs that elevate growth and learning. Please visit their website for important information about the services they offer to graduate students.

Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA)
The Graduate & Professional Student Association serves all currently enrolled University of Nevada, Las Vegas graduate and professional students. The GPSA maintains the Graduate Student Commons located in the Lied Library room 2141. The facility a working office equipped with a copier, fax, flatbed scanners, color laser printer, office supplies, and computers with printers and a small kitchen area. The GPSA is the graduate student governance body at UNLV; the GPSA Council consists of one graduate student representative from each graduate department, and they meet monthly. The GPSA also provides volunteer opportunities, sponsors social events, and supports graduate student research through the graduate research and travel grants program.
Office of Student Conduct
The Office of Student Conduct is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Conduct collaborates with the UNLV community to provide an inclusive system through enforcement of the UNLV Student Code of Conduct by:

- Promoting awareness of student rights and responsibilities;
- Establishing accountability for student choices;
- Creating opportunities for involvement in the process; and
- Striving to uphold the values and ethics that advance the common good.

Office of Veteran Services
The UNLV Office of Veteran Services is staffed with veterans and GI Bill-experienced staff to assist more than 1,000 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists. Their mission is to develop a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.

The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office
The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office supports higher-education access and persistence by providing financial aid to eligible students. The office partners with student organizations, the UNLV Foundation, the Graduate College, and other external constituents to provide financial aid learning opportunities and scholarship support for graduate students.

Writing Center
This is a free service to UNLV students to help you with any writing project, from papers to creative writing, to resumes, and we can work with you at any stage of the writing process. The center can help you brainstorm, make an outline, work on your drafts, or just be a soundboard for your ideas. The center staff can assist you in person, or via the Online Writing Lab (OWL) page.

University Policies and Procedures
Graduate students are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with UNLV Policies and Procedures. To view the most commonly referenced campus policies and procedures, you can refer to the following websites:

- Academic Integrity
- Activation for Military Service
- FERPA/Privacy Rights
- Health Insurance - Mandatory
- Jeanne Clery Campus Safety and Security Report
- Proof of Immunization
- Policies and Procedures on the Protection of Research Subjects
- Rebelmail Policy
- Student Conduct Code
- Student Computer Use Policy
- Title IX

To ensure compliance with Graduate College policies and procedures, please review the relevant sections of the Graduate Catalog:

- Academic Calendar
- Academic Policies
- Admission and Registration Information
- Degree Progression Policies & Procedures

In addition, the Graduate College website contains additional information regarding policies and procedures.
Nothing in this handbook supersedes any NSHE, UNLV, or Graduate College policy.

**Handbook Information**

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<th>Changes summary</th>
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<td>Victor H. Kwong</td>
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