

# Information for Incoming Prospective Physics Majors

Welcome to the University of Virginia. We want to encourage you to check out the physics department's teaching web site at <http://www.phys.virginia.edu/Education/>. The document "[Physics and Introductory Physics Courses](#)"<sup>1</sup> describes our introductory physics courses. The document "[Undergraduate Degree Programs](#)"<sup>2</sup> describes our degree programs, and the web page "[Undergraduate Physics Advisors](#)"<sup>3</sup> provides a list of our advisors for physics majors. You will select one of us as your physics major advisor when you declare a physics major (which you can do any time), but please contact any of us whenever you have questions even before your major declaration.

Before you start taking your first classes, we would like to make sure that you:

- ... understand that the introductory courses for the major require calculus. You should take Calculus 1 (MATH 1310) before starting the physics courses with Introductory Physics 1 (PHYS 1420 or 1425), and then continue with Calculus 2 (MATH 1320) and 3 (MATH 2310) concurrently with (or before) your other introductory physics courses.
- ... sign up for the correct introductory course sequence. We have courses for physics majors (PHYS 1420/2410 – starting in spring), and engineers (PHYS 1425/2415 – starting every semester).
- ... consider our optional course "Physics in the 21st Century" (PHYS 1930) in which you will learn about physics as a field, about research opportunities at UVa, and about what kind of career opportunities physics offers.
- ... consider our optional course "Practical Computing for the Physical Sciences" (PHYS 1660) in which you will make your first steps in programming for those of you who have not done that before.

We also want you to know about the weekly meetings of our local chapter of the Society of Physics (see <https://spsatuva.github.io/>). The SPS meetings offer special talks on topics related to physics by faculty members from Physics and other departments at the University. There are also presentations devoted to giving advice and commentary on graduate and professional schools, and talks about careers in science. At each meeting there are refreshments and time for

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.phys.virginia.edu/Education/UndergraduateAdvising/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.phys.virginia.edu/Education/Programs/MajorBrochure/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.phys.virginia.edu/Education/Programs/Advisors/>

students to talk to each other and to faculty members who are invited to attend. Membership in SPS is open to any student interested in physics. For relevant announcements, we have a mailing list; please send a message to our receptionist (Ashley Haddox, [physics@virginia.edu](mailto:physics@virginia.edu)) if you want to be included.

We wish you a successful start into your life at our university.

Stefan Baeßler, Director of Undergraduate Programs, for the Physics Department