

I Got into Grad School, and You Can Too!

Tom Boettcher

April 7, 2015

Disclaimer

Grad school is not the only option!

- ▶ Physics grads are typically very employable
- ▶ No matter what, work on building a skill set

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- ▶ Domestic, white male

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- ▶ Get involved in any outreach that sounds fun

Courses

Start thinking about which courses you should be taking. For example, Berkeley expects. . .

- ▶ 3 semesters- General Physics (P221, P222, P301)
- ▶ 1 semester- Mechanics (P441, P442)
- ▶ 2 semesters- Electromagnetism and Optics (P331, P332, P460)
- ▶ 1 semester- Thermal/Statistical (P340)
- ▶ 2 semesters- Atomic Physics and Quantum Mechanics (P453, P454)
- ▶ 2 semesters- Advanced Undergraduate Laboratory (P309, P451)
- ▶ Vector calculus (M/S311, M/S312)
- ▶ Linear algebra (M/S303)
- ▶ Ordinary and partial differential equations (M/S343, M/S344, M441, M442)
- ▶ Complex variables (M/S415)

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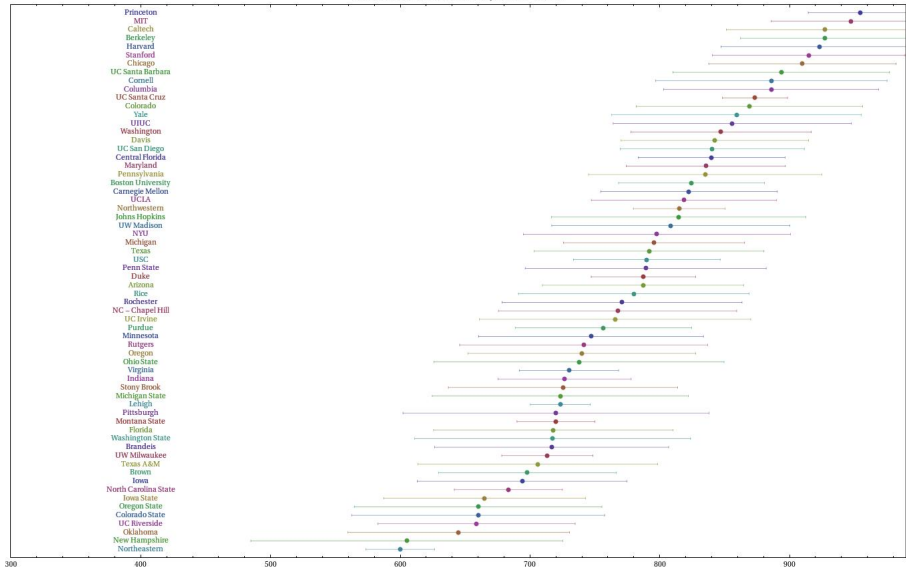
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- ▶ Prepare for the PGRE

Average accepted PGRE score by school
domestic white males, 2008–2010



Preparing for the PGRE

- ▶ Use the 5 available practice tests (1986, 1992, 1996, 2001, 2005)

Preparing for the PGRE

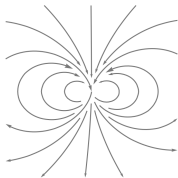
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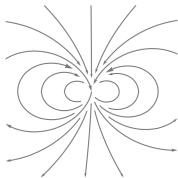
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Respect the test,
don't fear it!

Senior Year

The Application Process

In general, you'll need. . .

- ▶ Transcript
- ▶ Test scores (PGRE, GRE, TOEFL for international students)
- ▶ CV (not always)
- ▶ Course and textbook list (not always)
- ▶ 3 letters of recommendation
- ▶ Statement of purpose

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- ▶ Be specific about your interests
- ▶ Talk about specific professorS you want to work with and why
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If a school asks for a personal/diversity statement, keep it short unless you actually have something to say. Don't offend anyone!

Other Things to Consider

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Deciding where to apply

- ▶ Talk to professors in the field your interested in
- ▶ Rankings can be a guide, but they don't tell the whole story

Apply for external funding

- ▶ NSF GRFP
- ▶ DOE SCGF
- ▶ DOD NDSEG
- ▶ Hertz Fellowship

Some useful resources

- ▶ physicsgre.com (forum dedicated to the PGRE and grad school admissions)
- ▶ gradschoolshopper.com (admissions statistics and information)
- ▶ grephysics.net (worked solutions to PGRE practice tests)
- ▶ thegradcafe.com (admissions results, info on living in various cities)