

What Can I Do With a Major in Physics?



Below is a list of job titles, employers and graduate schools that Harvey Mudd College physics alumni have chosen in the last five years.

Job Titles

Accelerator Systems Operator	Firmware Engineer	Process Engineer	Software Engineer	Teacher
Activities Worker	Junior Quantum Engineer	Researcher	Software Test Engineer	Technical Services Engineer
Biomedical Engineer	Patent Agent	Scientist	Special Education Teacher	
Engineer	Physical Scientist	Software Developer	Support Engineer	

Employers

Applied Operations Research	Google	National Institutes of Health	San Francisco Unified School District	ViaSat
Arete Associates	Hitachi HTA	Northrop Grumman Corporation	Seeq	Zulily
Bluefin Bay Resort	Intel Corporation	Opto 22	SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory	Zygo Extreme Precision Optics
CytoVale	Laserfiche	Parasoft	Teach Overseas	
Epic	Medtronic	Parco Inc.		
Glast, Phillips & Murray PC	Meta	Rigetti Quantum Computing		

Starting Salary Summary

High Salary Range \$90,000–\$120,000	Low Salary Range \$45,000–\$54,999	Median Salary Range \$82,000–\$86,999
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Graduate Schools

California Institute of Technology	Georgia Institute of Technology	Princeton University	University of California, San Diego	University of Southern California
California State University, Long Beach	Harvard University	Stanford University	University of California, Santa Barbara	University of Texas at Austin
California State University, Los Angeles	Iowa State University	Stony Brook University	University of Chicago	University of Toronto
Carnegie Mellon University	Johns Hopkins University	Syracuse University	University of Colorado, Boulder	University of Virginia
Claremont Graduate University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Arizona	University of Houston	University of Washington
Columbia University	New York University	University of California, Berkeley	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	University of Wisconsin, Madison
Cornell University	Northwestern University	University of California, Davis	University of Maryland	Yale University
Duke University	Ohio State University	University of California, Irvine	University of Michigan	
Fuller Theological Seminary	Pennsylvania State University	University of California, Los Angeles	University of Minnesota	
	Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics (Canada)			

Summer Employers

Bloomberg	Jane Street Capital	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	U.S. Geological Survey*	University of Minneapolis (REU)
California Institute of Technology*	Jet Propulsion Laboratory (Summer Internship Program)*	Penn State (REU)	UC Davis (Microbiology Research)*	University of Pennsylvania (REU)
Columbia University (REU)	Laserfiche*	Pololu Electronics*	UC Los Angeles (Applied Math REU)	University of Rochester (REU)
Cornell University (REU)	Los Alamos National Laboratory (REU)	Potential Energy*	Ulsan National Institute of Science and Tech (Korea)	University of Waterloo (Canada)
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*	Louisiana State University (REU)	Rice University (REU)	University of California, Irvine	University of Wisconsin (REU)
Georgetown University (REU)	Meta	Ripple	University of California, San Diego (REU)*	ViaSat*
Girls Who Code*	NASA Ames Research Center*	Rochester Institute of Technology	University of Illinois (REU)	We Care Solar
Google	National Institute of Standards and Tech (REU)	Salesforce	University of Maryland (REU)*	Zone 5 Technologies
Harvard University (REU)	Northwestern University (REU)	SLAC National Accelerator Lab (REU)		
Health Data Vision Inc.				

**companies that hired first-year students*

Average Summer Wage

First-year \$4,304 stipend	Sophomore \$4,768 stipend	Junior \$4,927 stipend
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Here are just a few areas that may interest a physics major.

Area

Employers

ASTROPHYSICS

Teaching
Consulting
Administration
Research
Design
Astronautics

Colleges and universities
Government laboratories (e.g., NASA)
Research centers
Airports
Commercial industry
Aerospace industry
Observatories
Planetariums
Military

HEALTH PHYSICS

Research and development
Teaching
Consulting
Administration
Monitoring inspection

Colleges and universities
Government laboratories (e.g., U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
Nonprofit research centers
Nuclear industry (e.g., health physics instrumentation, nuclear power, nuclear weapons, radio-isotope products nuclear accelerators, nuclear reactors)
Environmental firms
Hospitals

TECHNICAL

Engineering (process and testing)
Quality control
Industrial hygiene
Design development
Technical writing
Computer technology
Research

Research and development firms
Mining and petroleum companies
Hospitals
Engineering firms
Professional and technical journals
Government laboratories
Manufacturing and processing firms
Atomic and nuclear labs
Government laboratories (e.g., U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Defense)
Television and radio stations
Weather bureaus

What You Can Do Now

- Gain experience through volunteering, internships and part-time or summer jobs.
- Develop good oral and written communication skills.
- Supplement curriculum with courses in business, economics, computers or statistics for increased job opportunities.
- Build relationships with faculty by conducting research.
- Develop the ability to work well on teams.
- Talk to professionals in areas of interest to enhance knowledge and make contacts.
- Join related student professional associations.

What You Can Do After Graduation

- An undergraduate degree is often sufficient for entry-level positions, but an advanced degree may open the door to more upper-level opportunities. Pair a strong background in physics with another technical discipline such as computer science or engineering.
- A master's degree in physics, business or related fields will be helpful for advanced positions or for consulting jobs.
- A PhD is needed for academic positions and certain areas of research.



Student Affairs
Office of Career Services