

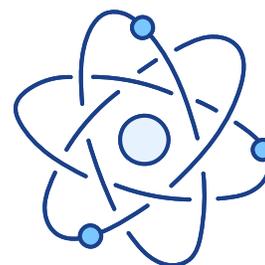
# UPDATES TO THE PHYSICS MAJOR



## What is Changing?

Beginning in Fall 2026, the Physics Department is introducing...

- A streamlined experimental lab sequence
- A re-ordered second-year course sequence
- More upper level elective flexibility
- Optional specialized tracks:
  - Quantum Information
  - Materials Physics
  - Atmospheric Physics
  - Astrophysics



## Your Options as a Current Student

### Option One: Stay with the Current (Old) Catalog

- No action required
- All required courses will continue to be offered
- You can complete your degree under the current requirements

\*If you progress more slowly in your coursework, course substitutions may be required but this will not impact major completion.

### Option Two: Switch to the (New) 2026-2027 Catalog

- More elective flexibility (12 credits instead of 6 credits)
- Opportunity to complete a specialized track
- CHEM 101 no longer required

\*Switching to the new catalog is a final decision that cannot be changed.

## Process for Choosing Old or New Curriculum

Confirm with your academic advisor which curriculum is best for you and discuss next steps for updating your degree audit.

## Key Differences at a Glance

	OLD	NEW
<b>Total Credits</b>	73-74 Credits	74 Credits
<b>Physics Credits</b>	42 Credits	40 Credits
<b>Upper Level Electives</b>	6 Credits	12 Credits
<b>CHEM 101 Required?</b>	YES	NO
<b>PHYS 190 Required?</b>	NO	YES
<b>CMSC requirement</b>	Either CMSC 104 or CMSC 201	CMSC 201
<b>Tracks Available?</b>	NO	YES

## Key Course Equivalencies

PHYS 224 > PHYS 211  
 PHYS 324 > PHYS 212  
 PHYS 330L > PHYS 333L

PHYS 220 > PHYS 233L \*\*  
 PHYS 122L > PHYS 133L

\*\*PHYS 220 was a 3 credit course while PHYS 233L is 4 credits.

## NEW Available Tracks

### Quantum Information

PHYS 361  
 PHYS 434  
 PHYS 461

### Materials Physics

PHYS 434  
 PHYS 471  
 PHYS 472 or PHYS 473

### Astrophysics

PHYS 415  
 PHYS 416  
 PHYS 425  
 STAT 355 or MATH 404

### Atmospheric Physics

PHYS 351

Two of the following: PHYS 435, 451, 452, 453

## FAQs About the New Curriculum

### ***Can I choose a track?***

Yes a track can be chosen, but it is not required.

### ***Do I have to take PHYS 190 Becoming a Physicist?***

Yes. The course will be offered in Fall semesters and will be graded pass/fail.

### ***If I switch, the next physics courses I need are PHYS 211 Waves and Relativity and PHYS 212 Thermal and Quantum Physics. Are they offered next year?***

No, PHYS 211 and 212 will be offered beginning Fall 2027. For academic year 2026-2027, take PHYS 224 Vibrations and Waves and PHYS 324 Modern Physics - they will substitute for 211 and 212.

### ***When can I take PHYS 333L Experimental Physics II?***

This course will not be offered until Fall 2028. Until then, PHYS 330L Optics Lab will be offered and serve as a substitute for PHYS 333L.

### ***Do I need PHYS 320L Electronics Lab if I switch to the new curriculum?***

No, the revised physics lab sequence focuses more on experimental skill with a less topical emphasis. The 320L content will be addressed in PHYS 122, 133L, 333L, and 433L. If you've already completed 320L, it can count as a 3-credit upper-level physics elective.

### ***What happens if I already completed Chem 101?***

If Chem 101 was completed prior to Fall 2026, it will count as a 3-credit upper-level physics elective.

### ***I already completed CMSC 104. Do I have to go back and take CMSC 201?***

No, CMSC 104 can count as your CMSC 201 requirement as long as it was completed prior to Fall 2026.

## What If I Have Other Questions?

Follow up with your advisor, contact Undergraduate Program Director Eric Anderson ([andersoe@umbc.edu](mailto:andersoe@umbc.edu)), and /or attend one of the sessions below.

### **Undergraduate Physics Advising Information Sessions:**

(12pm-1pm ; Physics bldg room 401)

Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>

Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>