

ASTRONOMY AND ASTROPHYSICS, B.S.

Seven Penn State campuses are scheduled for closure after Spring 2027: DuBois, Fayette, New Kensington, Mont Alto, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York. New students are not being admitted at these campuses.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Science degree in Astronomy and Astrophysics, a minimum of 125 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Requirements for the Major	98

18 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 9 credits of GN courses; 6 credits of GQ courses; 3 credits of GWS courses.

Requirements for the Major

To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn a grade of C or better in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Common Requirements for the Major (All Options)

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
ASTRO 320	Observational Astronomy Laboratory	3
CHEM 111	Experimental Chemistry I	1
CHEM 112	Chemical Principles II	3
ENGL 202C	Effective Writing: Technical Writing	3
MATH 230	Calculus and Vector Analysis	4
MATH 251	Ordinary and Partial Differential Equations	4
PHYS 237	Introduction to Modern Physics	3

Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better

ASTRO 291	Astronomical Methods and the Solar System	3
ASTRO 292	Astronomy of the Distant Universe	3
CHEM 110	Chemical Principles I	3
MATH 140	Calculus With Analytic Geometry I	4
MATH 141	Calculus with Analytic Geometry II	4
PHYS 211	General Physics: Mechanics	4
PHYS 212	General Physics: Electricity and Magnetism	4
PHYS 213	General Physics: Fluids and Thermal Physics	2
PHYS 214	General Physics: Wave Motion and Quantum Physics	2

Additional Courses

Select one of the following:			3
CMPSC 121	Introduction to Programming Techniques		
CMPSC 201	Programming for Engineers with C++		
CMPSC 202			

Supporting Courses and Related Areas

Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better

Select 12 credits from 400-level ASTRO courses ¹	12
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Requirements for the Option

Select an option	34
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¹ Except ASTRO 401, ASTRO 402W, ASTRO 494H, and ASTRO 496.

Requirements for the Option

Graduate Study Option (33 credits)

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
PHYS 400	Intermediate Electricity and Magnetism	3
PHYS 410	Introduction to Quantum Mechanics I	3-4
PHYS 419	Theoretical Mechanics	3

Additional Courses

Select one of the following:			3
MATH 405	Advanced Calculus for Engineers and Scientists I		
MATH 411	Ordinary Differential Equations		
MATH 417	Qualitative Theory of Differential Equations		
Select 6-7 credits of the following:			6-7

EE 471/ AERSP 490/ NUCE 490	Introduction to Plasmas		
PHYS 402	Electronics for Scientists		
PHYS 406	Subatomic Physics		
PHYS 411	Introduction to Quantum Mechanics II		
PHYS 420	Thermal Physics		
PHYS 457			
PHYS 457W	Experimental Physics		
PHYS 458	Intermediate Optics		
PHYS 479	Special and General Relativity		

Supporting Courses and Related Areas

Select 3 additional credits from advanced courses in computer science and engineering, mathematics, or statistics	3
Select 10-11 credits in consultation with adviser from department list	10-11

Computer Science Option (33 credits)

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
CMPSC 122	Intermediate Programming	3
CMPSC 221	Object Oriented Programming with Web-Based Applications	3
CMPSC 451	Numerical Computations	3

Additional Courses

Select one of the following:			3
STAT 318	Elementary Probability		
STAT 319	Elementary Mathematical Statistics		
STAT 401	Experimental Methods		
STAT 414	Introduction to Probability Theory		

Select two of the following:			6
CMPEN 271	Introduction to Digital Systems		
CMPEN 331	Computer Organization And Design		
CMPSC 360	Discrete Mathematics for Computer Science		

CMPSC 465 Data Structures and Algorithms

Supporting Courses and Related Areas

Select 3 additional credits from advanced courses in computer science and engineering, mathematics, or statistics 3

Select 12 credits in consultation with adviser from department list 12

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements**First Year Engagement**

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.