

Physics @ UK unis - quick facts

Top 20*

1 St Andrews	AAA	11 UCL	AAA
2 Oxford	A*AA	12 Glasgow	AAB
3 Cambridge	A*A*A	13 Southampton	AAB
4 Durham	A*A*A	14 Bath	A*AA
5 Birmingham	A*AA	15 Leeds	AAB
6 Lancaster	AAB	16 Exeter	AAA
7 Imperial	A*A*A	17 Bristol	A*AA
8 Nottingham	A*AA	18 Edinburgh	AAA
9 Warwick	A*AA	19 Surrey	ABB
10 Manchester	A*A*A	20 Royal Holloway	AAA

* Complete University Guide April 2020

Must haves

A Level maths and physics. Other preferred subjects include further maths, chemistry, biology. Applications with English or a modern language also favoured.

Other degrees to consider

Engineering, particle physics, theoretical physics, astrophysics, cosmology, meteorology

Example course modules

Laboratory physics, mathematical techniques, quantum physics, Newtonian & relativistic mechanics, fabric of physics, plasma & fluids, contemporary physics, stellar physics, analysing the nanoscale & magnetism

Contact hours per week: 13 -23, average 17. (Average all subjects 14.)

Career prospects

Although the subject has seen a bit of resurgence in recent years, the UK is still felt to be short of physics graduates, and in particular physicists training as teachers. If you want a career in physics research – in all sorts of areas, from atmospheric physics to lasers - you'll probably need to take a doctorate, and so have a think about where you would like to do that and how you might fund it (the government funds many physics doctorates, so you might not find it as hard as you think). With that in mind, it's not surprising that nearly a quarter of physics graduates go on to take doctorates when they finish their degree. Physics is highly regarded and surprisingly versatile, which is why physics graduates who decide not to stay in education are more likely to go into well-paid jobs in the finance industry than they are to go into science. IT and engineering – also commanding decent salaries - are other popular industries for physics graduates.

Average starting salary: £25,000