

IMPERIAL

Department of Physics



PHYSICS WITH A YEAR ABROAD

What is the 'Physics with Year Abroad' degree?

Students on our four-year MSci Physics with a Year Abroad (F309) degree, spend their third year at one of our partner institutions in Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland or the USA. You will follow lectures alongside local students and most importantly, carry out a research project in a prestigious research group. The first, second and fourth years of study are mostly identical to those of our MSci (Physics) degree. However, in your first and second year, you will follow a language if you are visiting an institute that teaches in a language other than English.



International Exchanges at Imperial College

The Imperial College Physics Department has the largest and best established European student exchange programme of any university in the UK. Over 250 Imperial College Physics students have participated in the programme during the last 15 years and over 300 incoming students from Europe have been accepted in return.

Why do a 'Physics with Year Abroad' degree?

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Your research work abroad is more intensive than that of your peers at home. You will spend on average 3.5 days per week in a research laboratory, it will feel very similar to a research job. Many decide to pursue a PhD afterwards.

INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE

By spending a year abroad you get to know international scientists and in some cases attend conferences, giving you exposure and links to the scientists, their group and network from across Europe and the world.

COMPETITIVE EDGE

Spending a year abroad gives you a competitive advantage over your peers later in life. It demonstrates your ability to adapt to new environments, to work in a science laboratory, to learn and communicate in other languages. You will gain a deep feeling for and understanding of another country by having lived there. This is an excellent preparation for careers in science, industry and business where employers seek to recruit students with international experience.

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE

In going abroad into a new environment you learn to cope with many challenges, giving you personal independence and helping you grow your personality. This is raised by our students as a key benefit of their year abroad.

Where can I go?

We have long-standing exchange agreements with 10 universities across mainland Europe. You will study the relevant language in years 1 and 2 of your degree at Imperial and then be given a choice of where to go abroad for year 3. If you would like to go to Utrecht or MIT then there is no language requirement, and you will need to **apply to transfer to the F309 degree in the 2nd year of your degree.**

Madrid, Spain



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)



FRANCE

Institut Polytechnique de Grenoble (Grenoble INP)
Université de Paris-Saclay



SPAIN

Universidad de La Laguna
Universitat de Valencia
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid



NETHERLANDS

Utrecht University



GERMANY

Universität Heidelberg



SWITZERLAND

Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale Lausanne



ITALY

Università degli studi di Padova



What our students have said...

“It is a great opportunity to expand your horizons, to learn in a different way, to interact with different people and to make many new great friends.”

“I am really glad that I had the chance to live such an amazing experience. It has changed my life, gave me a new way to communicate, a new set of friends, and a new experience in research. All students should undertake a year abroad. It is so rewarding!”

This list indicates the partners active for the year abroad in 2024–25 and is subject to change in future years.

What our students have said...

“It gave me a lot of clarity for the future in my professional life having been immersed in a research environment, being a full part of it. I also improved a lot in my language skills and have great memories. A true life experience!”



Language training



During the first two years at Imperial College, students follow the normal physics course but one physics elective is replaced by language classes taught by specialist language teachers. You need to have demonstrated ability in learning a relevant foreign language before admission, e.g. by having achieved a grade of at least a Grade 6 at GCSE in a relevant language (German, French, Italian or Spanish). You will study two years of the same language with Imperial's Centre for Languages (for credit) before going abroad. If you are fluent in a relevant language, there is flexibility in the choice of language and other options.

The year abroad



You will spend your third year at the partner university in Europe or America, attending lectures and working on a research project. We have very good personal links with the local coordinators and other staff at the host universities who always look after our students very well. A staff member from our Physics Department will typically visit you twice* while you are out there and will stay in regular email contact with you throughout the year.

Alongside regular course exams abroad, you will write a major report on your research project (in English) and will also give a short seminar presentation to the members of your research group abroad. Both courses and project count towards your degree back at Imperial.

*subject to travel restrictions

Studying in America

In addition to studying in Europe, the Physics Department also works with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA. Each year there is normally one place available for a student to study at MIT for an academic year. Students can apply for any undergraduate physics degree through UCAS and if interested in this opportunity, they will be invited to apply to transfer to the F309 degree in their second year of study. You cannot directly apply for this option through UCAS. Students will go through a selection process based on motivation and academic performance. There are some additional costs associated with this exchange, including health insurance.





Where will I live and what will it cost?

The host university will provide guidance on the accommodation options available, which for some will be in University Halls of Residence or other types of university-managed accommodation or it will be in private housing. In all cases the student is responsible for securing accommodation, and for all costs. Accommodation costs may vary (up or down) from those of London.

What other sources of financial assistance exist?

Imperial College will only place students at universities with whom it has signed a bi-lateral agreement: the tuition fees in the host university will be waived. A student will continue to pay tuition fees to Imperial College for the year in which the study placement takes place. While the following is open to change, Home/Ireland students currently pay reduced tuition fees to Imperial College (15% of the normal amount; a UK tuition fee regulation) for the actual year spent abroad. Overseas fee-paying students continue to pay the normal amount to Imperial for the year spent abroad.

Home students should note that they will continue to be able to apply for UK Student Finance for a period of study abroad within their degree, and, as part of that package, means-tested UK student finance (Home students) travel/insurance grants are normally available to apply for. For the year in question should the College have access to Turing funding a student can expect to be made aware of the application process, although funding cannot be guaranteed. Students who meet certain criteria may be eligible for an enhanced mobility grant from the Turing Scheme.

Whatever additional financial support is available it is traditionally meant to act as a contribution towards the additional costs of studying abroad, most notably travel. The year abroad does not extend the length of the MSci degree programme.

Applicants with concerns around financial support for study abroad can email the College's Student Exchange Co-ordinator, Mr. Adrian Hawksworth, for further insight: a.hawksworth@imperial.ac.uk

An Erasmus and Turing update can be found here: www.imperial.ac.uk/placements/erasmus

The student studying in America will be informed of the estimated living costs once they have transferred to the degree. MIT will support students in securing accommodation for the academic year they spend with them.

More information

For further information about the MSci in Physics with a Year Abroad degree, email the Physics Exchange Programme Coordinator:

ph.exchanges@imperial.ac.uk

www.imperial.ac.uk/physics/students/current-students/year-abroad/

