

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Optical Science Engineering (OSE) New Graduate Students

### Questions:

1. [How many credits should I choose for my first semester?](#)
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More FAQs are coming on...

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### Answers:

#### 1. How many credits should I choose for my first semester?

Usually there are three core courses you can choose for your first semester if you are enrolled in a fall semester, Advanced Optics I (PHYC 463 or ECE 463), Laser Physics I (PHYC 464 or ECE 464), Methods in Theoretical Physics I (PHYC 466 or Math 466). Except these, there are 500 seminars and some other one credit seminars you can take.

If you work as a teaching assistant (TA) or research assistant (RA), the minimum credits you need to take for one semester is 6 credits. Your academic adviser will help you to choose the courses you need to take. If you never took any graduate courses, he may suggest you taking the three core course and one or two seminars. He may tell you if you feel the courses are too much for you, you can choose tow of the three. Once you begin your study, if you find this is too much for you. You can drop the course which make you hard to move on before some due date. It is good for you to to take the optimum credits than taking too much credit.

The seminars are pretty easy to deal with. What you need to do is to sign in and sit there listening. They should take much less time than the core course.

#### 2. How can I get the textbooks?

On the first day of the course, the instructor will tell you which textbook he will use. Then you can buy it from UNM bookstore or through web. It is usually cheaper for shopping on the web. The web you can use is [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). Or you can use Google shopping to search and choose the one you like to buy.

### **3. What should I do to finish the homework?**



The teaching and learning styles here may have great difference with your own knowledge. A good habit for learning is building a study group with 3~5 students. Everyone has his own advantages or disadvantages. Studying with a group will help you increase your habit of cooperation and will decrease the opportunity spending a lot of time on some “small things”, which one of your group members may have a very good understanding.

The principle rule for group study is to learn things more efficiently than losing time by yourself. Do NOT copy others' work. That will not help you in the end. You know how to differentiate your behavior.

A good group work will help each member a lot. Everyone will benefit and enjoy it.

### **4. Which kind of teaching assistant work should I choose, lab instructor or grader?**



Before you are assigned which kind of work you will do as a TA, you will give a 5-min talk to show whether you can teach labs or not. There are different features for lab instructor and grader. Lab instructor will have much chance to know the undergraduate students, but you may need take more time than the graders to prepare your teaching and grading students' report. Graders have more flexible time, you can take your work back to your home and do it.

### **5. When should I find a research assistant position?**



Usually you begin to find a professor for summer research assistant position in the mid of spring semester. Just send email to the faculty you are interested in or make an appointment with him/her. It is not as difficult as you imagine. It is reasonable that you begin to enter labs when you are done with your cores course. Lab part is the main part for your diploma.