The Physics Major (Sciences and Letters) is a flexible program for students who plan to pursue technical or professional careers in areas requiring a sound grounding in physical science and mathematics. Students can use the concentration to prepare for employment immediately upon graduation or for continuing on to graduate study in a wide variety of fields. Students who are certain that they want to go on to graduate study in physics or in a closely allied field should also consider the LAS Specialized Curriculum in Physics. In some cases, however, the greater flexibility of the Science and Letters Curriculum may make it a better choice for graduate school preparation for those who want to pursue a combined major and minor, a double major, or double degrees.

Students in this major must choose an approved elective technical or professional option no later than the end of the second semester of the sophomore year. A set of pre-approved options is available via the departmental website (https://physics.illinois.edu/) and from the departmental undergraduate studies office. Students may also design and follow a "custom option" subject to departmental approval. Students completing the Astrophysics option will earn a minor in Astronomy, if appropriate Minor form is filed.

Entering freshmen typically take calculus, chemistry, rhetoric, and PHYS 110 during the first semester and begin the general physics sequence in the second semester. Students with advance placement in mathematics should begin the general physics sequence in the first semester. All students are strongly encouraged to plan ahead to allow space in their programs for undergraduate research.