Graduation with Distinction: Physics (PHYSICS)

Procedure for selection of students
To be eligible for graduation with distinction, a student must complete an honors thesis and the requirements for the B.S. degree. The student must also have an overall GPA of 3.0 and maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher in Physics from the time the project is initiated through graduation. To initiate an honors project, the student must set up a meeting with the director of undergraduate studies and a faculty mentor. The student should prepare, with the advice of the faculty mentor, a brief proposal outlining a research project and presenting a time-line for its completion. The student is required to meet with the director of undergraduate studies at least once each semester to review progress on the project.

Expected product
An extensive undergraduate thesis that is suitable for presentation on the Duke Physics web site is expected. The thesis should describe the results of an independent research project.

Evaluative body
A committee of three faculty members, including the student's mentor.

Evaluation procedure
The committee reads the thesis and listens to an oral defense. It then judges whether the work meets the standard for graduation with distinction.

Levels of distinction
Two levels: Distinction and High Distinction. To receive High Distinction, a thesis must be of exceptional quality and originality, comparable to papers published in peer reviewed journals and must receive the unanimous support for High Distinction from the committee members.

Special courses, other activities required, comments
Students writing a thesis enroll in PHYSICS 227, an independent study course that carries both "R" and "W" designations. In most cases, students have previously taken PHYSICS 226, an independent study course that carries "R", so that they have completed a substantial amount of research before taking 227. In some cases, however, 227 can be taken if the project is a continuation of substantial summer research with the same faculty mentor. The work described in the thesis should be equivalent to at least two semesters of independent study. Students are also required to present their work as a poster during a session organized by the department each April.

See Also:
* Department of Physics
* Graduation with Distinction