

# Applying to Caltech's Materials Science PhD Program - 2021/2022

## THE BASICS

- This application is for prospective PhD students only. Caltech Materials Science does not have a master's-only program. Students may receive their master's degree on their way to the PhD.
- You must have received your BS degree by fall 2022 in order to apply in the 2021-22 admissions cycle.
- The Caltech Materials Science PhD program is fully funded. Provided you maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree, your tuition and fees will be completely covered by Division fellowships, teaching assistantships, and your advisor's grants. You will also receive a monthly stipend that is enough for all basic needs. With good budgeting you will not need to take out loans during the duration of your PhD Program.
- At Caltech you can work with ANY advisor, independent of your degree program. Some students in the Materials Science PhD program are working with faculty with appointments in Applied Physics, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Medical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and more.
- You do not need to have an advisor at the time of application, nor do you need to contact faculty ahead of your application submission. In Caltech Materials Science you will have until the spring term of your first year to find an advisor/join a research group.
- Application Deadline is December 15th. Your application will not be reviewed until all items have been received, including all 3 letters of recommendation.

## WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE

- **GPA:** The majority of admitted students have a GPA above 3.5/4.0. Did you have an illness or another personal issue that might have affected your performance for a term or more? It is much better to address low grades in your personal statement than to hope the Admissions Committee won't notice. They will notice.
- **Coursework:** The Admissions Committee looks closely at what classes were taken. If your school had limited options for high-level STEM classes, please comment on this in your personal statement.

## WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE (CONT'D)

- **Personal Statement/Research Experience:** Show the Committee who you are and what you are passionate about. For example, what is the most influential science or engineering experience you've had? You might address how your background has equipped you to work within diverse communities (diverse in culture, gender, race, expertise, or economics) or situations where you have had to overcome a challenge. Feel free to be specific about which Caltech faculty members you might want to work with and research projects you are interested in. Although there is not an official page limit, we recommend ~2 pages for the personal statement.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Make sure your letter writers know you well. If you are able to have recommenders from more than one institution, you may do so, but feel free to use 3 great recommenders at your home institution. Note that your application will not be reviewed until all 3 letters are received. The application portal allows you to see which of your recommenders have submitted their letters. It is your responsibility to follow-up with them about submitting their letters.
- **GRE Scores:** For the 2021-22 admissions cycle GRE scores are not accepted. You may not submit scores.
- **TOEFL Scores:** For the 2021-22 admissions cycle TOEFL scores are optional. Whenever possible, we ask that International applicants demonstrate English proficiency via self-reported scores from TOEFL, PTE, IELTS or another service. Note that if you are an International student but received a degree (BS or master's) from a school where the language of instruction was English, you are exempt from this requirement.
- **Application Fee:** Your entire application package can be submitted without the application fee. Please check the box marked fee waiver if paying the fee presents a hardship. The Committee does not see who has requested a waiver. You will be contacted by the Caltech Graduate Office if more information is needed regarding your waiver request.

## CONTACTS FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS

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