

How to Succeed

Fisk-Vanderbilt Masters-PhD Bridge Program

Program webpage: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/bridge>

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This document is intended to help you succeed in the Fisk-Vanderbilt Masters-to-PhD Bridge program. Most of the forms and other details can be found in the Student Handbook and on the program website. *This is just a brief overview of requirements, please be sure to consult the Student Handbook and program website for details.*

Easy, but critical, things:

- Provide us with an email account that you use regularly. *Check your email at least once per day, and respond to emails promptly!*

Main requirements:

- Achieve ‘A’ or ‘B’ grades in the core courses. At least one of these must be a Vanderbilt course, with a minimum grade of ‘B’.
- Take other courses as required for the Fisk Masters degree. *Be sure to consult with your advisors when selecting courses.*
- Get involved in research with either your Fisk or your Vanderbilt advisor.
- Fulfill the requirements for a Masters Thesis at Fisk (see thesis checklist for key deadlines!).
- Apply for admission to the Vanderbilt PhD program. You must do the following:
 - Complete the online Vanderbilt application by January 15 of the year in which Fall admission is being sought.
 - Obtain a minimum of three letters of recommendation: one from the Fisk advisor, one from the Vanderbilt advisor, and one from a Vanderbilt faculty member from whom you have taken a course.
 - Take the GRE (physics subject GRE also required for physics and astronomy).

Other keys to success:

- If you’re having difficulty in any of your courses, get help early! We can help with tutors, etc.
- Take advantage of free Vanderbilt ID, email account, and library privileges.
- Apply for external fellowships. We are available to assist!
- Participate in relevant journal clubs, seminars, and colloquia at Vanderbilt. Remember: you need to become known by the faculty who will evaluate your PhD application.
- Participate in social events organized by the Bridge Club.
- Meet with the Fisk-Vanderbilt Masters-PhD Committee two times per year (in approximately May and December).

What we are responsible for:

- Provide you with a Fisk faculty advisor and a Vanderbilt faculty advisor.
- Provide you with research opportunities suitable for a Masters Thesis at Fisk.
- Provide you with financial support, and help you apply for external fellowships.
- Meet with you as a Committee at least two times per year (see above).
- Provide guidance as required to help ensure your success in the program.