

Space Guidelines and Practicalities for Grad Students

UMBC Physics Department (2026)

Grad Student Wing (Rooms 224/225/226)

The GSW is essentially the hub of Grad Student life in the building. Most Grad Students will have their individual desks in 224 & 226, and the Grad Collaboratory (225) can serve as a comfortable “home away from home”. The GSW hallway whiteboards are for Grad Student use. The GSW is dedicated to Grad Students – generally speaking, there shouldn’t be traffic from Faculty or Undergrads in the GSW.

Grad Collaboratory (Room 225)

The GC is open 24/7 for Grad Student use. Please use this space for collaborative research meetings, HW/study sessions, coffee breaks and lunch, practicing talks, naps, celebrating successful PhD proposal presentations and PhD defenses, PGSA events, general hanging out, etc. The GC can get noisy, and that’s OK!

Office Space

Each year, every full-time Graduate Student will have an assigned individual desk slot in the Physics bldg. These slots should generally be viewed as 1-year assignments that will change several times as you progress through the program. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-year Grad Students will generally have slots in 226 (32 slots total). Slots in 224 (17 slots total), as well as any available Grad Student slots in the “upstairs” (3rd/4th floor) offices, will be offered to upper-level Grad Students based solely on seniority each year. The timing, logistics, and definition of seniority for this are as follows:

- *At the end of the Spring Semester each year*, the number of “upstairs” Postdoc offices needed for the upcoming school year is finalized (with 2 Postdocs per office). At that point, any remaining “upstairs” offices will be designated as Grad Student offices for the upcoming school year (with 3 people per office). Note that this number will certainly change from year to year, but will typically result in something like $N \sim 6-18$ “upstairs” Grad Student slots each year
- *In late May each year*, upper-level Grad Students (based on seniority) will have the option to claim one of the N “upstairs” slots, or one of the 17 slots in 224 for the upcoming school year. Seniority (priority) is defined as 7th year students, then 6th year, then 5th year, 4th year, 3rd year, 2nd year, 8th year, 9th year; sorted alphabetically by last name within each cohort. Eligible students do not need to claim one of these slots; it’s fine to stay where you are if you’d prefer. The Space Cmte will simply go down the ranked list of Grad Students until all slots are filled.

- Grad Students claiming “upstairs” slots will be seated by seniority (defined above) starting in the lowest numbered office. In other words, the Space Cmte will not decide “who sits where” upstairs. Once all slots are assigned for the upcoming year, two students with “upstairs” slots are welcome to swap locations if it is mutually beneficial.
- *In June each year, all Grad Student office moves will take place.*

Note: because N will change from year to year, it is entirely possible that a Grad Student seated “upstairs” (or in 224) for a given year may need to move back to 224 (or 226) for the following year. Along the same lines, it’s also likely that several 3rd-year students may be in 224 or “upstairs” each year.

Meeting Rooms

Grad Students can reserve Meeting Rooms 221, 308, 407, and the Seminar Room 401 for MS defenses, PhD proposals, Annual PhD Committee meetings, and PhD defenses. Grad Students can also reserve these rooms for other types of meetings and events that won’t work well in the Grad Collaboratory 225. However, when looking for space for these other types of meetings and events, please keep in mind that the priorities for Meeting Rooms 221, 308, and 407 are weekly Research Group meetings, Administrative Committee meetings, and impromptu Faculty-led meetings of various kinds. The Seminar Room 401 is generally not used for meetings so that it is available for Colloquia, Seminars, MS defenses, PhD proposals, PhD defenses, special events, etc. Grad Students can make reservations for 221, 308, 407, and 401 through Jen & Shakura in the Front Office.

Space Outside of the Physics Building

Both the ILSB and the AOK Library have small meeting/study rooms that can be reserved by Graduate Students (and Undergraduates). These rooms can also be used for telecons, webinars, attending online workshops, etc.

Meckler Reading Room

The MRR is available to all Faculty, Staff, Postdocs, Undergraduate Majors and Minors, and Graduate Students in the Physics Department. In practice, however, the MRR has largely become the “undergrad study spot”.