

LADSS Frequently Asked Questions

Where do we meet the first day?

You will start out at the badge office first thing Monday morning. The badge office opens at 7:00 AM. After badging, you will come to our orientation. The exact location and start time are still to be determined, and we will let you know the location well in advance of your arrival.

What is the dress code?

Students dress casually at LANL, particularly during the summer. Shorts and T-shirts are fine, but business attire is suggested when giving presentations. When working in the labs, you are required to wear long pants, closed-toe shoes (no sandals), and tie long hair back. It is not okay to go barefoot while on site at the summer school.

What will the weather be like?

Los Alamos is located at an elevation of approximately 7,200 feet. Mornings are bright and sunny, and, toward the end of June, the sky clouds up nearly every afternoon with local thunderstorms, as is typical throughout the Rocky Mountains. High temperatures are typically in the mid 80's. It does get cool with temperatures as low as the high 50's in the evening, particularly after a rainstorm, so be sure to bring a few layers to put on when it gets cooler.

(<https://weather.lanl.gov/>)

How much will I be paid?

You will receive a fellowship that is comparable to regular undergraduate or graduate summer hires' pay and includes funds for travel to and from Los Alamos. The fellowships depend on the amount of college completed upon arrival at the summer school and the distance you are traveling. Pay rates for students are summarized at:

(https://www.lanl.gov/careers/career-options/student-internships/_assets/docs/salary-structure.pdf). Be sure you look at the Scientist/Researcher series and not the Professional series.

What about housing?

Housing is always an issue because the Laboratory hires more than 1,800 students during the summer. **It cannot be emphasized enough that it is important to take care of housing as early as possible.** Housing options in Los Alamos will start to disappear by March. By May, virtually all housing will be gone. We recommend that students set up a Facebook group or other similar group to coordinate housing arrangements and social events throughout the summer. We will let you know of any opportunities of which we are aware. Your housing costs come out of the fellowship payment you receive. You do not get an additional stipend for housing.

Why is the summer school ten weeks long?

The duration of the summer school is limited by the funding provided to pay for the students' and mentors' time. The schedule (June through the beginning of August) is based on a

compromise between universities that are on a semester system, which typically get out at the middle or end of May, and schools that are on a quarter systems that tend to get out later in June. Note: In 2009 we extended the summer school from 8 weeks to 9 weeks. Beginning with 2019, we again extended the school from 9 to 10 weeks.

How long is the workday?

Typically, the workday is from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM. We work five days per week, excluding the Fourth of July. The mentors can arrange to keep the facilities open longer if students decide they need additional time to work on their projects. A mentor must be present to work in the lab after 5:00 PM.

What is a typical workday?

- 8:00 to 9:30 four mornings per week you will be in a lecture (e.g. signal processing). The lectures are a different subject each week. The rest of the day, you will be working as a team of 2-3 students on a research project.
- 3:30-5:00 Tuesday and Thursday afternoons are set aside for guest seminars discussing various dynamics research topics.
- Additionally, during the second and third week of the summer school, you will have a mini-project to work on.
- Three student presentations of in-process work are given on Friday afternoons, spaced throughout the 10-week term. The final student presentations are on the second-to-last day of the program.
- Tours to different areas of LANL will be arranged throughout the summer.

What computer resources will be available during the summer school?

Each student will have a desktop computer with access to needed software and the internet. In addition, each project group will have a laptop or desktop computer for data acquisition that runs LabVIEW, or other data acquisition software, and to run other software needed for their specific project (e.g. finite element software). Software with restrictive or expensive licensing will only be available on a few shared computers.

What project will I be assigned to?

We will send out descriptions of the projects by mid-April and ask you to rank them based on your level of interest. We will then assign people to the projects based on these rankings. In the past, everyone who has responded by the deadline has been assigned his/her/their first or second ranked project. However, if too many people choose the same projects, we may be required to assign people to one of their lower-ranked selections. By the beginning of May, we will notify students by email of their projects, who their mentors will be, and provide some background reading material. Please note that in contrast to lab projects you have been engaged in during your undergraduate curriculum, these projects generally don't have a "known" outcome and are much more representative of a research project with which a graduate student would be involved.

Do I need a car?

A car is not necessary, and yet it makes getting around a bit easier (see advice from previous students). There are many interesting places to visit around New Mexico that require a car, and public transportation is very limited outside of Los Alamos. The summer school site is located 2-3 miles from most student housing locations. There is a free bus that will take students from town to the summer school, but it is limited and does not run on weekends. (https://www.losalamosnm.us/government/departments/public_works/atomic_city_transit/) Generally, students have been very good about carpooling and giving rides to those without a car.

What is unique about this summer school?

Some of the unique aspects of this program include projects with a hands-on component, lectures provided by world-renowned experts in various fields of dynamics and the access students have to these experts after their lectures, field trips to unique and restricted facilities at Los Alamos National Laboratory, and development and presentation of a paper at an international professional conference.

What after-hours activities are available?

Los Alamos is a very small town with a population of around 14,000. The town is surrounded by Santa Fe National Forest and Native American reservations (Pueblos). There is an abundance of outdoor activities that can be done locally, including backpacking, hiking, mountain biking, golf, rock climbing, and swimming at the highest altitude Olympic size swimming pool in the US. Santa Fe is about 35 miles away and is a big tourist attraction with many renowned restaurants, festivals, and nightlife.

See <http://visit.losalamos.com> and <http://www.santafechamber.com/>.

The advice from previous students also suggests lots of after-hours activities.