



**GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2020-2021**

**DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY**

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Louisiana State University  
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[chemistry.lsu.edu](http://chemistry.lsu.edu)

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## CHEMISTRY GRADUATE PROGRAM

GRADUATE HOMEPAGE: [www.lsu.edu/science/chemistry/graduate/graduate.php](http://www.lsu.edu/science/chemistry/graduate/graduate.php)

### CHEMISTRY GRADUATE STUDIES OFFICE

Prof. Donghui Zhang, Director of Graduate Studies,  
dhzhang@lsu.edu, 115 Choppin Hall

Dr. Caroline Schneider, Assistant Director of Graduate  
Studies cschn21@lsu.edu, 101 Choppin Hall

Kim Mollere, Graduate Coordinator, Graduate Records  
kmollere@lsu.edu, 113 Choppin Hall

All forms are to be submitted to the Chemistry Graduate Studies Office regardless of their final destination!

Graduate Student Bulletin Board: Outside the Graduate Studies Office, Room 113 Choppin, the bulletin board will post the Graduate School calendar, notices, deadlines, come topics, job opportunities, etc.

### TIMELINE

This timeline represents a *typical* trajectory for a graduate student entering the Ph.D. program in the Fall 2018 semester. *Deviations* may occur, but only after approval by the major professor and the Graduate Studies Office. Time between semesters should be dedicated to performing research and other degree requirements and is *not* automatically granted as holiday leave. Students are expected to fulfill all requirements and to work diligently toward completion of the degree.

Year 1	Orientation	Aug 6–17, 2018	Placement exams, forms, course advising, course registration, teaching orientation, safety training, various orientation seminars and events
	1 <sup>st</sup> semester	Fall 2018	Teaching, courses, seminars (new graduate student seminar, divisional seminar, departmental seminar), cumulative exams, major professor selection
	2 <sup>nd</sup> semester	Spring 2019	Research, teaching, courses, <sup>a</sup> divisional seminar, departmental seminar, cumulative exams, progress report
	Summer	Summer 2019	Research, teaching <sup>b</sup>
Year 2	3 <sup>rd</sup> semester	Fall 2019	Research, teaching, <sup>b</sup> courses, <sup>a</sup> divisional seminar, departmental seminar, cumulative exams, <sup>c</sup> advisory committee selection
	4 <sup>th</sup> semester	Spring 2020	Research, teaching, <sup>b</sup> courses, <sup>a</sup> divisional seminar, departmental seminar, cumulative exams <sup>c</sup> , progress report
	Summer	Summer 2020	Research, teaching <sup>b</sup>

Year 3	5 <sup>th</sup> semester	Fall 2020	Doctoral degree audit, <sup>a</sup> general exam, <sup>a</sup> research, teaching, <sup>b</sup> divisional seminar, departmental seminar
	6 <sup>th</sup> semester	Spring 2021	Research, teaching, <sup>b</sup> divisional seminar, departmental seminar, progress report
	Summer	Summer 2021	Research, teaching <sup>b</sup>
Year 4	7 <sup>th</sup> semester	Fall 2021	Research, teaching, <sup>b</sup> divisional seminar, departmental seminar
	8 <sup>th</sup> semester	Spring 2022	Research, teaching, <sup>b</sup> divisional seminar, departmental seminar, progress report
	Summer	Summer 2022	Research, teaching <sup>b</sup>
Year 5	9 <sup>th</sup> semester	Fall 2022	Research, teaching, <sup>b</sup> divisional seminar, departmental seminar
	10 <sup>th</sup> semester	Spring 2023	Research, teaching, <sup>b</sup> divisional seminar, departmental seminar, progress report
	Summer	Summer 2023	Research, teaching <sup>b</sup>
Year 6	11 <sup>th</sup> semester	Fall 2023	Research, teaching, <sup>b</sup> divisional seminar, departmental seminar, <i>Last semester of guaranteed support.</i>
Years 6 (Spring, Summer) and Year 7 7-year limit			Unsupported or supported as a research assistant: Research, divisional seminar (Fall/Spring), departmental seminar (Fall/Spring), progress reports (Spring)
Years 4 – 7			Final Exam: Written dissertation and oral defense <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Determined in consultation with your major professor.

<sup>b</sup> Students supported as research assistants or by fellowship may not need to teach.

<sup>c</sup> Students who pass the required number of cumulative exams do not need to register for the exams.

## **MILESTONES AND REQUIREMENTS**

The Ph.D. program typically begins with placement exams, teaching, formal coursework, seminars, cumulative exams, and the selection of a major professor. There are additional requirements that must be met before conferring the Ph.D. degree. Progress toward a Chemistry Ph.D. is marked by five milestones (cumulative exams, major professor selection, advisory committee selection, general exam, and final exam), each of which has its own targeted time allotment. A *maximum of seven years* will be allowed for the fulfillment of the requirements. A minimum of three full years of graduate study is required before the Ph.D. degree is granted. The average residence time is between 5 – 6 years. *The graduate student is responsible for ensuring that the proper forms are filed in the Graduate Studies Office and/or the Graduate School in a timely fashion.* The advice of your major professor and/or the Graduate Studies Office should be sought whenever there are questions involving proper procedures. The milestones and requirements for a Ph.D. are described in detail below.

### **Placement exams**

All entering graduate student are required to take placement examinations in each of the five major areas of chemistry - Analytical, Inorganic, Macromolecular, Organic, and Physical. The exams are given to all entering students just prior to registration during orientation. These exams are used by an advisory committee to help you design an initial coursework curriculum. Students who score above the minimum (60th percentile) in at least three of the

five placement exams will generally be free to start their studies with any graduate level courses, while students who score below the minimum on fewer than three exams will be advised to make up their deficiencies in specific areas - usually by taking the appropriate 4000-level courses. The placement examinations are standard ACS placement exams in each field. An outline of areas covered by each exam is available once a student is accepted into the graduate program.

### Coursework and Seminars

The coursework necessary for a given curriculum will generally be determined by the student in consultation with the advisory committee (during orientation for your first semester) and your major professor (all other semesters). In addition to courses, all students must register for seminars and cumulative exams. For the first semester, all students will take three graduate courses in chemistry or related to chemistry and four seminar classes (listed below). The level of courses initially taken depends on performance on the placement exams. Five substantive courses typically make up the first-year program of study. Generally, these courses will be a mixture of 4000-level (senior undergraduate/beginning graduate) and 7000-level (graduate) courses. They can be in any area of chemistry or in a related field such as biochemistry, physics, chemical engineering, or computer science. However, enrollment in courses outside of the CHEM designation requires written approval from the student's Major Professor each time a student enrolls in such courses (memo to the Director of Graduate Studies); students who do not gain Major Professor approval in these circumstances will not be considered "a student in good standing", as outlined in the student's financial offer letter. The Department of Chemistry has no foreign language requirements, nor are there requirements for a minor area in chemistry.

International students will also take tests for written and spoken English administered by the English Department during orientation. Students who fail either or both tests will be required to take courses in those areas. These courses are in addition to the three required chemistry courses.

Students are *not allowed to drop or withdraw* from a course during the first semester without permission of the Director of Graduate Studies. If a student drops or withdraws from a course in the first semester, this may delay the student being allowed to join a research group, and the student may be required to take additional courses in the second semester.

For the first semester, the Graduate Coordinator registers courses for each graduate student. For all other semesters, it is the graduate student's responsibility to register for courses. To complete registration every semester, the fee bill must be paid by the published payment due date or the date that is listed on the on-line fee bill remittance stub even if there is a zero balance (see 'Registration and Fees' section). If registration is not completed in this way, the courses will be cancelled and a late registration fee of \$75 will be charged.

Seminars and cumulative exams: Seminar attendance is *required*, so if you will be absent for any reason, please contact the relevant seminar instructor as soon as possible.

*New Graduate Student Seminar:* Students entering in the fall semester will enroll in CHEM 7800 (Faculty Research Seminar), during which 1-3 research faculty members will present short presentations each week, outlining their various research projects.

*Cumulative Exams (Cumes):* Students must register for CHEM 7800, SECTION (Cumes) their first four regular semesters in residence or until they have passed the required number of exams.

*Research Seminar:* Students in residence must register for CHEM 7800, SECTION (Concentration Area) each regular semester until they defend their dissertation. Macro students should register for CHEM 7901.

*Departmental Seminar:* Students in residence must also register for CHEM 7800, SECTION (Departmental Seminar) each regular semester until they defend their dissertation. Friday Departmental Seminars are held according to the schedule on the Chemistry Department webpage. The Graduate Studies Office is *not responsible* for the seminar schedule. Any changes to the schedule will be reflected on the website.

## Teaching

All students are required to participate in a *minimum of two semesters* of teaching. This usually involves teaching undergraduate laboratory courses - typically eight contact hours per week. Willful failure to perform satisfactorily can result in reduction of stipend or loss of the Graduate Assistantship. If a student completes three semesters of ENG 1051 but is not cleared to teach, the major professor may propose an alternative teaching experience that does not include Departmental support. The major professor will prepare a two-semester alternative teaching experience that must be approved by the student's committee and the Director of Graduate Studies.

## Cumulative Examinations

The Ph.D. *Qualifying Examination* in the Department of Chemistry is composed of a series of cumulative examinations (cumes). All students must take and pass the required number of cumes. Exams begin during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester in residence; students must pass six required cumes by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> regular semester. The Graduate Studies Office retains failed cumes until completion. Cumes constitute the first part of the *Degree Candidacy Exam*. Successful completion of cumes advances the student to *Applicancy* for the Ph.D. degree (see Appendix B for more details).

## Major Professor

Normally, students select a major professor, with whom to do research, by the end of the first semester of residence. The major professor has *primary* responsibility for advising and guiding progress toward the degree. During the Fall Semester, each new graduate student will schedule in-depth interviews with a *minimum of five* faculty members. Following those interviews, the students rank their top three choices and obtain a signature from each of them. Each student will submit their ranked listing to the Chemistry Graduate Studies Office by Friday, November 17, 2017. Selection of a major professor is not guaranteed and must be formally approved by the Major Professor and Graduate Faculty (see Appendix C for procedures and more details). A student on academic probation may not join a research group.

## Advisory Committee

Graduate students must select their advisory committee before the final course drop date during their third full semester (typically in November, see LSU academic calendar). This committee will offer guidance throughout your graduate career and will serve as the examining committee for both the General Exam and the Dissertation Defense. The committee will consist

of the *major professor and a minimum of two other faculty members*. Two committee members (in addition to the major professor) must have their primary appointment in the Department of Chemistry, but additional committee members from other departments are allowed. A Dean's Representative will typically be appointed 10-14 days in advance of the General Exam by the Graduate School Dean's Office. The Graduate School requires that at least one half of the committee members are Full Members of the LSU Graduate Faculty (not counting the Dean's Representative). The student should discuss with his or her major professor the makeup of the committee and then contact the faculty members. The student should then email the Graduate Studies Office (kmollere@lsu.edu) with the names of the committee members. The Graduate Studies Office will then email the faculty members to confirm their willingness to serve.

### **Progress Reports**

Starting with the *second semester* of residency, each student must submit by e-mail an annual one-page progress report on their research along with a copy of their CV to their Advisory Committee (meeting only if necessary) and the Graduate Office. If the student has not yet constituted an Advisory Committee, then the report should be sent to their major professor and the Graduate Office. *These reports are due by the Commencement date for the spring semester of each year.*

### **Doctoral Degree Audit**

In consultation with your major professor, an official Doctoral Degree Audit will be prepared for submission to the Graduate School. It lists all courses (including seminars and dissertation research) taken and planned, and must be approved by all members of your Advisory Committee. *The Doctoral Degree Audit Form is submitted along with your Application for the General Exam.*

- Ph.D. student forms can be downloaded from Graduate School/Enrolled Students/Forms. There is one combined form for the Doctoral Degree Audit and General Exam Request.
- Complete all information very carefully. Note that you may not receive more than six (6) hours of credit for CHEM 7800.
- Get signatures of all committee members.
- Get the signature of the Director of Graduate Studies and sign your name where it says "Signature of Student".
- Return the signed form to the Graduate Studies Office.

### **General Examination**

The Ph.D. General Examination in the Department of Chemistry follows the successful completion of cumes. The exam includes a research proposal and dissertation synopsis (written and oral). All students are required to pass a General Examination by the end of the *fifth semester* in residence (see Appendix D for more details). Summer exams are *highly* discouraged. Satisfactory performance on the General Exam advances the student to *Candidacy* for the Ph.D. degree. The Doctoral Degree Audit must be submitted at the same time as the Application for the General Exam.

General Exam Request:



- Speak with your committee members about a date for the exam.
- Students *must* schedule their general exam with the Graduate Studies Office by the 'Final Date for Adding Courses for Credit' date of that semester.
- Reserve a room through the Chemistry website.
- Download the form and obtain signatures from the Committee Chair and Director of Graduate Studies.
- Return the form to the Graduate Studies Office after signatures are secured.
- A Dean's Representative will typically be appointed 10-14 days in advance of the General Exam by the Graduate School Dean's Office.

*Failure to take and pass the General Examination by the deadline shall constitute a First Failure.* The Advisory Committee may vote for the student to pass, retake or fail the exam. If the Advisory Committee votes for the student to fail, the student will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program. If the Advisory Committee votes for the student to retake the exam, the committee will set a deadline and define what must be improved and/or completed for the retake. The latest deadline the Advisory Committee can set is the end of the next regular semester (Spring or Fall). The outcome of a retake of the exam can only be pass or fail.

## Final Exam

The final two requirements for the Ph.D. degree are (1) the submission of a satisfactory dissertation describing all aspects of the research project, and (2) an oral defense of the dissertation. The contents of the dissertation are determined by the student and the major professor, with advice from the advisory committee. The Dean's representative used during the General Exam will be the same Dean's representative for the dissertation defense. Include the name of the Dean's representative on the final exam request form. The dissertation or thesis should be provided to all committee members (including the Dean's Representative) at least two weeks before the final exam. Students should provide a paper copy of the dissertation or thesis to the committee members by the two-week deadline, unless the committee member indicates a preference for an electronic copy.

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

To hold a Teaching or Research Assistantship or a Fellowship, *FULL-TIME STATUS IS REQUIRED*. Full-time is 9 hours for Fall and Spring semesters and 6 hours for Summer semesters. Make sure that, even if a course is dropped your schedule remains full-time. If you are contacted by the Graduate School requesting documents, forms, or other information, please also provide a copy of that information to the Graduate Studies Office for your graduate student file.

Graduate assistants (GAs) are primarily students, not employees of the University or of the Department of Chemistry, and are subject to the following limitations:

1. For students pursuing the M.S. degree there is *no commitment of department support* (e.g. graduate teaching assistantship) (see Appendix A).
2. For students pursuing the Ph.D. degree there is a commitment of department support (e.g. graduate teaching assistantship) up to a *maximum of 5.5 years* of residence in the



## Chemistry graduate program.

On occasion, students pursuing the M.S. degree or students who have been in the graduate program longer than 5.5 years may be offered a graduate teaching assistantship. This will only occur if the Chemistry Department has a need for additional TA's that semester and if the student has performed well as a TA in the past.

A graduate student is expected to enter with, and to maintain, an acceptable academic record in order to hold a GA. A student with a cumulative or semester grade point average below 3.0 or who receives a "U" (unsatisfactory) in research will be placed on academic probation and may lose his/her GA until (1) the GPA is raised to 3.0, and/or (2) he/she shows satisfactory performance in research.

### Chemistry TA/RA Duties

The duties of the Graduate Assistant (GA) in the Department of Chemistry are those of a Teaching Assistant (TA), Instrument Assistant (IA), or Research Assistant (RA). Approximately 20 hours per week are required for teaching duties assigned to a TA or IA. As a TA or IA, an additional 20-40 hours must be devoted to research and studies to complete degree requirements. A full time RA does not teach and will devote 40-60 hours per week to research and studies to complete degree requirements. No less than 20 hours per week must be devoted to the research project supporting the RA appointment.

### TA Duties

At least one, but normally several, of the following tasks are required of TAs.

1. To supervise at least one undergraduate laboratory section. This generally includes:
  - a. Having or acquiring knowledge of the laboratory experiments;
  - b. Giving short lectures in the lab on procedures and principles;
  - c. Maintaining safe and proper lab conditions;
  - d. Dispensing unknowns and verifying student results;
  - e. Grading quizzes, reports, and evaluating student performance in labs;
  - f. Meeting students outside of class for help sessions;
  - g. Preparing solutions and setting up experiments in advanced lab courses;
2. To design and test experiments for advanced labs.
3. To maintain instruments in advanced lab courses.
4. To supervise the preparation of solutions for lab experiments.
5. To grade problem sets and examinations for lecture courses.
6. To proctor examinations.
7. To attend meetings related to teaching, proctoring or grading assignments.
8. To perform other service activities for the Chemistry Department.

GAs are fully expected to perform well in their teaching assignments and to show satisfactory progress in their research projects. Consistent failure to do either of these can result in reduction of stipend or loss of the assistantship and/or dismissal from the graduate program. A TA not performing satisfactorily on any or all TA duties will receive a written warning from the Director of Graduate Studies. Arriving late for TA duties is a substantial problem and is not consistent with satisfactory performance. Graduate teaching assistants should not plan to

travel from *the week before classes begin until the deadline for final grade submission* (excluding weekends and university holidays). Any proposed exceptions due to research related travel, medical issues, etc. should be discussed with the Director of Graduate Studies before travel plans are finalized. Two forms are available to arrange a substitute (**TA Substitution Agreement**) or request leave (**TA Leave Agreement**). The substitution or leave is not approved until all signatures are acquired, and the form is filed in the Graduate Studies Office. Two warnings from the Director of Graduate Studies in one semester related to performance of TA duties will result in a stipend reduction of at least 10% effective immediately and lasting until the end of the next regular semester (Fall or Spring).

## Fellowships

If a graduate student is awarded a fellowship that exceeds their total stipend (including the graduate assistantship, supplement, awards, fellowship, and/or scholarships) the new fellowship *supersedes* all components of their stipend. Components such as supplements and awards may be retained if the fellowship is less than their total stipend. Under these circumstances, the Director of Graduate Studies makes a recommendation to the Department Chair, who makes the final decision.

## Additional Employment

Graduate Assistants (RA or TA) generally are not allowed to hold additional jobs according to university policy. In special cases additional employment may be allowed, but the Chemistry Department must petition the Graduate School for this to happen. In addition, the Chemistry Department requires that the student's major professor is informed and approves of the proposed additional employment. This includes tutoring for undergraduate courses. Please contact the Chemistry Graduate Office for additional details.

## **PAYROLL, REGISTRATION, AND FEES**

### Payroll and Direct Deposit

Payday for students classified as GA 12-month (Fiscal GAs) is the last business day of each month from July through June. Direct deposit is mandatory for all employees. Your earnings will be automatically deposited into your bank account. You can get the necessary forms from the Payroll Office or sign up via MyLSU. The form for Employee Authorization Agreement for Automatic Payroll Deposits allows automatic deposits to a student's bank account. Your payroll and direct information can be viewed and updated on your MyLSU account under the "Financial Services" tab. In addition to payroll, student financial aid, credit balance refunds, travel reimbursements, and other non-payroll university reimbursements may be deposited directly to your designated bank account. Refer to the "Direct Deposit" application under "Financial Services" from your MyLSU account. Note that *Social Security and Medicare taxes are not deducted from earnings*.

Notify Payroll any time you have an address change. There is a Change of Address form (AS481) available in the Payroll Office or on our web site. A current address will ensure that you receive any pertinent documents. For your protection, all address change requests must be in writing.

Problems:

- (1) Please check with the Chemistry Graduate Office first to ensure that all necessary paperwork has been completed and approved before contacting the Department Office or Payroll Office.
- (2) Questions concerning accounts receivable deductions should be addressed to Judy Williams in the Office of Bursar Operations located at 125 Thomas Boyd Hall.
- (3) Office of Accounting Services / Payroll Division, 204 Thomas Boyd Hall, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, Tel: 578-3321 - Fax: 578-7217

## International GAs

International GAs are required to have a work permit, which is issued by the International Services Office. This permit signifies you have completed all necessary paperwork and are eligible to work in the U.S. If you do not have a work permit, report to the International Services Office located at 108 Hatcher Hall.

In accordance with IRS regulations, international GAs are required to complete their W-4 and L-4 forms claiming Single (regardless of marital status) and one personal exemption unless you are from Canada, Japan, Mexico, S. Korea or India.

GAs must complete an I-9 form and provide appropriate documentation for certification of eligibility to work. Usually, documentation presented are a valid driver's license and social security card. A birth certificate may be presented in lieu of a social security card. International students may provide an unexpired foreign passport with I-551 stamp or attached INS Form I-94 (or any other one of several documents named in List A on the back of the I-9) in lieu of driver's license and social security card.

You will need a Social Security Number in order to receive stipend payments. International Services Office can assist students with getting a social security number. The following publications are available from the IRS web site at Publication 515- Withholding of Tax on Nonresident Aliens, Publication 519- U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens and Publication 901-U.S. Tax Treaties.

## Registration and Fees

Please note that your registration must be completed by the published payment due date or the date that is listed on the on-line fee bill remittance stub. Students who do not complete registration by the published deadline date will be subject to cancellation of their course schedule and assessment of the late registration service charge of \$75 when they complete registration. Please note that enrollment as a graduate student is required for the fall and spring semester, but not for the spring semester. Students not enrolled in the summer months will be supported by the GA allowance plans.

Zero balance fee bills: If your fee bill balance is \$0, you are still required to complete registration by selecting the "Complete Registration" button from the "Fee Bill" application via MyLSU, or returning the on-line fee bill remittance stub to the Bursar's Office by the payment due date. Completing registration will prevent your course reservations from being dropped from your schedule.

### Payment Options:

1. Payroll Deduction: It is optional to have semester fees deducted from your stipend in equal installments. A Payroll Deduction Authorization Form needs to be on file at the

Office of Bursar Operations. The Payroll Deduction option has to be selected during registration each semester. Payroll deduction can be selected on MyLSU.

2. On-line Check/Bank Draft: Pay your fee bill with an on-line check/bank draft via MyLSU from the "Fee Bill" application. The charge will be posted to your designated bank account within two business days. An approved payment in process will protect your schedule from being purged. Please note that a \$25 service charge will be assessed on all payments returned NSF.
3. Credit Card: Pay your fee bill with a Master Card or Visa credit card via MyLSU from the "Fee Bill" application. Please note that there will be a 2.5% processing fee added to credit card payments. Allow two business days for the payment to credit your Bursars account. An approved payment in process will protect your schedule from being purged.
4. Mail: Return the on-line remittance stub and payment to the address listed on the remittance stub.
5. In Person: Pay by cash, check or money order in 125 Thomas Boyd Hall.
6. Deferred Payment Plan (if eligible) can be selected on MyLSU.

### **Student Aid & Scholarships**

If you anticipate some form of aid (scholarship, grant, loan, or exemption), please observe the following:

- All anticipated aid, scholarships and exemptions indicated are contingent upon the specified requirements for receiving such aid. If for any reason you do not receive an anticipated award, you will be responsible for the full balance of your account.
- Anticipated financial aid printed on the fee bill reflects only the amount of aid needed to apply to fees as of the date of this notice.
- If your financial aid is greater than the amount that you owe the University, you will be issued the remaining balance which will be processed the first week of class and be deposited into your designated bank account via direct deposit or sent as a paper check to the local mailing address. Aid balances that occur after the first day of classes will be issued as received.
- The anticipated aid will be applied to all current debt and to new semester charges.
- Students awarded federal student/parent loan funds have the right to cancel all or part of their loans through the Office of Student Aid and Scholarships within 30 days of the first class day. If you do cancel, you become responsible for the LSU account balance.

### **OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION**

#### **E-mail Accounts**

LSU e-mail accounts are mandatory – no other e-mail accounts will be posted. *You must check your e-mail regularly, as this is the medium by which faculty and staff will send you information.* Your LSU e-mail address will be posted on the Chemistry Department website. You may also have your LSU email forwarded to another account. Check here for directions. <http://grok.lsu.edu/article.aspx?articleid=15215>

## Keys

The Graduate Studies Office will send a request to the receptionist, Tonia Givens, in the main Chemistry Office (232 Choppin Hall) for office and building keys for you. You will be notified by email when your keys are ready to be picked up at the Facility Services Building. You will need your student id and a \$10 deposit for each key. Once you select a major professor at the end of the first semester, it is likely you will be assigned to a more permanent office space. Please remember to keep your contact information updated.

## Notebooks

Notebooks for research will be provided to you after you join a research group. Notebooks and any electronic data generated during research activities are LSU properties. They should be given to your advisor for keeping before your graduation.

## Mailboxes

Mailboxes are located adjacent to the main Chemistry Office (232 Choppin Hall). You can locate your mailbox on the alphabetical listing on the wall. Mailboxes are shared, so be careful to remove only the items addressed to you and please do not let mail stack up.

## Parking

The Office of Parking, Traffic & Transportation, located in the Public Safety Building, can answer questions concerning parking on campus. Students may pay motor vehicle fees through Payroll Deduction by making arrangements with the Office of Bursar Operations.

## Chemistry Lab Coat Program

Everyone who works in a lab in the Chemistry Department is required to wear a lab coat. The Department of Chemistry, through Cinta's, supplies each researcher with two personal, fitted, lab coats. Coats are picked up and laundered once a month. Drop off bins and pick up for the Chemistry and Materials Building personnel are located on each floor outside the conference rooms. For occupants of Choppin and Williams Halls, the drop off bin and pickup is located in 201 Choppin Hall. The Lab Coat Project is overseen by Operations Manager, Vickie Tate Thornton. Vickie will be available during New Graduate Student Orientation to fit students for new lab coats. It is the graduate student's responsibility to return the lab coats to Vickie before leaving or graduating from the department. Any questions should be directed to Vickie at [vthornton@lsu.edu](mailto:vthornton@lsu.edu)

## Student Health Center

All full-time and part-time students who pay the Student Health Center fee are eligible to use the services of the Student Health Center. Students should also investigate federal requirements regarding health insurance (Affordable Care Act). *It is recommended that students investigate health insurance BEFORE an emergency arises.*

## Chemistry Graduate Student Council (CGSC)

CGSC is organized and operated by Chemistry graduate students whose mission is to assist chemistry graduate students. CGSC provides a variety of social activities during the year. CGSC also provides informational services to graduate students about department facilities and policies. Officers of CGSC are elected yearly by chemistry graduate students. Any LSU Chemistry graduate student that has not previously been a member of CGSC is eligible for

election to the council. The contact information for the current council is listed below. Feel free to contact any member with any questions or concerns you may have.

President - Amanda Owen  
Vice President - Callie Stern  
Secretary - Remi Lawal  
Treasurer - Varad Agarkar  
Public Relations - Malitha Widanage  
Historian - Ghada Abdalla  
Volunteering Chair- Courtney Baumberger & Elizabeth Thomas  
Fundraising Chair - Rasangi Perera  
Communication Chair- Aderonke Folorunso  
Intramural Chair - Jeremy Vasseur  
Student Advocacy Chair - Unique Luna  
Cultural Awareness Chair - Kelcey Hines

### **National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE)**

The mission of the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE) is to build an eminent cadre of successful diverse global leaders in STEM and advance their professional endeavors by adding value to their academic, development, leadership, and philanthropic endeavors throughout the life-cycle of their careers. The local chapter of NOBCChE here at LSU is committed to upholding the national mission of the organization. We strive to establish a powerful and impactful presence here on campus as well as the surrounding community. We are dedicated to service and professional growth and development in those interested in and involved in any STEM field. NOBCChE has monthly meetings/social events to help you along your journey through graduate school, whether it's learning the best networking tips as a student or working on your mental health and stress management.

President: Leo Fontenot  
Vice-president: Jamira Stephenson  
Treasurer: Kelcey Hines  
Corresponding Secretary: Aisha Cook  
Recording Secretary: Ashley Walker  
Historian: Suliati Alli  
Parliamentarian: Rasidah Ali

### **Research Travel and Internships**

Some chemistry graduate students do take part in internships or travel to conduct research at other institutions, and the Department of Chemistry is supportive of these activities as long as they do not interfere with progress towards completion of the degree. Students and advisors should be aware that such travel can cause issues related to Graduate School policies, University policies, and Department of Chemistry rules (for example, seminar attendance). Students should follow the following guidelines to minimize potential problems for research travel and internships.

1. Graduate students should consult with their major professor before applying for internships or travelling to scientific conferences.



2. Graduate students should make an appointment to meet with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss plans to carry out research away from LSU or to participate in internships. The main goal of the meeting is to consider any potential issues with Graduate School, University and Department rules before the travel takes place.
3. Graduate students attending scientific conferences should make arrangements in advance to cover TA responsibilities and address mandatory seminar attendance requirements. The Director of Graduate Studies should be consulted in advance of such travel.

### **Leave of Absence**

Graduate students sometimes need to take a leave of absence due to health issues and other major life events. The Department of Chemistry is committed to working with our graduate students to help them work through these challenges and complete their graduate degrees. Each situation is different, and solutions must take into account Graduate School policies, University policies, and Department of Chemistry rules. Major issues related to a leave of absence include the continuous registration requirement and the 7-year limit for completing a Ph.D. degree. Graduate students should follow the following steps when facing an issue that may require them to halt their studies for a significant period of time.

1. Discuss the situation with your research advisor.
2. Make an appointment with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss the situation and possible solutions/accommodations.

### **Maternity benefits**

Graduate students who are pregnant or give birth during the duration of the graduate program will continue research or teaching activities that are compatible with pregnancy/earlier day child rearing and receive a full stipend. At least one semester of the stipend will be provided by the department in the form of graduate teaching assistantship.

### **DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY POLICY ON PLAGIARISM**

Each student of the Department of Chemistry is responsible for the avoidance of plagiarism. Each faculty member is responsible for enforcement of the regulations relating to academic and professional misconduct, including plagiarism, as outlined in various publications of Louisiana State University and the American Chemical Society.

The [LSU Code of Student Conduct](#) defines plagiarism in Section 10.1.H

“Lack of appropriate citation, or the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else's words, structure, ideas, or data; failure to identify a source, or the submission of essentially the same work for two assignments without permission of the instructor(s);”

The [ACS Style Guide](#) also provides guidelines concerning attribution of another's work:

"An author should identify the source of all information quoted or offered, except that which is common knowledge. Information obtained privately, as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, should not be used or reported in the author's work without explicit permission from the investigator with whom the information originated. Information obtained in the course of confidential services, such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications,



should be treated similarly."

Finally, [\*The Chemical Professional's Code of Conduct\*](#) provides guidance for professional ethical conduct:

"Chemical professionals should strive to remain current with developments in their field, share ideas and information, keep accurate and complete laboratory records, maintain integrity in all conduct and publications, and give due credit to the contributions of others. Conflicts of interest and scientific misconduct, such as fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, are incompatible with this Code."

Real or suspected plagiarism may occur in written assignments or reports in undergraduate or graduate classes, including laboratories, in research reports presented for publication, in General Examination documents, in theses or in dissertations. If plagiarism is suspected, the relevant faculty member(s) (instructor of record, major professor, advisory committee) should seek to document and number the missing citations. Corroboration and counsel may also be sought from other faculty. However, such extra-personal communication must be kept strictly confidential by all parties, keeping the student's rights, privacy, and due process foremost in mind.

*If a determination of plagiarism is made*, there are two possible actions, depending on the perceived intent of the student: *[Note: the following is patterned after an equivalent statement by the LSU English Department]*

- If the alleged plagiarism results from a student's honest lack of knowledge of proper documentation, the faculty member may treat the situation as an opportunity for instruction. Many instances of plagiarism can be dealt with pedagogically rather than judicially.
- If the alleged plagiarism results from a deliberate intention to deceive, and to claim as one's own the thoughts, ideas or data of another, the incident must be reported to the Dean of Students, who will then determine the course of action and the proper sanctions.

Faculty members are expected to make a judgment of intent, and that judgment will certainly be subjective. But, faculty members may not choose simply to ignore the incident. Regulations and sanctions relating to academic misconduct are detailed in the *Code of Student Conduct*, and the *Code* takes precedence in any case in which a conflict with the preceding statements of policy might occur, or when the faculty member is unable to judge intent.

For further information on plagiarism, search for "plagiarism" either on the LSU website or on the Internet.

## **APPENDIX A: CONDITIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE**

The graduate program in the Department of Chemistry is primarily designed for students wishing to obtain a Ph.D. degree. It is therefore assumed that you will work toward the Ph.D. degree (see below) unless it is made clear that a Master of Science degree is desired. *The MS degree is not required for those seeking the Ph.D. degree.* Students transferring from the PhD to a terminal MS program may receive a teaching assistantship for one semester following the semester of the transfer. Two types of Masters degree are given: a Coursework Master's or a

## Thesis Master's.

The **Coursework Master's** degree requires 36 semester hours of coursework, at least 18 hours of which must be at the graduate level (7000 and above). Of the 18 hours of graduate coursework, no more than 6 hours may be Chemistry 8900 (Problems in Chemical Research) and no more than 6 hours may be Chemistry 7800 and 7901. The student is required to have a final exam before a committee selected in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. Programs for master's degrees must be completed within five years from entrance into a degree program. **Credit for individual courses taken at LSU more than five years before the termination of a program may be revalidated. To revalidate a course, the student must contact the current instructor for the course and must take the final exam and earn at least a B.** The documentation of such an examination must be signed by members of the committee and the department's graduate advisor and reported to the Graduate School on the "Master's Course Revalidation form" before the request for the student's final examination will be approved. No more than 50 percent of the courses in a student's program may be revalidated and counted toward the degree requirements. In the final exam, the student is expected to prepare a presentation summarizing his/her educational and professional experience, courses taken at LSU and grades, and any research that have been conducted at LSU. The student is expected to answer questions related to the courses he/she has taken at LSU.

The **Thesis Master's** degree is the recommended and *preferred* terminal MS degree. It requires 30 semester hours of coursework, of which at least 12 hours must be at the graduate 7000 level and above. For the required 12 hours of 7000 level coursework, no more than 6 hours may be Chemistry 8900 (Problems in Chemical Research) and no more than 6 hours may be Chemistry 7800 (Seminar). Up to 12 hours of coursework may be at the 4000 level for graduate credit. The remaining 6 hours will be Thesis Research (Chemistry 8000). Chemistry 9000 hours can be used for this requirement. In addition, a written thesis covering a limited topic of independent research must be presented to the Graduate School. The thesis work, which is carried out under the direction of a faculty member, must also be defended orally before your advisory committee.

## **APPENDIX B: CUMULATIVE EXAMINATIONS**

1. Each new student should start taking cumulative exams at the beginning of the first regular semester in residence, and must pass the requisite number of exams (see 5. & 6. below) by the end of the fourth regular semester in residence.
2. Each student taking Cumes must register each month with the Graduate Coordinator for a specific exam by Thursday prior to the Saturday exam; only the registered number of exam copies will be available on Exam Saturday.
3. Each student may take only one exam on a given Saturday; since 8 exams are given each academic year (once each month during the Fall and Spring semesters), a maximum of 16 exams may be taken.
4. Each student must declare a major area, usually by the beginning of the second semester in residence but no later than the time the third exam is passed. Choice of major area will generally be made with the advice and consent of the major professor during the major professor selection process; however, a new major professor may require the student to change a previously declared major area and to pass the requisite number of exams for

that area.

5. Each student must pass, within the four-semester time period, a minimum of three (3) exams in the major area.
6. A minimum total of six (6) exams must be passed within four semesters.
7. The topic for each major area will be announced two weeks before the Saturday exam, and each exam will be allotted two hours to complete.
8. Each exam must be graded blind - only the student number should appear on the exam, and the grader should make no attempt to identify the examinees. The graded exams are due in the Graduate Studies Office no later than two weeks following the examination Saturday; a "P" exam will be returned to the student, but an "F" exam will be placed in the student's file and a copy will be given to the student.
9. Failure to pass the minimum number of exams as specified in 5. and 6. above shall constitute a First Failure of the Qualifying Exam. Student may petition the faculty for a one semester extension; if denied, student will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program. (**NOTE:** if granted, this extension does not relieve the student of the obligation to complete the General Exam by the end of the fifth semester in residence.)
10. Failure to pass the requisite number of exams during the one-semester extension shall constitute a Second Failure of the Qualifying Exam, and hence dismissal from the Ph.D. degree program.

### **APPENDIX C: PROCEDURE FOR CHOOSING A MAJOR PROFESSOR**

During the Fall Semester, all new graduate students (including any who enter during the preceding Summer Semester) will participate in the New Student Seminar (CHEM 7800), during which research-active faculty members present summaries of their research projects. Throughout that semester, each new graduate student will schedule in-depth interviews with a minimum of five faculty members. Students are strongly encouraged to especially interview the new professors in the department. Following those interviews, the students rank their top three choices and obtain a signature from each of them. After all faculty members have presented their research presentation, each student will submit their ranked listing to the Chemistry Graduate Studies Office by Friday, November 17, 2017, prior to the Thanksgiving Holiday.

At the end of the Fall Semester, the Chairman and the Director of Graduate Studies will generate a profile of each research group, listing the number of TA's, the number of RA's, and the number of other graduate students in the group. Any group out of compliance with established guidelines will have to provide justification and a plan for coming into compliance.

Before the beginning of the Spring Semester, the entire research-active faculty will meet to discuss the new students - their progress and allocation to research groups. Faculty members will be given the Research Group Profiles, the students' ranked choices for major professor, their Fall Semester grades, and such other information as deemed necessary for informed discussion. Graduate students will be allocated according to the established guidelines consistent with the research group profiles and plans for compliance. A student on academic probation may not join a research group.

Any graduate students entering in the Spring semester will be instructed to study the research

programs in the department, to interview a minimum of five (5) faculty members, and, to submit to the Graduate Studies Office, by the end of the Spring term, a rank ordered list of three (3) choices for major professor, after obtaining a signature from each of them. The entire research-active faculty will then discuss these new students - their progress and allocation to research groups in the same manner as outlined above.

Once a student has joined a research group, they should consult with their major professor regarding their concentration area for seminars and cumulative exams. Major professors can require their students to change these concentration areas.

## **APPENDIX D: GENERAL EXAM GUIDELINES**

As you start to create the documents for your general exam, check with the Graduate Studies Office to make sure you are aware of the most recent rules and guidelines concerning the exam. The General Examination consists of an oral defense, before the student's Advisory Committee, of two documents: a dissertation research proposal and an independent research proposal. Each document is double-spaced including text, figures, and tables but not references or appendices, Arial, 11 pts. Figures should be used to judiciously augment the proposals but not dominate them.

It is important to search and read the literature carefully to make sure your independent research idea is novel and feasible. It is unpleasant, but not uncommon, to discover an idea has already been done or won't work just before the general exam. *You must turn in your documents to your committee members and the Dean's representative two weeks before the exam date*. List the time and location of the exam on the document you give to your committee members. As soon as you have scheduled a date for your general exam, you should send your committee members an e-mail confirming the date of the exam. You should also send your committee members an e-mail reminder about the exam 1-3 days before the exam.

You should continue working on your research as you prepare for your exam. Most people can't work efficiently for 2-3 months on only writing a document like this. A lot of the time spent will be simply wasted. If you are in a position that you have to drop everything to write the exam at the last second, this probably means you waited too long to start thinking about and working on your general exam.

*Students wishing to take their general exam must schedule it with the Graduate Studies Office by the 'Final Date for Adding Courses for Credit' date of that semester.*

### **Dissertation Research Progress Report**

The primary goals of the Dissertation Research Progress Report are (1) to demonstrate that you understand your dissertation research project, and (2) to develop a plan for completing your research. While research results are important and an indication that you are on your way to completing your Ph.D., the main purpose of the exam is to demonstrate your understanding of your dissertation research. Of course, if you have completed projects and written papers heading into your general exam, it is likely that you will understand your overall project better. Understanding your project means understanding the overall significance of your work as well as understanding the technical details of your project. *Do not exceed the department guidelines for document length (15 pages maximum; an Appendix containing experimental detail may be*

added, if deemed necessary. However, the Committee is not required to read Appendices.).

### *Sections for the Dissertation Research Proposal and Suggested Lengths (for a 15 pp proposal)*

Summary (1 page) - This is essentially an abstract. A good summary should allow a reader to understand basically what you are proposing to do and why it is important.

Background and Significance (5 pages) - This is mainly a review of past work related to the project. It includes work by other groups as well as your research group. It should discuss work closely related to your Research Plan Section. Finally, it should review work that establishes the significance and importance of your proposed research plan.

Preliminary Results (6 pages) - The Preliminary Results section summarizes your research progress. Excessive experimental detail about routine procedures should be avoided,

although you should expect to be able to describe your experiments in detail if asked. If you have papers in press or in print, you can simply provide your committee with a reprint.

Research Plan (3 pages) - This section explains what research will be performed and how you will carry out the experiments. Don't explain things that are routine (e.g., how to make a buffer or measure pH). This section should be broken down into sections that might correspond to chapters in your dissertation.

Timeline - Set a timeline to include your courses and other academic milestones (e.g., seminars, teaching). Also include a timeline for future work you will do to complete your dissertation.

### **Independent Research Proposal**

The main goal of the independent proposal is to show that you have developed sufficiently as a scientist to think of new research ideas on your own. This is an essential, defining skill for a Ph.D. scientist. The research idea should be in an area that is not closely related to research going on in your group. The best way to prepare for this part of the exam is to read chemistry literature regularly and attend seminars. It is also wise to write down ideas you have even if your general exam seems far in the future. The independent proposal cannot exceed 8 pages in length, excluding references.

When you have settled on an idea for your original research proposal, write a one-page summary of your idea and present the idea to your committee to make sure the idea is acceptable. *This must be done before you start writing the proposal.* Do not exceed the department guidelines for document length (8 pages maximum).

### *Sections for the Independent Proposal and suggested lengths (for an 8 pp proposal)*

Summary (½ page) - For your independent proposal the summary should state specific aims. For this short proposal, expect to have only 1-3 of these.

Background and Significance (3 pages) - This section should include a review of work that establishes that your proposed work is of interest and importance. If you are developing a new technique, describe what methods already exist and how well these existing techniques perform. Remember that it is necessary but not sufficient for research to be novel. Research should answer scientific questions.

Research Plan - This section describes what you actually propose to do. The sections of the research plan should correspond to your specific aims. For your independent proposal,



this is where you should establish the feasibility of your idea.

## Oral Presentations

The goal of these presentations is to provide the committee a forum to ascertain the level of knowledge of the student on their research as well as general chemical principles. A formal presentation of both the research and independent proposals will be given. The research proposal will be discussed first followed by the independent proposal. Each presentation will have a *maximum* time limit of 15 minutes. Following each presentation, the committee will probe the student's knowledge of both proposals through a series of questions (*no questions will be asked during the student's presentation*). The student can bring additional figures and/or data they feel may be needed during this question/answer period.

## **APPENDIX E: SWITCHING MAJOR PROFESSORS**

Joining a research group is an extremely important action and should only be taken after extensive study and reflection. This action is tantamount to a contract between major professor and student. Thus, a decision to change advisors should only be made after an equal, if not greater, amount of discussion and reflection.

Steps involved in changing advisors: We encourage honest discussion between students and their advisors at all times. Sometimes, students feel that they are not being treated well by their advisors, but they may be afraid to say so until the problems get too serious. Therefore, if a student is dissatisfied with his/her current advisor, he/she should discuss the situation with the advisor. This discussion should be honest and open. Often, disputes between students and their advisors are the result of misunderstandings.

The student or major professor is welcome to discuss the situation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) at any point. The DGS may make additional suggestions for resolving the problem, such as moderating a meeting of the student and the advisor. If these discussions do not solve the problem, and the student wishes to change advisors, the student must write a letter to the DGS requesting a change in research advisors.

The graduate faculty, the DGS and the department chair must act on a request to change advisors within one month of receipt. If the main problem is that the student has not been performing adequately in their current group, the faculty may require that the student transfer to the M.S. program, complete the M.S. degree, and re-apply in order to pursue a Ph.D. under another advisor.

As part of any approved change of advisors, the student, the current advisor, and the new major professor must work out an agreement that specifies (a) any work that must still be completed before the transfer; and (b) satisfactory arrangements for funding the student's graduate assistantship. If a student will use research from their current/original major professor in the dissertation (or thesis), the original major professor will remain a member of the student's Ph.D. committee.

Students are welcome to have discussions with any faculty member at any time. However, if a student discusses the possibility of switching research groups with another faculty member, the faculty member is expected to notify the student's current major professor and/or the DGS immediately.

**APPENDIX F: CHANGES TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Generally, Ph.D. and M.S. students will have the same advisory committee from the time the committee is formed until the final defense and graduation, but there are circumstances which require changes to the committee. Examples include committee members retiring and committee members who are unavailable due to sabbaticals. Some students add committee members due to new collaborations or research needs. The following procedure will be followed when a student wishes to change their advisory committee:

1. The student will first talk to their major professor about the proposed committee change.
2. The student will talk to any faculty members they intend to add to their advisory committee and any faculty members they intend to remove from their advisory committee.
3. The student will send an e-mail to the Director of Graduate Studies stating the changes to be made to the advisory committee. The e-mail must include a simple explanation (1-3 sentences) of why the committee needs to be changed. The student must copy all of their current advisory committee as well as committee members they propose to add.