Chemistry

Degrees Offered

• Master of Science
• Doctor of Philosophy

Nature of the Program

The Department of Chemistry offers graduate studies leading to the degrees of master of science and doctor of philosophy with research concentration in the areas of analytical, inorganic, organic, and physical chemistry. The master of science and doctor of philosophy degrees require completion of a research project which represents the principal component of the graduate program. The M.S. program is limited in scope and involves advanced coursework and a study of a problem in chemical research culminating in the preparation and oral defense of a M.S. thesis.

The Ph.D. program has a much wider scope than the M.S. program. Ph.D. students are expected to take a broad range of advanced coursework, both within and outside of the major area of interest. The major emphasis of the Ph.D. program is on research. A typical research problem may take several years to complete and involves many advanced techniques and concepts at the frontiers of chemical knowledge. The Ph.D. program culminates in the preparation and defense of the Ph.D. dissertation.

The program for the degree of doctor of philosophy reflects a flexible, research-oriented approach geared to develop the interests, capability, and potential of students. A program of courses is recommended to suit individual needs based on background and ability. These courses are classified as basic graduate courses, which present the essentials of a given discipline on an advanced level, and specialized graduate courses, which take one to the frontiers in a specific area of research. The course offerings are designed to provide guidelines from which students can launch their independent studies in preparation for candidacy examinations. Students are required to enroll in the departmental seminar program and attend special lectures and seminars offered by visiting scientists. Graduate students in the Ph.D. program are required to satisfactorily complete a minimum of three courses (three credits each) at the 500 to 700-level offered by the Department of Chemistry and distributed in at least two areas outside their major area of research. In addition, each major area in chemistry requires students in that area to enroll in basic graduate courses presenting the essentials of that discipline on an advanced level.

FACULTY

CHAIR

• Gregory Dudley - Ph.D. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
  Eberly Family Distinguished Professor, Chemical Synthesis, Organic Reaction Methodology, Medicinal Chemistry

ASSOCIATE CHAIR

• Michelle Richards-Babb - Ph.D. (Lehigh University)
  Chemical Education

GRADUATE DIRECTOR

• Brian Popp - Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
  Organic and Organometallic Chemistry, Catalysis

PROFESSORS

• Terry Gullion - Ph.D. (William and Mary)
  Physical Chemistry, Solid State NMR, Biological Materials, Polymers

• Lisa Holland - Ph.D. (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill)
  Micro-separations, High Throughput Drug Screening

• Fred L. King - Ph.D. (University of Virginia)
  Analytical Chemistry, Mass Spectrometry, Trace Elements, Gas-phase Chemistry

• Michelle Richards-Babb - Ph.D. (Lehigh University)
  Chemical Education

• Kenneth Showalter - Ph.D. (University of Colorado)
  Bennett Distinguished Professor, Physical Chemistry, Chemical Kinetics, Multistability and Oscillating Systems

• Bjorn C. Soderberg - Ph.D. (Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden)
  Organic Synthesis Using Transition Metals

• Kung K. Wang - Ph.D. (Purdue University)
  Eberly Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Stereoselective Synthesis, Natural Products
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

- Fabien Goulay - Ph.D. (University of Rennes, France)
  Physical Chemistry, Laser Spectroscopy
- Jessica Hoover - Ph.D. (University of Washington)
  Organometallic Chemistry, Catalysis
- Justin Legleiter - Ph.D. (Carnegie Mellon University)
  Biophysical Chemistry, Scanning Probe Microscopy
- Blake Mertz - Ph.D. (Iowa State University)
  Computational Biophysics and Chemistry
- Carsten Milsmann - Ph.D. (Max-Planck-Institute for Bioinorganic Chemistry)
  Inorganic and Organometallic Chemistry
- Brian Popp - Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
  Organic and Organometallic Chemistry, Catalysis
- Stephen Valentine - Ph.D. (Indiana University)
  Mass Spectrometric Analysis of Biomolecules

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

- Brian Dolinar - Ph.D. (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
  Inorganic Chemistry
- Margaret Hilton - Ph.D. (University of Utah)
  Organic and Organometallic Chemistry, Catalysis
- Peng Li - Ph.D. (Texas Tech University)
  Bioanalytical Chemistry

Admissions

PH.D. IN CHEMISTRY

The Chemistry program admits students directly to the doctoral degree. Admitted students may transition to the MS in Chemistry during their studies. In addition to WVU’s general admission requirements (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/#classificationtext), applicants for graduate studies in chemistry must have a bachelor’s degree with an overall GPA of 3.0 as a minimum requirement. Applicants must have a major or concentration in chemistry and an appropriate background in physics and mathematics.

Applicants should submit all required materials. This includes three letters of recommendation from professional or academic references who can comment directly on your skills and experience. Applicants must submit a current curriculum vitae or resume that lists work experience, volunteer activities, internships, academic degrees and honors and other accomplishments you feel the admissions committee should take into account. A statement of purpose must be included. The statement of purpose should discuss specific examples of your ability to write effectively, analyze complex situations, and complete quantitative analyses. The following topics should be included in your statement: why a career in chemistry, what you hope to gain from the doctoral program, why WVU offers you the best opportunity for achieving your future professional goals, and which faculty members and/or research areas you wish to pursue. Information regarding faculty and their research interests can be found here (https://www.chemistry.wvu.edu/directory/). GRE scores are not required for admission. All applicants will be considered for financial support in the form of graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs) and Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs).

List of Admission Requirements:

- See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/)
- Three letters of recommendation from professional or academic references
- Curriculum Vitae or Resume
- Statement of purpose

International Applicants:

- See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/)
- International applications should view additional requirements here (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/#internationaltext) and here (https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/apply-for-2020-2021/international-graduate-applicant/)
- Language proficiency is required in order to hold a graduate teaching assistantship. See here (https://elli.wvu.edu/testing-resources/english-proficiency-gtas/).

Application Deadline:

- The Chemistry program admits students for the Fall semester only
- The priority review deadline for all application materials for fall admission is January 1st
• Applicants are typically notified of the committee’s decision on or before February 1st
• Completed applications for admission may be considered after the January 1st deadline on a space-available basis
• Exceptional applicants may be nominated by the Chemistry program for competitive University Fellowships. Qualified applicants will be notified if they are nominated. More information on WVU fellowships can be found here (https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/fellowships/).

For further information, please contact: Director of Graduate Studies, Chemistry.DGS@mail.wvu.edu.

Certain application requirements may be waived based on a preliminary review of an application by the program.

**Admission Requirements 2023-2024**

The Admission Requirements above will be the same for the 2023-2024 Academic Year.

Major Code: 1439

For specific information on the following program, please see the link to the right:

• Chemistry, M.S.

For specific information on the following program, please see the link to the right:

• Chemistry, Ph.D.

**Degree Progress**

**Guidance Exams**

By the end of the second semester in residence, both Master and Ph.D. students are required to pass 3 out of 4 guidance exams. The guidance exams are in the areas of analytical, inorganic, organic, and physical chemistry. Students have 3 total attempts to pass each exam. The initial attempts occur prior to the student’s first semester in the form of written exams generally during orientation week. Subsequent attempts can be either re-taking the written exam or earning a grade of B- or better in a designated graduate course.

**M.S. BENCHMARKS**

**Seminars:** All students in the thesis track must register for both graduate seminar (CHEM 796) and research seminar (CHEM 789) every semester. Students in the coursework track may register in a graduate seminar and must register for research seminar every semester.

**Thesis Track**

Graduate students in the M.S. program in chemistry in the thesis track are required to submit a research thesis. A research project is chosen in the area of the student’s interest and in consultation with the faculty. The thesis defense shows the ability of the student to defend scientific conclusions based on their research project. A final oral examination is administered after completion and submission of the thesis.

• **Credit Hour Requirement:** Students may apply up to 6 hours of research credit and 3 hours of seminars toward the 30-hour requirement. The remaining 21 hours of credit must be earned in basic graduate courses (500-level or higher) that reflect a diversified exposure to chemistry, and no more than 10 hours may be elected outside the department. Students are required to enroll in the departmental seminar program and are required to attend special lectures and seminars offered by visiting scientists.

**Coursework Track**

Graduate students in the M.S. program in chemistry in the coursework track are not required to submit a research thesis. The student may choose to perform research for research credit.

• **Credit Hour Requirement:** Students may apply up to 3 hours of research credit and 3 hours of seminars toward the 30-hour requirement. The remaining 24 hours of credit must be earned in basic graduate courses (500-level or higher) that reflect a diversified exposure to chemistry, and no more than 10 hours may be elected outside the department. Students are required to enroll in the departmental seminar program and are required to attend special lectures and seminars offered by visiting scientists.

**PH.D. BENCHMARKS**

**Research**

Research, which is the major theme of graduate studies, may be initiated as early as the student and faculty feel appropriate for the individual. Normally, a student will begin laboratory work no later than the beginning of the second semester. Upon successful completion of an original piece of research, the candidate will present results in a Ph.D. dissertation and, at the appropriate time, defend the work in a final oral examination.

**Candidacy**

Candidacy examinations contain written and oral portions. The written portion is a research progress report that will contain a comprehensive review of the pertinent literature and applicable scientific concepts, a discussion of current results, a description of studies needed to finish the project, a
discussion of expected results and alternative approaches, and a timeline for completing the work. After notification of successful completion of the written portion, the student will present and defend an oral progress report. This oral report must demonstrate fundamental chemical knowledge and independence on the part of the student. Both the written and oral portions of the candidacy examination will be evaluated by the student’s research committee and any other interested faculty members. Generally, students will attain candidacy before beginning their 3rd year in the doctoral program.

Research Progress Updates
Doctoral candidates will meet with their graduate research committee members at least once a year after attaining candidacy status. The candidate will prepare a short 10-minute oral presentation to update their committee member on notable successes from the previous year. Included in the presentation is a discussion of plans to complete their dissertation requirements. Generally, students will schedule these committee meetings in late spring or during the summer term in their 3rd and 4th years.

Independent Research Proposal
Doctoral candidates will prepare and present a written and oral independent research proposal. The written proposal proposes a unique research idea that is outside of the candidate’s doctoral research. The written proposal will be distributed to all members of the department including faculty and graduate students. An oral defense of the proposed idea will occur within the divisional seminar programs. After the presentation all members in attendance will have an opportunity to pose questions to the presenter. All faculty in attendance at the seminar will evaluate the proposal, both written and oral, on established criteria. Candidates must pass this requirement before they will be allowed to schedule their oral dissertation defense.

COURSES

CHEM 511. Advanced Instrumental Analysis. 3 Hours.  
PR: CHEM 310 with a minimum grade of C-. Lectures and demonstrations. Classical and cutting-edge instrumental methods applied to chemical analyses: electrochemistry, spectroscopy, mass spectrometry, and chromatography; presented at the advanced level. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 512. Environmental Chemistry. 3 Hours.  

CHEM 514. Mass Spectrometry Principles and Practices. 3 Hours.  
PR: CHEM 310. Fundamental principles underlying modern mass spectrometry. Gas phase chemistry related to the formation and fragmentation of ions. The design of instrumental systems for mass spectrometry. Application of mass spectrometric techniques to multidisciplinary problems of current interest. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 516. Bioanalytical Chemistry. 3 Hours.  
PR: (CHEM 310 and AGBI 410) or equivalent. Analytical principles and instrumental methods as they are applied to biochemical questions. Students are taught to evaluate and formulate methods and approaches for biochemical analyses.

CHEM 521. Organometallic Chemistry. 3 Hours.  
PR: Graduate standing in chemistry or consent. Syntheses, structure, and reactivity of organometallic compounds. Applications of organometallic compounds to catalysis and organic synthesis. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 522. Topics in Inorganic Chemistry. 3 Hours.  
PR: CHEM 310. Fundamental principles underlying modern mass spectrometry. Gas phase chemistry related to the formation and fragmentation of ions. The design of instrumental systems for mass spectrometry. Application of mass spectrometric techniques to multidisciplinary problems of current interest. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 531. Advanced Organic Chemistry 1. 3 Hours.  
PR: CHEM 234. Structural concepts, bonding, tautomerism, static and dynamic stereochemistry, mechanistic classifications of reagents, and reactions including some applications. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 532. Advanced Organic Chemistry 2. 3 Hours.  
PR: CHEM 531. Continuation of CHEM 531 with emphasis upon synthetic methods and reaction mechanisms. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 533. Advanced Structure Determination Using Spectroscopic Methods. 3 Hours.  
PR: Graduate standing or consent. In depth exposure to the techniques for identifying the functionalities and elucidating the bond connectivity of unknown organic molecules using UV, IR, and NMR spectroscopy and mass spectrometry techniques.

CHEM 541. Chemical Thermodynamics. 3 Hours.  
PR: CHEM 348. Principles of classical and statistical thermodynamics and their application to chemical problems. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 542. Computational Chemistry. 3 Hours.  
PR: CHEM 348 or consent. Introduction to the use of quantum mechanical-based computational techniques to study molecular structure, bonding, and reactivity, and their relationship to experimental techniques.

CHEM 545. Foundations of Quantum Chemistry. 3 Hours.  
Application of the principles of quantum mechanics to chemical systems and spectroscopy.

CHEM 547. Chemical Crystallography. 3 Hours.  
PR or Conc: (CHEM 346 and CHEM 348) or CHEM 341 or consent. Applications of X-ray diffraction of crystals to the study of crystal and molecular structure. Includes diffraction theory, space group symmetry, and crystallographic methods of analysis. (3 hr. lec.).
CHEM 548. Biophysical Chemistry. 3 Hours.
Biophysical Chemistry lies at the interface between physics, chemistry and biology, applying theories and methods of the physical sciences toward understanding biological systems. This course focuses on the physical chemistry of biological macromolecules. Topics to be covered include protein structure formation and stability, forces/interactions in biological molecular systems, bio-macromolecule folding dynamics, phase transitions in proteins, and membrane physics.

CHEM 549. Proximal Probe Techniques. 3 Hours.
Proximal probe techniques rely on the use of nanoscale probes, positioned and scanned in the immediate vicinity of surfaces. Their development is often viewed as a first step towards nanotechnology, since they demonstrate the feasibility of building purposeful structures one atom or one (macro) molecule at a time. This course provides thorough physical background of scanning probe microscopy techniques.

CHEM 552. Biochemical Toxicology. 3 Hours.
Introduction to the principles of toxicology, with a focus on the processes that occur at the cellular and molecular levels when chemicals interact with living organisms.

CHEM 591. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation of advanced topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses.

CHEM 593. Special Topics. 1-6 Hours.
A study of contemporary topics selected from recent developments in the field.

CHEM 695. Independent Study. 1-6 Hours.
Faculty supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.

CHEM 697. Research. 1-9 Hours.
PR: Consent. Research activities leading to thesis, problem report, research paper or equivalent scholarly project, or a dissertation. (Grading may be S/U.)

CHEM 713. Electrochemistry and Instrumentation. 3 Hours.
PR: CHEM 310. Electronic instrumentation applied to study of mass transfer kinetics of electrode reactions, voltammetry, and high-frequency methods. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 715. Chemical Separations. 3 Hours.
PR: CHEM 215 and CHEM 233, and physical chemistry. Fundamentals of transport and flow processes underlying all separation techniques. Empirical coverage of chromatographic and electrophoretic methods for analytical separations. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 723. Physical Methods in Inorganic Chemistry. 3 Hours.
PR: CHEM 422. Symmetry, vibrational spectroscopy, theory and applications of NMR and EPR methods, magnetism, optical activity, dynamic processes and fluxional behavior. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 727. Bioinorganic Chemistry. 3 Hours.
PR: CHEM 422 or consent. Metal ions in biological systems; proteins, nucleic acids, and cofactors as ligands; metal uptake, storage, and regulation; structural and catalytic roles; substance activation, electron transfer, and group transfer reactions; metals in medicine.

CHEM 743. Chemical Kinetics. 3 Hours.
PR: CHEM 348. Theories and applications of kinetics in gaseous state and in solution. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 745. Theoretical Chemistry 1. 3 Hours.
PR: Differential equations. Theoretical background for quantum mechanics. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 746. Theoretical Chemistry 2. 3 Hours.
PR: CHEM 745. Theories and applications of quantum mechanics in chemistry. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 747. Molecular Spectroscopy and Structure. 3 Hours.
PR: CHEM 450 or graduate standing in chemistry, or consent. Advanced applications of spectral methods to the study of molecular structure. (3 hr. lec.).

CHEM 750. Introduction to Proteomics. 3 Hours.
Introduction to protein separations and sequencing by modern mass spectrometry, and the application of these methods to the study of biological systems in health and environmental sciences.

CHEM 789. Research Seminar. 1 Hour.
PR: Graduate student in chemistry. Research seminars by visiting lecturers.

CHEM 790. Teaching Practicum. 1-3 Hours.
PR: Consent. Supervised practice in college teaching of chemistry. Note: This course is intended to insure that graduate assistants are adequately prepared and supervised when they are given college teaching responsibility. It will also present a mechanism for students not on assistantships to gain teaching experience. (Grading will be P/F.).

CHEM 791. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation of advanced topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses.

CHEM 792. Directed Study. 1-6 Hours.
Directed study, reading, and/or research.
CHEM 793. Special Topics. 1-6 Hours.
A study of contemporary topics selected from recent developments in the field.

CHEM 795. Independent Study. 1-9 Hours.
Faculty supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.

CHEM 796. Graduate Seminar. 1-3 Hours.
PR: Consent. Each graduate student will present at least one seminar to the assembled faculty and graduate student body of his or her program.

CHEM 797. Research. 1-9 Hours.
PR: Consent. Research activities leading to thesis, program report, research paper or equivalent scholarly project, or a dissertation. (Grading may be S/U.).