

Policies on Academic Progress, Probation, and Dismissal
PhD Program, Department of Chemistry
July 1, 2017

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and the Graduate Work Committee (GWC), a committee comprised of one faculty representative from each of the major chemistry divisions, Biological, Inorganic, Organic, and Physical, meets three times each year (December, May, and August) to evaluate the progress of all Chemistry PhD students. These meetings are held for two reasons:

- i) To make sure each student in the Chemistry PhD program is satisfying the academic requirements of the Chemistry PhD program and the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.
- ii) To make sure each student in the Chemistry PhD program is satisfactorily completing the teaching requirements of the Chemistry PhD program and the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.
- iii) To make sure each student in the Chemistry PhD program is satisfactorily prepares and defends a thesis research proposal prior to the end of the third semester in residence.
- iv) To make sure each student's research efforts are progressing satisfactorily to ensure completion of the thesis within approximately five years of residency, and ultimately within six years of residency – the duration of the Ph.D. program.
- v) To maintain a safe research and working environment, and practice safe protocols.

The evaluation criteria of each student depend on their time of residence in the program. In terms of academic performance, each entering PhD student takes proficiency examinations in Biological, Inorganic, Organic, and Physical Chemistry. Based on a student's performance on each exam, the DGS and GWC provides written advice on coursework that a student should take in order to address apparent weaknesses. Each student is required to prepare a thesis research proposal and defend it in front of his/her Thesis Advisory Committee prior to the end of his/her third year in residency, usually the fall semester of the second year. The student's performance is quantitatively evaluated, and the recommendation for candidacy is provided to the DGW and GWC. In addition, all Chemistry PhD students are required to hold annual thesis committee meetings beginning in the students sixth semester in residence, normally the spring semester of his/her third year. The written summaries prepared by the committees are reviewed by the DGS and GWC. These meetings are held for two reasons: i) to make sure the student's research is progressing satisfactorily, and that he/she should be able to complete a thesis within approximately five years of residency, and ii) to provide a sounding board for research ideas, results, and problems to faculty other than the student's thesis advisor. The second reason also provides a check on the feasibility of the research and plan being pursued by the PhD student.

If any requirements are not met by the PhD student, the DGS and the Chair of the Chemistry Department will typically prescribe, on the basis of the recommendation of the Graduate Work Committee or the student's Thesis Advisory Committee (or the department as a whole if the advisory committee has not been appointed) a probationary period during which the student will be expected to satisfy the requirements. In most circumstances, the student will receive a minimum of one probationary period during which the student should focus on fulfilling his/her stated deficiencies. The probationary period associated with unsatisfactory progress in coursework will span a duration of time through the next full academic semester (Fall or Spring), so that a student has sufficient time to raise his/her grades. The probationary period associated with unsatisfactory progress in research will span a duration of time through the next academic semester (Fall or Spring) or summer term. The student on probation should schedule a Thesis Advisory Committee meeting near the end of this period in order to present progress to the committee. In cases of extreme under-performance, the DGS and the Chair of the Chemistry Department will recommend to the Dean of the Graduate School that the student be immediately dismissed from the Chemistry PhD program. Note the Chemistry Department can only recommend the dismissal of a graduate student from the Chemistry PhD program (just as it recommends admission) to the Dean of the Graduate School. The ultimate decision for dismissal is made by the Dean.

A student has the right to appeal a recommendation for dismissal from the Chemistry PhD program by presenting a written request for reconsideration. The request, which should be made in writing and given to the DGS, should state clearly the reasoning why the student feels the decision was made in error. If the student has

a faculty advocate or advocates, a separate letter or separate letters from the faculty member(s) may be submitted to the DGS. If an appeal is received, the case will be discussed at a Chemistry Faculty meeting and voted on by the tenured and tenure-track faculty. The DGS will give the decision of the faculty to the student and the Dean of the Graduate School in writing. Ultimately, if the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Chemistry faculty, the student may then make an appeal directly to the Dean of the Graduate School.