Exam Sequence in the Chemistry Graduate Program for Master of Science Students

1. Placement exams (all new graduate students)
   Five placement exams in the area of organic chemistry, inorganic chemistry, biochemistry, analytical chemistry, and physical chemistry must be taken by any student admitted to the graduate program. The purpose of these exams is to ensure that the graduate student is adequately prepared for graduate studies. Students admitted in the fall semester must take placement exams in August of the same year before classes start. Students admitted in the spring semester must take placement exams in January of the same year before classes start.

   If a student fails more than two exams, the departmental graduate advisor will make recommendations to remediate deficiencies. Usually, the student will take a remedial course in the area of deficiency. The student must receive an A or a B as a passing grade in order to eliminate the deficiency. The student may also retake the placement exam in the area of deficiency in the next semester. All deficiencies must be eliminated within two semesters of admission into the graduate program.

   In addition, if the student’s committee feels that the student has a deficiency in a particular area important for the student’s success in graduate school, it is at the discretion of the committee to require the student to take other remedial actions.

2. First year progress report presentation
   Students may join a research group immediately, but no later than by the end of their first semester and begin research. Before the end of their first year in the graduate program students give an oral progress report presentation to their thesis committee, which should consist of their research advisor, two additional committee members from chemistry, and one outside member. The progress report presentation should entail a project title, an introduction to the project, significance of the project, a hypothesis (if applicable), the project goals, a presentation of the research done so far by the student, conclusions of these experiments, the future work to be carried out in order to complete the project, and a list of some key references. After the student’s presentation the committee may require some additional actions in order to meet progress expectations. Once all requirements are met students are asked to fill out the Progress Report Completion Form (which can be downloaded from our departmental homepage), collect the signatures of their thesis committee, and submit the form to the graduate advisor. Students who are out of compliance jeopardize their financial support and graduation.

3. M.S. defense
   The M.S. candidate provides all committee members with his/her thesis manuscript at least two weeks prior to the defense. The candidate arranges for the time and location of the defense. The first part of the defense is open to the public. The student presents his/her research...
project including an overview of the research area (~15 min) and his/her specific research accomplishments (30 – 40 min). The presentation should be completed within 45-55 min. After a general discussion open to the public, the candidate will be examined in private by the committee. The candidate is then excused, and the committee will make a decision on the thesis defense.