CHEMISTRY PHD

Degree Requirements

The following requirements are in addition to, or further elaborate upon, 
those requirements outlined in The Graduate School Policy Guide
(https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/academic-policies-procedures/).

Master’s

The Chemistry Department’s graduate program is designed to lead to the 
PhD degree, and it is expected that all students who enroll are pursuing 
the doctorate. However, a student leaving the Doctoral Program is eligible 
to receive a terminal master’s degree provided appropriate requirements 
delineated in the Departmental Graduate Program Guide are met.

Coursework Requirements

• Nine units of graduate-level coursework in chemistry are required.
• Research Requirements: Sufficient research to complete master’s 
thesis is required prior to degree completion.

PhD

Total Units Required: 9

Coursework Requirements

Course | Title
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Required Courses
CHEM 519-0 | Responsible Conduct of Research Training
CHEM 570-0 | Chemistry Colloquium (taken for three quarters in the 
first year)

Additional Courses

Additional course requirements differ for each major field of study. ¹

¹ Each division within the chemistry program has its own set of 
aditional course requirements. See the Graduate Program Guide 
(https://www.chemistry.northwestern.edu/graduate/current/ 
timeline/) for additional information.

Other PhD Degree Requirements

• Examinations: qualifying exam consisting of written document and 
oral examination prior to end of seven quarters of graduate study
• Original research proposal (ORP) has specific requirements in the 
third and fourth years of graduate study and at the dissertation 
defense. See the chemistry graduate program guide for further 
details. The ORP is not an extension of the dissertation topic.
• PhD Dissertation: must describe original research
• Final Evaluations: oral dissertation defense when all other 
requirements completed
• Other: all full-time students are required to teach for four quarters 
in their first two years of study. In order to complete the teaching 
requirement, all International students must comply with English 
proficiency requirements.