

Texas A&M Chemistry

Frequently Asked Questions about applying to our PhD program

Review & Decision

What are the minimum requirements for admission consideration?

Decisions are based on your application as a complete package. The information below is provided as guidance only and is not intended to convey hard cutoffs. We understand that individual circumstances vary and that not all applicants take a traditional road to graduate school.

- A B.A., B.S., M.S., or equivalent degree in chemistry or a degree in a closely related field with appropriate chemistry coursework is expected.
- Undergraduate research experience is expected. Publications are a plus, but are not in any way a prerequisite for consideration.
- An undergraduate grade point average of B (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher is expected, as well as an average of B or higher in chemistry and science courses.
- For international students, we expect TOEFL scores of at least 100 with a speaking of at least 23, or IELTS of 7.0+, with a speaking of at least 7.0.

I have a low GPA or TOEFL score. Does that automatically disqualify me?

The applications are reviewed as whole packages. We do not discard applications on the basis of a single score, grade, or number. We look for evidence of excellence in past accomplishments and strong promise of success in the future. This evidence can manifest itself in many different ways.

How can I check the status of my submitted materials?

You can check on the status of your submitted materials by logging in to your application on the Texas A&M GradCAS system: <https://texasam2021.liasoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login> Please understand that due to our review process, your application may not change status for periods of time.

When and how will I be notified of the decision?

You will be informed of the admissions committee's decision by email. Most, but not all, offers are made by mid-February. Some offers may be made as late as April. If you are offered admission, your response will be requested by April 15, 2021. You are under no obligation to respond before April 15, but we would appreciate learning of your decision once you have made it. Your decision may influence our late decisions on the applications still under consideration.

Why can you not make all the decisions earlier?

We receive hundreds of applications and we work hard to review them in the most expedient fashion, but it takes a significant amount of time. The decision on any given application depends not only on that application's content, but also on the competitiveness of the overall applicant pool, as well as the projected departmental areas of need. We receive more meritorious applications than we can admit. There is a great deal of uncertainty in how many applicants will accept our offer. Over the last few years,

around half of our offers remained unanswered a week before April 15. Because of this, some decisions are made quite late in the process.

I have not heard from you yet, but I have an offer from another school and they require me to respond before April 15. Can you make your decision sooner?

The majority of US schools agreed to a resolution stipulating April 15 as the universal response deadline for graduate school offers. Requiring you to respond before April 15 is a violation of this agreement.

Can you issue a conditional letter of admission for my fellowship application?

No, we cannot.

If I have a fellowship, does that guarantee me admission to the program?

All applications are reviewed on the basis of merit.

Do I need any vaccines to apply?

Proof of vaccination is NOT required for your application to be considered.

What if my question is not answered here?

Please email us at gradmail@chem.tamu.edu

App Content

Whom do you consider domestic and international applicants?

A domestic applicant is a US citizen or national or a permanent resident of the US. All others are international applicants. If you are a US citizen/resident with an overseas education, in general, you should follow the “domestic” guidelines, but we advise you to contact us at gradmail@chem.tamu.edu.

What is a complete application package?

A complete application package consists of the following items:

- GraduateCAS Application
- Statement of Purpose (aka essay)
- Transcripts from all colleges or universities attended
- TOEFL scores, if an international student
- Three (3) Letters of Recommendation
- CV

What is a Statement of Purpose?

A statement of purpose generally serves to explain why you are interested in and passionate about chemistry and about pursuing graduate studies. The exact content and the order of presentation is up to the applicant, but the admissions committee expects to see the following items (in 2 pages or less):

- How your education has led you to advanced studies in chemistry
- Your anticipated career goals
- Your past research experience (briefly please provide details about your past projects, the results you obtained, and their significance).
- Your research interests, and which areas and research groups at Texas A&M are attractive to you
- How you became interested in attending Texas A&M

What is a CV?

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is similar to a resume. It should contain information about your educational and professional background and history, list honors and awards, skills, activities, and interests relevant to graduate studies in chemistry. It should also list any published research papers and presentations. Optionally, you may include in the CV file one page dedicated to a brief description of your research accomplishments. We expect the CV to be 1-2 pages in total. Be sure your CV is accurate and complete. List all activities after high school graduation with dates and affiliations.

Should I list my awards and accomplishments in the CV or in Experiences and Achievement section online?

Please do list all of the awards, accomplishments, any relevant test scores (national or international) on the CV. You do not have to fill out the Experiences and Achievement section in the GraduateCAS application.

Who should the recommendation letters be from?

At least one letter should be from a research advisor. At least two recommendation letters are expected to be from chemists or people from a closely related field (e.g. biochemistry, materials science, etc.). We expect 3 letters total.

What are “additional supporting documents?”

Additional supporting documents are items that you feel may bolster and are immediately relevant to your application and/or future chemistry career, but are not listed in our application requirements. You may upload up to 3 documents no larger than 15MB. Accepted file type: .doc, .docx, .pdf, .rtf, .txt, .jpg, .jpeg, .png.

Can I transfer from another PhD program?

Accepting students who are active in a different PhD program in chemistry is uncommon. In addition to all the regular application materials, a student from another PhD program should clearly explain their current academic standing and research progress, and present cogent reasons for wishing to leave. A letter from the current research advisor or the director of graduate studies at the current institution is required.

I have credits earned at Texas A&M. Do I need to submit an official transcript?

No, you do not.

Can I email my documents rather than upload them?

Do not email your transcripts or any other documentation unless we specifically request you to do so.

What if my question is not answered here?

Please email us at gradmail@chem.tamu.edu

App Submission

Can I apply after the deadline?

You may apply after December 15, 2020. We will continue to review all completed applications. However, please complete your application package as soon as possible.

Should I apply early?

We encourage submitting applications in advance of our deadline (applying before early-/mid-November carries no benefit, however). We give full consideration to all applications submitted by our deadline; however, we continuously review application packages as they are received. Having more applications early may result in an earlier decision for the early applications, but also allows us to get through all of the applications sooner.

Do you accept applications for the Spring semester?

Spring admits are unusual. Applications received for admission in the Spring semester are considered on a case-by-case basis. The complete application package must be received by October 1. Spring 2021 applications are submitted via ApplyTexas.org. Please contact gradmail@chem.tamu.edu for additional instructions.

I know which professor I am interested in working with. Should I write to her/him first?

It is certainly alright to contact our faculty directly and express interest in their work. It is a good way to learn about our research efforts directly. However, in order to join any of the chemistry research groups as a PhD student, one first has to apply for admission and be admitted to our graduate program. There is absolutely no requirement to have an agreement with a specific faculty member in order to apply and be admitted, nor do prior contacts with individual faculty guarantee admission.

How do I make sure my letters of reference are submitted?

Enter the names and the contact information of your letter writers in the online system and it will automatically prompt them to submit their letters. You will receive emails from tamusupport@liasoncas.com when your recommendation was sent and when it was received.

Can I email my documents?

No. All supporting materials must be uploaded to the online system. We will use the uploaded copy of the transcript for the consideration of your application. If admitted, the University requires receipt of official transcripts.

Can I apply to more than one department at Texas A&M?

You may only apply to one graduate program at Texas A&M. However, some of our faculty have joint appointments in other departments and may serve as research advisors to PhD students in those programs. If you are unsure of whether Chemistry or another graduate program fits you better, please feel free to contact us with questions.

Where should I mail my materials?

You should not mail any application materials. If you are admitted to our program and accept the offer we will then explain how to submit official documentation.

What if my question is not answered here?

Please email us at gradmail@chem.tamu.edu

Program & Support

I am interested in a particular research area in chemistry. Do you have this area represented in your department?

Please take a look at the [Research](#) section of the departmental website which presents faculty research areas both by traditional divisions and by interest areas.

What are the major academic milestones in your Ph.D. program?

Please see the [Degree Programs](#) section of the departmental website.

Is there an M.S. degree program?

No. Our graduate program is aimed at students interested in obtaining a Ph.D. degree. Although it is possible to leave the program with an M.S. degree, we do not consider applications from students who are only interested in an M.S. Exceptions may be made for students on active duty in the U.S. military.

What is the financial support offered to graduate students?

Our graduate stipend is \$2,250/month or \$27,000 annually. This support may come in the form of a research assistantship or a teaching assistantship. This base stipend level is the same for all graduate students in the department. In addition, tuition and mandatory fees are paid by the department or the research advisor. Support is guaranteed for 5 years for students maintaining good academic standing. Students are also eligible for reduced-rate health benefits.

Do you offer additional fellowships and awards?

There are indeed fellowships and awards reserved for graduate applicants. All domestic applicants are automatically reviewed for their eligibility and no action beyond a submitting a complete application on time is needed to be considered. International students can apply for fellowships and awards once they have established a GPA. Students selected for a fellowship or an award, you will be notified by email. For the awards available to our resident graduate students, please consult www.chem.tamu.edu/graduate/#GraduateAwards.

What about external fellowships and awards?

We highly recommend all applicants consider applying for appropriate external fellowships. Consult our list of [External Awards](#) and the OGAPS [Externally Funded Fellowships](#) list. If you have been awarded an external fellowship that will provide support for your graduate studies, please mention it explicitly in your statement of purpose or contact us later at gradmail@chem.tamu.edu.

Can you issue an admission letter early so that I can apply for an external fellowship that is conditional on guaranteed admission?

We can only make a decision on an application after it is complete and has been reviewed in the context of our pool of applicants. We do not issue conditional letters of admission.

What if my question is not answered here?

Please email us at gradmail@chem.tamu.edu

GRE & TOEFL

Are GRE scores required?

We will not be requiring GRE General or Subject scores this year. We are not expecting to see them in the majority or the entirety of the applications. This pertains to both domestic and international applications.

I have taken GRE or GRE Subject. May I submit the scores?

If you feel that your GRE scores will bolster your application, you may submit the scores. You can add the test score information to the Standardized Test portion of the Academic History. Upload the score reports for the consideration by the admissions committee to the Documents section of the Chemistry program portion of your application. However, there will be absolutely no handicap to applications that do not submit GRE scores and we do not intend to encourage applicants to take GRE this year.

Where do I send my IELTS and/or TOEFL scores?

Self-reported scores should be entered in the online application to the Standardized Test portion of the Academic History. A screen-shot or scan of your IELTS and/or TOEFL report can be uploaded committee to the Documents section of the Chemistry program portion of your application If you are

accepted into the program, an official score report must be submitted to the TAMU Office of Admissions before registering for classes.

I plan to take IELTS or TOEFL in December. May I submit my scores late?

You may submit your scores late. However, we will not be able to complete the review your application until it is complete.

My IELTS or TOEFL scores were lower than I would like. If I retake the test and do better, will you consider the new scores?

Yes, we will consider the new scores. We do not mix-and-match scores from different testing dates. Information received after the deadline may not be fully taken into consideration.

What are the expected TOEFL and IELTS scores for evidence of English proficiency?

The Department of Chemistry expects a TOEFL iBT of at least 100 with a speaking score of at least 23, preferably 26 or higher; or an IELTS band score of at least 7.0, with a speaking of at least 7.0, preferably 8.0 or higher. All admitted international applicants who join our program must pass the oral portion of the TAMU English Language Proficiency Exam (ELPE) before they can be employed as teaching assistants. See the [Office of Graduate and Professional Studies' English Language Proficiency page](#) for the explanation of the policy.

Note that the TOEFL/IELTS *expectations* of the Chemistry Department are higher than the *minimum requirements* listed on the University site.

Do all international students have to submit TOEFL/IELTS scores?

Texas A&M University's Proof of English Proficiency exemption:

<http://admissions.tamu.edu/international/graduate>

If your native language is not English, you are required to submit proof of English proficiency to be eligible for review unless you meet either criteria below:

- You will complete or have completed all years of a Bachelor's degree or higher at a U.S. accredited university.
- You are a citizen of one of the following countries, you will be exempt from the English proficiency requirement for admission and considered English Language Proficiency (ELP) Verified:

American Samoa
Anguilla
Antigua and Barbuda
Australia
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Bermuda
British Virgin Islands

Ghana
Gibraltar
Grenada
Guyana
Ireland
Jamaica
Liberia
New Zealand
Nigeria

Canada (except Quebec)
Cayman Islands
Dominica
Federated States of Micronesia
Gambia

Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Trinidad/Tobago
Turks and Caicos Islands
United Kingdom

I am an international student with a Master's degree from a U.S. institution. Do I need to submit TOEFL/IELTS scores?

If you received your Master's degree from an accredited US college or university you may request waiver of the TOEFL or IELTS if your scores meet our minimum expectations and your GRE Verbal meets the University's minimum of 146. Please email your request and supporting documentation to gradmail@chem.tamu.edu. If admitted to the program you may still be required to pass the University's English Language Proficiency Exam as required by the State of Texas.

What if my question is not answered here?

Please email us at gradmail@chem.tamu.edu