

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT APPLICATION FAQS

OBJECTIVES

The Vanderbilt Chemistry Department strives to ensure that our international applicants understand the application process for our Ph.D. program. We recognize that international students face specific challenges when applying to US institutions and our goal is to provide transparent and beneficial information for submitting a strong application.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Our program is currently home to 125 graduate students. On average, most of our students complete the program within 5 years. Our graduate students receive a monthly stipend and health insurance. Additionally, all tuition costs are covered by the department. Below is an overview of the typical timeline for our students:

Year 1

Orientation | Begins in Early-August
3 Lab Research Rotations | Fall Semester
4-5 Courses
Join a Lab at the End of the Fall Semester

Year 2

Preliminary Examination | Fall Semester
Finish Coursework | 1-2 Courses

YEAR 3

Third-year Research Seminar
Ph.D. Qualifying Examination | Spring Semester

YEAR 4

Independent Research Proposal

YEAR 5

Defense of Dissertation

GRADUATE STUDENT SUPPORT

The graduate program in chemistry provides year-round financial support, guaranteed for five full years to all full-time graduate students in good standing. The financial support package includes tuition, health insurance, and a competitive stipend that helps cover living expenses.

\$36,500 Stipend, Tuition and Health Insurance

Access to resources including Student Health Services, University Counseling Center and Graduate Life Coaches

Mechanisms of Support

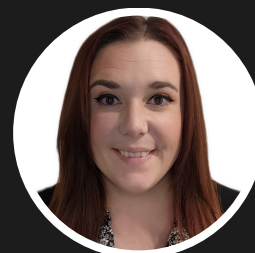
Research Assistants | Teaching Assistants | Fellowships | Training Grants



AT A GLANCE

- PROGRAM INFORMATION
- GRADUATE STUDENT SUPPORT
- APPLICATION PROCESS
- WRITING A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE & OUTLINE
- GENERAL FAQs

Questions? Contact us!



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APPLICATION PROCESS

Deadlines

Applications received by December 1, our priority deadline, will be considered for application fee waivers. The final application deadline is December 15. Typically, admission decisions are made in mid-January.

Materials

- Transcripts: Unofficial transcripts are perfectly acceptable for the application stage.
- GRE: The General GRE is not required but is encouraged.
- Recommender Contact Information: You will be asked for official email addresses and titles of all recommenders.
- English Proficiency: Most students will complete either the TOEFL, IELTS or Duolingo. Some students may be eligible for a [language examination waiver](#). The Graduate School minimums are listed below:
 - TOEFL: 89
 - IELTS: 7
 - Duolingo: 130
- Statement of Purpose

Letters of Recommendation

Letters should come from a research advisor, a professor who can judge your intellectual and laboratory preparation for graduate courses and research in chemistry or a supervisor (work or volunteer opportunities). We require a minimum of 3 letters and a maximum of 5. You may submit your application prior to our receipt of all your supporting letters. However, your application will not be reviewed until the required three letters are received.

WRITING A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We often get questions about the Statement of Purpose requirement within our application. This statement serves to highlight your accomplishments, previous research, and future research goals and/or endeavors. We do not have a specific word count or length requirement; However, we encourage applicants to aim for about 2 pages. Below is what we hope to see our applicants highlight:

- Tell us about your academic journey
- Tell us why you want to go to graduate school and what you expect to accomplish here
- Specify who you would like to work with at Vanderbilt

TYPICAL OUTLINE OF A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1. Introduce yourself and your motivation for graduate school

We want to know who you are! Explain what has shaped your decision to apply to graduate school. This introduction should be concise. (1-2 paragraphs)

2. Summarize your undergraduate and/or previous graduate career

Highlight research experiences. Explain who you've worked with, what the project was, your role, and if there were results and/or outcomes.

Highlight your experiences beyond your curricular requirements. This could be a paper, poster or thesis you worked on.

Highlight your work experiences relevant to chemistry. This should only include work that relates to the field of chemistry and may include internships.

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3. Explain any current activities relevant to chemistry

If you took a gap year or are applying to graduate school not directly out of undergraduate studies, tell us what you are currently doing.

4. Tell us what you want to do in the future

What area of chemistry are you most interested in? Who would you like to work with at Vanderbilt? What are your future career goals.

GENERAL FAQs

We've compiled a list of general FAQs that we receive from international applicants for your review:

Q: Do I need to secure an advisor prior to applying?

A: No! At Vanderbilt, we do not admit students for specific labs. Rather, our admitted students complete three lab rotations in their first semester to find their research lab. We encourage all applicants to familiarize themselves with the faculty and research conducted at VU Chemistry. The faculty you specify in your statement could be the laboratories in which you complete your rotations.

Q: Do I need to email someone to ask for an application fee waiver?

A: No! We have taken the complicated steps of seeking an application fee waiver out of the process. Simply submit your application and ALL required letters of recommendation and application materials and we will review your application.

Q: How will I be notified if I am admitted to the program?

A: All official admission decisions will be released to the application portal. You do not need to email the department for a decision. All applications will receive an official decision.

Q: When should I expect to be notified about my admittance decision?

A: Typically, we strive to make all admission decisions by mid-January of each year.

Q: Do I have to apply for TA or RA positions to secure my funding?

A: No! All of our students will be funded based on departmental and/or PI needs. Most students will TA for 4 semesters.

Q: Do you accept applications for the spring or summer semesters?

A: No! All of our applicants should apply for the fall semester.

