

NCS – CHEMISTRY PROGRAM PRACTICES

Questions 1A, 1B - Communication with Potential Doctoral Students

Questions 2A, 2B – Admission

Questions 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D – Orientation and Advisement

Questions 4A, 4B – Social Interactions

Questions		Answers
1A	When potential graduate students contact your department for information, who handles the inquiries? (Please provide the title rather than names)	Director of Graduate Programs or Graduate Program Assistant
1B	What type of information is usually sent in response to such inquiries?	A departmental brochure including faculty research descriptions, three items from the Graduate School (a general booklet, a booklet on the Graduate Student Support Plan, and a CD targeted to graduate studies at our institution), a campus map, and copies of our graduate requirements and available courses.
2A	Who in your department makes the decision about which applicants to admit (or to recommend for admission)? (Please provide the title rather than names).	Graduate Admissions Committee consisting of Director of Graduate Programs, Director of Recruiting, and one or two additional faculty members.
2B	What criteria are used in making this decision?	Personal statement, detailed transcripts, three letters of recommendation, GREs, undergraduate or Master's level research, possible work experience, other significant accomplishments.
3A	How does your department orient new students to graduate study?	We have two main mechanisms: 1. A two-week orientation period prior to the first day of class. Approximately 7 days applies to all students, an additional 1.5 days to international students, and 1.5 days are free. Departmental orientation is approximately 6 days, and topics include a number of administrative items; teaching assignments; individual advising and course selection; speakers on academic integrity, campus policies, safety (university and departmental sessions), learning styles, choosing a research

		<p>advisor, library resources; detailed training for TA assignments; half-day tour of a local industry. In addition our students attend a one-day graduate student orientation presented by the Graduate School to all incoming students.</p> <p>2. A course, Introduction to Graduate Studies that meets once a week for 90 minutes. Through mid-October, research faculty present talks predominate. After that point, sessions are held on safety, teaching effectiveness, research ethics, and 3 meetings at the library on electronic resources.</p>
3B	Who handles initial course advisement for new doctoral students, and how is that person selected?	The Director of Graduate Programs advises all incoming students individually for the initial fall semester. Advice is sought from other faculty as needed or as warranted.
3C	Describe the process by which a student selects or is assigned a dissertation chair.	<p>Students are required to attend an Introduction to Graduate Studies class that meets once a week for 90 minutes. Through mid-October, all research faculties are scheduled to give 15-30 minute. Research overview presentations.</p> <p>2. Each student is required to conduct one-on-one interviews with at least three faculty members, which can take place anytime until the end of October.</p> <p>3. By October 31, students turn in advisor selection sheets, identifying their first, second, and third choices.</p> <p>4. Director of Graduate Programs puts together a tentative assignment plan, which is then reviewed with Department Chair in light of research group size, funding, and advisor needs. Usually 80-90% of assignments are straightforward (1st choice). Director of Graduate Programs works out remaining 10-20% in discussions with individual faculty, the students, and the Chair.</p> <p>5. Advisor assignments are announced in early December</p>
3D	Can students in your department change dissertation chairs? If so, how is that change accomplished?	Yes. The student contacts the Director of Graduate Programs to discuss the proposed change. If the change is feasible in view of

		the new advisor's funding status, the student is instructed to provide a simple written request that has been signed off on by both the old and new advisors. It is the student's responsibility to discuss the potential transfer situation with both of them, although it is not unusual for the Director to contact one or both faculty at some point in the process. Typically one or two students change advisors each year without any rancor or hard feelings (so far).
4A	Other than formal coursework, does your department offer, sponsor, or support activities designed to foster social support and/or collaborative learning among doctoral students? (E.g., study groups, student organizations, student-student mentoring programs) If so, please describe.	The Phi Lambda Upsilon chapter in our department is very active. They raise funds, sponsor three social events per year, and host an outstanding invited speaker each year. At this point, there is no formal mechanism that fosters collaborative learning among doctoral students, although many informal arrangements do arise among the students.
4B	Does your department hold regular social activities in which students can interact informally with faculty members and other students? If so, please describe	The department typically holds two major social events each year. They are held outside at nearby parks or on campus. This year, the repetitive budget cuts we've experienced has temporarily curbed these activities.