



## Department of Chemistry FAQs

### 1. What can I do with a St. Thomas Chemistry major?

Chemistry is a very versatile major that teaches you the fundamental makeup of all living and nonliving things and how they interact with the world. This is why chemistry is essential learning for many post-graduate paths, including medicine and other health sciences (pharmacy, dentistry, veterinary) programs as well as industrial occupations. The St. Thomas chemistry degree will prepare you design and build molecules as well as understand how they impact living systems and the environment. Over half of our majors pursue post graduate work, such as graduate school or professional school in medicine, pharmacy, etc., while the remaining majors find positions in chemical, engineering, biotechnology, sustainability, and pharmaceutical industries.

### 2. Should I start chemistry my first semester at St. Thomas?

Planning your four-year plan is an important component of for deciding whether to take chemistry courses your first semester. If you are a chemistry or biochemistry major, it may be challenging to complete your degree in four years if you do not take chemistry right away. Other majors offer flexibility in choosing the scientific makeup of your first semester, but many post-graduate programs in the health sciences require you to reach advanced chemistry courses before applying. Delaying the start of your chemistry may require that you delay applications later in your academic career. If you have concerns about starting right away, be sure to reach out to your faculty advisor or [Academic Counseling](#) for individual guidance.

### 3. Does Chemistry have placement exams?

Chemistry has a placement exam that determines whether students should register for CHEM 110, CHEM 111, or CHEM 115. Students should take this as soon as they are able to avoid registration delays.

- CHEM 115 - Accelerated General Chemistry - This course blends the essentials of General Chemistry into one accelerated semester.
- CHEM 111/112 - General Chemistry I and II - The traditional two-semester sequence of General Chemistry.
- CHEM 110 - Introduction to Chemistry - This course is a 1-credit online course to provide foundational chemistry skills to students so that they are better prepared to succeed.

#### 4. Is there opportunity for undergraduate research in Chemistry?

The Chemistry Department has a strong commitment to undergraduate research and providing students with hands on experience. Research is a great way to expand your learning and retain what you have learned by putting it into practice. We have one of the largest undergraduate chemistry research programs in the state, with projects that span the discipline from renewable plastics to drugs and drug delivery. Faculty work with students throughout the year on cutting edge research that leads to presentations at national meetings or publications in peer-reviewed research journals.

There is a formal application procedure for summer positions. Applications are available on the [Chemistry Department](#) website at the end of fall semester. However, students are encouraged to contact faculty individually at any time of the year and can begin working any time. In most cases, students can begin working as freshmen.

#### 5. Can I study abroad if I am a chemistry major?

Yes! Studying abroad is a great idea for all majors and can be worked into your four-year plan. Planning ahead will ensure that any classes you take will transfer back to St. Thomas. The University also sponsors its own study abroad experiences, several of which include chemistry. One fantastic opportunity for students taking chemistry is to consider is taking Organic Chemistry, CHEM 201, in Rome, Italy as part of the [Rome Empower Program](#). Students live in Rome and take chemistry as well as several core classes with St. Thomas faculty. Other January term study abroad opportunities are likely to be offered during your time at St. Thomas. Consult with your advisor if study abroad is one of your goals.

#### 6. I have taken an AP Chemistry course and earned credit for CHEM 111. What advantage does CHEM 115 offer me?

Students who choose to receive credit for CHEM 111 based on an AP exam may begin with the second course in the regular general chemistry sequence, CHEM 112 offered in Spring semester. We developed CHEM 115 as a way to get advanced students into a chemistry class in the fall without the class being a repeat of what they learned in high school. Students can complete their general chemistry requirement one semester early and get involved in the chemistry program right away. CHEM 115 also has the added benefit of counting toward the requirements of the [Aquinas Scholars Honors Program](#), whether you are an incoming member or choose to join in your first year.

Contact: Dr. Eric Fort, [ehfort@stthomas.edu](mailto:ehfort@stthomas.edu), 651-962-5588