

Departmental Scholars Program

Program Overview:

The Departmental Scholars Program (DSP) is designed for exceptionally promising undergraduates in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. As an accelerated master's program, the DSP allows students to earn their Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees simultaneously after completing one additional year of graduate level coursework and research.

To qualify for the DSP, you **must** be a departmental major and conducting research with a [faculty member in the department](#). While in the program, Departmental Scholars will maintain undergraduate status even though they are taking graduate level courses.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Completion of preparation for the major
- Completion of 24 courses (96 units) at UCLA or a similar institution
 - If any of these courses are from another institution, a copy of the transcript from the other institution must also be submitted in your application.
- 3.5 cumulative GPA, major GPA, AND upper division major GPA
- Research with a [Chemistry/Biochemistry faculty member](#)

Note: If you are double majoring, your GPA for each major must meet these requirements. However, please reach out to the Undergraduate Office to discuss your options if you do not meet the requirements for your non-Chemistry department major.

How to Apply:

Eligible students must submit a completed application, including letters of recommendation, by December 15th of their final year of undergraduate study. For example, a student planning to graduate with their bachelor's degree in Spring 2027 should apply by **December 15, 2026**.

A completed application should include the following:

- [Nomination form](#) (Part I only)
- Statement of purpose (1-2 pages long, PDF format)
- Research Abstract (1-2 pages long, PDF format)
- Unofficial transcript (the PDF version of your Degree Audit Report and/or an unofficial transcript downloaded from MyUCLA)
- Two letters of recommendation (these can be submitted directly by the faculty member to the Student Affairs Office)
 - One letter from your faculty advisor
 - One letter from a tenure-track faculty member

Students should submit their application materials to the Undergraduate Office (cbugrad@ucla.edu). Applications will then be reviewed by the department. If/when your application has been approved, an email notification will be sent to you and your faculty mentor.

Master of Science (M.S.) Chemistry

Please schedule a meeting with Lorena Rivera (lrivera@college.ucla.edu) in College Honors to file a petition to exceed maximum units.

Course Requirements:

DSP students are required to complete a minimum of 36 units of coursework.

- At least 20 of the 36 units must be graduate 200-level courses for a letter grade.
 - The remaining units can be 200-level or 500-level courses, such as 598, for S/U or a letter grade. **Undergraduate courses cannot be applied towards this degree.**
- DSP students are eligible to apply 8 units of Chem 598 to their course requirements.
 - Students under the “Materials” specialization are eligible to apply 12 units.
- Courses may not be applied twice (i.e. if the course is required for your B.S. degree it may not be used for the M.S. coursework).
 - Please refer to the specialization core class breakdown for specific 200-level courses that you should enroll in.
- Substitutions may be made with consent of the faculty area adviser.

Area of Advisement	Name	Email
Analytical/Instrumentation	Professor Anastassia Alexandrova	alexandrova@g.ucla.edu
Biophysics	Professor Anastassia Alexandrova	alexandrova@g.ucla.edu
Chemical Biology	Professor Stuart Conway	stuartconway@ucla.edu
Inorganic	Professor Chong Liu	chongliu@chem.ucla.edu
Materials	Professor Ben Schwartz	bjs@g.ucla.edu
Organic	Professor Yi Tang	yitang@g.ucla.edu
Physical	Professor Anastassia Alexandrova	alexandrova@g.ucla.edu
Theory and Computation	Professor Thomas Fay	thomaspfay@g.ucla.edu
BMSB (Biochemistry)	Professor Jose Rodriguez	jrodriguez@mbi.ucla.edu

Required Forms for Current DSP Students:

- [Nomination of Master’s Committee Form](#)
 - Your thesis committee must be appointed by the beginning of your third quarter and final quarter.
 - Your faculty advisor will serve as your committee chair, and you’ll also need to select a minimum of two additional faculty members.
 - It is important that you review the committee requirements and regulations (detailed on the form) to ensure that your committee meets all of the requirements set by the Division of Graduate Education (DGE).
 - To ensure sufficient processing time, this form must be submitted to the Student Affairs Office by **Friday of Week 1 of your final quarter**.
- [Petition for Advancement to Candidacy Form](#)
 - Once your committee has been appointed by DGE, you must complete this form.
 - To ensure sufficient processing time, this form must be submitted to the Student Affairs Office by **Friday of Week 1 of your final quarter**.

Your Master's committee has the responsibility of approving your Master's Thesis online using ETD (online filing) by the required deadline.

Students are required to register and attend a [Master's Thesis & Doctoral Dissertation Filing workshop](#) that is available through UCLA Graduate Education. **The workshop will cover all the details related to filing your Master's thesis.**

Other Responsibilities:

- Students are expected to meet regularly with their faculty advisor.
- All course substitutions must first be approved by the student's faculty advisor.
 - Once the student has obtained their faculty advisor's approval, they should reach out to the Student Affairs Office for next steps.
- Students are allotted a maximum of 5 academic quarters to finish their M.S. coursework and thesis.
- Students will be notified if they are not making adequate progress in the program.

Important Dates and Deadlines:

- [Nomination of Master's Committee Form](#): Friday of Week 1 of your final quarter.
- [Petition for Advancement to Candidacy Form](#): Friday of Week 1 of your final quarter.
- Register and attend a [Master's Thesis & Doctoral Dissertation Filing workshop](#): Winter or Spring quarter.

Master of Science (M.S.) Biochemistry, Molecular, and Structural Biology

Please schedule a meeting with Lorena Rivera (lrivera@college.ucla.edu) in College Honors to file a petition to exceed maximum units.

Course Requirements:

DSP students are required to complete a minimum of 38 units of coursework.

- At least 20 of the 38 units must be graduate 200-level courses for a letter grade.
 - The remaining units can be 200-level or 500-level courses, such as 598, for S/U or a letter grade. **Undergraduate courses cannot be applied towards this degree.**
- DSP students are eligible to apply 8 units of Chem 598 to their course requirements.
- Courses may not be applied twice (i.e. if the course is required for your B.S. degree it may not be used for the M.S. coursework).
 - Required courses include Chem 269A-E (10 units) and Chem 268 during the first three quarters.
- Substitutions may be made with consent of the faculty area adviser.

Required Forms for Current DSP Students:

- [Nomination of Master's Committee Form](#)
 - Your thesis committee must be appointed by the beginning of your third quarter and final quarter.
 - Your faculty advisor will serve as your committee chair, and you'll also need to select a minimum of two additional faculty members.
 - It is important that you review the committee requirements and regulations (detailed on the form) to ensure that your committee meets all of the requirements set by the Division of Graduate Education (DGE).
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Students are required to register and attend a [Master's Thesis & Doctoral Dissertation Filing workshop](#) that is available through UCLA Graduate Education. **The workshop will cover all the details related to filing your Master's thesis.**

Other Responsibilities:

- Students are expected to meet regularly with their faculty advisor.
- All course substitutions must first be approved by the student's faculty advisor.
 - Once the student has obtained their faculty advisor's approval, they should reach out to the Student Affairs Office for next steps.
- Students are allotted a maximum of 5 academic quarters to finish their M.S. coursework and thesis.
- Students will be notified if they are not making adequate progress in the program.

Important Dates and Deadlines:

- [Nomination of Master's Committee Form](#): Friday of Week 1 of your final quarter.
- [Petition for Advancement to Candidacy Form](#): Friday of Week 1 of your final quarter.
- Register and attend a [Master's Thesis & Doctoral Dissertation Filing workshop](#): Winter or Spring quarter.

Specialization Course Requirements

Analytical/Instrumentation Chemistry

Course Requirements:

- One of these two sets of courses:
 - Chem C215A, Chem C223A
 - Chem C243A, Chem 244A
 - Chem C207, Chem C276A
 - Chem C279 and CM205A
- Chem 257 or Chem C285
- A minimum of 8 units from: Bioengr C204, Bioengr M225, Bioengr C231, Bioengr M248, Chem 236, Chem 266, Chem 269A through 269E, Mat Sci 211, Mat Sci 225, or other courses approved by area specialization advisor
- Chem 228, Chem 247, 268 or Chem 278 each quarter
- Two elective courses approved by area specialization advisor
- Chem 400 (S/U grade)
- Chem 598 (research units in your advisor's section) every quarter
- Group meeting course in your advisor's section every quarter

Biophysical (Track A) Chemistry

Course Requirements:

- Chem C215A, C223A, and C223B (letter grade)
- A minimum of 8 units from: Chem M230B, 257, 269A-C; Physics 220, 241A-C (letter grade)
- Two elective courses approved by area specialization advisor
- Chem 228 or 268, every quarter (letter grade)
- Chem 400 (S/U grade)
- Chem 598 (research units in your advisor's section) every quarter
- Group meeting course in your advisor's section every quarter

Biophysical (Track B) Chemistry

Course Requirements:

- Chem C200 or Com Sci C221, Chem M230B or 257, 258, and 269A-C (letter grade)
- 8 units of additional graduate courses from these options: Chem C215A, Chem C215B, Chem C223A, Chem C223B, Chem M230B, 257, M230D, Com Sci C221, Com Sci C222, Physics 220. The same units cannot be used to satisfy the (2) course requirement. These courses can be substituted with approval by the Biophysics Area Advisor.
- One elective course approved by area specialization advisor
- Chem 228 or 268, every quarter (letter grade)
- Chem 400 (S/U grade)
- Chem 598 (research units in your advisor's section) every quarter
- Group meeting course in your advisor's section every quarter

Chemical Biology

Course Requirements:

- Chem CM205A, two of the 269 series (letter grade).
- Chem C243A or 244A (letter grade).
- A minimum of 12 units from: Chem C243A, C243B, 244A, 244B, C264, 266, 269A, 269B, 269C, 269D, 269E, C279, or other courses with approval of the chemical biology area advisor.
 - The same units cannot be used to satisfy the other course requirements.
- Chem 206, 203B or C250, and 400 (S/U grade)
- Chem 247 or 268, every quarter (letter grade)
- Chem 598 (research units in your advisor's section) every quarter
- Group meeting course in your advisor's section every quarter

Inorganic Chemistry

Course Requirements:

- Chem C207, C276A, C279 or C273, and C280 (letter grade).
- One of the following courses: Chem CM205A, C213B, C215B, C223A, C226A, 236, 241A through 241Z, C243A, C243B, 244A, 244B, C274, or other graduate courses with the approval of the inorganic chemistry area adviser (letter grade)
- One elective course from the preceding group not already taken or other courses approved by area specialization advisor
- Chem 278 every quarter (letter grade)
- Chem 400 (S/U grade)
- Chem 598 (research units in your advisor's section) every quarter
- Group meeting course in your advisor's section every quarter

Materials Chemistry

Course Requirements:

- Chem C280, and C285 (letter grade)
- Two of the following courses: Chem C207, C215A, C215B, C223A, C223B, 236, C243A, C243B, 244A, 244B, C276A, C279 (letter grade)
- Two of the classes from the preceding group not already taken.
 - Other graduate courses from outside of Chemistry and Biochemistry may also be used with approval of the materials chemistry area adviser (letter grade)
- Chem 228, Chem 247, or Chem 278 every quarter (letter grade)
- Chem 400 (S/U grade)
- Chem 598 (research units in your advisor's section) every quarter
- Group meeting course in your advisor's section every quarter

Organic Chemistry

Course Requirements:

- Chem 236, C243A, 244A (letter grade)
- Three of the following courses: Chem CM205A, C207, 238, 241B, C243B, 244B, C245, C181 or other courses with approval of the organic chemistry area advisor (letter grade)
- Chem 247 every quarter (letter grade)
- Chem 248 every quarter (S/U grade)
- Chem 400 (S/U grade)
- Chem 598 (research units in your advisor's section) every quarter
- Group meeting course in your advisor's section every quarter

Physical Chemistry

Course Requirements:

- Chem C215A, C215B, C223A, C223B, or equivalent substitutions can be made with the approval of the physical chemistry area advisor (letter grade)
- Two graduate-level (200+) lecture courses from the Chemistry and Biochemistry department or an appropriate course from an outside department (letter grade)
- Chem 228 every quarter (letter grade)
- Chem 400 (S/U grade)
- Chem 598 (research units in your advisor's section) every quarter
- Group meeting course in your advisor's section every quarter

Theory and Computation

Course Requirements:

- One of these sets of requirements (a or b):
 - C215A, C215B, C223A, C223B, and C226A
 - C215A, C223A, either C215B or C223B, and 2 courses from the following:
 - Chem C226A, 269A, 269B, C276A, Com Sci C221 or other 200+ classes from physics, mathematics, QIS, bioinformatics, or computer science as fits your education (discuss with the area and research advisors) (letter grade)
- One elective course approved by area specialization advisor
- Chem 228, every quarter (letter grade)
- Chem 400 (S/U grade)
- Chem 598 (research units in your advisor's section) every quarter
- Group meeting course in your advisor's section every quarter

Biochemistry

Course Requirements:

- Chem 269A-E (10 units)
- At least 16 units from the following categories:
 - a. 10-12 units from the following approved *graded lecture courses*: Chem CM205A (4 units), C232A (4 units), 230A (4 units), Chem M230D (2 units), Chem C250 (4 units), Chem 257 (4 units), Chem C259 (4 units), Chem C264 (2-4 units), Chem C265 (4 units), Chem 266 (4 units) or other courses with approval of the area advisor (letter grade)
 - b. 4-6 *seminar* units (students may choose to take seminar units, or additional graded lecture courses): Biol Chem 251B, 251C, 254A-D, 266B, MPharm 287
- Chem 268 every quarter (Biochemistry Research Seminar)
- Chem 598 (research units in your advisor's section) every quarter
- Group meeting course in your advisor's section every quarter