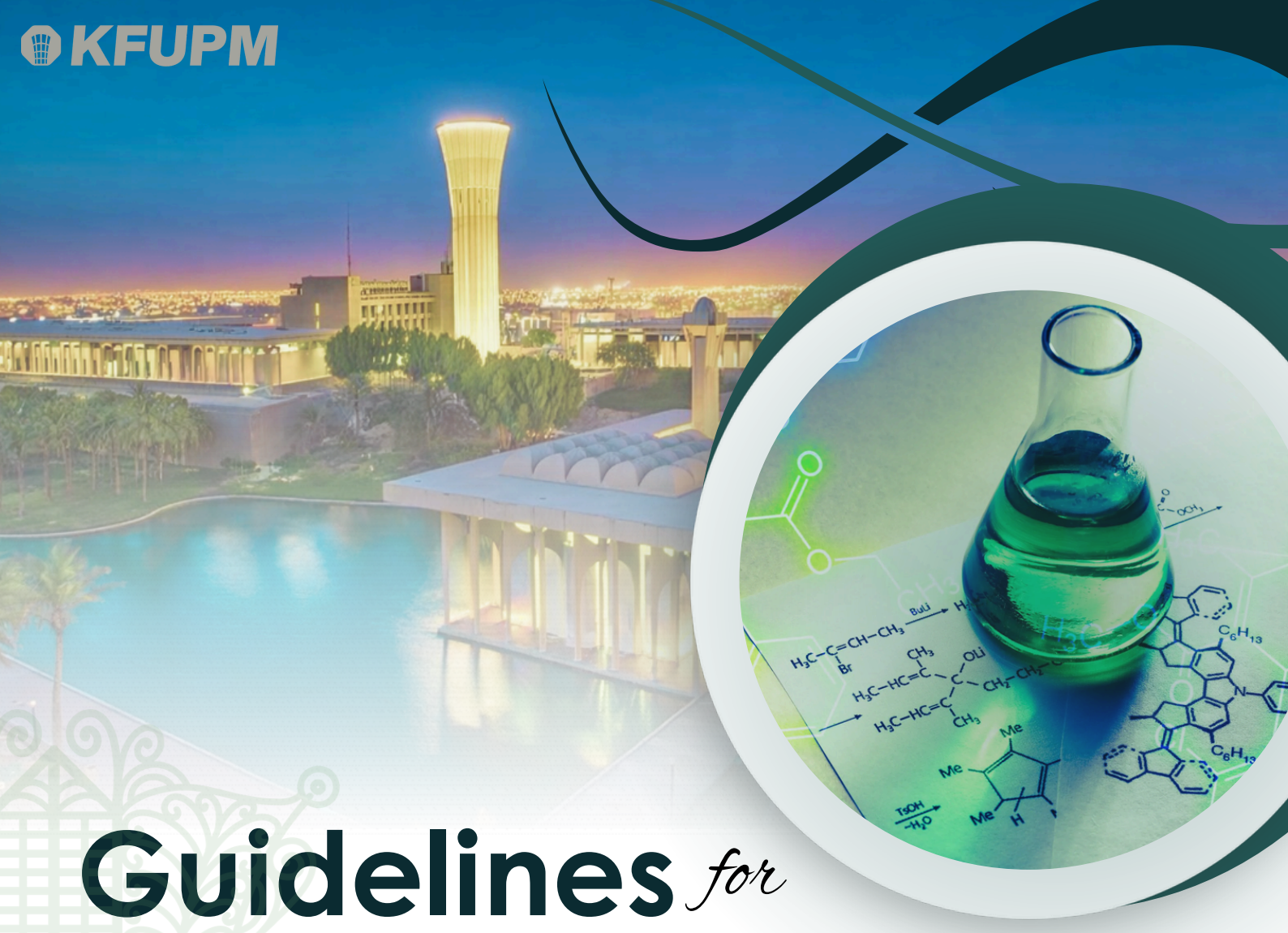
KFUPM



Guidelines *for* CHEMISTRY

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Guidelines

For M.S. and Ph.D. Graduate Program in the Chemistry Department at KFUPM

Comprehensive Guidelines

Visit Chemistry Department Website:
https://chemistry.kfupm.edu.sa/

FEBRUARY 2026

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Welcoming *Statement*

KFUPM

Chemistry Department
King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals



Chairman of Chemistry

Prof. Musa M. Musa

Welcome to the Chemistry Graduate Program at King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals (KFUPM). The Chemistry Department is recognized for its strong academic foundation, innovative research, and active collaboration with industry. Our graduate programs are designed to cultivate advanced scientific knowledge, independent research skills, and professional development, preparing graduates for successful careers in academia, industry, and research institutions worldwide.

This guideline serves as a comprehensive reference to help you navigate your graduate journey with clarity and confidence throughout your studies in the Chemistry Department.

Graduate *Committee*

KFUPM

Chemistry Department
King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals



Graduate Coordinator

Prof. Nisar Ullah

The Graduate Committee of the Chemistry Department plays a central role in advancing the Department's mission by upholding high standards of academic excellence, research integrity, and professional development for students enrolled in the M.S., Ph.D., and M.Sc. (Project-Based) programs. The Committee is responsible for developing, implementing, and continuously improving graduate education frameworks that promote strong foundational knowledge and independent research skills in alignment with international scientific standards.

In addition, the Committee oversees and coordinates all academic and research-related components of the graduate programs, including curriculum review, graduate admissions, course offerings, comprehensive examinations, assessment practices, and degree requirements.

Degree Programs

1 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Program

The Chemistry degree programs at KFUPM are founded on a strong interdisciplinary framework, supported by the expertise of distinguished faculty across the Department's four core divisions: Analytical, Inorganic, Organic, and Physical Chemistry. Faculty members in each division are actively involved in teaching, research, and innovation, integrating specialized knowledge and advanced methodologies into both classroom instruction and laboratory training. This breadth and depth of expertise ensure that students receive comprehensive preparation in fundamental principles, modern analytical and experimental techniques, and emerging areas of chemical research. Through close interaction with experienced faculty, the programs equip graduates with the skills and knowledge needed for successful careers in industry, research, and advanced academic study. Detailed information on the research specialties of faculty members in each division is available on the department website:



https://chemistry.kfupm.edu.sa/

1.1 Direct Ph.D. Admission

The **Direct Ph.D. Admission** pathway enables outstanding students to enter the Ph.D. program directly after completing a Bachelor's degree, without the requirement of a Master's degree, provided they demonstrate exceptional academic performance and strong research potential. This option is intended for high-achieving Bachelor's degree holders who wish to pursue doctoral research without extending their study period through a Master's program.

1.2 Reguler Ph.D. Admission

The **Regular Ph.D. Admission** pathway follows the traditional route, requiring applicants to have completed a Master's (M.S.) degree prior to enrolling in the Ph.D. program. This pathway is suitable for students who have already earned a Master's degree and seek to build upon their graduate coursework and research experience at the doctoral level.

1.3. Continuing Ph.D. Admission

The **Continuing Ph.D. Admission** pathway is intended for students who have earned their M.S. degree from KFUPM and wish to pursue a Ph.D. program. These students have already completed the four required core courses during their M.S. studies. Therefore, subject to meeting a department-defined GPA threshold, they may be granted course waivers for up to five graduate courses. However, students whose GPA falls below the specified threshold may not receive such waivers and will instead follow the traditional Ph.D. admission route.

2 Master of Science (M.S.) Program

The **M.S. program** provides advanced coursework and supervised research training, preparing students for professional research roles or continuation to Ph.D. studies.

Graduate Journey

Graduate study in the Chemistry Department consists of a sequence of structured academic and research milestones for both Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) students:

1. **Degree Plan Completion**
2. **Graduate Seminar Course**
3. **Directed Research Course**
4. **Supervisor Selection**
5. **Ph.D Comprehensive Exam**
6. **Ph.D Pre-Dissertation**
7. **Ph.D Dissertation**

KFUPM Graduation

Each phase builds progressively on the previous one and must be completed within the timelines specified by the Graduate Studies Regulations and departmental policies.

1 Degree Plan Completion

1.1 Ph.D. Degree Plan (Direct/Regular Track)

The Ph.D. degree requires **42 credit** hours, distributed as follows:

- Coursework (Core + Electives): **30 credits**
- Graduate Ph.D Seminar (CHEM 699): **0 credits (Pass/Fail)**
- Pre-Dissertation (CHEM 711): **3 credits**
- Ph.D Dissertation Research (CHEM 712): **9 credits**

Core Courses:

- CHEM 501 — Physical Chemistry: A Molecular Approach
- CHEM 502 — Chemistry of Coordination Compounds
- CHEM 503 — Organic Reactions: Mechanisms and Reactivity
- CHEM 504 — Advanced Analytical Chemistry

Table 1. Ph.D. Degree Plan (Direct/Regular Track)

Course Code	Course Title	LT	LB	CR
First Year – Semester 1				
CHEM 5xx	Core course 1	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx	Core course 2	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx/6xx	Elective 1	3	0	3
CHEM 699	Graduate (Ph.D.) Seminar	0	0	IP
Total		**9**	**0**	**9**
First Year – Semester 2				
CHEM 5xx	Core course 3	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx	Core course 4	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx/6xx	Elective 2	3	0	3
CHEM 699	Graduate (Ph.D.) Seminar	0	0	IP
Total		**9**	**0**	**9**
Second Year – Semester 1				
CHEM 5xx/6xx	Elective 3	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx/6xx	Elective 4	3	0	3
Free 5xx / Free 6xx	Elective 5	3	0	3
CHEM 699	Graduate (Ph.D.) Seminar	0	0	IP
Total		**9**	**0**	**9**
Second Year – Semester 2				
Free 5xx / Free 6xx	Elective 6	3	0	3
CHEM 711	Ph.D. Pre-Dissertation	0	0	3
CHEM 699	Graduate (Ph.D.) Seminar	0	0	0
Total		**3**	**0**	**6**

Course Code	Course Title	LT	LB	CR
Third Year – Semester 1				
CHEM 712	Ph.D. Dissertation	0	0	IP
Total		**0**	**0**	**0**
Third Year – Semester 2				
CHEM 712	Ph.D. Dissertation	0	0	IP
Total		**0**	**0**	**0**
Fourth Year – Semester 1				
CHEM 712	Ph.D. Dissertation	0	0	IP
Total		**0**	**0**	**0**
Fourth Year – Semester 2				
CHEM 712	Ph.D. Dissertation	0	0	9
Total		**0**	**0**	**9**
Total Credits Required			**42**	

1.2 Ph.D. Degree Plan (Continuing Student)

Continuation of the Ph.D. program requires completion of a total of **27 credit** hours, in addition to the ***15 credit hours waived*** for five courses, distributed as follows:

- Coursework (Electives): **15 credits**
- Graduate Ph.D Seminar (CHEM 699): **0 credits (Pass/Fail)**
- Pre-Dissertation (CHEM 711): **3 credits**
- Ph.D Dissertation (CHEM 712): **9 credits**

Table 2. Ph.D. Degree Plan (Continuing Student with Courses Waiver)

Course Code	Course Title	LT	LB	CR
First Year – Semester 1				
CHEM 5xx / 6xx	Elective 1	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx / 6xx	Elective 1	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx / 6xx	Elective 1	3	0	3
CHEM 699	Graduate (Ph.D.) Seminar	0	0	IP
Total		**9**	**0**	**9**
First Year – Semester 2				
CHEM 5xx / 6xx	CHEM Elective 1	3	0	3
CHEM xxx	CHEM Elective 2	3	0	3
CHEM 699	Graduate (Ph.D.) Seminar	0	0	IP
Total		**6**	**0**	**6**
Second Year – Semester 1				
CHEM 711	Ph.D. Pre-Dissertation	0	0	3
Total		**9**	**0**	**9**
Second Year – Semester 2				
CHEM 712	Ph.D. Dissertation	0	0	IP
Total		**0**	**0**	**0**

Course Code	Course Title	LT	LB	CR
Third Year – Semester 1				
CHEM 712	Ph.D. Dissertation	0	0	IP
Total		**0**	**0**	**0**
Third Year – Semester 2				
CHEM 712	Ph.D. Dissertation	0	0	IP
Total		**0**	**0**	**0**
Fourth Year – Semester 1				
CHEM 712	Ph.D. Dissertation	0	0	IP
Total		**0**	**0**	**0**
Fourth Year – Semester 2				
CHEM 712	Ph.D. Dissertation	0	0	9
Total		**0**	**0**	**9**
Total Credits Required			**27**	

1.3 M.S Degree Plan

The M.S. students require **30 credit** hours, distributed as follows:

- Coursework (Core + Electives): **24 credits**
- Graduate M.S. Seminar (CHEM 599): **0 credits (Pass/Fail)**
- M.S Thesis (CHEM 610): **6 credits**

Table 3. M.S. Degree Plan.

Course Code	Course Title	LT	LB	CR
First Year – Semester 1				
CHEM 5xx	Core course 1	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx	Core course 2	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx/6xx	Elective 1	3	0	3
CHEM 599	Graduate (M.S.) Seminar	0	0	IP
Total		**9**	**0**	**9**
First Year – Semester 2				
CHEM 5xx	Core course 3	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx	Core course 4	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx/6xx	Elective 2	3	0	3
CHEM 599	Graduate (M.S.) Seminar	0	0	IP
Total		**9**	**0**	**9**

Course Code	Course Title	LT	LB	CR
Second Year – Semester 1				
CHEM 5xx/6xx	Elective 3	3	0	3
CHEM 5xx/6xx	Elective 4	3	0	3
CHEM 610	M.S. Thesis	0	0	IP
CHEM 599	Graduate (M.S.) Seminar	0	0	0
Total		**6**	**0**	**6**
Second Year – Semester 2				
CHEM 610	M.S. Thesis	0	0	6
Total		**0**	**0**	**6**
Total Credits Required		**30**		

2 Graduate Seminar Course

A Graduate Seminar Course is a special non-credit requirement in graduate programs designed to help M.S. and Ph.D. students develop their research, presentation, and professional skills. All graduate students are required to participate in departmental seminars delivered by faculty members, visiting scholars, and fellow graduate students. Attending research seminars exposes students to current research trends and methodologies, enhances critical thinking, and deepens their understanding of how theoretical concepts are applied in practice. In addition, these seminars motivate students and assist them in selecting suitable research topics or pursuing advanced studies.

Students are required to register for the seminar course (**CHEM 699 or CHEM 599**) in their **first semester** and will continue to receive an **IP (In Progress)** grade in subsequent semesters until the course requirements are completed. Upon completion, students are no longer required to register for seminar courses. Students who have not completed CHEM 699 but wish to register for CHEM 711 may do so by submitting a petition requesting simultaneous registration in CHEM 699 and CHEM 711.



2.2 Graduate (M.S.) Seminar (CHEM 599)

- The student enrols in the first term and receives an **IP** grade each semester until course completion, when an **NP** grade is issued
- Student seminar presentation is typically delivered in the **third semester**
- Students must maintain a minimum attendance of **80%** before and after completing the seminar course

2.1 Graduate (Ph.D.) Seminar (CHEM 699)

- The student enrolls in the first term and receives an **IP** grade each semester until course completion, when an **NP** grade is issued
- The student seminar presentation is typically delivered in the **fourth semester**
- The student must maintain a minimum attendance of **80%** before and after completing the seminar course

3 Directed Research Courses

Directed Research courses (**CHEM 701, CHEM 702 and CHEM 606**) provide early research exposure under faculty supervision. These courses help students develop experimental, analytical, and scholarly skills in preparation for thesis or dissertation research.

3.1 Eligibility Criteria

- Direct Ph.D. and Continuing Ph.D. students are **not** eligible
- To enroll in the first Directed Research course, students must have a minimum **GPA of 3.5** in the core courses or an **A+** in at least one core course.
- To enroll in the second Directed Research course, students must have a minimum **GPA of 3.5** in the core courses or **A+** grades in at least two core courses.

3.2 Enrollment Procedure

- The student selects a faculty member of their choice and obtains their consent to supervise the Directed Research Course
- In consultation with, and under the supervision of, the intended Directed Research supervisor, the student prepares a research proposal in accordance with the Graduate Committee's prescribed format and guidelines.
- The research proposal must be submitted to the Graduate Committee in response to their call for proposals for Directed Research courses. The call for submissions is typically announced in the fourth week of each regular semester that includes the prescribed format and guidelines.
- The Graduate Committee reviews the proposal and notifies the student of its approval or rejection before the end of the semester
- For students with approved proposals who meet the eligibility criteria, course registration is processed through the Department Chairman's office during the first week of the following semester.



4 Supervisor Selection

- Selecting a research supervisor is a critical milestone, particularly for Ph.D. students, as the supervisor plays a central role in guiding the research direction, monitoring academic progress, and preparing students for key milestones such as the comprehensive examination, CHEM 711, and CHEM 712.
- Both M.S. and Ph.D. students are required to select a thesis or dissertation supervisor by the end of their **second semester**. Selection of a supervisor within a specific division i.e., ***Analytical, Inorganic, Organic, or Physical Chemistry***, establishes the student's area of specialization. This choice directly determines the nature of the foundation and core courses a Ph.D. student must complete as part of the comprehensive examination.
- Although not mandatory, students are strongly encouraged to identify and secure a supervisor during their first term. To facilitate this process, the department conducts advisor selection surveys during the second week of each semester to record students' supervisor preferences. Prior to indicating a preference in the survey, students must meet with the prospective supervisor and obtain their consent to supervise the thesis or dissertation.
- The department reserves the right to assign a thesis or dissertation supervisor to any student who has not selected one by the end of the **second semester**.



5 Ph.D Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive examination is designed to provide graduate students with an opportunity to develop both breadth and depth in their program of study. The examination enables students to:

- Synthesize and integrate knowledge, skills, and experiences across major topics within their academic discipline.
- Contribute to disciplinary discourse by demonstrating original thinking and unique insights.
- Develop and present critical arguments in support of a central thesis through effective analysis of texts, contexts, and scientific discourse.
- Learn to formulate research questions that can lead to significant scientific discoveries.

The Chemistry Department conducts the comprehensive examination on **Thursday** of the **second week** of each regular semester. A Ph.D. student is allowed a maximum of **two attempts** to successfully pass the comprehensive examination.

5.1 Timing and First Attempt

Students are required to attempt the full comprehensive examination for the first time according to the following schedule:

- Direct/Regular Ph.D. students: During the **third semester**
- Continuing Ph.D. students: During the **second semester**
- Part-time Ph.D. students: Upon completion of **18 credit hours** of coursework

If a student does **not pass** the comprehensive examination on the first attempt, the **second and final attempt** must be taken in the following semester.

5.2 Comprehensive Examination Model

5.2.1 New Examination Model (Applicable to students admitted in T251 and thereafter)

The comprehensive examination under the new model consists of the following two parts. A minimum score of **70%** is required to pass each part of the examination.

- **Part I: Division-Specific Foundational Comprehensive Examination**

Students are examined on content based on a single, pre-approved textbook relevant to the student's division. Further details regarding the prescribed textbooks and mode of examination are provided in ***Appendix A***.

- **Part II: Examination based on two graduate core courses**

Students are examined on content based on two graduate-level core courses. One core course, relevant to the student's field of specialization, is assigned by the Graduate Committee. The second core course is selected by the student in consultation with their research supervisor, based on the student's research interests and alignment with the dissertation topic.

5.2.2 Old Examination Model (Applicable to students admitted in prior to T251)

The comprehensive examination under the old model also consists of two parts. A minimum score of **70%** is required to pass each part of the examination.

- **Part I: ·Part I: Examination based on two graduate core courses**

Students are examined on content based on two graduate-level core courses. One core course, relevant to the student's field of specialization, is assigned by the Graduate Committee, while the second core course is selected by the student in consultation with their research supervisor, based on research interests and alignment with the dissertation topic.

- **Part II: Examination based on two graduate elective courses**

Students are examined on content based on two graduate-level elective courses. These courses are assigned by the Graduate Committee in accordance with the student's research interests and the alignment of the courses with the dissertation topic.



6 Ph.D Pre-Dissertation (CHEM 711)

The **main objective** of the course is to equip students with the skills needed to develop a rigorous, original, and methodologically sound dissertation research proposal in preparation for the dissertation defense and independent research. If a student fails to complete this course during the semester of registration, an **IC (Incomplete)** grade will be assigned. The student must complete the course requirements in the following semester. In accordance with Graduate Studies policies, any student who receives an IC grade in CHEM 711 in their last semester is required to register for CHEM 712 in the following semester. In such cases, registration in CHEM 712 must be completed through a petition. Registration in CHEM 712 is essential to maintain the student's active status in the program.

The Chemistry Department has implemented a formal assessment process for CHEM 711. The course is evaluated by the student's Ph.D. Dissertation Committee using an assessment rubric provided in ***Appendix B***. Students are strongly encouraged to review this rubric carefully to understand the course expectations and to plan their work accordingly in order to make satisfactory progress.

To process a course grade change (from **IP to NP** or **IC to NP**), students must submit the following documents:



1. **Dissertation Committee's assessment**
2. **CGIS approval of the thesis proposal**
3. **A PDF copy of final version of the proposal**



The complete set of documents should be sent to:
To: MJ Baylon: (melvin.baylon@kfupm.edu.sa)
Cc: c-chem@kfupm.edu.sa; nullah@kfupm.edu.sa

7 M.S. Thesis and Ph.D Dissertation

M.S. Thesis (CHEM 610) involves individual studies by students in the field of Chemistry. The work should be original and the concept, data and the conclusions should contribute new knowledge to the field of research problem. The quality of the work should reflect the student's proficiency in research and creative thinking. Following preliminary studies and a literature survey on the thesis subject, each student will present his proposed thesis subject orally, and submit a written proposal to the College of Graduate Studies for approval. On satisfactory completion of his thesis work, the student is required to make a formal defense of his research thesis.

The **main objective** of the **Ph.D. Dissertation (CHEM 712)** is to enable the students to work on his Ph.D. Dissertation as per the submitted dissertation proposal, submit its final report and defend it in public. The student passes the course if the Ph.D. Dissertation committee accepts the submitted final dissertation report and upon successfully passing the Dissertation public defense. Students are required to register for **CHEM 610 (M.S. Student)** and **CHEM 712 (Ph.D. Student)** and will continue to receive an **IP (In Progress)** grade in subsequent semesters until the course requirements are completed.

To process a course grade change (from **IP to NP**) in these courses, students must submit the following documents:



1. **CGIS approval of the final thesis**
2. **A PDF copy of the final version of the thesis, including the cover page signed by the Dean of CGIS.**
3. **The URL of the thesis on the KFUPM ePrints platform.**



The complete set of documents should be sent to:
To: MJ Baylon: (melvin.baylon@kfupm.edu.sa)
Cc: c-chem@kfupm.edu.sa; nullah@kfupm.edu.sa

For the public oral defense of **M.S. Thesis** and **Ph.D. Dissertations**, the following rules apply in accordance with the Graduate Studies Guidelines:

- For **M.S. Thesis**, there must be at least **one semester** with a minimum of 4-month period separation between the thesis proposal approval and planned public oral defense.
- For a **Ph.D. Dissertation**, this duration is at least **two semesters** with a minimum of 9-month period separation"



Q: Where can I find the university regulations for graduate studies?
A: Regulations for graduate studies can be found on the CGIS website at KFUPM
https://cgis.kfupm.edu.sa/docs/default-source/default-document-library/college-of-graduate-and-interdisciplinary-studies-policies-at-king-fahd-university-of-petroleum---final-version.pdf?sfvrsn=a965ae2e_1

Q: Where can I find the university regulations for thesis and dissertation guidelines?
A: University regulations for thesis and dissertation guidelines can be found on the CGIS website at KFUPM.
https://cgis.kfupm.edu.sa/academics/thesis-dissertation-guidelines



Q: What is the contact information for the university Graduate Office?
A: College of Graduate & Interdisciplinary Studies
Mr. Ali Altoum
Building 68, Room 253
Tel: 0138602816 (Office)

Disclaimer

These **Graduate Studies Guidelines** are intended to provide general information and guidance. They do not constitute a contract or guarantee, and the institution reserves the right to amend, modify, or withdraw any provision at any time. In the event of a conflict between these guidelines and official institutional policies, regulations, or governing documents, the latter shall prevail.



Appendices

APPENDIX A

1 Division-Specific Foundational Comprehensive Exam in Organic Chemistry

1. Textbook: Organic Chemistry by John E. McMurry (9th Edition)
2. Exam Format: Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)
3. Material to be Covered: Chapters 1–26, 30 and 31

2 Division-Specific Foundational Comprehensive Exam in Inorganic Chemistry

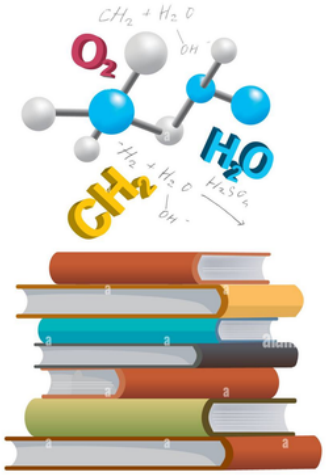
1. Textbook: Inorganic Chemistry by Miessler, Fischer, and Tarr (5th edition)
2. Exam Format: Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)
3. Material to be Covered: Chapters 2–6, and 9–14

3 Division-Specific Foundational Comprehensive Exam in Physical Chemistry

1. Textbook: Elements of Physical Chemistry, by Peter Atkins & Julio De Paula (5th edition)
2. Exam Format: Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)
3. Material to be Covered: 1–14, 19 and 20

4 Division-Specific Foundational Comprehensive Exam in Analytical Chemistry

1. Textbook: Daniel C. Harris, Quantitative Chemical Analysis (9th edition)
2. Exam Format: Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)
3. Material to be Covered: 1–17, 19 and 20





APPENDIX B

CLOs Assessment Rubric for PhD Pre-Dissertation (CHEM-711) [#]

CLO	Excellent 8.5-10 pts	Good 7.0-8.4 pts	Marginal 5.5-6.9 pts	Inadequate 4-5.4 pts
1) Identify and articulate a significant, original, and feasible dissertation research problem.[*]	• Research problem is articulated with exceptional clarity and originality. • Demonstrates high scholarly significance and strong contribution to knowledge. • Feasibility is convincingly justified within institutional, time, and resource constraints.	• Research problem is clear, original, and significant. • Feasibility is appropriately justified and suitable for PhD-level research	• Research problem lacks sufficient clarity, originality, or significance. • Feasibility is partially justified or requires refinement.	• Research problem is unclear, insignificant, derivative, or infeasible for PhD-level study.
2) Critically evaluate and synthesize scholarly literature relevant to their field. [S]	• Demonstrates advanced critical evaluation and synthesis of contemporary, high-impact scholarly literature. • Clearly identifies research gaps, theoretical tensions, and methodological limitations. • Constructs a coherent conceptual or theoretical framework.	• Critically reviews and synthesizes relevant scholarly literature. • Identifies major themes and research gaps. • Demonstrates strong disciplinary knowledge.	• Literature review is largely descriptive with limited critical synthesis. • Gaps and theoretical connections are weak or unclear	• Literature review is incomplete, outdated, poorly integrated, or lacks critical evaluation.
3) Develop clear research questions, hypotheses, or aims aligned with the research problem.[*]	• Research questions/hypotheses/aims are precise, theoretically grounded, innovative, and fully aligned with the research problem and proposed methodology.	• Research questions/hypotheses/aims are clear, logically derived, and aligned with the research problem.	• Research questions/hypotheses/aims lack clarity, depth, or alignment with the research problem.	• Research questions/hypotheses/aims are unclear, misaligned, or absent.
4) Demonstrate strong academic communication skills by presenting pre-dissertation research clearly and coherently, addressing questions effectively, and participating in scholarly critique.[*]	• Demonstrate high-level scholarly communication, critical engagement, and professional academic delivery. • Consistently provides clear, rigorous, and well-justified responses to questions and critique, demonstrating a high level of readiness for doctoral defense contexts	• Presentation demonstrates effective academic communication through clear, well-structured, and audience-appropriate delivery of ideas. • Provides generally clear and well-reasoned responses to questions and critique, demonstrating good readiness for doctoral defense contexts.	• Presentation lacks coherence, depth of critique, or professional academic delivery. • Provides partially clear responses to questions and critique, demonstrating limited readiness for doctoral defense contexts.	• Presentation is unclear, poorly structured, or does not meet PhD-level academic standards. • Provides unclear or incomplete responses to questions and critique, demonstrating inadequate readiness for doctoral defense contexts.
5) Write a coherent, well-structured dissertation proposal suitable for defense and approval.[S]	• Proposal is exceptionally coherent, logically structured, and academically rigorous. • Writing demonstrates advanced scholarly competence and is fully ready for defense and approval.	• Proposal is clearly written, well-organized, and meets PhD-level standards for defense.	• Proposal demonstrates partial coherence; structural, conceptual, or writing issues limit readiness for defense.	• Proposal is poorly structured, unclear, or does not meet PhD-level standards for approval.
6) Design a rigorous and ethical research plan.[S,*]	• Research design demonstrates exceptional rigor, methodological coherence, and full alignment with research questions. • Ethical considerations fully comply with institutional requirements, exceeding minimum standards	• Research design is appropriate, methodologically sound, and ethically compliant. • Aligned with research questions and feasibility constraints.	• Research design shows weaknesses in rigor, alignment, or ethical considerations. • Requires refinement.	• Research design is flawed, misaligned, or does not meet ethical or methodological standards.

[#] Targeted Level: ≥ 7; [S] CLO assessed by assessing the Proposal; [*] CLO assessed by assessing the Proposal Defense