

Chemistry Honors Information

July 3, 2008

General Information

- Minimum GPA requirements – 3.0 overall, 3.0 in chemistry
- Honors Grade (Fail, Pass, Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors) based on 20% oral presentation, 30% chemistry grades, 50% written thesis.
- Director of Honors shares average grades for oral and written components with students after last chapel

Guidelines for Thesis Grades from Advisors (A, A-, B+, B, etc.)

- Based on engagement and effort
- Grade after fall semester is preliminary and is honest assessment of student effort and engagement, spring grade counts for all 8 or 12 credits
- Effort judged by dedication to the project and the amount of time spent working on the project. Engagement involves demonstrated ownership of the project, thought about experiments, generation of new ideas. Truly engaged students think regularly about questions like: Why is this project important? Why am I running this experiment? What do my results mean? What experiments should I do next? A guideline for the average amount of time spent working on a 12 credit thesis is 24 hours per week, 8 credit thesis is 16 hours per week (hours equals number of credits per semester times four); Please note that this estimate includes all time spent on the project whether it be performing experiments in the lab, researching in the library, analyzing data in your room, etc.

Evaluation Criteria for Written Thesis

- Not based on success of experiments
- Not based on length
- Quantity of experiments is less important than quality of experiments
- Ability to present, explain, and interpret results
- Evidence of critical thinking, analysis, and ability to problem solve
- Adherence to chemistry stylistic conventions – how to present data, what to present, etc. (See ACS Style Guide for tips)
- Logical presentation
- Organized
- Connection to Literature
- Complete Experimental Details

Evaluation Criteria for Oral Presentation

- Presentation is half of grade; answering question is half of grade
- Normally, advisor will not ask or answer questions
- Practice with advisor and at other meetings (including ACS CVS Symposium)
- Do not need to present the entire thesis
- Tell major/important story about project
- Professional presentation with expectations for professional dress and behavior
- Use appropriate media (chalk, overhead, PowerPoint, etc.) for amount/type of information
- PowerPoint should not distract from results – see C&EN News and ACS Style Guide for tips on oral presentations
- Do not read text off of slides, do not have too many slides, do not have too many words on slides
- Use 20 minutes well
- Outline may not be necessary (Do not have Introduction, Results, Conclusions...this is expected), Future Plans are optional
- Spend time to help audience understand material
- Set project in big picture of field and provide honest motivation for research
- Get diverse audience interested in presentation
- Use chalk board to answer questions when appropriate
- Answer the question that is asked – clarify question and enter conversation with questioner if necessary
- Faculty usually don't know the answer to the questions they ask you
- Demonstrate understanding of the project (possible in both presentation and questions)