

Welcome to General Chemistry at Gustavus!

We know you probably have a lot of questions about what courses you should take and what things will be like in the fall. We hope this guide of frequently asked questions will be helpful!

What chemistry course should I take?

If you are considering a major, pre-professional program, or certification that requires at least one chemistry course, you will need to start with either CHE-106 or CHE-107. In some cases, we advise that you start chemistry immediately, in the fall of your first year.

Take CHE-106 or 107 this fall:	Can wait to take CHE-106 or 107 another year (only offered in the fall):
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biology• Biochemistry & Molecular Biology• Chemistry• Chemical Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Geology• Nursing• Pre-physical therapy• Environmental Studies*

** The Environmental Studies major does not require general chemistry, but some ES students choose to take it depending on personal interests.*

What about pre-dentistry, -medicine, -optometry, -pharmacy, -veterinary?

You will often see recommendations to take both chemistry and biology starting in your first year. Please note that this recommendation assumes you are interested in a major in Biology, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, or Chemistry, but you can choose any major that interests you. If you choose a major outside the biology/biochemistry/chemistry options, you would not need to take both chemistry and biology in your first year – you could choose just one of them.

Should I take both Chemistry & Biology in my first semester?

This is recommended for most students considering a major in either Biology or Biochemistry & Molecular Biology. In some cases, if a student's preparation in biology and/or chemistry is not strong, we will recommend students take either biology or chemistry, but not both. The chemistry placement exam is not really part of that decision.

What if I just want to take chemistry for my required science course?

We strongly recommend that you do not take either CHE-106 OR CHE-107 in this case.* In our experience, the majority of students who do not need chemistry for their major/future plans, but take CHE-106 or 107 anyway, regret it. This is true even for those who liked chemistry in high school. These are great courses, but they are a lot of work. Choose one of the many other options for your science requirement!

**Unless you are a Physics major taking your outside science course.*

Is it better to take CHE-106 or CHE-107?

You should follow the recommendations based on your placement exam results! We developed this placement system based on Gustavus students and it is very, very good at placing students in the right course. The CHE-106 track does require that you take CHE-108 in January term to meet the equivalent of CHE-107. Adding the CHE-106/108 we have observed a huge increase in student success in general chemistry. Either path has the same learning outcome, but the CHE-107 course proceeds at a significantly faster pace.

Here's what the two first-year chemistry paths look like:*

Fall	January term	Spring
CHE-106	CHE-108	CHE-141

OR

Fall	January term	Spring
CHE-107		CHE-141

Both pathways get you to the next course in our sequence (CHE-141) on the same schedule.

**Nursing students do not need to take either CHE-108 or CHE 141. Geology students do not need to take CHE-141. In both cases, CHE-141 may be a pre-requisite for some graduate schools.*

What if I took a college-level chemistry course or an AP or IB chemistry course?

- If you have earned a grade of at least C- in a full year of college-level chemistry with lab, and it's the version required for science majors at that college. You must also have a college transcript for it. (College in the Schools, PSEO, etc.)

OR

- If you have completed AP or IB chemistry and have earned a 4 or higher on the exam (higher level exam for IB).

In these cases, you may choose to skip General Chemistry (and we usually recommend that you do skip it). If you plan to continue in chemistry, then you should wait for the spring and register for CHE-141 (Organic Chemistry I). If you really want to take General Chemistry anyway, take the placement exam.

We are looking forward to meeting you in the fall! If you have questions about chemistry placement, feel free to send an email to chemistry-placement@gustavus.edu.

-- The Chemistry Department