

Everything You Need to Know About Force-Adding a Chemistry Course

Virginia Tech Chemistry Department. Read first. Then questions to chemadvising@vt.edu.

Schedule and Deadlines. Chemistry force-add (FA) requests are accepted starting in early June for Fall term and early December for Spring term. We begin processing force-add requests about two weeks prior to spring and fall semesters. To receive full consideration, FA requests must be submitted no later than 5 PM on Friday before the start of the academic term. At 5 PM, we will sort the list, prioritizing those who are graduating imminently, and those who submitted their requests the earliest. FA requests received after the 5 PM Friday deadline will remain, unsorted, at the bottom of the list and will not be processed until all of the requests received before the deadline have been processed. The absolute final deadline to request a FA is 5 PM on the **third day** of each academic term (Wednesday in the Fall term; Thursday in the Spring term). Do not falsify your graduation date hoping for unearned consideration. We check your reported date against your transcript. Moreover, if you are graduating imminently, then we should be able to confirm your graduation data by reviewing your Application For Degree on Hokie Spa.

Chemistry Majors: We do everything possible to help chemistry majors enroll in the courses they need. Chemistry majors needing major-restricted non-majors courses such as CHEM 1035, 2535, etc. should submit FA requests for these courses. A chemistry major who has received a policy exception (e.g., to sidestep a prerequisite) should submit an FA request and explain the irregularity in the appropriate comment area. So, even though you're a chem major and we know you, if you need a force-add, please use the form so that we will have everything in one place.

Labs. We will **not** add students into full lab sections!! Lab enrollments are limited by safety regulations. Labs are offered as follows: CHEM 1045: fall, spring & summer. CHEM 1046: spring & summer. CHEM 2545: fall & summer. CHEM 2546: spring & summer. The ONLY two lab courses that the Chemistry Department offers in BOTH fall AND spring semesters are CHEM 1045 and CHEM 3625. Equivalent courses may be available at your hometown community college. Sometimes even the lab portion of general chemistry can be found online.

Making Your Request. The link to request a force-add is shown below. Incomplete or ineligible requests will be deleted with no notification to the student. Please **only** fill out the survey **once** unless your previous submission was incomplete or flawed in some other way. Submitting duplicate requests does **not** help. If you click the link and find that the form is not accepting requests, please re-read "Schedule and Deadlines" at the top of this page.

FALL 2025: <https://forms.office.com/r/jzv1K1gJyb> **SPRING 2026:** <https://forms.office.com/r/GzYW4vM5ek>

Your Preferences. The form will ask you which course you wish to be force-added into. Students will be placed into individual CRNs (sections) based on availability and schedule. The Chemistry Department does not add courses based solely on the student's preference for instructor, day/time, or room/location. You can *request* a specific CRN, but you will be *placed* into a CRN according to what we believe will allow us to accommodate more students.

Prerequisites. For the course that you want to add, if you have taken (or are currently taking) the prerequisite course at a **different** college or university, and you have **not yet finished** the course, please DO NOT submit the force-add form until you have **finished** the prerequisite course and received an official final grade. We require you to upload a screenshot of your unofficial transcript **showing your final grade for the equivalent prerequisite course before** we consider adding you to the course you are requesting. Information on General Chem eligibility is found at the link below. If you are relying on ALEKS for eligibility, your score needs to be visible in your Hokie Spa profile.

<https://chem.vt.edu/undergraduate/chem-readiness.html>

If you have taken the prerequisite course at Virginia Tech, or if your transfer credit shows on your Hokie Spa transcript, then you should be able to add yourself to the course you want, during the drop-add period. If you are presently enrolled in the prerequisite at Virginia Tech, then you should be able to add yourself to the course you want after completing the prerequisite; we will NOT force-add you into the course you want just to "hold a seat" for you until you can finish the prerequisite and add the desired course yourself.

Major Restrictions in General Chemistry. Seats in CHEM 1035 and CHEM 1045 are restricted to a long list of specific majors. Once we decide that students in those majors have had adequate opportunity to gain seats, we will remove the major restrictions *from the sections that have available seats at the time the decision is made*. Restrictions will not be removed from sections that showed full at that time, because removing major restrictions is an extremely tedious process that must be done section by section, removing each major individually.

Facts About Section Capacities. We know that there are students who will never be able to add themselves to a course like CHEM 2535, because maybe they took the prerequisite (CHEM 1036) over the summer at a community college, so their credit transfer is stuck somewhere in the Registrar's Office (they are tragically understaffed, too), but the student still needs the course to meet an imminent graduation date. This scenario is very common, and these students submit dozens of FA requests. To ensure that these people can get seats, we sometimes need to set section capacities well below the physical room capacity. This approach makes multiple sections available to us. Other departments use the same process. Once we have finished adding the priority students, which is usually around the middle of the first week of classes, then we can raise capacities to their physical limits. Seats in general chemistry may also be limited by the capacities of the rooms used for common-time exams or recitation sections, and by the funding available to provide TAs for labs and Learning Assistants for recitations.

Didn't Get Your Lab? First, check your program! Students often request force-adds into labs that their majors do not require. We understand that you may still need these courses for minors, med-school, etc. Also, at Virginia Tech, there are NO courses outside of Chemistry that require CHEM 2545 or CHEM 2546 (organic labs) as prereqs. That means you could take CHEM 2545-2546 in your senior year without disrupting the rest of your program.

Tips and Tricks. Suppose you have submitted your FA request, and you want to maximize your chance of getting a seat. Sometimes we are able to add a recitation section of CHEM 1036, or a couple of sections of lab CHEM 1045 or CHEM 2545, by hounding our dean's office for more funding close to the start of the semester. (The associate dean's job of apportioning scarce resources is not easy.) If you look at the timetable for CHEM 1045 and you see that three or four sections are showing "capacity" of zero and "seats" numbers that are negative (like -13, -6, -17, etc.), this means that we received last-minute funding to open a few more sections, and we are force-adding students into those particular CRNs. So, while there's no guarantee, you can improve your odds by arranging the rest of your schedule so that one or two of the "negative-seats" CRNs will work for you. You also want to be sure that there aren't bursar holds on your account, and that your FA request won't put you over 19 hours. You may have to think about which of two courses is more important to take first. Just to give one example, there is a known time conflict between CHEM 1036 and BMSP 2135 in the fall, and there's really nothing that can be done about it.

Notification. If your force-add is approved, you will be notified via email when the course has been added. If you have not received notification by 5:00 PM on the fifth day of the semester, that means we were unable to process your request. You WILL NOT receive email notification if your request is denied or deleted.

Please do NOT ask for a status update. Responding to such requests only slows down the overall process. Common reasons for denial include the following: Prerequisite not showing; adding a course would give you too many credits (CHEM 1055 is **4 credits**); you have a schedule conflict with the course you've requested; there are no seats available in a section that fits your schedule; you requested a course that's only for chemistry majors but you're not a chemistry major; etc. Once you've submitted your form, you need to **wait**.

Please **DO NOT come to our offices** to discuss your request further or to plead your case or to request an update on your status. Our staff is too professional to be rude to you, but your effort to apply the "personal touch" just slows down the process and won't change anything anyway.

Questions or Concerns. If you have questions or concerns about our force-add policies or procedures, please send your question to chemadvising@vt.edu with "Force Add Question" in the subject line of your email. If you are hoping for an exception to the policies provided above, know that they are granted rarely, and that they take time.