

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

Virginia Tech Chemistry Department. Read first. Then questions to chemadvising@vt.edu. Updated 3/30/2026

Schedule and Deadlines. Chemistry force-add (FA) requests are accepted starting on August 01 for Fall term and on January 05 for Spring term. We begin processing FA requests about 2 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 that time, we will sort the list, prioritizing first by graduation date, and then by the date of the request. FA requests received after the 5 PM Friday deadline will not be considered until all of the requests received before the deadline have been processed. The absolute final deadline to request a force-add is 5 PM on the **third day** of each academic term (Wed in the Fall term; Thu in the Spring term). Do not falsify your graduation date hoping for unearned consideration. We check your reported date against your transcript and your Application For Degree (AFD).

We cannot perform ANY force-adds unless Add/Drop is open for the requested term (see the [Enrollment Schedule](#)). If you email us in March with an FA request for a Fall course, we can't do a Fall force-add in March anyway, and we'll probably just ask you to mark your calendar for August 1 and make your request then, using our regular form (below).

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 all of our tasks on one list.

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 will be included in an *online* course offering.

Making Your Request. Use one of the links shown below. Incomplete or ineligible requests will be deleted with no notification. Please **only** fill out the survey **once** unless your previous submission was flawed in some way. Duplicate requests do **not** help. If the form is not working, please re-read "Schedule and Deadlines" above before reaching out.

FALL (request form opens on Aug 01): <https://forms.office.com/r/jzv1K1gJyb>

SPRING (request form opens on Jan 05): <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 help the most 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 will add 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 account.

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

If you have completed (or are currently enrolled in) the prerequisite course at Virginia Tech, or if your transfer credit already shows on your transcript, then you can add yourself to the course you want, during the drop-add period.

Summer Courses. Add-drop for both Summer 1 and Summer 2 opens in mid- to late March. You can add a course if you are currently enrolled in the prerequisite. As an example, as soon as Summer 1 starts (in late May), if you are *enrolled* in CHEM 1045, then you can add yourself to CHEM 1046 for Summer 2. We will NOT force-add you into CHEM 1046 just to "hold a seat" for you. None of us can ever recall a summer CHEM course reaching its enrollment limit. But please do reach out to us if your financial aid situation calls for an exception to this summer-registration policy.

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 as full at that time, because removing major restrictions is a 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 common, and these students, collectively, 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. 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. Other departments use the same process. Seats in general and organic chemistry may also be limited by the capacities of the rooms used for common-time exams or recitation sections, or by the funding available to provide personnel (TAs) for labs and 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 prerequisites. 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. First, unless you're a CHEM major, we will not delete other courses from your schedule or shift your other courses to other times in order to make room for your force-add. You either have room in your schedule for the section we have open, or you don't. 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 pleading with 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 an easy one.) 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 or -6), this means that we received some last-minute funding, 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 force-added course won't put you over 19 hours. Again, if we can't process your request because of an avoidable technical issue, you will not receive any notification; you just won't get your force-add.

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**.

Especially, 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.