

## Orange County American Chemical Society Education Committee



Dear High School Chemistry Teacher,

February, 2022

This is the time of year when we normally send out information about our first year exam. We had high hopes that this would be the year that we could resume our normal spring schedule, but at this point in time we are uncertain about whether the exam and the awards dinner will take place in 2022. If we are able to give the exam, we will require that all students comply with the requirements that national ACS has set (see below) for the USNCO (United States National Chemistry Olympiad).

Vaccination according to CDC guidelines must be certified by the teacher for all students being registered. Students must present a vaccine card to the teacher in order to be certified, and bring it to the exam venue as well. Please note that CDC guidelines may include a booster by the April registration date. No accommodations can be given by our local section, since unvaccinated students pose a danger to proctors.

*We have discussed with our legal team the conditions under which an in-person component can be administered. In addition to meeting any requirements of your venue and meeting local health regulations, we would require that:*

- *All participants and volunteers wear masks (without valves) for the entirety of the exam*
- *All participants and volunteers be fully vaccinated (definition as provided by the Centers for Disease Control) at least 14 days before the exam date. Local Sections would be responsible for confirming vaccination status before entry into the testing venue.*
- *All participants are expected to comply with all health and safety guidelines.*
- *In light of events surrounding COVID-19, this is an appropriate time to remind ourselves of the risks incident to participating in USNCO Exams in 2022. Even with every reasonable precaution to keep you safe as outlined for you by the CDC, ACS cannot fully eliminate all risks of harm to participants or guarantee their safety, especially from risks posed by COVID-19 or its variant strains. Ultimately, everyone is responsible for their own safety.*

Below I'm going to give our standard set of instructions, but it is **up to the individual teachers to check our website to see if the exam will be given or not**. The registration window will be from 4/4/2022 - 4/15/2022 (see below for times), and you must register your students within that window. You should also check right before the exam date to make sure that the situation has not changed. If we are able to give the exam, we hope to be able to have the awards dinner in mid-May. Again, you must check the website to make sure. The proposed date will be provided in the materials sent to you after completion of the exam. The url where you should check is <https://ocacs.org/welcome-letter>

Here are the instructions applicable if we are able to give the first year exam:

The Orange County Section of the American Chemical Society is once again pleased to invite First Year Chemistry students from about 90 public and private high schools to participate in the 55<sup>th</sup> annual ACS First Year Chemistry Examination. Every school that participates has a winner! Your school is allowed to send up to eight students who are in their **first year** of regular or honors Chemistry.

**PLEASE REMEMBER, students in their first year of chemistry at an IBHL level or who plan to take the AP chemistry test in the year that they intend to compete in the First Year Exam are NOT ALLOWED to take the First Year Exam, only the Local ACS Chemistry Olympiad test.**

This year's ACS Examination will be held on **Saturday, April 23, 2022**. Once again, CSU Fullerton has generously offered the use of their facilities for this event.

Students are required to bring a #2 pencil. **NO CALCULATORS ARE ALLOWED!** (Note that we will allow cell phones, but they must be turned off during the exam. Students will be disqualified if their cell phone goes off during the test, or if they are found accessing their smartphone for information. Smart watches will not be allowed at the desks, and students will assume the liability if they wear one to the exam and have to surrender it during the exam. We must be apprised of medical monitoring by such a device ahead of the exam. A teacher must make the contact with us. ) All students are asked to report to the south side of McCarthy Hall at **8:45 a.m.** where the room assignments will be posted. **Report to the assigned room before 9:00 am with your photo ID.**

**Without a photo ID students will be permitted to take the exam, but will not be recognized as a winner unless a legitimate ID is provided before the end of the exam.**

The exam, which consists of 90 multiple choice questions, will begin at 9:00. Some information: the content is based on the SAT II standards; students who arrive later than 9:10 will not be allowed to take the test; students should be finished at 11:00 at the latest; there are no bathroom breaks! **All students must wear masks (without valves) correctly over their mouth and nose for the duration of the exam.**

As coordinator for your group, you are asked to do the following:

- Teachers must select the students and submit their names all at one time, being sure to check their vaccination cards ahead of time so that you can certify their **full vaccination according to CDC guidelines** when you register them. Full vaccination means that they have completed their second dose (or booster if that is required as of April) of the vaccine at least 14 days before the exam date. Be sure these students can and will attend the event.

No late registrations accepted. DO NOT SEND "SUBSTITUTES" on the morning of the exam.

- Between the dates of Monday, 4/4/22 (8am) and Friday, 4/15/22 (11:59 pm), register your students on our website. TYPE <http://ocacs.org/high-school-chemistry-exam>

**The website will accept NO REGISTRATIONS after Friday, 4/15/22 at 11:59 pm.**

*If you have any questions about the exam or registration, contact Sanda Sun at [awards@ocacs.org](mailto:awards@ocacs.org)*

Please make copies of the enclosed map for your participating students, or retrieve a map from the CSU Fullerton website: [www.fullerton.edu](http://www.fullerton.edu). Saturday parking is free in the parking structure at Nutwood and State College Blvd, adjacent to McCarthy Hall.

- On the day of the exam, please send your school's ACS plaque with a responsible student. We will collect the plaques at the registration table. *If you have not participated before, we will make a plaque for your school if we get a commitment from you to continue in this program. Please contact Carol Grimes at [cgrimes@gwc.cccd.edu](mailto:cgrimes@gwc.cccd.edu).*

We will notify you about the results of the exam by mail during the week after the test. We will also be sending to you and your first place winner an invitation to be guests (with both dinners paid for) at the ACS banquet to be held in mid-May if possible. The Bruce Davis Award will be given to the top scorer(s) in the county. If there is a tie then multiple winners will be honored. The top student from each school will have his/her name engraved on the school's perpetual plaque, and will be invited to the awards dinner in May as noted above, along with his/her teacher, as long as the teacher is fully vaccinated.

Each school will be allowed to send up to 8 students to the exam. The point total (number of questions correct) for the **top 5 students** from each school will be added to obtain a score for each participating school. Plaques will be given for the **top six school** scores at the awards banquet, and each plaque will include the names of the top 5 student competitors. The plaques will be presented to the top scorer from each school and his/her teacher. All five students and their teacher(s) will be invited to the awards dinner.

We strongly discourage sending only one student to this exam, which is designed to be an internal competition among your school's students. If only one student takes the exam, s/he will receive a certificate of participation, but may not be acknowledged as your "best" student on the school plaque. If you feel that there is a good reason why your school is entering only one student (who should be recognized as the best student from your school), please file an appeal with Carol Grimes at [cgrimes@gwc.cccd.edu](mailto:cgrimes@gwc.cccd.edu).

Ties for the team awards will not be broken. However, only six plaques will be awarded each year. For example, if two teams tie for third then two third place plaques will be given and no sixth place plaque would be given. However, if two teams tie for sixth the tie will be broken based on the following criteria. The first tiebreaker will be for the number of students competing. Schools with more students competing (up to the eight allowed) will finish ahead of those with fewer students competing. The second tiebreaker will be based on the score of the highest scoring student on the team. The school with the highest scoring student wins. The third tiebreaker is the score of the second highest scoring student on the team. The school with the highest score for the second highest scoring student wins.

We most sincerely hope that we will see you and your students in person in 2022!

Sincerely,



Carol J. Grimes, Ph.D. e-mail: [cgrimes@gwc.cccd.edu](mailto:cgrimes@gwc.cccd.edu)  
Chair, Education Committee, Orange County ACS