

Orange County American Chemical Society (OCACS) Education Committee

A community engaged in promoting the positive impact of chemistry



November, 2025

Dear Fellow Chemistry Teachers,

Welcome to another year of chemical education!

We hope many of you teachers and your students will be able to participate in activities available this year. Below is the most current information about upcoming events. **Additional information about test registration and dinner reservations will be sent in February and April.**

Information will be sent to your work email - from EdSecretary@ocacs.org. Be on the lookout!

For other information along with results from previous years, please go to the OCACS webpage at ocacs.org and click on the EDUCATION tab at the top of the page - or contact EdChair2@ocacs.org.

Please share the following calendar in your department as a reminder of these dates.

Nominations for 2025 Chemistry Teacher of the Year

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Due December 15, 2025

Chemistry Olympiad Local Section Exam (LSE)

- Registration submitted by students individually
- (*Top student per school, USNCO qualifiers, & top school teams are guests at the HS Awards Dinner*)

More information [below](#)

Saturday, February 28th, 2026

Irvine Valley College
8:45 am - 11:00 am

*Registration at ACS currently open
Early Payment Feb 2-13*

Orange County Science & Engineering Fair

- Junior and Senior High Divisions
- Check OCSEF.org for other dates

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Wednesday, March 11, 2026
Virtual Judging via Zoom

College Awards Dinner

- Honors outstanding OC college students

April, date TBD

USNCO (United States National Chemistry Olympiad)

- Top 12 students (determined by national ACS) on LSE
- 4.75 hrs plus breaks, includes written & lab components

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Saturday, April 18, 2026

UC Irvine
8:00am - 2:30 pm

First Year High School Chemistry Exam

- Registration submitted by teacher
- max 8/school team picked by HS teacher
- (*Top student per school & top school team are guests at the HS Awards Dinner*) [details](#) below

Saturday, April 25, 2026

Cal State Fullerton
9:00 -11:15 am
(8:45 am Registration)

High School Awards Dinner

- Honors First Year Test winners, LSE Olympiad winners, USNCO qualifiers, Science Fair winners

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Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Orange Coast College
6:00 -8:30 pm

(Next page for more information on the High School ACS Exams)

First Year Exam



This test is for Orange County students

- *in their first year of regular or honors chemistry*
- selected by their teacher

WHO MAY NOT TAKE IT:

- (a) *enrolled in an AP Chemistry class or at IBHL*
- (b) *registered for the 2026 AP chemistry test or*
- (c) *who take the Chemistry Olympiad LSE exam*

First Year Chemistry Exam

- **April 25, 2026** at Cal State Fullerton.
- **SELECTION:** Teachers at each high school determine the criteria for selecting their eligible students and will register students in the spring. (Exceptions listed to the left)
- **HOW MANY:** Up to 8 students per school. School team scores are determined by adding the top 5 scores.
(Please see [our website](#) for the policy of sending only one student.)
- **NO CALCULATORS** are allowed on this 2-hour test
- **FORMAT:** 80-90 multiple choice questions of varying complexity, covering topics included in NGSS and first year chemistry textbooks, prepared by experienced college teachers
- The goal is to challenge but not discourage students; the average score has been about 60% with only a few students scoring over 90%.
- Top scorer from each high school is recognized.

Chemistry Olympiad



Primarily for:

- *IB HL*
- *Second year high school chemistry, and*
- *First year AP chemistry students*

Note: students taking this LSE exam may NOT also take the OCACS first-year exam

Chemistry Olympiad (Local Section Exam, LSE)

- **Feb 28, 2026** at Irvine Valley College
- **TO REGISTER:** With parent/guardian, *students register individually at the National ACS link: [ChemOly Registration](#)*
- **COST:** Registered students will be contacted after February 2, 2026 with information about the test, along with instructions to pay the \$10 test fee (\$20 late fee based on available space), unless there is a financial burden.
- **HOW MANY:** Unlimited number of students from each school. School team scores are the sum of the top 4 individual scores. Past USNCO national qualifiers are welcome to compete, but they will participate individually, not as part of a school team.
- **FORMAT:** The 110-minute 60 question multiple-choice test is prepared by the National ACS Olympiad Committee. A tiebreaker written by local university chemistry instructors will also be given.
- **PROCTORING:** Schools with many participants are asked to provide teachers to proctor the LSE on Feb 28, 2026. Please contact Stacey Hamamura (edchair2@ocacs.org) if you can help proctor the test. *Your help is crucial to the success of the program.*

After the Exams



AFTER THE EXAMS:

- ❖ The top scorer from EACH high school & the top six school teams will be honored at our HS Awards Dinner in May 2026.
- ❖ The USNCO exam on April 18, 2026 is by invitation from the National ACS. This year will include the top 12 LSE scorers from Orange County - with a maximum of two from any single school.
- ❖ The top 20 on the USNCO in the U.S. will be invited to the National Study Camp in June 2026. The top four from the study camp represent the U.S. at the International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO) in July 2026.

Contact Stephanie Nobles or Stacey Hamamura of the OCACS Education Committee for support or for more information. Best wishes to you and your colleagues for a stellar academic year! We thank you for all you do for your students.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Nobles and Stacey Hamamura, Co-Chairs Education Committee OCACS
EdChair1@ocacs.org and EdChair2@ocacs.org