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GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AT VIRGINIA TECH

Virginia Tech has prioritized graduate education and scholarship as central to its academic mission and strategic goals. As such, the mission of the Virginia Tech Graduate School is to enhance the preparation and better equip its graduate students with knowledge and skills for meaningful and relevant contributions as citizens in the 21st century society. The Graduate School is committed to providing a rich learning environment that attracts and retains outstanding graduate students to work closely with outstanding faculty. Together, the faculty and graduate students will advance knowledge and scholarship that enables us to address the complex issues of today's society and tomorrow's future.

A 21st century university must encourage and embrace interdisciplinary education and scholarship, sustaining master's programs and professional development opportunities and enhancing the preparation of the next PhD generation of scholars, scientists, professionals and the future professoriate. This approach is coordinated through the innovative initiative entitled *Transformative Graduate Education (TGE)*. TGE is a signature program that provides opportunities for doctoral and master's students to explore the connections between their roles and responsibilities as faculty members and professional practitioners, their pedagogical approaches and construction of teaching and learning paradigms, and their development of research-in-practice as citizen-scholars. In addition, TGE, integrates a critically engaged understanding and use of technology throughout the process.

Another unique feature of graduate education at Virginia Tech is the establishment of the **Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown**. The Graduate Life Center (GLC) provides an intellectually stimulating and rich learning environment that builds a strong graduate community, as well as the physical space and institutional place for 21st century graduate education.

Building Graduate Community: Expectations for Graduate Education at Virginia Tech documents our commitment to enhancing the graduate education experience at Virginia Tech. The goal of the Graduate School is to provide quality graduate education in the context of a progressive and vibrant academic community.
<http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/expectations/index.html>

INTRODUCTION

This document sets forth policies, procedures and requirements relating to graduate study at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). The policies in this document have been developed by the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies (CGS&P) and approved by the faculty governance system of Virginia Tech. This document is designed to assist all those involved in graduate education at the university. The major responsibility for knowing and completing the degree requirements rests with the graduate student. The Advisor (i.e., the Chair of the student's Advisory Committee or Major Professor) and the student's Advisory Committee help the student prepare a Plan of Study (that lists the course work required for the degree) and select an appropriate research topic. The Graduate School seeks to foster quality in all phases of graduate education.

Graduate Student Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to satisfy all university requirements described in the Graduate School Policy as well as requirements established by the faculty in the academic unit in which the student is enrolled. Policy changes that occur between revisions of the catalog can be found in presidential policy memoranda <http://www.policies.vt.edu/policymemos/index.php> and through the Policies and Procedures of the Graduate Catalog <http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/gcat/index.html>. Some additional procedural information is available at http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/procedural_guidelines/index.html

Changes

The university reserves the right to make changes in fees, policies, degree requirements, schedules, or courses offered.

Petitions/Appeals

Exceptions to policies may be requested of the Graduate School. Petitions must be approved by the student's Advisory Committee and the Department Head or Faculty Graduate Coordinator for the department and should cite the regulation and justify the exception being requested. All exceptions should be directed to the Dean of the Graduate School.

STUDENT LIFE AND RELATED UNIVERSITY POLICIES

All students enrolled at Virginia Tech are subject to student life policies set by the university. The university publication, University Policies for Student Life is available at <http://www.judicial.vt.edu/upsl.php>. In addition, information about medical and health related policies and parking are included below.

Physical Examination

All Blacksburg campus students, admitted to the university for the first time, must complete a physical examination form and return it to Student Health Services <http://www.healthcenter.vt.edu/>

Medical Insurance Coverage

The university has contracted with an insurance carrier to offer group coverage for all students at Virginia Tech. For details on levels of coverage and specific limitation, please contact the Student Medical Insurance office in the Student Services Building, 540/231-6226 or 231-6303, or visit www.studentmedical.vt.edu

Medical insurance is mandatory for all international students with F-1 or J-1 visas at a minimum of \$50,000 accident and sickness coverage. Medical insurance is mandatory for all College of Veterinary Medicine students at a minimum of \$100,000 accident and sickness coverage. All students in these two areas must show in writing that they have equal or better coverage of the minimum levels from another insurance company, or they must purchase the university-

sponsored student plan. Review of insurance policies is done by the Student Medical Insurance office.

MEDEX Overseas Evacuation Program

An overseas emergency evacuation program is available to faculty, staff, students and their families who may travel overseas either on business or pleasure. MEDEX provides emergency services outside your home country. Included are:

- locating appropriate medical care
- evaluation and close monitoring of treatment - management of emergency
- medical evacuation and transport of mortal remains
- coordination of direct claims payments to providers
- verification of your insurance to facilitate hospital admission continuous
- contact with family, physicians, and employer
- assistance with interrupted travel plans resulting from an emergency situation
- assistance replacing lost or stolen medications
- emergency message transmittal services
- emergency international transfer of funds
- assistance in locating lost or stolen passports
- multilingual language services in emergency situations
- coordination centers and phone numbers throughout the world

MEDEX is already a part of the Virginia Tech medical insurance offered to full-time students attending the university. For further information on MEDEX services or the student medical insurance program, contact Risk Management by telephone 540/231-7439, fax 540/231-5064, or e-mail to weaverf@vt.edu
<http://www.controller.vt.edu/risk/>

Automobiles

Motor vehicles owned and operated by students who drive them on campus must be registered with the University Parking Services Office when the vehicle is brought on campus. Parking and operating regulations are issued at the time of registration <http://www.facilities.vt.edu/ot/parking.asp>

GRADUATE APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

Requirements for graduate degrees vary across academic units. Prior to submitting an application, individuals are encouraged to review the requirements and conditions for admission. A list of degrees and their requirements are available for each Virginia Tech campus at this website: <http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/programs/index.html>

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by the departmental Graduate Admissions Committee. Major factors considered in this evaluation are scholastic record, professional experience, letters of recommendations, and as appropriate, scores on standardized tests. Individual departments may have additional admission standards beyond those set by the Graduate School.

Applications and all related materials for admission should reach the Graduate School Office at least eight weeks before the beginning of the semester in which enrollment is requested. For financial assistance information, visit www.finaid.vt.edu Admission to the Graduate School is contingent upon receipt of a bachelor of science/arts degree from an accredited college or university and the presentation of evidence of potential to pursue graduate work. Applications for admission should be made on-line at <http://www.applyweb.com/apply/vtg/indexa.html>

Credentials

Applicants for admission should apply on-line at www.grads.vt.edu If this is not possible, a printable application is also available. An official transcript should be sent to both the Virginia Tech Graduate School and to the academic department. Individual departments may require applicants to submit the results of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). For applicants to the Pamplin College of Business, the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) is required. Please request that GRE or GMAT scores, if applicable, be sent to Virginia Tech. The Educational Testing Service Institution Code for Virginia Tech is 005859. All reference letters should be sent directly to the academic department. Please visit academic department websites for other departmental requirements such as resumes, vitas, portfolios, etc. All credentials submitted in support of an application become the property of the university. The application fee is \$45.00 (\$25.00 for Visiting Graduate Students) and is non-refundable. Applicants using a paper application must pay the fee with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank; cash is not acceptable. Checks should be made payable to Treasurer, Virginia Tech. Applications will not be processed without the application fee.

International Applicants

International students are subject to the usual departmental review process required of all graduate students. Proficiency in English is a requirement for admission to Graduate School. The results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) are required for international applicants except those who graduate from an accredited university where English is the language of instruction. A TOEFL score of 550 paper/213 computer/80 internet based is required for consideration of the application, and some departments require higher TOEFL scores.

Legal Status and Financial Certification

All international students must hold valid non-immigrant status to enroll at Virginia Tech. Prior to the issuance of certificates of eligibility to apply for the appropriate visa, all international students must submit an Immigration Information Form. The following link provides the Immigration Information Form, Affidavit of Support, and Financial requirements and general instructions. http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/international/immgrinfo_finreg_affidavitofsupport.pdf The Immigration Information form collects both information required for form issuance and funding documents which demonstrate that a student has sufficient financial resources for the first year of education. International students in F-1 and J-1 visa status are required to carry health and accident insurance approved by Virginia Tech. International students who have been admitted and have shown proof of having sufficient funds to cover their educational and living expenses for at least one year are issued visa eligibility documents (I-20 or DS-

2019 forms) by the Graduate School. International students currently enrolled for advanced degrees at other American universities are usually expected to complete their degree requirements prior to their admission to Virginia Tech.

English Placement Test

All incoming international graduate students are required to take the English Placement Test (EPT) during the orientation period prior to the beginning of classes unless they have both a TOEFL score of 620 paper/260 computer or higher and an Essay Writing score (Test of Written English) of 4.5 or higher. This test assesses student writing ability in an academic setting. Those who fail the EPT are required to take and satisfactorily complete a semester-long Advanced Academic Writing course during the first semester of their enrollment at Virginia Tech along with their full load of academic classes (9-18 credit hours). There is an additional instructional fee for this course (fee includes the textbooks), taught by the Virginia Tech English Language Institute (ELI).

SPEAK Test for International Graduate Teaching Assistants

International Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) who are assigned classroom or laboratory teaching duties must pass the SPEAK Test before they can begin their teaching duties. Those who do not pass must take English 0014, Oral Communication for International Teaching Assistants (3 hrs., 1 credit) during the semester prior to beginning their teaching assignment. The SPEAK Test is administered individually during the Orientation Period. Additionally, all international GTAs must attend the GTA Workshop for all GTAs during the week prior to classes.

Attending at Extended-Campus Locations

International students on F-1 or J-1 visas may pursue graduate degrees in Blacksburg or at the extended-campus in the National Capital Region (NCR). They may not, however, be enrolled in the Commonwealth Campus Program because it is a special non-degree admissions category.

Requirements for Assistantships and Employment

International students on F-1 or J-1 status who obtained regular admission into a degree program are eligible for consideration by the appropriate academic departments for assistantships and in-state tuition scholarships. Part-time employment on campus is subject to federal regulations governing employment of student (F-1) and exchange visitor (J-1) visa holders. Please refer to <http://www.igss.grads.vt.edu> for further information on other visa statuses that may permit enrollment and/or employment on campus.

ADMISSION CATEGORIES AND GRADUATE STUDENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Students are admitted or classified in one of the following categories. Changes from one status to another, for example, from provisional to regular are made when the student

meets the qualifications for the change and only upon the request of the graduate program.

Regular Student

For an applicant who meets the required grade point average (GPA) on the last 60 semester hours (or equivalent) and whose academic background meets established requirements and is relevant and current. The Graduate School requires a GPA of 3.0 or higher for this status. International students residing outside the U.S. are only considered for regular admission.

Provisional Student (master's only)

For an applicant whose GPA is between 2.75 and 2.99 and/or whose academic background is deficient or not current. Upon completion of 9 credit hours of course work, the student's Advisory Committee may recommend that the student be admitted to regular status. Provisional student status is allowed for no more than the equivalent of one semester (12 credit hours of course work is equivalent to one semester) during which time the provisional student must earn a GPA of at least 3.0.

Note: International students are not eligible for consideration for admission as provisional students.

Non-degree Student

This classification is for an applicant with a bachelor's or higher degree, who qualifies for admission to the Graduate School as a Regular student but who does not wish to or cannot be listed as a degree candidate for one of the following reasons: a) does not currently desire to work toward a graduate degree; b) desires to transfer the credits for use toward a graduate degree at another institution; or c) there currently is no higher degree available at the university other than the one the applicant currently holds in the department or field of study. The university places no limits on the total number of hours that may be taken as a non-degree student. "Non-degree" graduate students are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

Credits earned by students in either Provisional or Non-degree status may be used in meeting degree requirements if included in the Plan of Study and thus recommended by the student's Advisory Committee and Department Head and approved by the Graduate School. All students in these admission categories should seek faculty counsel before any course work is taken.

Commonwealth Campus Student

This classification is open to an applicant who holds an earned baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited postsecondary institution. Examples of students who seek admission into the Commonwealth Campus program include students who a) may qualify for regular admission but do not currently wish to work for a graduate degree; b) do not qualify for admission because of a poor undergraduate record but who have several years of appropriate professional experience and wish to improve their credentials; c) require graduate courses for professional certification; or d) are not U.S.

citizens and are in a visa status that does not prohibit non-degree enrollment. Students may take up to 12 hours of course work if they remain in good academic standing (students may petition to be allowed to take more courses). Students may not earn a graduate degree while enrolled in the Commonwealth Campus program. Commonwealth Campus students are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

Students enrolled in courses as Commonwealth Campus students who later decide to pursue a graduate degree from Virginia Tech must make formal application for admission to the Graduate School. Students applying for Commonwealth Campus status must complete the Application for Graduate Study and submit a transcript (unofficial is sufficient) or a copy of their diploma for the highest degree attained.

A determination of the applicability of any courses and credits earned while enrolled as a student in the Commonwealth Campus program will be made following admission to a degree program. The acceptability of any courses and credits towards a degree is at the discretion of the department.

Graduate Certificate Student

Qualified students who wish to enter Virginia Tech to obtain a graduate certificate in an approved certificate program, should submit a certificate application http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/certificate_application.pdf The Graduate School requires a minimum grade point average of 3.0 for this category. Official transcripts must be submitted. Students will only be designated in this classification if they are not also seeking a degree. Those students pursuing a degree and a certificate simultaneously are classified in their degree program. Credits used toward a certificate may be used in meeting degree requirements if recommended by the student's Advisory Committee and Department Head and approved by the Graduate School.

Professional Certification Student (Departments of Teaching and Learning and Educational Leadership and Policy Studies only)

Admission requirements include an accredited bachelor's degree plus appropriate professional experience. Under this admissions category, a maximum of 9 hours of courses may be taken on a pass/fail basis only, and the courses taken may not be used toward a graduate degree. This is a restricted admission and permits students to enter only certain approved courses in these departments. Individual instructors may reject from their courses anyone in this category who does not meet the normal prerequisites.

Visiting Graduate Student

A graduate student in good standing at another university may be permitted to take graduate courses by submitting a Visiting Graduate Student Letter of Approval, available at <http://www.grads.vt.edu>

Eligibility of Faculty/Staff for Graduate Degrees

Teaching and research faculty of the rank of assistant professor or above shall not become candidates for degree or be awarded degrees at this university. The Provost's office may be requested to waive this policy for an individual following successful appeal to the Commission on Faculty Affairs.

Staff and administrative/professional faculty may become candidates for degrees with approval from the academic program, the university employer, and the graduate school. To receive approval, candidates must address conflicts of interest, time, and commitment. Supervisors of these candidates should abstain from chairing and/or serving on the candidates' graduate committees to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

Undergraduates Taking Graduate Courses

Seniors

Students in their senior year, with a 3.0 or better GPA, may enroll in 5000-level courses satisfying undergraduate degree requirements within their department with the permission of the course instructor and the Department Head. Taking 5000-level courses outside the department requires Graduate School approval. Should the student become a graduate student, these courses may not be used for graduate credits.

Dual Students

Seniors who intend to receive a bachelor's degree, are within one semester of graduation, and have a GPA of 3.0 or better, may take graduate level course work to satisfy an advanced degree program as dual registrants (i.e. the student has been accepted into a graduate degree concurrent with bachelor's degree completion). Such graduate course work may only be used to satisfy graduate degree requirements when it is not used for the bachelor's degree and when the student's Advisory Committee approves including the courses on the graduate Plan of Study.

Combined Student Status (Architecture Only)

This status is reserved for qualified students in the bachelor of architecture program who: a) are within 24 semester hours of graduation; b) are proceeding toward one of the two-year master's programs in urban and regional planning or architecture; and c) have at least a 2.75 GPA for the last two years (60 credit hours) of undergraduate studies. Combined students are permitted to take graduate courses. The bachelor of architecture degree is awarded at the end of the first year of graduate studies on acceptance of 24 semester hours of work done instead of the regular fifth year in architecture. A total of 156 semester hours is required for the bachelor of architecture degree.

Five-Year Bachelor/Master's Degree (Open)

Academic units may petition the Graduate School to combine existing bachelor's and master's degree programs into new five-year bachelor/master's degree (open) programs. These programs would allow undergraduate students with a 3.2 or better GPA and the completion of 75 hours of study to enroll in the Graduate School before completion of their undergraduate requirements.

Up to 12 hours of graduate course work may be taken before the completion of the bachelor's degree. However, a maximum of 6 such hours may be used to satisfy both bachelor's and master's degree requirements.

Five-Year Bachelor/Master's Degree (Honors Program)

Undergraduate students with a 3.5 or above GPA may apply for admission to the Graduate School upon the completion of 75 hours (see department for specific information and additional requirements) of undergraduate study.

The student submits the Application for Graduate Study to the department. Upon approval of the application, the Department Head will attach a letter affirming the department's acceptance and recommendation of the student into the graduate program and agreement that the student can complete his or her undergraduate studies upon demonstration of 12 hours of graduate study.

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Course Enrollment and Changes in Enrollment

Registration (Course Request; for continuing students occurs during an eight-day period in the middle of each semester during which current students may request and be registered electronically for classes for the next semester. Registration for new students begins prior to the start of the new semester. For registration procedures, see <http://www.registrar.vt.edu/>

Students may adjust their schedules on a space available basis using web DROP/ADD (available through Hokie SPA), an electronic schedule adjustment program. The Add Period is restricted to a short period at the beginning of the semester, the Drop Period lasts for a larger proportion of the semester; deadlines for these electronic transactions that can be done by the student are published in the Timetable for each semester.

A **Force-Add** form permits enrollment in a class over the set capacity for that class. This transaction is done with the "force-add" form available in the department offering the course, and requires the instructor's (or, in some departments, departmental) permission. Force-adds are processed by the department offering the course during the Add Period in the first week of classes of each semester. **Late Adds and Drops:** In unusual circumstances when adjustments to the student's schedule are needed after the last date to carry out an electronic change, permission is required from the instructor, the student's advisor and a graduate dean (see the current Timetable for deadline dates). An

explanation of the extenuating circumstances necessitating the late change will be required. If a late withdrawal from a course is approved it will be designated as a **Graduate Withdrawal** (WG on the transcript) and will not carry a grade penalty; this option is only allowed prior to the Friday of the last week of classes for the semester. <http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/gcat/gcaGenInfo.html>

If a student wants to **Withdraw from all courses** for the semester or **if a student who is enrolled for a single course** wants to drop that course, a **Resignation/Withdrawal** must be submitted to the Registrar's office by certain specific deadlines.

A student may resign/withdraw without academic penalty by completing an official Virginia Tech Resignation/Withdrawal form on or before the last day specified on the Timetable for that semester or summer session. Resignation after the specified date requires permission of a Graduate Dean and is only permitted because of extenuating circumstances. The form is available at <http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Resignation.pdf> The student's grade report and transcript will show that he/she was enrolled for the term and that he/she resigned on the specific effective date. A student who is considering resigning should view the Virginia Tech **refund policy** at <http://www.bursar.vt.edu/refunds/> to determine the financial consequences of a resignation.

Student responsibility for enrollment. Each student is responsible for verifying his/her enrollment in courses and for making any changes in that enrollment. Students should check their enrollment in specific courses during the first week of classes of a semester (the Add Period) when any corrections can be made electronically. Faculty cannot add or drop students from their rolls and cannot add or drop a student by including or removing his/her name on the final grade sheet.

Continuous Enrollment

Unless on an approved leave of absence, graduate students in degree programs must be registered continuously during the academic year (fall and spring semesters) and pay the prescribed tuition and fees. Students working on research/scholarly activity toward their thesis or dissertation should enroll in the number of credit hours that reflects the extent of a student's study or research activity. The minimum enrollment is for 3 credit hours except in the case of a student who qualifies for Defending Student Status. If the student holds an assistantship or other form of financial support, the enrollment requirement is typically set by the conditions for that support. Students on graduate assistantships must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credits **(see Academic Eligibility to Hold a Graduate Assistantship)**.

Registration at the Time of Examinations and for Degree Completion

Graduate students must be registered for the minimum number of credits in the semester or summer session when they take an examination required by Graduate School Policies and in the semester when a degree is completed **(see Continuous Enrollment)**. Students who have a thesis/dissertation ready for defense by the

beginning of a semester, may schedule that defense within the first 20 class days of the semester and qualify for Defending Student Status (DSS, 1 credit; **see Defending Student Status**). http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Req_Lv_of_Absence.pdf

Leave of Absence

Students sometimes experience situations in which they cannot be continuously enrolled. A student may request a Leave of Absence to suspend activities associated with course work or thesis/dissertation research. The *Request for Leave of Absence* form http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Req_Lv_of_Absence.pdf must be submitted two weeks before the beginning of the semester for which the leave is requested. The leave of absence must be approved by the student's advisor and the Department Head (or Faculty Graduate Coordinator for the department) before submission to the Graduate School. If a graduate dean approves the leave, the continuous enrollment requirement will be relaxed during the period of leave. The Leave of Absence form indicates the time when the student will return to the program and any conditions the department or the Graduate School may stipulate for the student's Readmission within that time. International students also should consult the immigration advisors in the Graduate School before taking a leave of absence.

Readmission

When a student has not been registered for more than one calendar year, an Application for Readmission <http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Readmission.pdf> is required whether or not the student has been on a formal Leave of Absence. The Readmission process requires a review of the student's progress and the Plan of Study to determine what changes, justification of old course work or other conditions may be required for the department to recommend the student's readmission to the degree. The Readmission fee is \$25.00.

Change of Status

A change from one type of degree status to another, while remaining in the same major, requires a Change of Admission Status form http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Chg_Admiss_Status.pdf. An example of a status change is: Master's to Ph.D. in the same major. For departments where the non-thesis option is available, a master's degree candidate is allowed to change from the thesis to the non-thesis option (or vice versa) only once. The Thesis Option Change Form http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/thesis_option_change.pdf requires accompanying documentation from the departmental Faculty Graduate Coordinator or Department Head that verifies the appropriateness of the change of status. A change from Commonwealth Campus or Non-degree status to Master's or Ph.D. requires an Application for Admission and submission of official transcripts and all other required application materials (apply on-line at <http://www.grads.vt.edu>).

Change of Graduate Program

A change of graduate program/department requires the approval of the Faculty Graduate Coordinator or Department Head of both the old and the new program and

the Graduate School.

http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Chg_Graduate_Prog.pdf

Students wishing to change programs should consult with the department they wish to enter to determine the likelihood of acceptance prior to beginning this process. The department the student wishes to enter may see the original application materials by making a request to the Graduate School and may request additional materials from the student.

Change of Campus

Students wishing to study at a different campus, but remain in the same major, should submit a Change of Campus form

http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/change_of_campus.pdf

Simultaneous Graduate Degrees

Students wishing to work toward two graduate degrees in different departments/programs should submit an Application for Simultaneous Degree Approval http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/simultaneous_degree.pdf The fee is \$45.00.

II. GENERAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Grading System

Assignment of grades is the responsibility of the course instructor. The university has adopted the following grading system:

Letter Grade	Numerical Value (GPA)
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D-	0.7
F	0.0

Grades in all courses, including those not counted for graduate credit on the student's Plan of Study, are calculated into the overall GPA. There are in addition to

the above grades: "I" (Incomplete; no effect on GPA), "P" (Pass; taught on a Pass/Fail basis only), "X" (a temporary grade for the first semester in those courses that continue across more than one semester; no effect on GPA), and "EQ" (Equivalent Credit, a "pass" for research or project/report credit). "NG" (No Grade, assigned when the student has not done the expected work for the course) and "NR" (Not Recorded, indicating the instructor did not enter a grade) calculate as 0.0 in computing the GPA.

Grade for Thesis/Dissertation/Major Paper

Research toward a thesis, dissertation or major paper (the last is generally designated as Project and Report credits) is assigned equivalent credit hours (EQ grade) when satisfactory progress has been made. The NG grade can be given when progress on a thesis or dissertation has not been satisfactory.

Incomplete and X Grades

An Incomplete ("I") grade, which does not calculate in the GPA, may be given when the requirements of a course have not been completed because of illness or extenuating circumstances. It is at the discretion of the instructor whether the circumstances warrant the assignment of an Incomplete. Incompletes should be removed, by completing the course requirements as soon as possible. Departments should set policies for the time allowed for removal of "I" grades by students in their programs. Grades of "I" may be removed during a period when the student is not enrolled at the university. Grades of "X" are assigned initially to course work that extends over more than one semester and are removed when the final grade for the course is entered. Graduate degrees cannot be completed until all "I" grades and "X" grades have been converted to a letter grade on the Plan of Study.

Grading System Requirements

All courses on the Plan of Study, i.e., courses that satisfy degree requirements, must be taken for a letter grade (A/F) except for those courses offered on a pass/fail (P/F) basis *only* (for example, seminars and Independent Study courses are only P/F). Courses on the Plan of Study, with grades below "C-", must be repeated. Courses on the Plan of Study, once taken, cannot be removed from the Plan of Study.

Graduate students are permitted to take additional courses on a pass/fail basis only if those courses are not on their Plan of Study, are outside the department and are approved by the student's advisor. Such courses may not be used to satisfy minimum degree requirements. Under the graduate P/F grading option, a "P" is granted for earning a "C-" or better in a course. Once credit is received for a course taken P/F, the course may not be repeated under the A/F grading system.

Repeating Courses

Courses originally taken on the P/F option, in which a grade of "F" is earned, may only be repeated on a P/F basis. Courses may not be repeated if a "P" grade or a grade of "C" or better is earned.

When a course is repeated the grade for the earlier enrollment will be a **Repeat Graduate** ("RG"; defined as a "C-" or lower) which will not calculate into the GPA. Only the grade earned for the final enrollment in the course will receive a letter grade and be calculated in the GPA.

Auditing

An audit requires approval of the instructor. Auditing of laboratory work is not permitted. Registration for audit may not be changed to credit, or vice versa, after the last day to add classes without an exception to policy by the instructor, the student's major advisor, and the dean of the Graduate School. At the end of the semester, the instructor will determine if an audit is "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" based on participation and other expectations set forth at the beginning of the course. Unsatisfactory performance ("NG" grade) earns no quality credits and calculates into the GPA. A student who does not receive a satisfactory grade for an Audited course can request of the Graduate School that the course be dropped from his/her transcript. Students are assessed the same rate for tuition and fees for auditing courses as for courses taken for credit. Audited courses do not count toward full-time enrollment.

Graduate Credit

Students must have a recognized status with the Graduate School (i.e., have been admitted) and be officially enrolled in a course to earn graduate credit in that course. Instructors should not allow students to attend if they aren't enrolled in a courses (i.e., are not on the official Class List which can be viewed on Hokie Spa in Faculty Access). Students should resolve enrollment problems before the end of the Add Period at the beginning of the semester to be able to obtain credit for a course.

On-line Courses/Independent Study in Absentia/Continuing Education

On-line courses offered for graduate credit from accredited universities may be considered for transfer credit (see section on transfer credit limitations in Plan of Study). Independent study done while the student is residing at a distance from the instructor's Virginia Tech location must have regular faculty consultation by means such as email or regular telephone calls. No credit toward graduate degrees may be obtained by correspondence study or from continuing education courses.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

GPA Requirements

Students must obtain a 3.00 GPA, both overall and for courses on the Plan of Study. All courses on the approved plan, including supporting courses must be completed with a grade of "C-" or better **(see Graduate Degree and Certificate Requirements)**.

Probation due to Unsatisfactory Grades

Students whose cumulative GPA falls below a "B" (3.00) will be placed on probation by the Graduate School. Enrollment for one semester of probation normally is permitted to remedy an unsatisfactory GPA. If the student does not achieve a 3.0 GPA within one semester after being placed on probation, the Graduate School will consult with the department about dismissal of the student from Graduate School. A department can appeal to the Graduate School for additional time for the student to achieve a 3.0 GPA, providing the student is making reasonable progress in raising the GPA. If an appeal is made to the Graduate School for additional time it should come from the departmental Faculty Graduate Coordinator or the Department Head. If extra time is granted, the student should be informed in writing of the amount of additional time allowed for achieving a 3.0 GPA. If the department does not support a time extension, the student will be dismissed from the Graduate School.

Satisfactory Progress toward a Graduate Degree

If a student fails to make satisfactory progress toward all degree requirements, permission may be denied to continue in the degree program. This decision may be reached by the student's Advisory Committee, a graduate program Evaluation Committee in the department, or the Department Head, and recommended to the Graduate School. If the research progress has been unsatisfactory, NG (no grade) may be entered for any thesis (5994) or dissertation (7994) credits the student is taking. The Graduate School will dismiss the student for unsatisfactory progress following the recommendation by the department.

Academic Eligibility to Hold a Graduate Assistantship

Assistantships may be offered to graduate students admitted to Regular (GPA of 3.0 or greater) or Provisional (GPA of 2.75-2.99) status. To continue to be eligible for an assistantship a student must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher and make satisfactory progress toward attainment of a graduate degree. The academic department or the Graduate School may allow students one semester on probationary status to remedy grade deficiencies while holding an assistantship. Students on assistantships must be enrolled full time (12-18 credit hours). Audited courses do not qualify in satisfying this minimum. Graduate students holding assistantships are not required to enroll during summer sessions. All new GTAs at Virginia Tech are required to attend and be enrolled in the GTA Workshop (GRAD 5004, 1 cr., P/F) offered the first three days of the week before fall semester classes start in August.

CREDIT HOUR LIMITS AND REQUIREMENTS

Full Time Enrollment

Full-time enrollment for graduate students, for purposes of tuition and fees, consists of a minimum of 9 credit hours and a maximum of 18 credit hours per semester during the academic year. However, **graduate assistants** (GAs, GTAs, and GRAs) and **fellowship and scholarship recipients** must enroll for at least 12 credit hours per semester. Overloads (19 hours or more per semester, or 6 each summer session) require permission of a graduate dean.

Employed Graduate Students

The Graduate School recognizes that many students depend on part-time employment (including assistantships) and some full-time university employees are part-time graduate students (see Eligibility of Faculty/Staff for Graduate Degrees). University policy prescribes the following upper limits on graduate academic loads for employed students. Students on full graduate assistantship are assumed to be 50 percent employed.

Maximum Student Credit Load		
Percent Employed	Academic Semester	Each Summer Term
100	6	3
75	9	3
50 or less	12-18	6-9*

* Maximum 12 hours of course work in both summer terms (maximum of 9 hours in any one term).

Virginia Tech Employees

Full-time salaried employees, that have been admitted to the Graduate School (see the section on Eligibility of Faculty/Staff for Graduate Degrees), and with the approval of their department, may have waived or reimbursed twelve (12) credit hours per academic year (Fall through Summer II), not to exceed six (6) hours in a Fall, Spring, Summer I, or Summer II term. Part-time salaried employees are also eligible for up to 6 credit hours of tuition waiver per academic year. The maximum number of credit hours will include tuition waiver, tuition reimbursement, or a combination of both. For more information, refer to the Human Resources website: <http://www.hr.vt.edu/employment/development/>

Fellowship Recipients

Fellowship and scholarship recipients are required to take at least 12 credit hours each semester in which they are receiving a stipend. These credit hours must represent work toward satisfying minimum degree requirements. Audited courses do not qualify in satisfying this minimum.

GRADUATE DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

General Degree Requirements for Graduate Students

For graduate students, the university degree requirements are those identified in the Graduate Catalog (Policies and Procedures) effective for the academic year in which the students were admitted. The departmental requirements are those effective at the time of filing the Plan of Study. If the requirements change during the time the graduate student is enrolled, the graduate student can choose, but is not required, to abide by the

"new" requirements. For graduate students not enrolled for more than one calendar year, requirements will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis at the time of Readmission.

Plan of Study

Submission and Approval All graduate students must submit a Plan of Study that meets at least the minimum requirements for the designated degree. The Plan of Study must be approved by the student's Advisor and Advisory Committee, the Department Head, and the Graduate School. All courses on the Plan of Study, including supporting courses, must be taken on a letter grade (A/F) basis except for those courses approved to be graded on a pass-fail (P/F) basis only. Audit courses cannot be included on the Plan of Study. After approval by the student's Advisory Committee and the Department Head, the Plan of Study should be entered and sent electronically to the Graduate School for approval, according to the following schedule.

Master's: Before completing 15 credit hours in Master's programs (before 30 credit hours for the master of architecture or master of urban and regional planning).

Ph.D.: Before completing 15 credit hours in the Ph.D. program.

Ed.D. : No later than 30 days following the successful completion of the required qualifying examination. The qualifying exam is an Ed.D. requirement, not a Graduate School requirement.

Transfer Courses on the Plan of Study. Up to 50% of the graded credit hours needed to satisfy requirements for a Virginia Tech graduate degree may be transferred in from another accredited institution if the student's advisory committee considers these credits appropriate to the degree. All such credits must have earned grades of "B" or better, have been earned while a graduate student in good standing in graduate status, and must have been offered for graduate credit at the institution where the student took the courses. Grades of "S" or "P" are not acceptable for transfer credit. All transfer courses must be acceptable to the student's advisory committee and Department Head and must have been completed within the time limits prescribed for satisfying degree requirements. For transfer course work more than five years old, see section on Justification of "Old" Course work below.

Credits are transferred to the Virginia Tech graduate degree at the time the Plan of Study including those courses is approved by the Graduate School. Transferred courses count only as credit hours and are not included in the calculation of the GPA. Official transcripts are required before transfer course work can be approved for the Plan of Study.

Research hours may not be transferred in from another institution for Virginia Tech graduate degree requirements. Credits taken while in undergraduate status or for an undergraduate degree cannot be used as transfer credit for a graduate degree.

Justification of "Old" Course Work. Academic work, including transfer credit, must meet the time limits specified below. Course work more than five years old at

the time the Plan of Study is submitted requires Justification for inclusion on the plan. The Justification is based on filing the Justification form http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Chg_Admiss_Status.pdf and an Advisory Committee explanation of how the committee will insure the student will update their knowledge for out-of-date courses. Justifications remain valid throughout the degree unless the student is out of enrollment for a period exceeding one calendar year.

Supporting Courses. Courses numbered lower than 4000, or 4000-level courses not approved for graduate credit, can only be used on the Plan of Study as supporting courses. All courses listed on the Plan of Study are requirements for the degree, count toward the Plan of Study GPA and must be completed with a grade of "C-" or better. However, supporting courses do not count toward the minimum number of credit hours required for the degree by Graduate School policy.

Courses not approved for Graduate Credit. A course required for an undergraduate degree in a given area may not normally be credited toward a graduate degree in the same area unless the department has received approval from the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies to include up to 6 credits of such 4000 level coursework, outside the student's department, with explanation, on the Plan of Study.

Plan of Study Changes. A Plan of Study Change Form http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Chg_Plan.pdf is necessary whenever changes are made to the course work on the Plan of Study. Changes to the Plan of Study must be approved by the student's advisory committee, the Department Head and the Graduate School. Once a course on the Plan of Study is taken for a grade, it must remain on the Plan of Study.

A master's degree candidate is allowed to change from the thesis to the non-thesis option (or vice versa) only once. Such action requires written approval of the Department Head and the student's Advisor.

http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/thesis_option_change.pdf

Grades on Plan of Study Courses. All graded courses on the Plan of Study must be taken for a letter grade (A/F) except for those courses offered on a pass/fail (P/F) basis *only* (for example, seminars and Independent Study courses are only P/F). Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA or better on the Plan of Study course work. Once a course on the Plan of Study is taken for a grade, it must remain on the Plan of Study.

Repeating Courses on the Plan of Study. Students are required to repeat any courses on the Plan of Study in which a grade below "C-" is earned. Courses may not be repeated if a "P" grade or a grade of "C" or better is earned.

After a course has been repeated the grade for the first enrollment will be **Repeat Graduate** (RG, defined as a "C-" or lower). Only the most recent enrollment in the course will receive a letter grade and be calculated in the GPA.

Graduate Advisory Committees

Committee Functions: The student's Advisory Committee designs and approves the Plan of Study, provides advice, and regularly assesses the student's progress and accomplishments. Advisory Committee members are appointed by the Graduate School on recommendation of the Department Head. This occurs in conjunction with the approval of the Plan of Study.

Committee Size and Composition: Master's students must have an advisory committee of at least three faculty members with a Master's degree or higher. Doctoral candidates must have an advisory committee of at least four faculty members with a doctoral degree. Requests for one exception to these qualifications on an Advisory Committee may be made to the Graduate Dean.

Committee chairs must be teaching/research faculty in the graduate program the student is enrolled in. Research professors who have been approved as Graduate Program Faculty by the program also may serve. The student should refer to the departmental policies and procedures document for specific guidelines for graduate Advisory Committee service within the department/program. It is appropriate but not required that the Advisory Committee includes at least one faculty member from outside the student's major department.

Faculty are not permitted to serve as major advisor or committee member for individuals with whom they have a personal or professional conflict of interest (e.g., spouse, son, daughter, business associate, etc.).

Graduate students may not serve on a graduate Advisory and/or Examining committee.

Virginia Tech Administrative/Professional Faculty and Staff and Personnel from Outside Virginia Tech: Personnel, with suitable academic training and research experience, who are not Virginia Tech teaching/research faculty, may be recommended for inclusion on a graduate student Advisory and/or Examining Committee, but may not serve as Advisory Committee Chairs. Such personnel must have a graduate degree at or above the degree being sought. Approval of the inclusion of such personnel employed at Virginia Tech is granted if the Plan of Study is approved by the Graduate School. Inclusion of committee members from outside Virginia Tech is requested by the student's Advisory Committee Chair using the Non Virginia Tech Committee Registration Form. A curriculum vita for the proposed committee member should be included with the form and the particular advantages of including this person on the committee should be cited. Non-faculty personnel shall make up no more than one-third of the total committee membership, may share thesis/dissertation supervision responsibilities, and enjoy voting rights and privileges.

Changes in a student's Advisory Committee: will be granted only on approval of all committee members, new and old, and on recommendation by the Department Head http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Chg_Committee.pdf In the case that one or more members does not approve the change in the membership of the Advisory Committee, an appeal may be made by either the student or a faculty member to the Department Head. If the Department Head considers the appeal to

have merit, he/she may then ask the Graduate School for an exception to all members signing the form.

CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

Master's Degree. Virginia Tech allows for both thesis and non-thesis master's degrees. For each degree type, the student's Plan of Study must meet the requirements shown below. These are the minimum Graduate School requirements, departments/programs may have additional requirements for specific degrees.

Requirements for Master's Degree			
	Minimum Total Graduate Credits	Minimum Graded Graduate Credits	Minimum Research Hours
Thesis	30	20 ¹ (12 credits of 5000-level or higher)	6
Non-Thesis	30	24 ² (15 credits of 5000-level or higher)	

¹ A maximum of 12 credits in 4000-level courses approved for graduate credit and 6 credits total in 5974, 5984, and 6984 courses. Undergraduate Independent Study (4974) and Special Study (4984) courses cannot be used on a graduate Plan of Study.

² A maximum of 9 credits in 4000-level courses approved for graduate credit and 9 credits total in 5974, 5984, and 6984 courses. Undergraduate Independent Study (4974) and Special Study (4984) courses cannot be used on a graduate Plan of Study.

Second Master's Degree. The requirements for a second master's degree are the same as for the first master's degree: an additional 30-54 hours, depending on the degree sought. A student working on a second Master's degree may transfer up to 50% of appropriate graded course work from the first Master's degree from another institution or may use up to 50% of the appropriate graded course work from a first Master's degree at Virginia Tech.

Simultaneous Degrees. If a student wishes to pursue two graduate degrees in different departments simultaneously, an Application for Simultaneous Degree Approval must be submitted http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/simultaneous_degree.pdf Up to 50% of the appropriate graded course work from the degree in one department may be used toward the degree in the other department.

Education Specialist Degree

The Education Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) is a post-master's program requiring 60 credit hours. The program consists of 30 credit hours (minimum) from Virginia Tech and up to 30 credit hours of transfer credit from the first master's degree. At least 21 credit hours must be completed at Virginia Tech after acceptance to the Ed.S. degree. In this program, candidates are expected to attain a broad and systematic understanding of professional education, a definitive knowledge of a particular field of specialization and the ability to integrate and apply theoretical concepts of education in an actual educational context. This program is designed for the accomplished, experienced practitioner with special professional aspirations. It is not designed to be a prelude to doctoral study.

The Ed.S. degree may be pursued in the following areas: Administration and Supervision of Special Education, Career and Technical Education, Curriculum and Instruction, and Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (Educational Leadership [K-12] and Higher Education).

Doctoral Degrees

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Each Ph.D. student must complete a minimum of 90 credit hours of graduate study and a dissertation. The Plan of Study must meet the following minimum Graduate School requirements; departments/programs may have additional requirements and an advisory committee may add specific requirements needed for an individual student's academic development.

All courses listed on the Plan of Study become a part of the requirements for the degree, must be completed with a grade of "C-" or better, and count toward the minimum GPA of 3.0 for fulfilling degree requirements.

Doctoral (Ph.D.) Degree Requirements

	Semester Credit Hours ¹	
	Minimum	Maximum
Research and Dissertation (7994)	30	—
Courses numbered 5000 or higher ²	27	—
Graduate-approved 4000-level courses ^{2,3}	0	—
Seminars (subject matter unstructured) ³	0	4
Courses numbered 5974, 6974, 5984 and 6984 ⁴	—	18

¹ Some departments have approval from the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies to reduce the minimum number of graded course credits required for a

specific degree program. See departmental degree requirements to determine if a department has petitioned for such changes in graded course work requirements.

²Students can use any graded coursework credits taken at Virginia Tech during a master's degree at Virginia Tech toward a doctoral degree if their Advisory Committee considers those courses appropriate to the doctoral Plan of Study. However, courses "double counted" toward the bachelor's degree for a student in the bachelors/masters program cannot be used for doctoral credit.

³ Any number of 4000-level courses approved for graduate credit may be counted toward the 90 hour total, provided that all other requirements are met. Courses numbered lower than 4000, or 4000-level courses not approved for graduate credit cannot be used on the plan except as Supporting Courses.

⁴ Seminars may be taken on a pass/fail basis, and may be used toward meeting the minimum requirements in courses numbered 5000 or higher.

⁵ Courses numbered 5974, 6974, 5984, and 6984 may be used in meeting minimum requirements in courses numbered 5000 or higher. When a Special Study course a student has taken subsequently is approved as a regular course during the student's degree, the department should notify the Graduate School of that change. In such cases the Special Study course does not count toward the maximum permitted special study credit hours. Undergraduate Independent Study (4974) and Special Study (4984) courses cannot be used on a graduate Plan of Study.

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

The Graduate School course work requirements for the Ed.D. are the same as those listed above for the Ph.D. with the exception that the minimum number of Research and Dissertation 7994 credits is 20. Departments and programs may have additional requirements beyond the minimum ones listed above.

Residency Requirements for Ph.D. and Ed.D.

At least 24 graduate-level credit hours, including no less than 15 hours of course work (not including research 7994), must be completed while in residence at the Virginia Tech Blacksburg campus. Students may receive residence credits during the summer sessions, but not during any academic year semester(s) in which they are enrolled for fewer than 6 credits or if they are employed more than one-half time (that is, a maximum obligation external to their academic program of 20 hours a week). The Graduate School may grant policy exceptions to individual degree programs and students.

The Graduate School may permit individual degree programs to allow their students to satisfy the residency requirement at non-Blacksburg locations. Requests for such alternative location residency must be made in writing to the Graduate Dean (by letter for existing programs or as part of the program proposal for new programs). Such requests must provide a discussion of how the particular program at the alternate location will achieve the residency purposes. Where the proposed alternate residency location is a commercial entity or government laboratory, the request must

include an agreement between the university and the commercial entity or government laboratory. Such agreement will specifically define the research environment that will be maintained to meet the residency requirement. The Graduate School will report annually to the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies on the success level of the alternative residency. The Graduate School retains the right to withdraw the permission for such alternate forms of residency, if deemed necessary.

The Graduate School may grant exceptions to the 20-hour external work limitation to individual students enrolled in programs with alternative location residency. Requests for changing the 20-hour work schedule must include an agreement between the university, the student's employer, and the student. The requests should define the research environment that must be maintained at the alternative location for the duration of the Ph.D. student's residency. An endorsement letter from the student's academic advisor must accompany the request.

Residency for the Ed.D. involves full-time study during two consecutive semesters. This also applies to the Ph.D. in educational research and evaluation. The dissertation for the Ed.D. typically demonstrates the candidate's ability to investigate phenomena in educational institutions or service agencies to increase practitioners' understanding of practical problems and issues. The Ed.D. student and the advisory committee develop and submit a plan of study that is designed to build on the unique strengths and interests of the individual.

Residency for the Ph.D. in Education involves two consecutive regular semesters (exclusive of summers) of full-time enrollment to permit a close association between the candidate and the advisor/advisory committee. The dissertation for the Ph.D. demonstrates the candidate's ability to conceptualize, conduct, describe, and defend an original investigation that makes a significant contribution to the professional literature.

Purposes of the Residency Requirement for Doctoral Degrees

The basic goals of the residency requirement for doctoral students include the ability to understand and critically evaluate the literature of their field, to understand the issues and problems at the frontiers of knowledge in their field, and to cultivate and exercise their ability to make original contributions to knowledge in their field. These goals are not specific to particular career paths, but are fundamental to the level of achievement and mature scholarship that the doctorate certifies. These specific purposes of residency are based on recent recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine (Reshaping Graduate Education, National Academy Press, 1995) and the residency requirement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (the accrediting agency for Virginia Tech):

1. To ensure access to a wide spectrum of courses in the student's own discipline as well as related disciplines.
2. To ensure regular and substantial interaction with an adequately large pool of qualified faculty. This is important not only to support dissertation work and studies, but as a source of advice, perspective and guidance in formulating career objectives.

3. To ensure a similar level of interaction with fellow graduate students.
4. To guard students against a parochial view of their discipline, in which narrow focus in their specialty excludes experience with other disciplines.
5. To guard against over-specialization, and provide a broad range of professional development.
6. To ensure access to full-scale library and laboratory resources.
7. To provide access and exposure to a wide spectrum of seminars, professional presentations, and contact with leaders in their own discipline as well as others.
8. To ensure quality and rigor of the program through involvement with and scrutiny by peers in other disciplines.
9. To require that students transferring several course credit hours from other institutions complete a minimal amount of course work at Virginia Tech.

The traditional residency requirement addresses these objectives by bringing the student into the rich academic environment of the multidimensional university campus. The purpose of the 20-hour external work limitation in particular is to ensure that the student's involvement with the campus' culture of study and discourse is substantial. The level of fluency and accomplishment at the frontiers of one's discipline that the doctorate represents cannot be achieved if students are never involved with more than 50 percent of their effort and intellectual energy.

Second Doctoral Degree

A student seeking a second doctoral degree, regardless of whether the first was earned at this university, must earn a minimum of 48 additional semester credits and must satisfy additional residence requirements specified for the doctoral degree.

Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS)

The Center for Public Administration and Policy CAGS program affords the student the opportunity to develop an advanced level of post-master's specialization in a public policy field (e.g., energy, human resources, or environmental policies) or a public management field (e.g., finance or personnel). This program recognizes the successful completion of 60 hours of doctoral level work, including the Preliminary Examination. Students with master's degrees who can profit from doctoral course work but do not need or wish to write the dissertation are invited to apply. For more information, please see: www.cpap.vt.edu Students completing the CAGS must submit a completion form as required for all certificates (see below).

Graduate Certificates

Certificates can be awarded to individuals who do not desire to work toward a degree as well as to some students who are working on degrees. The specific requirements for each certificate can be found on the Graduate School Home Page at <http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/programs/certificates.html> Certificate candidates must be admitted to the Graduate School and formally accepted to the certificate program http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Certificate_Application.pdf

Upon successful completion of certificate requirements, an **Application For Certificate Conferral**

http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Certificate_Completion.pdf must be signed by the department and submitted by the Application for Degree deadline in the term in which the certificate will be awarded. Meeting this deadline is necessary for the student's name to appear in the commencement bulletin

http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html

EXAMINATIONS

All graduate examinations are open to the faculty and faculty members are encouraged to attend and participate in such meetings. The student must be registered during the semester in which any examination required by Graduate School Policies is taken.

Scheduling Examinations:

Examinations required by Graduate Policies and Procedures (Preliminary and Final Examinations), are scheduled through the Graduate School.

http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched_Prelim.pdf

http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched_Final.pdf Requests to schedule examinations must include the time, date, building and room number, title of dissertation or thesis, and the names of the recommended Examining Committee. These requests should be received at least two weeks before the examination date requested. Notification of the approval of the examination scheduling will be sent electronically to the student and all members of the Examining Committee. The examination card will be sent to the Chair of the student's Advisory Committee prior to the examination. The signed examination card should be returned to the Graduate School within 1-2 days after the examination.

Required examinations are administered during regular academic semesters or sessions, i.e., between the first day of classes for a given semester or session and ending with the last official day for examinations. Permission to schedule an examination in the time between sessions may be granted if an explanation of special circumstances requiring that scheduling is made to the Graduate School by the Chair of the Student's Advisory Committee.

Examining Committees

At least four Advisory Committee members are required for doctoral examinations, at least three are required for a Master's examination. If one of the Advisory Committee members cannot be present at an exam, another appropriate faculty member should be recommended to serve on the Examining Committee. Those conducting the examination must all sign the examination card and indicate whether they consider the student's performance to be Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

Successful Completion of Required Examinations

To pass any of the required examinations, a graduate student is allowed at most one Unsatisfactory vote. If a student fails an examination, one full semester (a minimum of 15 weeks) must elapse before the second examination is scheduled. Not more than two opportunities to pass any one examination are allowed. A student failing

any of the examinations required by Graduate Policies two times will be dismissed from graduate studies by the Graduate School.

Final Examination (Master's)

An oral and/or written final examination is required of all master's programs (see departmental policy for specific format). For some non-thesis master's programs, final exams are structured in special ways and a limited number of course work-only master's degrees do not include a final examination. For more information about master's final examinations, consult the departmental policies and procedures document. http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched_Final.pdf

Qualifying Examination (Doctoral)

Certain departments require doctoral students to take a qualifying examination (see departmental policies). The results are typically used to evaluate subject mastery, to determine deficiencies, and to determine whether the student should continue into dissertation research. The results of qualifying examinations are made part of the student's departmental record. Qualifying exams, are not scheduled through the Graduate School.

Preliminary Examination (Doctoral)

The preliminary examination is a requirement for all doctoral students. This examination must be taken at least nine (9) months before the final examination. At least 24 hours of course work and/or research must remain to be taken, including work for which the student is currently enrolled. The preliminary examination may be oral or written, or both. http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched_Prelim.pdf

Individual departments may choose to administer the preliminary examination as a departmental examination for a group of doctoral students. In this case the examination is typically administered by a committee with all members certifying the results. The results are to be reported to the Graduate School within two weeks after administration of the examination. If a department conducts the Preliminary Examination as a departmental examination, the members of the individual student's Advisory Committee must sign examination card.

Final Examination (Doctoral)

All doctoral candidates must take a final oral and/or written examination, which is at minimum a defense of dissertation. This examination must be scheduled no earlier than nine months after successful completion of the preliminary examination. http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched_Final.pdf

To be eligible for hooding at Commencement, the Final Examination must be completed and the Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) must be approved by the Graduate School by the published deadline for the semester http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html

Registration at the Time of Examinations

Graduate students must be registered for the minimum number of credits in the semester or summer session when they take an examination required by Graduate School Policies and in the semester when a degree is completed. The minimum enrollment is 3 credits except for students who may qualify for Defending Student Status (DSS, 1 credit; see below and Continuous Enrollment).

Defending Student Status

A student who has a thesis/dissertation ready for defense at the beginning of the semester may qualify for Defending Student status (DSS, 1 credit) if the defense can be scheduled within the first 20 class days of the term

http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html

Students should submit a Defending Student Status (DSS) form to the Graduate School with the Request to Schedule Examination form at least two weeks before their proposed defense date. If DSS is approved the Graduate School will register the student for 1 credit in GRAD 6864; Master's Defense or GRAD 7864; Doctoral Defense. Students cannot enroll themselves in DSS. If the student does not qualify for DSS, the minimum registration of 3 credits is required.

Students enrolled in DSS will be classified as less than half-time for certification purposes. This status may not meet the minimum requirement for most student financial aid or loan deferments. Students may wish to take into consideration their student loans when applying for DSS status. International students should consult the Graduate School concerning the visa implications of this status. Students on DSS are not eligible to hold assistantships or fellowships (**see Eligibility for Graduate Assistantships**).

THESIS AND DISSERTATION

Master's degrees may be thesis or non-thesis and this is specified on the Plan of Study at the time the plan is submitted. For departments where the non-thesis option is available, a master's degree candidate is allowed to change from the thesis to the non-thesis option (or vice versa) only once. A change between thesis and non-thesis requires the filing of a Thesis Option Change form

http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/thesis_option_change.pdf

Doctoral degrees (Ph.D. and Ed.D.) require a dissertation.

Independent Effort

Two or more students may work on the same total problem; however, each student must prepare an independent thesis or dissertation. The individual contributions of each student involved in the same problem should be explained in each thesis or dissertation.

Committee Approval

The thesis/dissertation must be evaluated by all members of a student's Advisory Committee. Committee members signify approval or disapproval by signing the thesis or dissertation (ETD) approval form. This form is included in the package with the Defense card and is available at http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/ETD/etd_approval.pdf If a committee member does not approve the thesis/dissertation, upon the faculty member's request, non-approval will be designated on the ETD. A successful candidate is allowed, at most, one negative vote.

Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD)

Theses and dissertations are submitted electronically. For instructions, see <http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/completion/etd.html> and Appendix I of this Graduate Catalog.

Deadline for Submission

Final version of the thesis/dissertation/major paper must be submitted electronically as an ETD to the Graduate School no later than two weeks after the successful completion of the final examination. If this deadline cannot be met, a request (e-mail is preferred) for an extension should be sent to the dean of the Graduate School by the student's Advisor. Extensions into another semester will require enrollment for 1 credit of DSS in the semester when the ETD is submitted and approved.

Copyrighting and Microform

The Graduate School does not require students to register their copyright. For those doctoral students that elect to register their copyright, there is an arrangement with University Microfilms (UMI). Students are required to return the UMI form to the Graduate School at the time of filing the ETD and to indicate whether or not they wish to copyright the dissertation. The form and guidelines for payment (\$75.00) for this service are included in the booklet that is provided by UMI in the student's defense packet. The company now called ProQuest digitizes the abstracts in their book Dissertation Abstracts and also digitizes the dissertations <http://il.proquest.com/brand/umi.shtml> If a master's student wishes to register the copyright, they must apply directly through the Library of Congress Copyright Registration Office. More information concerning the requirements and cost of copyright registration can be found at <http://www.copyright.gov/register/>

Intellectual Property

A University Intellectual Property Policy was adopted in 1986 by the university's Board of Visitors. The policy applies to copyrightable material, patentable inventions, and other creations conceived by any faculty member, staff member, or student employee when substantial university resources, such as money or equipment, are used in connection with the conception and/or development of the creation. All such creations are the property of the university and subject to any applicable agreements with funding agencies.

If a student employee has conceived a creation, which may belong to the university pursuant to the Intellectual Property Policy, it is his or her responsibility to report promptly the creation to the university. All creations must be reported to the Office of the Vice President for Research. Creations must be reported before publication of the item, or before publication of information relative thereto or before disclosure to an outside firm or agency. Under the existing policy, net income to the university in the form of royalties (etc.) from the creation may be shared equally with the creator(s).

Copies of the Intellectual Property Policy and assistance in reporting creations may be obtained from the Office of the Vice President for Research
<http://www.research.vt.edu/> or <http://www.vtip.org/>

GRADUATION

Procedures for Graduation

Students anticipating degree completion or certificate award must file an **Application for Degree** (AFD) form <http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/AFD.pdf> or an **Application For Certificate Conferral** http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/certificate_completion.pdf to have their names appear in the Commencement Bulletin and to obtain a diploma or certificate. The AFD application should be submitted electronically through Hokie SPA in accordance with schedules posted at http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html

Graduation Clearance Procedures

Summary of Procedures for a candidate for the master's or doctorate degree:

1. Scheduling of final examination, two weeks before exam
2. Taking final examination
3. Filing of Application for Degree, payment of fee. This form makes an individual degree completion checklist available to the student on Hokie Spa
http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/completion_checklist_masters.pdf
http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/completion_checklist_doctoral.pdf
4. Submitting the final authorized version of the Electronic Dissertation or Thesis (ETD) within two weeks after the defense
5. Submitting the completed and signed ETD approval form
http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/ETD/etd_approval.pdf
6. Submitting any applicable supporting documentation for the ETD, i.e.: copyright permission letters to reproduce items from other publications, Institutional Research Board approval or exemption notices (if appropriate), UMI form, Survey of Earned Doctorates
7. Payment of the archiving fee (see ETD fees)

8. The graduate degree is not complete until the ETD is approved by the Graduate School.

ETD Fees

An archiving fee is required by all students submitting an Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD). The fee of \$20.00 for master's students and \$75.00 for doctoral students must be paid at the time of ETD submission.

Commencement Participation

Master's students who have completed their degree requirements, and those nearing completion, can participate in the commencement Ceremonies. However, diplomas are not issued until all degree requirements are met. Summer graduates may attend either fall or spring commencement but must confirm their attendance through Hokie Spa.

Doctoral candidates must have completed all degree requirements including ETD approval by the deadlines published each semester on the Graduate School website to be eligible to participate in the doctoral hooding ceremony
http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html

Academic Regalia

Information on master's and doctor's regalia is available from the University Bookstore, Clothing and Gifts department, 540/231-5991,
<http://www.bookstore.vt.edu>

Degree Conferring Dates

In addition to the traditional twice-a-year commencement, two additional "Degree-Conferring Dates" have been established each year. These dates appear on the diploma for qualified graduates. These additional degree-conferring dates fall on the last day of final examinations of First Summer Term and Second Summer Term. No commencement ceremonies are conducted during the summer. Students who complete degree requirements at these times may attend the next commencement; students must confirm commencement attendance via Hokie Spa. All degrees conferred between commencements are listed in the next commencement program. Diplomas will be mailed to graduates by first class mail.