

Graduate School Policies and Procedures

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 Policies and Procedures section in the Graduate Catalog <http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/gcat/index.html> as well as any additional requirements established by the faculty in the academic program in which the student is enrolled. Policy changes that occur between revisions of the catalog are described in the Graduate School Blog (put link in here) In addition to the procedures included in this document, procedural information is available at http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/procedural_guidelines/index.html

Graduate students rights and responsibilities....ethics and scholarly integrity....

Graduate Student Ombudsperson

The Graduate Student Ombudsperson, with an office in the Graduate Life Center, provides confidential help to graduate students to resolve issues and address concerns that arise within the university setting. The ombudsperson provides a resource for and information about institutional policies and acts as a facilitator to work toward resolutions of graduate students' concerns. The office is an informal avenue for graduate students, and consultations are kept confidential, unless the student grants permission for the ombudsperson to discuss issues with involved parties or administrators.

Graduate Honor System

Compliance with the Graduate Honor Code requires that all graduate students exercise honesty and ethical behavior in all their academic pursuits at Virginia Tech, whether the undertakings pertain to study, course work, research, engagement, or teaching. The

Constitution of the Graduate Honor System is contained <http://ghs.grads.vt.edu>

Graduate Program Responsibilities

Each graduate program/department that offers graduate degrees or certificates lists the requirements of those degrees or certificates in the Graduate Catalog and in their departmental Graduate Policies document which is available on the departmental website. The Graduate School website provides links to these Degrees and Programs <http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/programs/index.html>

Each graduate program should identify a graduate program faculty who have the ultimate responsibility for quality of the graduate program in the academic unit. A member of the graduate program faculty will serve as the **Graduate Program Director** for overseeing academic matters in the graduate program and who chairs the departmental Graduate Program Committee. The Department Head//Chair/Director may appoint the Graduate Program Director as the signing authority for all departmental graduate transactions. In some departments, the Department Head serves as the Graduate Program Director. Most programs also have a staff member designated as the **Graduate Coordinator** who is involved with overseeing many technical aspects of the graduate program.

Each department is responsible for developing procedures for Advisory Committees to use in the **Annual Evaluation of Progress of each graduate student** in the program. These evaluations should consider GPA, courses with grades of Incomplete or other grade problems, progress on the Plan of Study, preliminary exam performance (doctoral students), research performance, teaching performance, assistantship status and performance, general departmental citizenship, and recommendations for the next review period. For those students who have not yet established an Advisory Committee, the evaluation should be conducted by a departmental committee, the Graduate Program Director, or the Department Head. The results of the evaluation, including a Rating indicating whether the student's progress is Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory, should be placed permanently in the student's file in the department and the student should be informed of the results of the annual evaluation. In cases of Unsatisfactory ratings, it is especially important that written, constructive feedback about what the student needs to do to obtain a Satisfactory rating, be included in the evaluation.

A summary of these annual evaluations for all students in the program, as well as the copies of the individual student evaluations, should be sent to the Graduate School by the end of spring semester each year (submission of electronic files are encouraged). This review process is mandated by Presidential Policy Memorandum #229 (2003) which is an update to #1 (1977).

Periodic reviews of Graduate Programs and their standards and policies also are required. All programs in the university will be reviewed over a seven year cycle currently in progress. See Presidential Policy Memoranda #14 (1979), #126 (1992), and #152 (1995).

Changes

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

Exceptions to Policy

Exceptions to policies may be requested of the Dean's Office of the Graduate School. A request for an exception should cite the policy, justify the request, and demonstrate appropriate departmental support for the request. Requests for exceptions should come from the graduate student's Advisor and have the support of the Graduate Program Director or Department Head.

Student Life and Related University Policies

University Policies for Student Life

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>. This document is applicable to students matriculated at the Blacksburg campus, as well as those students at branch campuses, higher education centers, or other university owned or leased properties. 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 visa status and their accompanying dependents in F-2/J-2 visa status. Insurance requirements are posted at http://www.grads.vt.edu/igss/maintaining_status/. 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 coverage from another insurance company that is equal to or better than the minimum levels required by the university, or they must purchase the university-sponsored student plan. Review of insurance policies is done by the Student Medical Insurance office. <http://www.co.vt.edu/Risk/studenthealthinsr/index.html>

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

Admission to the Graduate School is contingent upon receipt of a four year (or 3 year degree recognized by the Bologna process) bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university and the presentation of evidence of potential to pursue graduate work. Additional requirements for graduate degrees, beyond those of the Graduate School, vary across academic units. Prior to submitting an application, individuals are encouraged to review the requirements and conditions for admission. Degrees and their requirements, as well as information about which degrees are offered at non-Blacksburg sites, are available at:

<http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/programs/index.html>. Students currently enrolled for graduate degrees at other universities are usually expected to complete their degree requirements prior to their matriculation at Virginia Tech.

Applications for admission are reviewed and evaluated by the departmental Graduate Admissions Committee. Major factors considered in this evaluation are scholastic record, professional experience, letters of recommendation, 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 <http://www.finaid.vt.edu>.

Applications for admission should be submitted on-line at :

<https://www.applyweb.com/apply/vtechg/index.html>. If this is not possible, a printable application also is available.

Credentials

Official transcripts should be sent to both the Virginia Tech Graduate School and the academic department. If the official transcript submitted for admission does not show bachelor's degree completion, the applicant will need to later supply another official transcript showing that the degree has been awarded/conferred. 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.

International Applicants

International students are only eligible for Regular admission to master's programs. – Proficiency in English is a requirement for international applicants for admission to Graduate School (see below).

Legal Status and Financial Certification

All international students must hold valid non-immigrant visa 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_finreq_affidavitofsupport.pdf.

The Immigration Information Form collects (1) information required for issuance of visa eligibility documents and (2) information that demonstrates that a student has sufficient financial resources for at least the first year of education. International students in F-1 and J-1 visa status and their accompanying dependents 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.

Evidence of English Proficiency

International applicants are exempt from demonstrating English proficiency if they have graduated from an accredited university where English is the language of instruction or if they are U.S. permanent residents (“green card” holders).

The results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) are the most readily accepted demonstration of English proficiency for international applicants. A minimum TOEFL score of 550 paper-based (PBT), 213 computer-based (CBT) or 80 internet-based test (iBT) is required for consideration of the application. On the iBT, subscores of at least 20 on each subtest (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) are required for admission. Some departments have higher TOEFL score requirements than those set by the Graduate School. For more details, see

http://www.grads.vt.edu/igss/faculty_staff/toefl_interp.html

English Placement Test (EPT)

All incoming international graduate students are required to take the EPT, a diagnostic writing test, during the orientation period prior to the beginning of classes unless they have both a TOEFL score of 620 PBT, 260 CBT and an essay writing score (Test of Written English) of 4.5 or higher (out of 6) or higher. On the Internet-Based TOEFL (iBT) a total score of 105 with a writing subscore of 26 or higher (out of 30) is required for exemption from taking the EPT. Those who do not achieve the required scores on the

EPT are required to take and satisfactorily complete a semester-long Advanced Academic Writing or Technical 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 Language and Culture Institute (LCI; formerly called the English Language Institute; <http://www.lci.vt.edu/elp/>). National Capital Region (NCR) students should consult with the LCI office in that location about alternative sites for any required additional English training. Those at other sites should consult with the Graduate School offices in Blacksburg.

SPEAK Test for International Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

International GTAs who are assigned classroom or laboratory teaching duties must pass the SPEAK Test before they can begin their teaching duties. For international GTAs to be exempt from oral testing, a minimum Speaking score of 26 on the iBT is required. Those who do not pass the SPEAK Test must take English 0014, Oral Communication for International Teaching Assistants (1 Cr.) during the semester prior to beginning their teaching assignment. The SPEAK Test is administered individually during the Orientation Period. All GTAs also must attend and be enrolled in the GTA Workshop which begins on the Monday of the week before fall semester classes start in August (see Academic Eligibility to Hold a Graduate Assistantship).

Attending at Extended-Campus Locations

International students in F-1 or J-1 visa status may pursue graduate degrees in Blacksburg or at the extended-campus in the National Capital Region (NCR). Questions regarding enrollment eligibility at the NCR location should be directed to the International Graduate Student Services office of the Graduate School in NCR at 703/538-3743, gssso@nvc.vt.edu; <http://www.ncr.vt.edu/>.

Requirements for Assistantships and Employment

International students in F-1 or J-1 status who obtained admission into a degree program are eligible for consideration by the 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. Blacksburg students should contact the International Graduate Student Services office of the Graduate School at 540/231-8486, igss@vt.edu; National Capital Region students should contact 703/538-3743, gssso@nvc.vt.edu.

Admission Categories and Graduate Student Classifications

Students are admitted or classified in one of the following categories:

Regular Admission

Regular Admission to a graduate degree is open to an applicant whose grade point average (GPA) meets or exceeds the 3.00 required by the Graduate School for the last half of the credits earned for the undergraduate (bachelors) degree, and whose academic background meets the requirements of the admitting academic unit. A graduate degree, or at least 12 credits of graduate coursework taken post-baccalaureate, while in graduate status, will supersede the undergraduate record in evaluating credentials for admission.

Provisional Admission (Master's only)

Provisional Admission to a graduate degree is open to an applicant whose GPA is below the 3.00 required by the Graduate School, but generally not lower than 2.75, who has other experience or qualifications that demonstrate potential to undertake graduate study and whose admission is requested by the admitting academic unit. After attempting 12 graduate credits and earning at least a 3.00 GPA, a student is changed to Regular status by the Graduate School. If a 3.00 GPA is not earned in the first 12 credit hours attempted, the Graduate School will consult with the academic unit to determine whether the student should be allowed to continue for one additional semester on probationary status (see Academic Progress, Probation).

Appropriate coursework taken while on Provisional status may be included on the Plan of Study for the student's graduate degree at the discretion of the student's Advisory Committee.

Conditional Admission

An applicant whose academic background is deficient in some aspect, but who otherwise meets minimum GPA qualifications for admission (Regular or Provisional) may be granted "conditional" admission. The admitting academic unit specifies and informs the conditions of admission to the applicant and the Graduate School by letter prior to applicant matriculation. The academic unit notifies the Graduate School when the conditions have been met.

Non-degree Status

Non-degree status is open to an applicant who qualifies for admission to the Graduate School in Regular status (i.e., who has a 3.00 GPA or better for the last 60 credit hours of undergraduate study) 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. Official transcripts of the undergraduate degree are required for admission to this status. The university places no limits on the total number of credits that may be taken while in

Non-degree status. Credits earned by students in Non-degree status may be used in meeting degree requirements, if they are appropriate for inclusion, in the Plan of Study if the student is later admitted to a graduate degree. Graduate students in Non-degree status are not eligible for graduate assistantships. International Exchange Students in J1 status only may hold Non-degree status for up to two semesters (note that TOEFL score requirements do apply).

Commonwealth Campus Status

Commonwealth Campus status is open to an applicant who holds an earned bachelors or higher degree from a regionally accredited U.S. university. Examples of students who seek admission into the Commonwealth Campus program include those 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 and wish to improve their credentials; (c) need to update their academic credentials after several years of professional experience or (d) require graduate courses for professional certification. International students in F1 or J1 visa status are not eligible for Commonwealth Campus status. However, some other types of visa status may allow non-degree enrollment (note that TOEFL score requirements do apply). Students applying for Commonwealth Campus status must complete the Application for Admission and submit a transcript (unofficial is sufficient) or a copy of their diploma for the highest degree attained. Students in Commonwealth Campus status are not eligible for graduate assistantships. Commonwealth Campus students are limited to 12 credits of course work while in this status. Students may not earn a graduate degree while enrolled in Commonwealth Campus status.

If a Commonwealth Campus student wishes to enter a degree program, the Application for Admission to that degree needs to be filed early in the semester prior to the desired semester for degree entry.

If the student is accepted to a degree, a determination of the applicability of any courses taken while in Commonwealth Campus status, to a graduate degree, will be made at the time of submission of the Plan of Study for the degree.

Graduate Certificate Status

A qualified student who wishes to enter Virginia Tech ***to obtain a graduate certificate, without being enrolled in a degree program***, may apply for graduate admission to Graduate Certificate status. Such applicants should submit concurrently an Application for Admission and a Graduate Certificate Application http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/certificate_application.pdf. The Graduate School requires a GPA of 3.0 for admission to Certificate Status and official transcripts must be submitted. Note that 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 they are appropriate for inclusion on the Plan of Study for the degree.

Professional Certification Status

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

Admission requirements for Professional Certification include a bachelor's degree from an accredited university plus appropriate professional experience. Under this admissions category, a maximum of 12 credit 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 that 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 Status

A graduate student in good standing at another university may be permitted to take graduate courses by submitting a Visiting Graduate Student Application form, available at http://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Application_for_Visiting_Graduate_Student.pdf Enrollment as a visiting graduate student is limited to one calendar year or 18 credit hours.

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 graduate degrees from 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 graduate 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. Also see the section on Teaching Assignments for Graduate Students below.

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. Should the student become a graduate student, these courses may not be used on the Plan of Study for a graduate degree.

Dual Student Status

Seniors in a bachelor's degree, who have a GPA of 3.0 or better may be eligible for Dual Status during the final semester of their undergraduate degree. To obtain this status, students must file an application for the master's degree and the Concurrent Undergraduate and Graduate Status Form (for obtaining Dual Status). The department reviews the student for master's acceptance and, if this is recommended, indicates on the Admission Analysis form that the student will be accepted for Dual Status for the final semester of the undergraduate degree. This acceptance must occur prior to the final semester of the undergraduate degree. Graduate coursework taken during the semester of dual registration may only be designated for use in the graduate degree when it is not used to meet bachelor's degree requirements (i.e., each course taken during the final semester is specified as being for either the bachelor's or the master's degree).

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 3.0 GPA for the last two years (60 credit hours) of undergraduate studies. Combined students are permitted to take graduate courses.

Accelerated Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs

In accordance with the new CGS&P policy effective for Fall 2010 for the accelerated undergraduate/graduate degree programs, "each graduate degree program wishing to offer one or more accelerated undergraduate/graduate degree programs must submit a written description of their program to the Graduate School for review and approval before students may be admitted hereto".

Consistent with Graduate School policy, the standards for each program must meet the minimum requirements but can exceed these (e.g., GPA, fewer number of courses to double counted). These regulations include the following:

- Students must be accepted into the program prior to the beginning of the semester in which they would enroll in courses to be used on the accelerated program. Students qualifying for the program must be in the last 12 months of their undergraduate degree
- A maximum of 12 credits of graded coursework may be used in the program
- No more than 6 of the double-counted credits may be at the 4000 level; all others must be offered for graduate credit
- A grade of B or higher must be earned in each course to be double counted

- Courses must not be taken pass-fail if a graded option is available

Academic units wishing to offer accelerated programs should submit proposals to the Graduate School. The following information should be included in the proposal:
As a reminder, these programs can be within one department, across disciplines, or across colleges.

- Accelerated program(s) you wish to offer
- Graduate degrees included - master's or doctoral degrees or both
- Admission criteria and application materials required, including but not necessarily limited to student status, minimum GPA requirement, statement of motivation and career objectives, student's experience and qualifications as reflected in a résumé, a portfolio, and/or letters of reference
- the number of credits to be double counted towards undergraduate and graduate degrees
- Process for identifying potential students and faculty advisors, and for mentoring during program
- Tentative listing of courses that the department expects to be used for graduate plans of study for students in the program

Other conditions or aspects of the proposed program as appropriate.

Enrollment and Registration Procedures

Course Enrollment and Changes in Enrollment

Registration

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

Students may adjust their schedules on a space available basis using web DROP/ADD (available through HokieSPA <http://www.hokiespa.vt.edu>), an electronic schedule adjustment program. The Add Period is restricted to a short period at the beginning 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 of

Classes for each semester, see Important Dates and Registration Information at:
https://banweb.banner.vt.edu/ssb/prod/HZSKVTSC.P_DispRequest.

Force-Add

A **Force-Add** form **permits enrollment in a class, over the set capacity for that class, within the Add period**. This transaction is done with the "force-add" form 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

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). The request for the Late Add or Drop and an explanation of the extenuating circumstances necessitating the late change should be submitted to the Dean's office by the student's Advisor or the Graduate Program Director of the department.

Graduate Withdrawal

Course withdrawals late in the semester: If a late withdrawal from a course (after the Drop period for electronic drops) 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/forms/academics/Graduate_Course_Withdrawal_WG.pdf

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 form** (see below) must be submitted to the Registrar's office by specific deadlines.

Resignation/Withdrawal

A student may resign/withdraw without academic or tuition penalty by completing an official Virginia Tech Resignation/Withdrawal form on or before the first day of the semester/summer session (see dates on the Timetable for that semester). The form is available at http://www.registrar.vt.edu/forms/documents/resign_withdrawal.pdf. Resignation/withdrawals received at the Registrar's office after 5 pm on the first day of the semester result in partial tuition and fee charges (see Bursar's office refund policy http://www.bursar.vt.edu/refunds/refund_policy.php). **Resignation/withdrawal after the specified date for withdrawing without grade penalty (see Timetable for date for that semester) requires permission of a Graduate Dean and is only permitted because of extenuating circumstances.** 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.

Resignation/withdrawals may have consequences for assistantship and scholarship awards so these considerations should be investigated prior to completing the forms. Resignation/withdrawals do not affect the student's ability to enroll in the subsequent semester.

Student responsibility for enrollment

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 a Graduate Assistantship, scholarship 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 per semester (see Academic Eligibility to Hold a Graduate Assistantship).

Registration at the Time of Examinations and for Degree Completion

Graduate students must be registered for at least the minimum number of credits (3 credit hours) 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 early in the semester and qualify for Defending Student Status (DSS, 1 credit; see Defending Student Status under Examinations and see Dates for Degree Completion at http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html). Students are not required to be enrolled for the purpose of certificate completion alone.

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/Leave_of_Absence_Request.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 Graduate Program Director 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 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/Application> 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 of the Plan of Study to determine what changes, justification of old course work, committee changes or other conditions may be required for readmission to the degree (the forms required for these processes are at: <http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/index.html>)

Changes of Status

A change from one **type of degree status** to another, while remaining in the same major, requires a Change of Status form

http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Change_of_Degree_Status1.pdf. An example of a status change is: Master's to Ph.D. in the same major. International students in F1 or J1 status should consult with the international advisors in the Graduate School for the proper SEVIS changes.

For departments where the non-thesis option is available, a master's degree candidate is allowed to change status 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_Request.pdf requires accompanying documentation from the department 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 (if these weren't previously submitted) and all other required application materials (apply on-line at <http://www.grads.vt.edu>).

Change of Graduate Program

Change of Graduate Program (between departments)

A change from a degree in one graduate program/department to a degree in another program/department requires the approval of the Graduate Program Director or Department Head of both the old and the new programs and the Graduate School.
http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Change_of_Graduate_Program.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 who wish 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 International students in F1 or J1 status should consult with the international advisors in the Graduate School for the proper SEVIS changes.

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/Application_for_Simultaneous_Degree.pdf
See also Credit Hour Requirements; Simultaneous Degrees.

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, assigned one of the letter grades above, are calculated into the overall GPA on the transcript. An additional GPA is calculated for the Plan of Study for each graduate degree. There are, in addition to the above grades, the following grades that do not calculate into the GPA: "I" (Incomplete), "P" (Pass; performance of C- or higher when enrolled for the P/F grade option), "X" (a temporary grade for the first semester in those courses that continue across more than one semester; "EQ" (Equivalent Credit, a "pass" for research or project/report credit); "RG and RP" (Repeat Graduate grades) and "NR" (grade Not Recorded, indicating the instructor did not enter a grade). The "NG" (No Grade, assigned when the student has not done any of the work for the course) and the grade "F" on a course taken Pass/Fail 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, X, NG and NR Grades

An Incomplete ("I") grade, which is not calculated 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 and the number of "I" grades that are allowed 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 students in a course 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", "X", "NG" and "NR" grades on the Plan of Study have been converted to a passing letter grade (i.e., a C- or better for courses with the A/F grading option, a P for courses only offered on the P/F grading option).

If a student is ready to complete a graduate degree and grades of "I", "X", "NG" or "NR" are present on the transcript but off the Plan of Study, the department should investigate why these grades have not been remedied. In many cases these grades reflect unresolved problems or errors that can and should be remedied. However, as long as the student has a GPA of 3.0 or better both on the Plan of Study and overall, these grades can remain on the transcript and not interfere with degree completion.

Grading System Requirements

All courses taken at Virginia Tech that are included 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, Independent Study courses and most seminars are only offered 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; "RP", defined as a grade of C or higher, when the course was first taken) 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. If a student wishes to repeat a course in which the first grade earned was a C or higher, permission for a policy exception must be obtained from the Dean's office prior to taking the course a second time.

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. An Audit is a mechanism for a student to reserve a seat in a course, with no performance evaluation of the student. If the student or the instructor expects evaluation of coursework, then the student must enroll either as a P/F option or for a letter grade. If a faculty member wishes to restrict the participation of auditing students in selected activities, then that should be stated in the syllabus. Students are assessed the same rate of tuition and fees for audited 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 to graduate studies) and be officially enrolled in a course to earn graduate credit in that course. Graduate courses at Virginia Tech are numbered 5000 or higher. As of Fall 2009 there are no 4000-graduate approved courses (see Plan of Study about the limited use of undergraduate courses on Plans of Study). Instructors should not allow students to attend if they aren't enrolled in a course (i.e., are not on the official Class List, which can be viewed on HokieSpa in Faculty Access, by the end of the Add Period for the semester). Students should resolve all enrollment problems before the end of the Add Period 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 (5974) or Graduate Research credits (5994 or 7994) 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 section below).

Probation due to Unsatisfactory Grades

Students whose cumulative GPA falls below a "B" (3.00 GPA) 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 Graduate Program Director 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

All graduate students are required to have an Annual Review of Progress at least once a year by their Advisory Committees. Students who do not yet have a Plan of Study and an Advisory Committee should be reviewed by the Graduate Program Director or a departmental Graduate Committee. If a student fails to make satisfactory progress toward degree requirements (coursework, grades, research, projects, examinations and other 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 and the Graduate Program Director, or the Department Head, and recommended to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will dismiss the student for unsatisfactory progress following the recommendation by the department. The departmental recommendation should include documentation of at least one review indicating unsatisfactory progress, communication to the student about what was needed to reestablish satisfactory progress, and evidence that the student's progress continued to be unsatisfactory (second review).

Graduate Assistantships

Types of Assistantships

There are three types of graduate assistantships:

Graduate Assistant (GA): GAs provide academic and program support to faculty or departments. GA responsibilities may be administrative in nature and consist of duties unrelated directly to teaching or research (such as academic advising, program planning, advising student groups, and assisting with the administration of student services offices). GA responsibilities also may be academic in nature and include grading examinations, problem sets, and/or lab assignments, setting up displays for lectures or laboratory sections, and preparing or maintaining equipment used in laboratory sections.

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA): GTAs assist faculty in the department in the teaching mission, with assignments including laboratory teaching, grading of examinations, problem sets and/or lab assignments, setting up displays for lectures and laboratory sections, and preparing or maintaining equipment used in laboratory sections. GTAs must have 18 credit hours of graduate-level course work in their teaching discipline to be assigned full responsibility for teaching an undergraduate course. GTAs lacking this training may be assigned to work under the supervision of a faculty member who will be the instructor of record for the course. Graduate students may assist faculty in teaching graduate courses but may not be the instructor of record for the course.

GTAs are required to attend and be enrolled in the **GTA Workshop** (GRAD 5004, 1 cr., P/F) in the first fall semester of their teaching appointment at Virginia Tech. Other students who hope to qualify for a GTA appointment in the future should take the workshop in their first semester at Virginia Tech. The workshop consists of Phase I (two half days, Monday and Tuesday of the week before classes start in August) a wide variety of Phase II sessions during fall semester.

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA): GRAs conduct research under the direction of a faculty member, who is typically a principal investigator on an external grant or contract that funds the GRA and determines the nature of research work required for the assistantship. The research work required for the GRA is determined by the funding source and is typically beyond research done for academic credit toward the student's degree.

Academic Eligibility to Hold a Graduate Assistantship

Assistantships may be offered to degree seeking 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 be making satisfactory progress toward attainment of a graduate degree. The academic department and the Graduate School may allow a student to continue on an assistantship for one semester of probationary status to remedy grade deficiencies.

Students on assistantships must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credit hours per

academic year semester. Audited courses do not qualify in satisfying this minimum. Graduate students holding assistantships during the academic year and/or in the summer are not required to enroll during summer sessions, except if they are taking a preliminary or final examination.

Additional Employment for Students Holding a Graduate Assistantship

Unless specified otherwise in the assistantship agreement contract, graduate students on full assistantships are not prohibited from seeking additional employment. Students should consult with their academic advisor and/or assistantship supervisor as applicable regarding the fulfillment of their assistantship and graduate study responsibilities. Students must notify the Graduate School about any additional employment agreement, including the period of employment, name and contact of employer, and job title or short description of duties.

Enrollment 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 during academic year semesters. However, the Commonwealth of Virginia does not count students as full time unless they are enrolled for at least 12 credits, and in most academic contexts, 12 credits is considered full time. The maximum number of credit hours is 18 during academic year semesters. Overloads (19 credit hours or more per semester, or more than 6 per summer session) require permission from a graduate dean.

Graduate Student Employment/Assistantships

Graduate Assistants (GAs, GTAs, and GRAs) must enroll for at least 12 credit hours per semester to be eligible for their assistantship. Students on full assistantship are expected to work an average of 20 work hours per week for the assistantship and are considered to be 50% employed. Graduate students on assistantship can enroll for up to 18 credit hours of course work in academic year semesters and up to 6 credit hours during each summer session.

Virginia Tech Employees

Tuition Waivers or Reimbursement: Full-time salaried employees, who have been admitted to the Graduate School (see the section below 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 calendar year (Fall through Summer II), not to exceed six (6) credits in a Fall, Spring, Summer I, or Summer II term. Part-time salaried

employees are 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/benefits/tuition/>.

Fellowship and Scholarship 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 a graduate student, the university degree requirements are those identified in the Graduate Catalog (Policies and Procedures) effective for the academic year in which the student files the Plan of Study. If the requirements will change in the coming academic year (cases where the governance system has set new policy to be effective at the beginning of the next academic year), the graduate student may 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

Submission and Approval. All graduate students must submit a Plan of Study that meets at least the minimum Graduate School requirements for the designated degree. The Plan of Study must be approved by the student's Advisor and Advisory Committee, the Graduate Program Director or 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 Graduate Program Director or 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

Master's: The Plan of Study is due by the end of the second academic semester for all

Master's degree students (based on full time enrollment of 12 credits per semester). For the Master of Architecture or Master of Urban and Regional Planning degrees, the Plan of Study is due before 30 credit hours are completed. For Bachelors/Masters students, the Plan of Study is due by the end of the first full semester of graduate study.

Ph.D.

Ph.D.: The Plan of Study is due by the end of the third academic semester for all doctoral students (based on full time enrollment).

Ed.D.

Ed.D.: The Plan of Study is due no later than 30 days after 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

Transfer Courses on the Plan of Study. No more than 50% of the graded credit hours needed to satisfy the requirements for a Virginia Tech graduate degree may be transferred in from a regionally accredited university. All such credits must have earned grades of "B" or better, have been earned while in good standing in graduate status, and must have been graduate courses (numbered 5000 or higher) 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 the Graduate Program Director or Department Head. For transfer course work more than five years old, a Justification of 'Old' Course Work form must be filed with the Plan of Study (see below).

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

Research, Project and Report, Practicum or Internship credit hours may not be transferred in from another university to meet Virginia Tech graduate degree requirements (i.e., they cannot be included on the Plan of Study). Credits taken while in undergraduate status or for an undergraduate degree cannot be used as transfer credit for a graduate degree.

Courses double counted for both degrees for Accelerated Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Program students are transferred from the bachelor's degree onto the master's Plan of Study, so the rules for Transfer courses apply.

Justification of 'Old' Course Work

Justification of 'Old' Course Work. Academic work, including transfer credit more

than five years old at the time the Plan of Study is submitted, requires Justification for inclusion on the plan. The Justification form requires an Advisory Committee explanation of how the committee will insure that the student will update their knowledge for out-of-date courses. The Course Justification Request form is at <http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Revalidation.pdf> and some procedural guidelines are at http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/procedural_guidelines/index.html. Justifications remain valid throughout the degree unless the student is out of enrollment for a period exceeding one calendar year. Justification of “old” course work and review of the Plan of Study occurs at the time of re-admission.

Supporting Courses

Supporting Courses. Supporting courses are those the student's Advisory Committee considers necessary to provide missing background for taking the key courses required for the student's degree program. Courses numbered lower than 4000 can only be used on the Plan of Study as Supporting Courses. All courses listed on the Plan of Study, including Supporting Courses are requirements for the degree 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.

Plan of Study Changes

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 or Graduate Program Director and the Graduate School. Once a course on the Plan of Study has been taken for a grade, it must remain on the Plan of Study.

Change of Thesis Option

Change of Thesis Option. A master's degree candidate is allowed to change from the thesis to the non-thesis option (or vice versa) only once. Such changes often require changes in the Plan of Study and coursework required. These changes require approval of the Department Head/Graduate Program Director and the Chair of the student's Advisory Committee. http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/thesis_option_change.pdf

Grades on Plan of Study Courses

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, Independent Study courses and many seminars 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 (see below).

Repeating Courses 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-" has been 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; RP, defined as a grade of C or higher when the course was first taken). Only the most recent enrollment in the course will receive a letter grade and be calculated in the GPA.

Graduate Advisory Committees

Committee Functions

Committee Functions: The student's Advisory Committee works with the student to design a Plan of Study, approves the Plan of Study, provides advice, conducts required examinations and regularly assesses the student's progress and accomplishments. Advisory Committee members are appointed by the Graduate School on recommendation of the Department Head or Graduate Program Director by submission of a Plan of Study listing the proposed committee members.

Committee Size and Composition

Committee Size: 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 to expand an Advisory Committee by one member lacking these qualifications may be made to the Dean's office of the Graduate School.

Graduate Advisors (i.e., Chairs of Advisory Committees) must be teaching/research faculty (i.e., full time, tenured or tenure track faculty at Virginia Tech), i.e., Graduate Program Faculty, in the graduate program in which the student is enrolled. A department may request that qualified non-tenure track faculty (e.g., Research Professors or Emeritus faculty who are research active) be approved as members of the Graduate Program Faculty of a department for purposes of having Chair/Co-chair privileges. If the Chair of an Advisory Committee leaves the university or retires during the student's degree, the department should consult with the Dean's Office of the Graduate School to determine the most appropriate continuing committee composition for advising of the student to degree completion.

Committee members on Advisory Committees: Full time, tenure track, teaching/research faculty may serve on graduate committees throughout the university. Committee service by other qualified individuals, inside or outside the university may be requested by the department (see section below).

The student should refer to the departmental policies and procedures document for any 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 Advisor or committee member for individuals with whom they have a personal or professional relationship (e.g., spouse/partner, son/daughter, business associate, employment supervisor, etc.). See also Eligibility of Faculty/Staff for Graduate Degrees.

Graduate students (including those VT employees who are pursuing graduate degrees) may not serve on a graduate Advisory and/or Examining Committee.

Committee Service by Personnel Other Than Tenure Track Teaching/Research Faculty at Virginia Tech

Committee Service by Personnel Other Than Tenure Track Teaching/Research Faculty at Virginia Tech

Committee Service by Personnel Other Than Tenure Track Teaching/Research Faculty at Virginia Tech: Personnel, with suitable academic training and research experience, who are not Virginia Tech full time, tenure track, 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. The form requesting that such personnel serve on graduate committees is at http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Non-Virginia_Tech_Program_Faculty_Committee_Member_Registration.pdf This category includes personnel from outside Virginia Tech, as well as Administrative/Professional Faculty, Instructors, Adjunct Faculty, Retired or Emeritus Faculty and Staff at Virginia Tech. Such personnel must have a graduate degree at or above the degree being sought. Approval of the inclusion of such personnel is granted at the time the Plan of Study is approved by the Graduate School. If the person is on a temporary appointment there should be assurance that he/she will be available throughout the student's degree. Inclusion of committee members in these categories is requested by the student's Advisory Committee Chair and Graduate Program Director using the form for Non-Virginia Tech Program Faculty Committee Member Registration. 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. Once the registration form has been filed for an individual, a new form is not required for service on additional committees. These personnel may make up no more than one-third of the minimum committee membership, may share thesis/dissertation supervision responsibilities, and enjoy voting rights and privileges.

Changes in a Student's Advisory Committee

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 or Graduate Program Director

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 for Degrees and Certificates

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 semester credit hours requirements shown below. Departments/programs may have additional requirements and an advisory committee may add specific requirements needed for an individual student's academic development. Graded credits must be taken for an A/F grade unless the course is only offered P/F (see Grading System Requirements). See Transfer Credit for policies about the transfer of graduate credits for use on the Plan of Study. See Undergraduates taking Graduate Courses for policies allowing Bachelor/Master's students at Virginia Tech to transfer some courses from the bachelors degree to the master's degree (also referred to as double counting courses toward both degrees).

Thesis Master's

Minimum total credits: 30 credit hours

Minimum graded credits: 20 credit hours

- May include a maximum of 6 credits of Virginia Tech 4000-level undergraduate course work
 - The 6 credits of Virginia Tech 4000-level course work may include Special Study (4984) courses but may not include Undergraduate Independent Study (4974) or Undergraduate Research (4994) courses.
- All other graded course work must be 5000 level or higher (i.e., graduate course work)
- The 5000-level course work may include a maximum of 6 credits total in 5974, 5984, and 6984 courses and 3 credits of seminar.

Minimum research credits: 6 credit hours of Master's Research (5994) taken at Virginia

Tech.

Non-thesis Master's

Minimum total credits: 30 credit hours

Minimum graded credits: 24 credit hours

- May include a maximum of 6 credits of Virginia Tech 4000-level undergraduate course work
 - The 6 credits of Virginia Tech 4000-level course work may include Special Study (4984) courses but may not include Undergraduate Independent Study (4974) or Undergraduate Research (4994) courses.
- All other graded course work must be 5000 level or higher (i.e., graduate course work)
- The 5000-level course work may include a maximum of 6 credits total in 5974, 5984, and 6984 courses and 3 credits of seminar.

Maximum project and report or research credits:

- May include a maximum of 6 credits of Project and Report (5904) credits taken at Virginia Tech

Second Master's Degree

Second Master's Degree (both degrees at Virginia Tech). The requirements for a second master's degree (after the first master's has been completed) are the same as for the first master's degree: an additional 30-54 hours, depending on the degree sought. No more than 50% of appropriate graded course work, to meet the requirements for a master's degree, may be common to both degrees. For example, if one master's degree requires 20 credits of graded coursework and the other requires 30 credits of graded coursework, no more than 10 credits (50% of the graded work on the degree with lower graded credit requirements) can be used toward both degrees. No Research or Project and Report credits from the first master's degree can be used for the second master's degree. If the first master's degree is from another university, see Transfer Credits.

Simultaneous Degrees

If a student wishes to pursue two graduate degrees in different departments simultaneously, an Application for Simultaneous Degree must be submitted http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/simultaneous_degree.pdf. No more than 50% of appropriate graded course work requirements for a master's degree may be common to both degrees. For example, if one master's degree requires 20 credits of graded coursework and the other degree requires 30 credits of graded coursework, no more than

10 credits (50% of the graded work on the degree with lower credit requirements) can be used toward both degrees. No Research or Project and Report credits from one degree may be counted toward the other degree.

Education Specialist Degree (Ed. S.)

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 master's degree. At least 21 credit hours must be completed at Virginia Tech after acceptance into the Ed.S. degree program. 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 graduate program is designed for the accomplished, experienced practitioner with special professional aspirations beyond the masters, but who generally does not wish to pursue a doctorate. The Ed.S. is designed to meet this need and is offered in several specialty areas.

Doctoral Degrees

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Doctoral degrees at Virginia Tech must meet the semester credit hour requirements listed below and include a dissertation that involves original research/scholarship. Departments/programs may have additional requirements and an advisory committee may add specific requirements needed for an individual student's academic development. Graded course work on the Plan of Study must be taken for an A/F grade unless the course is only offered P/F (see Grading System Requirements). See Transfer Credit for policies about the transfer of graduate credits for use on the Plan of Study. Courses transferred from the bachelor's to the master's degree for a student in the Bachelor/Master's program at Virginia Tech cannot be used for doctoral credit (i.e. they cannot be 'triple counted').

Minimum total credits: 90 credit hours

Minimum graded credits: 30 credit hours

- At least 27 graded credits must be at the 5000 level or higher (i.e., graduate course work). Some departments have approval from the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies to reduce the minimum number of graded course work credits required for a specific degree program. See departmental degree requirements to determine if a department has approval for such changes in requirements.
- The 5000-level course work may include a maximum 18 credits total in

5974, 5984, and 6984 courses and 4 credits of seminar.

- The Plan of Study may include a maximum of 6 credits of Virginia Tech graded 4000-level undergraduate course work.
 - The 6 credits of Virginia Tech 4000 level course work may include Special Study (4984) courses but may not include Undergraduate Independent Study (4974) or Undergraduate Research (4994) courses.

Minimum research credits: 30 credit hours of Doctoral Research (7994).

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 24. 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.

Residency Requirements for Doctoral Degrees

Doctoral Degrees

Virginia Tech offers three doctoral degrees: the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), the Doctor of Education (EdD) and the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM). The PhD and EdD degrees are offered through the Graduate School and the DVM is offered through the College of Veterinary Medicine. The PhD is a research degree that focuses on “basic research that expands the knowledge base of the field” while the EdD is focused more on “applied research related to professional practice” (Council of Graduate Schools, CGS, 2005). The nature and purpose of the PhD is described as the following (CGS, 2005):

“The Doctor of Philosophy program is designed to prepare a student become a scholar: that is, to discover, integrate, and apply knowledge, as well as to communicate and disseminate it. Such skills may lead to careers in social, governmental, educational, biomedical, business, and industrial organizations as well as in university and college teaching, research and administration. The PhD. Program emphasizes the development of the student’s capacity to make significant original contributions to knowledge in a context of freedom of inquiry and expression. A well-prepared doctoral student will have the ability to understand and critically evaluate the literature of the field and to apply appropriate principles and procedures to the recognition, evaluation, interpretation and understanding of issues and problems at the frontiers of knowledge. The student also will have an appropriate awareness of and commitment to the ethical practices appropriate to the field.” (p. 1)

In accordance with the definition of doctoral degrees as involving mastery of intellectual principles, development of original scholarly contributions to the chosen field or fields,

and critical evaluation of issues and problems in relevant disciplines, residency is required for all doctoral students at Virginia Tech.

Doctoral Residency Guidelines

Residency allows students to concentrate focused time on their degree, acquire the necessary “habits, attitudes, skills, and insights” (CGS, 2005) required for contributions to scholarship, and have opportunities to work closely with other scholars including faculty and other graduate students. These scholarly skills, attitudes, and experiences go beyond acquiring knowledge in classes and beyond experience in professional practice.

The Graduate School expects all graduate programs to encourage and provide opportunities for immersion of doctoral students in scholarship. Residency goals can be achieved by multiple means, including but not limited to individual and group research training; providing access to resources such as libraries, research equipment, scholarly materials, and laboratories; providing networking opportunities with Virginia Tech and external scholars and graduate students; participation in scholarly seminars presented by scholars from Virginia Tech or elsewhere; assisting with developing applications for external funding of scholarly endeavors; participation at scholarly conferences; and publications or other forms of scholarly dissemination.

Residency for doctoral degree programs (PhD, EdD) can be accomplished through one of three mechanisms.

- **Two consecutive semesters of full-time enrollment:** Programs will be expected to provide opportunities during those two semesters to cultivate immersion in scholarship and achieve the goals of residency. Students completing residency via full-time enrollment should understand residency goals and plan not only to complete required courses, but also to sustain scholarly engagement and immersion in research, scholarship and professional development.
- **Program-specific alternative residency plan:** Academic degree programs may propose alternative methods by which enrolled students will achieve residency goals to be approved by the Graduate School. Program-specific alternatives may be proposed for doctoral degree programs offered outside Blacksburg or on the Blacksburg campus.
- **Individual alternative residency plan:** Proposals for alternative residency from individual students can be submitted for approval by the Graduate School.

Each academic degree unit should determine the mechanism through which the doctoral students can satisfy the residency requirement. Academic units may utilize any or all of the three options as determined appropriate by the graduate program faculty. For existing degree programs, the enrollment-based requirement will serve as the mechanism unless a specific request is made for a program-specific alternative residency plan. For new degree programs, the mechanism for earning doctoral residency should be included in the

proposal submitted for approval through the governance process.

Proposals for alternative residency plans (program-specific, individual) should include a description of how the alternative plan will help achieve the purposes and goals of doctoral residency. Please provide strategies for each of the following goals:

Disciplinary depth and breadth

- Access to a wide variety of classes and academic experiences in the student's field and in related disciplines
- Access to library, information technology, and laboratory resources
- Quality and rigor of the program through involvement with and scrutiny by peers in other disciplines

Scholarly immersion

- Development of the student's capacity to make significant original contributions to knowledge in a context of freedom of inquiry and expression (e.g., individual and group research training, assisting with developing applications for external funding, participation at scholarly conferences, publications or other forms of scholarly dissemination).
- Ability to understand and critically evaluate the literature of the field and to apply appropriate principles and procedures to the recognition, evaluation, interpretation and understanding of issues and problems at the frontiers of knowledge.

Professional socialization

- Substantial interaction with a large pool of faculty to obtain scholarly and disciplinary advice, perspective, and guidance
- Interaction with fellow graduate students on professional issues
- Provision of a broad range of professional development experiences to guard against over-specialization
- Access to a wide spectrum of seminars, professional presentations, and contact with leaders in their own discipline as well as others

Professional practice

- Awareness of and commitment to the ethical and regulatory principles and practices appropriate to the field.

Program-specific alternative residency proposals should clearly identify the various

methods the program will utilize to promote scholarly immersion and achieve the goals of residency as discussed above. The plan should consider the goals of residency and outline the ways these will be achieved, including specific activities and the timeframe as appropriate during which residency will be completed. Program-specific alternative residency plans should be submitted by the academic unit to the Graduate Dean for review and approval. Proposals should be submitted at least one semester before the desired effective date for implementation. Proposals will be reviewed and feedback provided within 30 days of submission. As needed, initial proposals can be revised for final review and approval. In addition, programs can submit revised or updated plans if elements of the degree program change.

Individual alternative residency proposals must be submitted by the student and faculty advisor/committee as appropriate to the Graduate School for review and approval. Students should begin planning with their advisors early in their degree programs. Individual alternative residency plans must be submitted to the Graduate School as early as possible or at the latest, concurrent with submission of the Plan of Study. Alternative residency will be approved by the Graduate Dean before approval of the Plan of Study

Recording of residency plans: All doctoral students should indicate the mechanisms by which they plan to earn residency on the Plan of Study form. Should a change in residency plan be required, students can seek approval of such change via the Plan of Study Change form accompanied by relevant documentation.

Second Doctoral Degree

A student who is 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 the residency requirements specified for the doctoral degree at Virginia Tech.

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: <http://www.cpap.vt.edu>. Students completing the CAGS must submit a completion form as required for all certificates (see below).

Graduate Certificates

Graduate certificates can be awarded to individuals who do not desire to work toward a degree as well as to students who are working on graduate degrees. Of the graduate course work (5000-level or higher courses) for the certificate, at least 2/3 must be graded

course work taken on the A/F grading option. Certificates must include a minimum of 9 credit hours of Virginia Tech graduate course work credits. 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://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Application%20-%20Certificate.pdf>

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

http://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Application_for_Degree_or_Certificate.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

Enrollment is not required for certificate completion alone.

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

Scheduling Examinations:

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

http://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Request_to_Admit_Candidate_to_Final_Exam.pdf

http://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Request_to_Admit_Candidate_to_Prelim_Exam.pdf

Requests to schedule examinations must include the time, date, building and room number, title of dissertation or thesis, and the names and signatures of the Examining Committee. ***These requests are due in the Graduate School at least two weeks before the examination date requested.*** Notification of the approval of the examination scheduling and the examination form/card will be sent electronically to the student and all members of the Examining Committee. ***The examination should not be conducted if the Advisor has not received notification that the examination has been scheduled and the examination form/card has been received.*** The signed examination form should be returned to the Graduate School within 1-2 days after the examination with each committee member signifying whether the exam performance was Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

Before filing the request for scheduling an examination, the student's record should be reviewed by the department to make sure that the Plan of Study has been filed and

approved and that there are no problems. The Graduate Program Director's signature on the form is the departmental verification that the Plan of Study has been examined and that it is appropriate for the student to schedule the examination.

For **Preliminary Examinations**, which commonly are comprehensive examinations of the doctoral coursework, typically students complete the formal coursework on the Plan of Study prior to taking the exam. If a student has coursework remaining to be taken, the department should determine whether or not it is appropriate for the student to take the examination before all the graded coursework on the Plan of Study is completed. Students may take the Preliminary Examination despite having some grade problems on the Plan of Study (e.g., Incompletes, grades <C- that require retaking a course) but the student's Advisory Committee should address whether this will put the student at a disadvantage on the exam. If the decision is to schedule the exam in a case like this, a note addressing the committee's decision to move forward with the exam should accompany the exam request. By the end of the degree, all grades on the Plan of Study must be a C- or higher and the Plan of Study and overall GPA must be a 3.0 or higher. For scheduling of the **Final Examination, Thesis Master's and Ph.D. students** must have the thesis/dissertation ready for defense (as judged by Advisory Committee members having read the document and signed the examination scheduling request) and the student must be able to complete all other degree requirements within the semester when the examination is held: all coursework on the Plan of Study will need to be completed with grades of C- or higher and both the Plan of Study GPA and the overall GPA must be a 3.0 or higher by the end of the semester. Because some of the problem situations with deficient grades or credits require retaking courses or adding credits, the Plan of Study should be examined at the beginning of the semester in which a student plans to take the Final Examination. For **Non-thesis Master's students**, scheduling of the Final Examination requires that the student will be able to complete any Project and Report or Independent Study requirements, complete all coursework on the Plan of Study with grades of C- or higher and attain a Plan of Study and overall GPA of 3.0 or higher by the end of the semester.

Students wishing to schedule the Final Examination, who have not been enrolled at Virginia Tech for more than a year, need to file for Readmission and allow enough time for any problems to be resolved so they can be Readmitted prior to the 2 week period needed for Exam scheduling.

For enrollment requirements when taking a Final Examination, see below.

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 Dean's office of the Graduate School by the student's Advisor. Scheduling of examinations between semesters/terms does not alter ETD submission or approval deadlines.

Examining Committees

At least four Advisory Committee members are required to participate in 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, the Chair of the Advisory Committee should request, in a brief letter accompanying the exam request, that another faculty member serve on the Examining Committee. Those conducting the examination must all sign the examination form and indicate whether they consider the student's performance to be Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Examination form should be returned to the Graduate School within 1-2 days after the exam. Note that a substitute member who serves on a final examination committee does not sign the Thesis or Dissertation Approval Form, it remains the responsibility of the student's Advisory Committee to evaluate the thesis or dissertation and sign this form.

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 in some non-thesis master's degrees the evaluation of a project is used in lieu of a final examination. For more information about master's final examinations, consult the departmental policies and procedures document. [http://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Request to Admit Candidate to Final Exam.pdf](http://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Request_to_Admit_Candidate_to_Final_Exam.pdf)

Qualifying Examination (Doctoral)

Certain departments require doctoral students to take a qualifying examination (see departmental policies). The results typically are 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 examinations 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 six (6) months before the Final Examination. The Preliminary Examination may be oral or written, or both
http://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Request_to_Admit_Candidate_to_Prelim_Exam.pdf.

Individual departments may choose to administer the Preliminary Examination as a written 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 to the department. In such cases, the examination date requested should coincide with the date when the decision about the student's performance is made. The results should be reported to the Graduate School within 1-2 days of the decision about the examination. If a department conducts the Preliminary Examination as a departmental examination, the members of the individual student's Advisory Committee must sign the examination form/card. If the Preliminary Examination consists of a written section followed by an oral examination, the examination date requested should be the date of the oral.

Final Examination (Doctoral)

All doctoral candidates must take a final oral and/or written examination, which is at minimum a defense of the dissertation. This examination must be scheduled no earlier than six months after successful completion of the preliminary examination.

http://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Request_to_Admit_Candidate_to_Final_Exam.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/enrollment at the Time of Examinations

Graduate students must be enrolled 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.

Students Working on the Thesis/Dissertation during a Semester or Summer

The minimum enrollment for students working on writing their thesis/dissertation and consulting with their Advisor and/or committee during a semester or summer is 3 credit hours. The exception is those students who may qualify for Defending Student Status (see below).

Defending Student Status

Qualification for DSS: A student who is

- on active status (i.e., does not require Readmission) and
- has a thesis/dissertation ready for defense at the beginning of the semester

may qualify for Defending Student status (DSS, 1 credit).

To be ready to defend, the student's Advisory Committee members must have read the thesis/dissertation and agreed that it is in a form ready for defense (i.e., the thesis/dissertation is finished) and that it appears that the student will be able to make corrections and file the thesis/dissertation as an ETD by the deadline of two weeks after the defense.

If a student is not on active status, i.e., has not been enrolled for more than a calendar year, the Readmission process must be completed before the student can file to take the Final Examination or qualify for DSS.

The “**DSS scheduling period**” is

- the first three weeks of an academic semester and
- the Request for Final Exam must be received by the Graduate School within this scheduling period.

To allow for time to process the exam request (two weeks), students should make every effort to submit the DSS form and the Request to Schedule Examination form to the Graduate School by the end of the second week of the semester.

Final Exam/defense Date: If the student qualifies for DSS:

- the exam date should be set for as early as possible in the semester
- if the exam needs to be delayed, the student's Advisor should explain the circumstances for the delay (e.g. employment at a distance that does not allow travel at certain times, committee members who are away on international travel, etc), in a letter/email to the Dean's office.
- students are urged to pay careful attention to timing deadlines relative to Commencement. See

http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html for the deadlines for each semester of the current year.

DSS Enrollment: If DSS is approved, the Graduate School will register the student for 1 credit of 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 enrollment 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 the section on Eligibility for Graduate Assistantships).

Thesis and Dissertation

Master's degrees

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://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Thesis_Option_Change_Request.pdf

Doctoral degrees

Doctoral degrees (Ph.D. and Ed.D.) require a dissertation that involves original research.

Independent Effort

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

Advisory Committee Approval of the Thesis or Dissertation

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/Dissertation Approval form. This signifies that the thesis or dissertation is in final form and ready for ETD submission to the Graduate School. This form is available at

http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/ETD/Thesis_Dissertation_Approval_Form.pdf.

If a committee member does not approve the thesis/dissertation, that 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>

Deadline for ETD Submission

The final version of the thesis or dissertation approved by the student's Advisory Committee, must be submitted electronically as an ETD to the Graduate School no later than two weeks after the successful completion of the final examination. The ETD Approval Form, indicating Advisory Committee approval of the document must be returned to the Graduate School when the ETD is submitted. If the process of ETD revisions leading to Graduate School approval of the ETD extends beyond the posted deadlines for a semester, the student will be enrolled for 1 credit of DSS in the later semester when degree completion occurs.

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

Degree Completion and Graduate School Approval of the ETD

Degree Completion

Graduate degrees are completed after the approval of the ETD by the Graduate School and the completion of all other requirements for the degree.

Copyrighting and Microform

The Graduate School does not require students to register their copyright. ProQuest (previously University Microfilms), digitizes 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://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Application_for_Degree_or_Certificate.pdf or an

Application For Certificate Conferral

http://grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Application_for_Degree_or_Certificate.pdf to obtain

a diploma or certificate and to have their names appear in the Commencement Bulletin

The AFD should be submitted electronically through Hokie SPA. Schedules for those

wishing to complete their degrees in time to attend Commencement are posted at

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

Graduation Clearance Procedures

Summary of Procedures

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

1. Submission of the Request to Schedule Final Examination, two weeks before the proposed examination date for students who have been enrolled during the last year. For those who have been out of residence for more than a year, and require Readmission, the Readmission process should be completed before requesting the Final Examination.

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 version of the thesis or dissertation, approved by the student's Advisory Committee as an Electronic Dissertation or Thesis (ETD) within two weeks after the defense
5. Submitting the completed and signed Thesis/Dissertation Approval form http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/ETD/etd_approval.pdf at the time of ETD submission
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 which is required of students at the time the ETD is submitted
8. **Degree Completion** requires ETD approval by the Graduate School and completion of all other requirements for the degree.

Commencement Participation

Master's students who have completed their degree requirements, and those nearing completion, can participate in Commencement. 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, to be eligible to participate in the doctoral hooding ceremony, must have completed all degree requirements including ETD approval by the Graduate School by the deadlines published each semester on the Graduate School website:

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. 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 during summer 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.

Extended Campus Locations

Extended Campus Locations

Virginia Tech offers courses and degree programs at several extended campus locations: Hampton Roads, National Capitol Region (several sites), Roanoke, Richmond, Southwest Virginia.

For degree offerings at the extended campus locations, see http://www.grads.vt.edu/graduate_catalog/locations.jsp.

The National Capital Region website lists forms and other details relevant to that extended campus <http://www.ncr.vt.edu/>

Appeals

Graduate Student Appeals

Graduate education is a complex activity involving a high order of student-faculty relationship. It follows that the evaluation of the graduate student's progress is, and must be, dependent in large part on the judgment of the student's Advisor and augmented by the collective judgment of the members of the Advisory Committee. The university, through the Graduate School, defines minimal entrance standards and general rules governing eligibility for continuation in graduate programs. However, the crucial agency in student evaluation is the student's Advisor and other Advisory Committee members.

It is important that each graduate student be fully informed, not only of the Graduate School Policies and Procedures, but of any additional departmental program requirements beyond those of the Graduate School. The Graduate School website provides a link to departmental policy requirements

<http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/programs/index.html> The department should inform graduate students of their degree requirements at the time of matriculation.

It is assumed that most problems involving graduate education will be discussed informally and reconciled at the departmental level. Indeed, most discussions of this kind will commonly occur among the student, the Chair of the student's Advisory Committee, and the other members of the Advisory Committee. However, from time to time serious questions may arise that place the student's status in jeopardy. On these occasions it is important that the university provide full opportunity for the student's grievance to be

reviewed in a judicious manner.

The Departmental Appeal

When a graduate student believes that any work has been improperly evaluated, or believes that there has been unfair treatment, it is expected that the student will take up the questions directly with the faculty member involved. This may be the student's Advisor, other faculty members, or an instructor responsible for a course. If, after earnest inquiry, the matter remains unreconciled, the graduate student will be expected to appeal the question to the Department Head (the Graduate Program Director also may be involved in this level of appeal). If the Department Head is a party to the grievance, the Dean of the academic college will assume this responsibility. The Department Head, in consultation with the college Dean, shall take all reasonable and proper actions to resolve the question at the departmental level. The student shall be informed in writing of the results no later than one month after the appeal to the Department Head. In some matters, the Faculty Handbook provides additional relevant information, for example, "the assigning of grades is the responsibility of the individual instructor in every case. The basis on which grades are assigned rests on his/her judgment alone....").

The University Appeals Procedure

Should the aggrieved student believe that the student's rights were abridged at the departmental level, the student may file an appeal with the Dean of the Graduate School. In a statement to the Dean, the aggrieved student must clearly state the substance of the appeal. The Dean of the Graduate School shall take all reasonable and proper actions to resolve the question or refer it directly to the Graduate Appeals Committee for its review. As a standing committee of the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, this committee will consist of three faculty members and one graduate student. For each appeal the dean shall appoint to the committee one additional faculty member knowledgeable in the academic area of the appeal.

The review by the Graduate Appeals Committee will have available to it all pertinent information in the student's record in the university and (a) the department's policy statement concerning its degree expectations, (b) a summary of the department's action on the appeal, and (c) copies of the student's statement to the Dean of the Graduate School recording the student's view of alleged irregularities (i.e., the basis for university appeal).

The Graduate Appeals Committee may hold a formal hearing on grievance appeals referred to it by the Dean of the Graduate School. The hearing will be conducted with the following procedural safeguards:

1. All parties to the dispute will be notified of the time and place of the hearing at least 48 hours in advance;
2. The aggrieved student will be permitted, if the student chooses, to invite a member of the faculty or student body to represent him/her in the hearing;
3. All parties in the dispute will be given full opportunity to testify and to present such evidence or witnesses as seem relevant;

4. All matters on which the finding will be based must be introduced into evidence at the hearing.

The Graduate Student Appeals Committee will make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School, which will be acted upon by the Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with the Provost. The Dean will convey the committee's recommendation and the final disposition of the matter to all concerned parties.

Academic Programs

Below is a listing of academic programs, degrees, and related course offerings.

<u>Accounting and Information Systems</u>	PhD, MACIS
<u>Aerospace Engineering</u>	MS, MEng, PhD
<u>Agricultural and Applied Economics</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Agricultural and Extension Education</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Agricultural and Life Sciences</u>	MS
<u>Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought</u>	PhD, MA
<u>Animal and Poultry Sciences</u>	PhD, MS
<u>Apparel, Housing and Resource Management</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Architecture</u>	MArch, MS
<u>Architecture and Design Research</u>	PhD
<u>Biochemistry</u>	MS, PhD, MSLFS
<u>Biological Sciences</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Biological Systems Engineering</u>	MS, MEng, PhD
<u>Biomedical and Veterinary Sciences</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Biomedical Engineering</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Biomedical Technology Development and Management</u>	MS
<u>Building Construction</u>	MS
<u>Business Administration</u>	MBA

<u>Business Information Technology</u>	PhD
<u>Chemical Engineering</u>	MS, MEng, PhD
<u>Chemistry</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Civil Engineering</u>	MEng, PhD, MS
<u>Communication</u>	MA
<u>Computer Engineering</u>	MEng, MS, PhD
<u>Computer Science & Applications</u>	MS, PhD, MIS
<u>Creative Writing</u>	MFA
<u>Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences</u>	PhD, MS
<u>Dairy Science</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Economics</u>	PhD
<u>Education, Career and Technical Education</u>	MSED, EdS, EdD, PhD
<u>Education, Counselor Education</u>	MA, PhD
<u>Education, Curriculum and Instruction</u>	PhD, EdS, EdD, MAEd
<u>Education, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies</u>	MA, PhD, EdD, EdS
<u>Education, Educational Research, Evaluation</u>	PhD
<u>Education, Health and Physical Education</u>	MSED, EdD, PhD
<u>Electrical Engineering</u>	MEng, MS, PhD
<u>Engineering Education</u>	PhD
<u>Engineering Mechanics</u>	MS, MEng, PhD
<u>English</u>	MA
<u>Entomology</u>	PhD, MSLFS
<u>Environmental Design and Planning</u>	PhD
<u>Environmental Engineering</u>	MS

<u>Environmental Sciences and Engineering</u>	MEng, MS
<u>Finance</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences</u>	PhD, MS
<u>Food Science and Technology</u>	PhD, MSLFS
<u>Foreign Languages, Cultures, and Literatures</u>	MA
<u>Forestry</u>	PhD, MS
<u>Genetics, Bioinformatics, and Computational Biology</u>	PhD
<u>Geography</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Geosciences</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Geospatial and Environmental Analysis</u>	PhD
<u>Government and International Affairs</u>	PGG, MPIA
<u>History</u>	MA
<u>Horticulture</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Hospitality &, Tourism Management</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Human Development</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Industrial and Systems Engineering</u>	MS, MEng, PhD
<u>Information Technology</u>	MIT
<u>Landscape Architecture</u>	MLA, PhD
<u>Macromolecular Science and Engineering</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Management</u>	PhD
<u>Marketing</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Materials Science and Engineering</u>	MEng, PhD, MS
<u>Mathematics</u>	MS, PhD
<u>Mechanical Engineering</u>	MS, MEng, PhD
<u>Microbiology Graduate Training Program</u>	PhD

Mining Engineering	PhD, MEng, MS
Molecular Plant Sciences	PhD
Natural Resources	MNR
Ocean Engineering	MEng, MS
Philosophy	MA
Physics	MS, PhD
Planning, Governance, and Globalization	PhD
Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Science	MS, PhD
Political Science	MA
Psychology	MS, PhD
Public Administration and Public Affairs	MPA, PhD
Rhetoric and Writing	PhD
Science and Technology Studies	MS, PhD
Sociology	MS, PhD
Statistics	MS, PhD
Theatre Arts	MFA
Urban and Regional Planning	MURPL
Wood Science and Forest Products	MF, MS, PhD

Graduate Certificates Offered and their (codes)

- [Africana Studies \(AFSC\)](#)
- [Air Transportation Systems \(ATRC\)](#)
- [ASPECT \(ASPC\)](#)
- [Business Information Systems \(BISC\)](#)
- [Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies \(CAGC\)](#)

[Communications Systems \(CSC\)](#)

[Computational Engineering Science & Mechanics \(ESMC\)](#)

[Decision Support Systems \(DSSC\)](#)

[Engineering Education \(ENGC\)](#)

[Environmental Politics & Policy \(PEPC\)](#)

[Foundations of Political Analysis \(PPAC\)](#)

[Future Professoriate \(FPGC\)](#)

[Geospatial Information Technology \(GITC\)](#)

[Gerontology \(GRTC\)](#)

[Health Product Risk Management \(HPRC\)](#)

[Higher Education Administration \(HEAC\)](#)

[History of Science and Technology \(HSTC\)](#)

[Human-Computer Interactions \(HCIC\)](#)

[Information Policy & Society \(PIPC\)](#)

[Civil Infrastructure Systems \(IEC\)](#)

[Integrative STEM Education \(STMC\)](#)

[International Research and Development \(IRDC\)](#)

[Liberal Arts \(LRTC\)](#)

[Local Government Management \(LGMC\)](#)

[Macromolecular Interfaces with Life Sciences \(MILC\)](#)

[Marriage and Family Therapy \(MAFC\)](#)

[Metropolitan Studies \(METC\)](#)

[Natural Resources \(NATC\)](#)

[Networking \(NWC\)](#)

[Nonprofit and Nongovernmental Organization Management \(NNMC\)](#)

[Philosophy of Science and Technology \(PSTC\)](#)

[Politics and Policy Studies of Science and Technology \(PPSC\)](#)

[Race and Social Policy \(RSPC\)](#)

[Science and Technology Studies \(STC\)](#)

[Security Studies \(PSOC\)](#)

[Social and Cultural Studies of Science and Technology \(SCSC\)](#)

[Software Development \(SDC\)](#)

[Traffic Control and Operations \(TCOC\)](#)

[Transportation Systems Engineering \(TSEC\)](#)

[Treatment Process Engineering \(TPEC\)](#)

[Urban Hydrology and Stormwater Management \(UHSC\)](#)

[Water Quality Management \(WQMC\)](#)

[Watershed Management \(WSMC\)](#)

[Women's Studies \(WSC\)](#)