

## GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – 2007- 08

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## THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AT VIRGINIA TECH

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

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

[http://www.grads.vt.edu/graduate\\_school/tge/index.html](http://www.grads.vt.edu/graduate_school/tge/index.html)

Another unique feature of graduate education at Virginia Tech is the establishment of the **Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown**. The Graduate Life Center (GLC) provides an intellectually stimulating and rich learning environment that builds a strong graduate community, as well as the physical space and institutional place for 21<sup>st</sup> century graduate education [http://www.grads.vt.edu/student\\_life/glc/index.html](http://www.grads.vt.edu/student_life/glc/index.html).

**Building Graduate Community: Expectations for Graduate Education** at Virginia Tech documents our commitment to enhancing the graduate education experience at Virginia Tech. The goal of the Graduate School is to provide quality graduate education in the context of a progressive and vibrant academic community.

<http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/expectations/index.html>

### Introduction

This document sets forth policies, procedures and requirements relating to graduate study at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). The policies in this document have been developed by the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies (CGS&P) and approved through the university 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), select and complete 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 of 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 Monthly Memos from the Dean [http://www.grads.vt.edu/graduate\\_school/monthly\\_memos/index.html](http://www.grads.vt.edu/graduate_school/monthly_memos/index.html). Some additional procedural information is available at [http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/procedural\\_guidelines/index.html](http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/procedural_guidelines/index.html).

### **The Graduate Honor System**

Graduate students, by accepting admission, subscribe to and are governed by the Graduate Honor Code, and acknowledge the right of the University to establish policies and procedures and to take disciplinary action when such action is warranted. Compliance with the Graduate Honor Code requires that all graduate students, regardless of their campus location, exercise honesty and ethical behavior in all their academic pursuits at Virginia Tech, whether these undertakings pertain to study, course work, research, extension, or teaching. The Graduate Honor System Constitution is available at <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 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 has a faculty member who serves as the **Graduate Program Director** for overseeing academic matters in the graduate program and who chairs the departmental Graduate Program Committee. 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 Advisory Committees to use in **annual evaluations of the progress of each graduate student** in the program. These evaluations should consider GPA, courses with a grade of incomplete, progress on the Plan of Study, preliminary exam performance, 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 suitable departmental committee, the Graduate Program Director or the Department Head. The results of the evaluation 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.

The results of these evaluations should be reported to the Graduate School in spring semester each year. This review process is in Presidential Policy Memorandum #229 (2003) which is an update to #1 (1977).

Periodic reviews of Graduate Programs and their standards and policies are required and 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 Policies**

Exceptions to policies may be requested of the Graduate School. A request for an exception should cite the policy, justify the request and demonstrate appropriate departmental support for the request. All exceptions should be directed to the Dean's office of the Graduate School.

## **STUDENT LIFE AND RELATED UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

All students enrolled at Virginia Tech are subject to student life policies set by the university. The university publication, **University Policies for Student Life** is available at <http://www.judicial.vt.edu/upsl.php>. 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.co.vt.edu/Risk/studenthealthinsr/index.html>.

### **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](http://www.studentmedical.vt.edu).

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

## **MEDEX Overseas Evacuation Program**

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

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

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

## **Automobiles**

Motor vehicles owned and operated by students who drive them on the Blacksburg 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>.

## **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. A copy of each departmental graduate policy statement should be on file in the Graduate School and available to

graduate students. 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 head of his department. 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 Faculty Handbook states "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 student shall be informed in writing of the results no later than one month after the appeal to the Department Head.

### **The University Appeals Procedure**

Should the aggrieved student believe that the student's rights were abridged at the departmental level, the student may file a request for review 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 them 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.

## **GRADUATE APPLICATION AND ADMISSION**

Admission to the Graduate School is contingent upon receipt of a bachelor of science/arts degree from an accredited college or university and the presentation of evidence of potential to pursue graduate work. 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. A list of degrees and their requirements are available for each Virginia Tech campus at this website:

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

Applications 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 [www.finaid.vt.edu](http://www.finaid.vt.edu). Applications for admission should be made on-line at <https://www.applyweb.com/apply/vtechg/index.html>. If this is not possible, a printable application also is available.

### **Credentials**

An official transcript should be sent to both the Virginia Tech Graduate School and the academic department. Individual departments may require applicants to submit the results of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). For applicants to the Pamplin College of Business, the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) is required. Please request that GRE or GMAT scores, if applicable, be sent to Virginia Tech. The Educational Testing Service Institution Code for Virginia Tech is 005859. All reference letters should be sent directly to the academic department. Please visit academic department websites for other departmental requirements such as resumes, vitas,

portfolios, etc. All credentials submitted in support of an application become the property of the university. The application fee is \$45.00 (\$25.00 for Visiting Graduate Students) and is non-refundable. Applicants using a paper application must pay the fee with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank; cash is not acceptable. Checks should be made payable to Treasurer, Virginia Tech. Applications will not be processed until the application fee has been paid.

### **International Applicants**

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

### **Legal Status and Financial Certification**

All international students must hold valid non-immigrant status to enroll at Virginia Tech. Prior to the issuance of certificates of eligibility to apply for the appropriate visa, all international students must submit an Immigration Information Form. The following link provides the Immigration Information Form, Affidavit of Support, and Financial requirements and general instructions.

[http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/international/immgrinfo\\_finreq\\_affidavitofsupport.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/international/immgrinfo_finreq_affidavitofsupport.pdf).

The Immigration Information Form collects both information required for form issuance and for funding documents, which demonstrate 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.

### **English Placement Test**

All incoming international graduate students are required to take the English Placement Test (EPT) during the orientation period prior to the beginning of classes unless they have both a TOEFL score of 620 paper/260 computer-based and an essay writing score (Test of Written English) of 4.5 or higher. On the Internet-Based TOEFL (iBT) a score of 80 for admission to the Graduate School is required, with recommendations to the departments of at least 20 on each subtest (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing). For international GTAs to be exempted from oral testing, a minimum speaking score of 26 is required. Those who do not achieve the required scores on the EPT are required to take and satisfactorily complete a semester-long Advanced Academic Writing course during the first semester of their enrollment at Virginia Tech along with their full load of academic classes (9-18 credit hours). There is an additional instructional fee for this course (fee includes the textbooks), taught by the Virginia Tech English Language Institute (ELI). National Capital Region students should consult with the Graduate Student Services Office

(GSSO) 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**

International Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) who are assigned classroom or laboratory teaching duties must pass the SPEAK Test before they can begin their teaching duties. Those who do not pass must take English 0014, Oral Communication for International Teaching Assistants (1 Cr.) during the semester prior to beginning their teaching assignment. The SPEAK Test is administered individually during the Orientation Period. Additionally, all international GTAs must attend and be enrolled in the GTA Workshop (GRAD 5004; 1 Cr., P/F). The workshop consists of three half days (Monday to Wednesday of the week before classes start in August) and two sessions from the Phase II offerings during fall semester.

### **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 should be directed to the International Graduate Student Services office of the Graduate School at 540/538-3743, [gssso@nvc.vt.edu](mailto:gssso@nvc.vt.edu).

### **Requirements for Assistantships and Employment**

International students in F-1 or J-1 status who obtained regular 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](mailto:igss@vt.edu); National Capital Region students should contact 703/538/3743, [gssso@nvc.vt.edu](mailto:gssso@nvc.vt.edu). For further information on other types of visa status that may permit enrollment and/or employment on campus. See the section on GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS below.

## **ADMISSION CATEGORIES AND GRADUATE STATUS CLASSIFICATIONS**

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

### **Regular Status**

For an applicant who meets the required grade point average (GPA) on the last 60 semester hours (or equivalent) of undergraduate credit and whose academic background meets established requirements and is relevant and current. The Graduate School requires a GPA of 3.0 or higher for this status. A graduate degree, or at least 12 credits of graduate coursework taken while in graduate status, may supersede the

undergraduate record in evaluating credentials for admission. International students residing outside the U.S. are only considered for regular admission.

### **Provisional Status (Master's only)**

For an applicant whose GPA is between 2.75 and 2.99. After completing 12 graduate credits with a GPA of 3.0 or better, students in Provisional status are automatically changed to Regular status. Provisional status is allowed for no more than the equivalent of one full semester, so if a 3.0 GPA is not earned in the first 12 credit hours, the Graduate School will consult with the department to determine if the student should be allowed to enroll in the next semester. Coursework taken while on Provisional status may be included on the Plan of Study for the student's degree. Note: International students in F1 or J1 are not eligible for admission to Provisional status.

### **Conditional Acceptance**

For an applicant with an academic background that is deficient or not current, but who meets minimum GPA standards for admission. The conditions for continued enrollment (e.g., specific coursework, timing for completing required coursework, etc.) should be specified in a letter from the admitting department to the applicant prior to matriculation. The conditions for continued enrollment will be monitored by the admitting academic department.

### **Non-degree Status**

For an applicant who qualifies for admission to the Graduate School in Regular status (i.e., who has a 3.0 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.

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**

This classification is open to an applicant who holds an earned bachelors or higher degree from an accredited university. Examples of students who seek admission into the Commonwealth Campus program include students who (a) may qualify for regular admission but do not currently wish to work for a graduate degree; (b) do not qualify for admission because of a poor undergraduate record but who have several years of appropriate professional experience and wish to improve their credentials; (c) require graduate courses for professional certification; or (d) are not U.S. citizens and are in a visa status that does not prohibit non-degree enrollment (note that TOEFL score

requirements do apply; students in F1 or J1 visa status are not eligible for Commonwealth Campus status). Students applying for Commonwealth Campus status must complete the Application for Graduate Study and submit a transcript (unofficial is sufficient) or a copy of their diploma for the highest degree attained. Students in Commonwealth Campus status are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

Students in Commonwealth Campus status may take up to 12 credits of course work if they remain in good academic standing (students may request to be allowed to take more courses). Students may not earn a graduate degree while enrolled in Commonwealth Campus status.

Students enrolled in this status, who later decide to pursue a graduate degree from Virginia Tech, must make formal application for admission to the Graduate School. A determination of the applicability of any courses and credits earned 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 a certificate application [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/certificate\\_application.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/certificate_application.pdf). The Graduate School requires a GPA of 3.0 for this category 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 a degree.

### **Professional Certification Status** (Departments of Teaching and Learning and Educational Leadership and Policy Studies only)

Admission requirements include an accredited bachelor's degree plus appropriate professional experience. Under this admissions category, a maximum of 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 and permits students to enter only certain approved courses in these departments. Individual instructors may reject from their courses anyone in this category who does not meet the normal prerequisites.

### **Visiting Graduate Student Status**

A graduate student in good standing at another university may be permitted to take graduate courses by submitting a Visiting Graduate Status form, available at [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Req\\_Visiting\\_Graduate\\_Student\\_Status.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Req_Visiting_Graduate_Student_Status.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 degrees at this university. The Provost's Office may be requested to waive this policy for an individual following successful appeal to the Commission on Faculty Affairs.

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

### **Dual Student Status**

Seniors in a bachelor's degree, who have a GPA of 3.0 or better and who are accepted to pursue a graduate degree after completion of the bachelor's, may be enrolled as dual registrants during the final semester of their undergraduate degree. Graduate coursework taken during the semester of dual registration may only be used for the graduate degree when it is not used to meet bachelor's degree requirements.

### **Combined Student Status (Architecture Only)**

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

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

Academic units may submit a request to the Graduate School to establish a five-year bachelor/master's degree (open) program. Undergraduate students may apply for

admission to these programs after the completion of 75 credit hours and if they have a 3.2 or better GPA.

A maximum of 6 credit hours of graduate course work, taken during the last two semesters before the completion of the bachelor's degree, may be used to satisfy both bachelor's and master's degree requirements.

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

Undergraduate students, who have completed 75 credit hours and who qualify for the Honors Program by having a 3.5 or better GPA, may apply for admission to these programs. Students should review the departmental requirements for the program.

The student submits the Application for Graduate Study to the department. Upon approval of the application, the Department Head will attach a form affirming the department's acceptance and recommendation of the student into the graduate program.

A maximum of 12 credit hours of graduate course work, taken during the last two semesters before the completion of the bachelor's degree, may be used to satisfy both bachelor's and master's degree requirements.

## **ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

### **Course Enrollment and Changes in Enrollment**

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

**Students may adjust their schedules** on a space available basis using web DROP/ADD (available through Hokie SPA <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 [https://banweb.banner.vt.edu/ssb/prod/HZSKVTSC.P\\_DispRequest](https://banweb.banner.vt.edu/ssb/prod/HZSKVTSC.P_DispRequest).

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

approved it will be designated as a **Graduate Withdrawal** (WG on the transcript) and will not carry a grade penalty; this option is only allowed prior to the Friday of the last week of classes for the semester

<http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/gcat/gcaGenInfo.html>.

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

A student may resign/withdraw without academic penalty by completing an official Virginia Tech Resignation/Withdrawal form on or before the last day specified on the Timetable for that semester or summer session. Resignation after the specified date requires permission of a Graduate Dean and is only permitted because of extenuating circumstances. The form is available at

<http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Resignation.pdf>. The student's grade report and transcript will show that he/she was enrolled for the term and that he/she resigned on the specific effective date. A student who is considering resigning should view the Virginia Tech **refund policy** at <http://www.bursar.vt.edu/refunds/> to determine the financial consequences of a resignation.

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

### **Continuous Enrollment**

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

### **Registration at the Time of Examinations and for Degree Completion**

Graduate students must be registered for at least the minimum number of credits in the semester or summer session when they take an examination required by Graduate School Policies and in the semester when a degree is completed (see Continuous Enrollment). Students who have a thesis/dissertation ready for defense by the beginning of a semester, may schedule that defense early in the semester and qualify for Defending Student Status DSS, 1 credit; see Defending Student Status and Dates for Degree Completion at

[http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates\\_deadlines/commencement\\_deadlines.html](http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html).

## **Leave of Absence**

Students sometimes experience situations in which they cannot be continuously enrolled. A student may request a Leave of Absence to suspend activities associated with course work or thesis/dissertation research. The *Request for Leave of Absence* form [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Req\\_Lv\\_of\\_Absence.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Req_Lv_of_Absence.pdf) must be submitted two weeks before the beginning of the semester for which the leave is requested. The leave of absence must be approved by the student's advisor and the Department Head or 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 also should consult the immigration advisors in the Graduate School before taking a leave of absence.

## **Readmission**

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

## **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/Chg\\_Admiss\\_Status.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Chg_Admiss_Status.pdf). An example of a status change is: Master's to Ph.D. in the same major. 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 from the thesis to the non-thesis option (or vice versa) only once. The Thesis Option Change Form [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/thesis\\_option\\_change.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/thesis_option_change.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

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 program and the Graduate School.

[http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Chg\\_Graduate\\_Prog.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Chg_Graduate_Prog.pdf)

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

## Change of Campus

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

[http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/change\\_of\\_campus.pdf](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. The fee is \$45.00. [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/simultaneous\\_degree.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/simultaneous_degree.pdf)

## GENERAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION

### Grading System

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

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

Grades in all courses, including those not on the student's Plan of Study, are calculated into the overall GPA. There are in addition to the above grades: "I" (Incomplete; no effect on GPA), "P" (Pass; 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; no effect on GPA), and "EQ" (Equivalent Credit, a "pass" for research or project/report credit). The "NG" (No Grade, assigned when the student has not done any of the work for the course) calculates as 0.0 in computing the GPA. The "NR" (grade Not Recorded) indicating the instructor did not enter a grade) does not calculate in the GPA.

### **Grade for Thesis/Dissertation/Major Paper**

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

### **Incomplete and X Grades**

An Incomplete ("I") grade, which 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 by students in their programs. Grades of "I" may be removed during a period when the student is not enrolled at the university. Grades of "X" are assigned initially to course work that extends over more than one semester and are removed when the final grade for the course is entered. Graduate degrees cannot be completed until all "I" and "X" 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).

### **Grading System Requirements**

All courses on the Plan of Study, i.e., courses that satisfy degree requirements, must be taken for a letter grade (A/F) except for those courses offered on a pass/fail (P/F) basis *only* (for example, 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.

## **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 faculty 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 for tuition and fees for auditing courses as for courses taken for credit. Audited courses do not count toward full-time enrollment.

## **Graduate Credit**

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

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

On-line courses offered for graduate credit from accredited universities may be considered for transfer credit (see section on transfer credit limitations in Plan of Study). Independent study (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) 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 to be reviewed 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. If a student fails to make satisfactory progress toward all degree requirements, permission may be denied to continue in the degree program. This decision may be reached by the student's Advisory Committee, a graduate program Evaluation Committee in the department and the Graduate Program Director, or the Department Head, and recommended to the Graduate School. If the student's research progress has been unsatisfactory, NG (no grade) may be entered for any thesis (5994) or dissertation (7994) credits the student is taking. The Graduate School will dismiss the student for unsatisfactory progress following the recommendation by the department. 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.

## **CREDIT HOUR LIMITS AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **Full Time Enrollment**

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

## Employed Graduate Students

Students on full graduate assistantship are assumed to be 50 percent employed for determining credit hour loads and can enroll for 12-18 credit hours of course work in academic year semesters and/or 6-9 credit hours during each summer session. The maximum credit hours total for both summer sessions is 12 and the maximum is 9 credit hours in any one summer session.

## Virginia Tech Employees

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 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 also 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/employment/development/>.

For university employees that are working on a graduate degree part-time, University policy prescribes the following upper limits on graduate academic loads. Also see the section below on Eligibility of Faculty/Staff for Graduate Degrees.

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

\* Maximum 12 credit hours of course work in both summer sessions (maximum of 9 credit hours in any one session).

## Fellowship Recipients

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

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

### Types of Assistantships

There are three types of graduate assistantships: general Graduate Assistantships, Graduate Teaching Assistantships, and Graduate Research Assistantships. To learn

more about assistantships, see  
<http://www.grads.vt.edu/financial/assistantships/index.html#types>.

### **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 or the Graduate School may allow a student one semester on probationary status to remedy grade deficiencies while holding an assistantship.

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.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) at Virginia Tech 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 an assistantship in the future should take the workshop in their first semester at Virginia Tech. The workshop consists of three half days (Monday to Wednesday of the week before classes start in August) and two sessions from the Phase II offerings during fall semester.

### **Teaching Assignments for Graduate Students**

Graduate students may be the Instructor of Record in undergraduate courses providing they have completed 18 credit hours of graduate work in the disciplinary area of the teaching. GTAs may assist a faculty member but may not have sole responsibility for a graduate course. To be the Instructor of Record in a graduate course requires: (a) holding a graduate degree that is the terminal degree for that field, and (b) not being currently enrolled as a graduate student in the same department.

## **GRADUATE DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS**

### **General Degree Requirements for Graduate Students**

For graduate students, the university degree requirements are those identified in the Graduate Catalog (Policies and Procedures) effective for the academic year in which the students were admitted. The departmental requirements are those effective at the time of filing the Plan of Study. If the requirements change during the time the graduate student is enrolled, the graduate student can choose, but is not required, to abide by the "new" requirements. For graduate students not enrolled for more than one calendar year, requirements will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis at the time of Readmission.

## Plan of Study

**Submission and Approval.** All graduate students must submit a Plan of Study that meets at least the minimum 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:** 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.

**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 of 12 credits per semester).

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

**Transfer Courses on the Plan of Study.** No more than 50% of the graded credit hours needed to satisfy the minimum requirements for a Virginia Tech graduate degree may be transferred in from another 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 offered for graduate credit at the institution where the student took the courses. Grades of "S" or "P" are not acceptable for transfer credit. All transfer courses must be acceptable to the student's Advisory Committee and the Graduate Program Director or Department Head and must have been completed within the time limits prescribed for satisfying degree requirements. For transfer course work more than five years old, see section on Justification of "Old" Course work below.

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

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

**Justification of "Old" Course Work.** Academic work, including transfer credit, that is 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.

<http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Revalidation.pdf> and [http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/procedural\\_guidelines/index.html](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.

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

**Courses not approved for Graduate Credit.** Any course required for an undergraduate degree in a given area may not normally be credited toward a graduate degree in the same area. Departments that wish to include up to 6 credits of 4000 level coursework that (1) is not graduate approved and (2) is from another department, in a graduate degree, may request approval from the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies. If the proposal is approved, each individual Plan of Study that includes such 4000 level course work must include an explanation justifying the use of coursework that is not graduate approved.

**Plan of Study Changes.** A Plan of Study Change Form [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Chg\\_Plan.pdf](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 is taken for a grade, it must remain on the Plan of Study.

**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](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/thesis_option_change.pdf)

**Grades on Plan of Study Courses.** All graded courses on the Plan of Study must be taken for a letter grade (A/F) except for those courses offered on a pass/fail (P/F) basis *only* (for example, 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.

**Repeating Courses on the Plan of Study.** Students are required to repeat any courses on the Plan of Study in which a grade below "C-" is earned. Courses may not be repeated if a "P" grade or a grade of "C" or better is earned. After a course has been repeated, the grade for the first enrollment will be **Repeat Graduate** (RG, defined as a "C-" or lower; 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:** The student's Advisory Committee designs and approves the Plan of Study, provides advice, and regularly assesses the student's progress and accomplishments. Advisory Committee members are appointed by the Graduate School on recommendation of the Department Head or Graduate Program Director. This occurs in conjunction with the approval of the Plan of Study.

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

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) in the graduate program the student is enrolled in. Teaching/research faculty may serve on graduate committees throughout the university. Research Professors also may serve as Advisors and as Advisory Committee members if they have been approved as Graduate Program Faculty by the department/program and notification of that approval has been sent to the Graduate School. The student should refer to the departmental policies and procedures document for specific guidelines for graduate Advisory Committee service within the department/program. It is appropriate but not required that the Advisory Committee includes at least one faculty member from outside the student's major department.

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

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:** Personnel, with suitable academic training and research experience, who are not Virginia Tech 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\\_vt\\_committee.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/non_vt_committee.pdf). This category includes personnel from outside Virginia Tech, as well as Administrative/Professional Faculty, Instructors, Adjunct 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 if the Plan of Study is approved by the Graduate School. If the person is on a temporary appointment there should be assurance that they will be available throughout the student's degree work. Inclusion

of committee members in these categories is requested by the student's Advisory Committee Chair using the form for Registration of Committee Members Who are Not Virginia Tech Graduate Program Faculty. 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. 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:** 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](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Chg_Committee.pdf) In the case that one or more members does not approve the change in the membership of the Advisory Committee, an appeal may be made by either the student or a faculty member to the Department Head. If the Department Head considers the appeal to have merit, he/she may then ask the Graduate School for an exception to all members signing the form.

## CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

**Master's Degree.** Virginia Tech allows for both thesis and non-thesis master's degrees. For each degree type, the student's Plan of Study must meet the requirements shown below. Departments/programs may have additional requirements and an advisory committee may add specific requirements needed for an individual student's academic development.

### Requirements for Master's Degree

	Minimum Total Graduate Credits	Minimum Graded Graduate Credits	Minimum Research Credits
Thesis	30	20 <sup>1,3,4</sup> (12 credits of 5000-level or higher)	6
Non-Thesis	30	24 <sup>2,3,4</sup> (15 credits of 5000-level or higher)	

<sup>1</sup> After satisfying the requirement for 12 credits of 5000-level course work, the plan may include up to 12 credits in 4000-level courses approved for graduate credit. The 5000-level course work may include up to 6 credits total in 5974, 5984, and 6984 courses. Undergraduate Independent Study (4974) and Special Study (4984) courses cannot be used on a graduate Plan of Study.

<sup>2</sup> After satisfying the requirement for 15 credits of 5000-level course work (exclusive of any departmental Project and Report requirement), the plan may include up to 9 credits in 4000-level courses approved for graduate credit. The 5000-level course work may include up to 9 credits total in 5974, 5984, and 6984 courses. Undergraduate Independent Study (4974) and Special Study (4984) courses cannot be used on a graduate Plan of Study.

<sup>3</sup> A maximum of 3 credits hours of seminar may be included in the graded credit hour totals.

<sup>4</sup> Graded credits must be taken for an A/F grade unless the course is only offered P/F (see Grading System Requirements).

**Second Master's Degree.** The requirements for a second master's degree are the same as for the first master's degree: an additional 30-54 hours, depending on the degree sought. No more than 50% of appropriate graded course work, to meet Graduate School minimum requirements for a masters degree, may be common to both degrees (i.e., "double counted"). 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 Approval must be submitted [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/simultaneous\\_degree.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/simultaneous_degree.pdf). No more than 50% of appropriate graded course work, to meet Graduate School minimum requirements for a masters degree, may be common to both degrees (i.e., half of 20 credits for a thesis masters or half of 24 credits for a non-thesis masters). No Research or Project and Report credits from one degree may be counted toward the other degree.

### **Education Specialist Degree**

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

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

### **Doctoral Degrees**

#### **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)**

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

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

### Doctoral (Ph.D.) Degree Requirements

	Semester Credit Hours <sup>1</sup>	
	Minimum	Maximum
Research and Dissertation (7994)	30	—
Graded courses 5000-level or higher <sup>2,5</sup>	27	—
Graded graduate-approved 4000-level courses <sup>2,3,5</sup>	0	—
Seminars (subject matter unstructured) <sup>5</sup>	0	4
Courses numbered 5974, 6974, 5984 and 6984 <sup>4,5</sup>	0	18

<sup>1</sup> 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 had approval for such changes in graded course work requirements.

<sup>2</sup> Students can use the graded course work credits from a master’s degree at Virginia Tech toward a doctoral degree in the same department if their Advisory Committee considers those courses appropriate to the doctoral Plan of Study. However, courses “double counted” toward the bachelor’s degree for a student in the bachelors/masters program cannot be used for doctoral credit.

<sup>3</sup> After satisfying the requirement for 27 credits of graded 5000-level course work, the plan may include any number of 4000-level courses approved for graduate credit provided that all other requirements are met within the 90 credit total requirement (note that a minimum of 30 research credits are required within the 90 credit hour total). Courses numbered lower than 4000, or 4000-level courses not approved for graduate credit (including Undergraduate Independent Study, 4974, and Special Study, 4984, courses) cannot be used on a doctoral Plan of Study except as Supporting Courses.

<sup>4</sup> Courses numbered 5974, 6974, 5984, and 6984 may be used in meeting minimum requirements for 5000-level or higher credits. When a Special Study course a student has taken subsequently is approved as a regular course during the student’s degree, the department should notify the Graduate School of that change. In such cases the Special Study course does not count toward the maximum permitted special study credit hours. Undergraduate Independent Study (4974) and Special Study (4984) courses cannot be used on a graduate Plan of Study.

<sup>5</sup> All graded course work on the Plan of Study must be taken A/F unless the course is only offered P/F.

## **Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)**

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

## **Residency Requirement for the Ph.D.**

At least two consecutive semesters of full-time enrollment (at least 12 credit hours per semester) must be completed at the Virginia Tech Blacksburg campus to fulfill the Residency Requirement. Individual degree programs, located at sites other than Blacksburg may request an alternative to the Blacksburg campus requirement by petitioning the Graduate School. The Graduate School will report annually to the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies on the success of the alternative residency. The Graduate School retains the right to withdraw the permission for such alternate forms of residency, if deemed necessary.

## **Residency Requirement for the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)**

Residency for the Ed.D. involves full-time study (at least 12 credit hours per semester) during two consecutive semesters (the full summer is considered the equivalent of one academic year semester). The dissertation for the Ed.D. typically demonstrates the candidate's ability to investigate phenomena in educational institutions or service agencies to increase practitioners' understanding of practical problems and issues. The Ed.D. student and the advisory committee develop and submit a plan of study that is designed to build on the unique strengths and interests of the individual.

## **Purposes of the Residency Requirement for Doctoral Degrees**

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

The traditional residency requirement addresses these objectives by bringing the student into the rich academic environment of the university campus. During the full time enrollment for residency, any external work should be limited to ensure that the student's involvement with the campus' culture of study and discourse is substantial.

1. To ensure access to a wide spectrum of courses in the student's own discipline as well as related disciplines.

2. To ensure substantial interaction with a large pool of qualified faculty. This is important not only to support dissertation work and studies, but as a source of advice, perspective and guidance in formulating career objectives.
3. To ensure a similar level of interaction with fellow graduate students.
4. To guard students against a parochial view of their discipline, in which narrow focus in their specialty excludes experience with other disciplines.
5. To guard against over-specialization, and provide a broad range of professional development.
6. To ensure access to library and laboratory resources.
7. To provide access and exposure to a wide spectrum of seminars, professional presentations, and contact with leaders in their own discipline as well as others.
8. To ensure quality and rigor of the program through involvement with and scrutiny by peers in other disciplines.
9. To require that students transferring several course credit hours from other institutions complete a minimal amount of course work at Virginia Tech.

### **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 additional residence requirements specified for the doctoral degree.

### **Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS)**

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

### **Graduate Certificates**

Certificates can be awarded to individuals who do not desire to work toward a degree as well as to students who are working on degrees. At least 2/3 of the graduate course work for the certificate 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://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Certificate\\_Application.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Certificate_Application.pdf).

Upon successful completion of certificate requirements, an **Application For Certificate Conferral** [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Certificate\\_Completion.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Certificate_Completion.pdf) must be signed by the department and submitted by the Application for Degree deadline in the term in which the certificate will be awarded. Meeting this deadline is necessary for the

student's name to appear in the commencement bulletin  
[http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates\\_deadlines/commencement\\_deadlines.html](http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html)

## **EXAMINATIONS**

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

### **Scheduling Examinations:**

Examinations required by Graduate Policies and Procedures (Preliminary and Final Examinations), are scheduled through the Graduate School.  
[http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched\\_Final.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched_Final.pdf) Requests to schedule examinations must include the time, date, building and room number, title of dissertation or thesis, and the names of the 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 will be sent electronically to the student and all members of the Examining Committee. The examination card will be sent to the Chair of the student's Advisory Committee prior to the examination. The signed examination card should be returned to the Graduate School within 1-2 days after the examination.

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

### **Examining Committees**

At least four Advisory Committee members are required for doctoral examinations, at least three are required for a Master's examination. If one of the Advisory Committee members cannot be present at an exam, 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 card and indicate whether they consider the student's performance to be Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Examination cards 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 ETD Approval Form, it remains the responsibility of the student's Advisory Committee to evaluate the thesis or dissertation and sign the ETD Approval 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://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched\\_Final.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched_Final.pdf)

### **Qualifying Examination (Doctoral)**

Certain departments require doctoral students to take a qualifying examination (see departmental policies). The results are typically used to evaluate subject mastery, to determine deficiencies, and to determine whether the student should continue into dissertation research. The results of qualifying examinations are made part of the student's departmental record. Qualifying 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://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched\\_Prelim.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/Sched_Prelim.pdf).

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

### **Final Examination (Doctoral)**

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

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

## **Registration at the Time of Examinations**

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

## **Defending Student Status**

A student who has a thesis/dissertation ready for defense at the beginning of the semester may qualify for Defending Student status (DSS, 1 credit). Presidential Policy Memorandum # 97, which established this enrollment status, required that the defense be scheduled before the semester started for a student to be eligible for this status. In practice, the Graduate School has allowed a limited time after the beginning of the semester for students to defend with DSS enrollment. See [http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates\\_deadlines/commencement\\_deadlines.html](http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html) for the deadlines for each semester of the current year.

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

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

## **THESIS AND DISSERTATION**

**Master's degrees** may be thesis or non-thesis and this is specified on the Plan of Study at the time the plan is submitted. For departments where the non-thesis option is available, a master's degree candidate is allowed to change from the thesis to the non-thesis option (or vice versa) only once. A change between thesis and non-thesis requires the filing of a Thesis Option Change form [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/thesis\\_option\\_change.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/thesis_option_change.pdf).

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

## **Independent Effort**

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

## **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 ETD Approval form. This signifies that the thesis or dissertation is in its final form and ready for ETD submission to the Graduate School. This form is included in the package with the Defense card and is available at [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/ETD/etd\\_approval.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/ETD/etd_approval.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> and Appendix I of this Graduate Catalog.

## **Deadline for ETD Submission**

The final version of the thesis/dissertation/major paper, 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 extends beyond the posted deadlines for a semester [http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates\\_deadlines/commencement\\_deadlines.html](http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html), the student will be enrolled for 1 credit of DSS in the semester when degree completion occurs.

## **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. However, students are required to return the UMI form to the Graduate School at the time of filing the ETD and to indicate whether or not they wish to copyright the dissertation. For those doctoral students that elect to register their copyright, there is an arrangement with University Microfilms (UMI). The form and guidelines for payment (\$75.00) for this service are included in the booklet that is provided by UMI in the student's defense packet. The company, now called ProQuest, digitizes the abstracts in their book

Dissertation Abstracts and also digitizes the dissertations <http://il.proquest.com/brand/umi.shtml> If a master's student wishes to register the copyright, they must apply directly through the Library of Congress Copyright Registration Office. More information concerning the requirements and cost of copyright registration can be found at <http://www.copyright.gov/register/>

## Intellectual Property

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

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

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

## GRADUATION

### Procedures for Graduation

Students anticipating degree completion or certificate award must file an **Application for Degree** (AFD) form <http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/AFD.pdf> or an **Application For Certificate Conferral** [http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/certificate\\_completion.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/certificate_completion.pdf) to obtain a diploma or certificate and to have their names appear in the Commencement Bulletin The AFD application 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](http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/commencement_deadlines.html)

### Graduation Clearance Procedures

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

1. Scheduling of final examination, two weeks before exam
2. Taking final examination
3. Filing of Application for Degree, payment of fee. This form makes an individual degree completion checklist available to the student on Hokie Spa

[http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates\\_deadlines/completion\\_checklist\\_masters.p  
df](http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates_deadlines/completion_checklist_masters.pdf)

[http://www.grads.vt.edu/academics/dates\\_deadlines/completion\\_checklist\\_doctoral.p  
df](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 ETD approval form  
[http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/ETD/etd\\_approval.pdf](http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/academics/ETD/etd_approval.pdf)
6. Submitting any applicable supporting documentation for the ETD, i.e.: copyright permission letters to reproduce items from other publications, Institutional Research Board approval or exemption notices (if appropriate), UMI form, Survey of Earned Doctorates
7. Payment of the archiving fee (see ETD fees)
8. **Degree Completion** requires ETD approval by the Graduate School and completion of all other requirements for the degree.

### **ETD Fees**

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

### **Commencement Participation**

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

Doctoral candidates, 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](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 at these times may attend the next commencement; students must confirm commencement attendance via Hokie Spa. All degrees conferred between commencements are listed in the next commencement program. Diplomas will be mailed to graduates by first class mail.