

2022-2023

Virginia Tech School of Education

Graduate Requirements and Procedures

**To be used in conjunction with the VT
Graduate School Policies**

Approved by the
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THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AT VIRGINIA TECH

Virginia Tech's School of Education (SOE) is dedicated to enriching the lives of PK-20 learners, families, and communities through inquiry, leadership and advocacy in a diverse world. We fulfill this mission through the preparation of educational professionals, applied research, and high impact outreach. We seek to promote rigorous inquiry in all aspects of our teaching, research, and outreach, provide the leadership necessary to advance all educational systems, and engage in advocacy that ensures equity and accessibility to quality learning experiences for all members of our diverse and global community. Our mission clearly situates our work within the university's motto "**Ut Prosim.**"

As a community within Virginia Tech, the SOE upholds the values expressed in the Virginia Tech Principles of Community. These principles focus on creating a community of inclusion, equity, respect, and thoughtfulness, which we believe should be the basis for any learning environment.

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

- ***We affirm*** the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- ***We affirm*** the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- ***We affirm*** the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- ***We reject*** all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.
- ***We pledge*** our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of *Ut Prosim (That I May Serve)*.

SOE community members are also directed to the Graduate School documents regarding the Expectations for Graduate Education. These documents, including specific expectations for students, for faculty, for departments and programs, and for the graduate school are also based on principles of inclusion, equity, respect, and thoughtfulness.

The graduate school expectations can be found at:

<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/expectations/expectations-for-graduate-education-overview.html>

Introduction to Graduate Studies

Undertaking graduate studies is something that students should be proud of, and we are glad that you have chosen to complete your studies with us at the Virginia Tech School of Education. Please do not hesitate to ask questions regarding the contents of this SOE Graduate Requirements and Procedure document. Staff in the VT Graduate School and in the SOE Office of Academic Programs, as well as your advisors, will either be able to answer your questions directly or help you get to the person who can. Whatever aspect or level of support you need to be successful and thrive throughout your graduate studies, it exists at Virginia Tech.

This document describes requirements and procedures that are specific for the SOE. Students and faculty should refer to the Graduate School policies (GSP) for requirements that must be met in all graduate degree programs:
https://secure.graduateschool.vt.edu/graduate_catalog/policies.htm;jsessionid=D65E02B34D1C181F362036BDE9B3930E.smithwicks

Some items in the GSP need and warrant clarification at the department/school level. These areas include the sections in this document titled GSP with the name of the parallel policy. Some programs within the SOE might have specific procedures for students, which are located on the program website. Students should check with advisors or the OAP about any policy or procedure questions.

The major responsibility for knowing and completing all Graduate School, SOE, and program degree requirements rests with the graduate student. With the support and direction of the advisor, students are responsible for completing forms at the appropriate time and obtaining the required signatures. Programs and advisors are expected to be transparent about expectations for exams and procedures, as indicated in the Expectations for Graduate Education. After all of the signatures required for a given form are obtained, the form should be submitted to the OAP to be signed by the Graduate Program Director and Graduate Coordinator. (Note: Some forms require the signature of the Department Head, who for graduate school paperwork in the SOE is the Graduate Program Director, who is the Associate Director of Academic Programs.)

The SOE Associate Director for the Office of Academic Programs (OAP), Dr. Nancy Bradley, serves as the Graduate Program Director for the SOE and oversees academic matters in the graduate program. Two Graduate Coordinators are involved in overseeing technical aspects of the SOE graduate programs. Nancy Nolen works with all graduate programs and students earning degrees in EDCI and EDCT. Kathy Tickle works with all graduate programs and students earning degrees in ELPS, EDCO, EDRE, and EDHE.

Contact information:

- Dr. Nancy Bradley (Associate Director), nanboden@vt.edu, 540-231-5220
- Nancy Nolen (Graduate Coordinator), nanolen@vt.edu, 540-231-5348
- Kathy Tickle (Graduate Coordinator), ktickle@vt.edu, 540-231-9721
- OAP office fax: 540-231-3717

SOE and Graduate School forms are available on the SOE OAP website:
<https://liberalarts.vt.edu/departments-and-schools/school-of-education/support-offices/office-of-academic-programs.html>

Specific proposals or issues regarding SOE graduate requirements and procedures included in this document should be brought to the attention of the Associate Director for Academic Programs. Proposals for changes will be reviewed by the SOE Administration and either acted upon in that committee or, for

substantive changes, revisions will be presented to the SOE faculty members for discussion and decision by faculty vote.

Exceptions to requirements may be requested at the appropriate level. Exceptions to program requirements are approved at the program level, typically by the advisor and committee members. Requests for exceptions to SOE requirements should be submitted by the advisor and committee to the Associate Director of the OAP, who may confer with SOE leadership personnel as needed. Requests for exceptions to Graduate School policy should be submitted through the Associate Director of OAP.

Sections of the Graduate School Policies and the relevant clarifications specific to the SOE

GSP: GRADUATE APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

The SOE requires that all applicants for Ph.D. programs submit GRE scores. Some programs within the SOE have additional admission requirements beyond those of the Graduate School and SOE, such as supplemental application materials or application deadlines. Program websites provide specific information regarding their requirements. Program faculty members recommend admission to the OAP, which submits the recommendation to the Graduate School for the final admission decision and notification to the applicant.

GSP: ADMISSION CATEGORIES AND GRADUATE STUDENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Undergraduates Taking Graduate Courses

Accelerated Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs

The School of Education has been approved by the Graduate School to offer the Accelerated Undergraduate/ Graduate (UG/G) Degree Program for the following degrees:

Career and Technical Education: MSED

Curriculum and Instruction: MAED

- **Admission criteria:**
 - Students must be accepted into the program prior to enrolling in courses to be used on the accelerated program.
 - Students qualifying for the program must be within 12 months of the completion of their undergraduate degree at Virginia Tech.
 - The student must have a minimum GPA of 3.3 in the last 60 credits of their undergraduate program.
 - To be accepted for the graduate program, students are required to submit all materials (e.g., reference letters, essays) and follow all procedures (e.g., interviews) that are required by the program for admission.

- **Credits to be double counted toward undergraduate and graduate degrees:**
 - A maximum of 12 credits of graded coursework may be double counted in the program.
 - No more than six credits to be double counted may be at the 4000 level; all others must be offered for graduate credit.

- A grade of B or higher must be earned in each course to be double counted.
- Courses must not be taken pass-fail if a graded option is available.
- **Process for identifying potential students and faculty advisors and mentoring during program:**
 - Potential students will be identified by working with appropriate undergraduate faculty to recommend students and provide information about the program to potential students. Information will also be provided on websites of School of Education programs that are participating in the UG/G option.
 - At the time a program recommends a student for admission, a faculty advisor will be appointed.
 - The faculty advisor will mentor the student throughout the UG/G program.
 - The faculty advisor will provide the student with a listing of the graduate courses that the student can take that are appropriate for use on a graduate Plan of Study.
- **Typical listing of courses to be used for graduate plans of study for students in the program:**
 - EDCI 5104 Schooling in American Society
 - EDEP 5154 Psychological Foundations for Teachers
 - EDCI 5264 Comprehending Processes and Reading in the Content Areas
 - EDCI 5554 Educating Exceptional Learners Across the Lifespan

GSP: ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Course Enrollment and Changes in Enrollment

- Students are expected to register for courses in a timely manner, as decisions are made about courses with low enrollment about two weeks prior to the start of each semester.
- Requests for force-adding into a course that is listed as full should be made to the faculty member of record for the course, who will contact the appropriate Graduate Coordinator if the request is approved.
- Dropping a class after the designated period, resigning or withdrawing for the semester will be managed in the OAP in consultation with the advisor.

GSP: GENERAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Incomplete, X, NG and NR Grades

If a student in the School of Education has three or more Incompletes in classes, they will not be allowed to register for additional classes until those Incompletes have been removed by completing the course. All Incompletes should be completed within one year during the academic calendar by the last day of classes of that semester. An Incomplete awarded in the Summer or Fall needs to be completed by the following Fall (i.e. Summer or Fall of 2018 needs to be completed by end of Fall 2019). An Incomplete awarded in the Spring needs to be completed by the following Spring (i.e. Spring of 2018 needs to be completed by end of Spring 2019). Students should be aware that faculty are not contracted to work in the summer, and thus should not rely on faculty availability to grade material in the summer sessions. Incompletes that are not completed within this time-frame will be changed to a grade of F.

GSP: ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Satisfactory Progress toward a Graduate Degree

School of Education doctoral students are required to complete their doctoral degrees within eight years of their first semester of enrollment as a doctoral student. Exceptions need to be approved in consultation with the student, advisor, and the Associate Director of Academic Programs.

All graduate students are to be reviewed at least once a year by their advisory committees. For Teacher Education master's students in one-year programs, faculty will endorse student progress on the Plan of Study submitted in the fall semester.

For all other SOE students, the student initiates this process when prompted by the OAP in the spring, and the faculty advisor endorses the annual review with input from the committee as appropriate. The overall evaluation may include GPA, courses with a grade of incomplete, progress on plan of study, preliminary or other exam performance, research performance, teaching performance, assistantship status and performance, program-specific professional dispositions, and recommendations for the next review period. Students who do not yet have a plan of study and an advisory committee should be reviewed by the advisor. Programs may establish additional requirements related to annual reviews and provide information on their websites.

If a student fails to make satisfactory progress toward degree expectations, this determination will be communicated in writing to the student and signed, or acknowledged by email, by student and advisor. If the student is not responsive to contacts, the attempts to reach the student will be documented. If a student is assessed as not making satisfactory progress, the student and advisor are encouraged to discuss any and all issues keeping the student from progressing, and create a plan to mitigate those issues and create an opportunity for success. If it is appropriate to include others into the conversation (other faculty, Associate Director, or Ombudsperson), this should be completed as early as possible to provide suitable support for the student. The Graduate School will dismiss students who receive two annual unsatisfactory progress reports. All documentation of reviews indicating unsatisfactory progress, should be shared with the student and with the OAP Associate Director.

If the advisor determines the student's dissertation research progress has been unsatisfactory, NG (no grade) should be entered for any thesis (5994) or dissertation (7994) credits the student is taking.

GSP: GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Types of Assistantships

For the purposes of this clarification, doctoral students includes all students enrolled in a program leading to a doctoral degree (EdD or PhD) in the School of Education; GA includes those doctoral students who have assignments as Graduate Assistant (GA), Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), and Graduate Research Assistant (GRA).

Graduate Assistant serving as Instructor of Record

In the School of Education, doctoral students and GAs can serve with full responsibility for teaching an undergraduate course as identified in the graduate school policy (after 18 credit hours and completion of GRAD 5004).

Generally, the Graduate School does not allow doctoral students to teach in master's level classes. However, in recognition of the experience that our doctoral students have in education and teaching, and since the only possibility for teaching in the SOE is with master's classes, the Dean of the Graduate School will consider requests from the Associate Director of OAP to allow doctoral students to be Instructor of Record. In preparation of this request, the following need to be in place:

- The doctoral student has completed the Grad School GTA workshop;
- The doctoral student has completed at least 24 credits in the doctoral program at VT;
- The doctoral student has been previously mentored and supervised as an instructor in the class with the faculty member as the Professor of Record;
- The doctoral student does not have (or has a plan to mitigate) any dual relationships with the masters students in the class.

Co-teaching or mentor teaching

If a faculty member is interested in working with a doctoral student or GA in a master's course for which the faculty is listed as Professor of Record, the following should be kept in mind. It can be important for doctoral students to experience the process of teaching and supervising master's students as part of preparation for faculty positions, but this needs to be completed in a developmental and ethical manner for both the doctoral student and the master's students. The university SPOT evaluations will always reflect the Professor of Record, so this should be kept in mind as decisions are made, especially in the case of pre-tenured faculty. As the Professor of Record, the faculty member is ultimately responsible for student learning. To honor this responsibility, it is expected that the Professor of Record will: meet with the doctoral student to develop and approve the course syllabus and assessment design, develop an assessment strategy in the case of dual relationships with students enrolled in the class, directly observe the class proceedings with the doctoral student leading at least twice during the semester (class proceedings can be a classroom setting or the interactions that occur in an on-line course), enter all grades in the Banner system, provide an evaluation for the doctoral student after the class, and be available to manage problems if they arise during the semester. The Professor of Record and the doctoral student should have a clear understanding of the responsibilities prior to the start of the semester.

GRADUATE DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

Scholarly Ethics and Integrity

Information about the SOE process for meeting the Ethics and Integrity requirement can be found on the following webpage:

<https://liberalarts.vt.edu/departments-and-schools/school-of-education/support-offices/office-of-academic-programs.html#ethics>

Plan of Study (POS)

- **Submission and Approval:** All graduate students must submit a Plan of Study that meets the program and Graduate School requirements for the designated degree. The program website is the source of information for requirements and may include a specialized Plan of Study form. The Plan of Study also indicates when the Ethics and Academic Integrity requirement has been met by the avenue approved for the student's program, and if required, the certificate of completion and results of the electronic module should be submitted with the POS. Please take advantage of the Guides for completion of the Plan of Study available in the Academic Progress section on the SOE Forms page
<https://liberalarts.vt.edu/departments-and-schools/school-of-education/support-offices/office-of-academic-programs.html#forms>
- **Master's degree:** The plan of study must be submitted before completing 12 credit hours. Programs requiring 36 credits or more for the master's degree may extend the due date for the plan of study to the completion of 24 credit hours.
- **Education Specialist degree:** The Plan of Study must be submitted before completing 12 credit hours beyond the master's degree.
- **Ph.D. and Ed.D. Degrees:** The Plan of Study must be submitted before completing 18 credit hours beyond the master's degree. The completed Plan of Study should be submitted to the OAP no later than 30 days following the successful completion of the qualifying examination.

Graduate Advisory Committees

Graduate Advisors: The School of Education requires that the committee chair or at least one co-chair of doctoral student dissertation committees be a faculty member in an area of study that serves students earning the same degree (EDCI, EDEL, EDRE etc.). If a chair or co-chair is not from the specific program within the degree that the student is studying (for example EDIT or Ed Psych or Science Ed within the EDCI degree), this needs to be approved by the Associate Director of Academic Programs in consultation with the program leader and the Director.

CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES

Education Specialist Degree

The Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree is a post master's degree for professionals who seek advanced preparation to broaden their understanding of complex professional issues, strengthen their ability to conduct systematic inquiry on their practice and provide leadership for their institutions. The Ed.S. degree prepares leaders under any of the following degree areas:

- Career and Technical Education (EDCT)
- Curriculum and Instruction (EDCI)
- Educational Leadership (K-12) (ELPS)

Ed.S. Degree Requirements

Admissions. Individuals seeking admission into the Ed.S. degree must have:

- completed a master's degree,
- attained a 3.0 GPA in graduate level work,
- documented successful professional experience, and
- participated in an admissions interview with faculty.

Academic features. The Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree includes the following general requirements; each specialty area may designate additional program requirements.

1. Completion of a sixty-credit graduate program, thirty of which is beyond the masters.
2. Completion of twenty-one credits of course work from Virginia Tech after acceptance into the Ed.S. program.
3. Successful completion of a qualifying exam administered at the discretion of the committee.
4. Successful completion of a project approved by the student's advisory committee.
5. Successful completion of a comprehensive examination at the end of the course work.
6. Have an advisory committee of three faculty members of which the chair must be a faculty member from the degree area (ELPS, EDCT, EDCI) in which the student is enrolled.

Structure. Each student pursuing the Education Specialist degree must have an approved Plan of Study that includes a minimum of course work in the areas indicated below, which may include studies from the master's degree:

Research and Evaluation	6 semester hours
Foundations	6 semester hours
Concentration	12 semester hours
Cognate	3 semester hours
Supervised Field Study	3 semester hours

Doctoral Degrees**Doctoral Research and Evaluation Course and Dissertation Requirements**

The SOE requires the following number of credits in the area of research as a differentiation between the PhD degree and the EdD degree. The total credits required is the same (90) for both degrees. .

Minimum required credits	EdD degree	PhD degree
Research/Evaluation credits	12	15
Dissertation credits (7994)	24	30

EXAMINATIONS**Scheduling Examinations**

Paper forms to request scheduling the Prospectus examination must be submitted to the OAP at least 3 weeks before the exam date.

Master's Final, Doctoral Prelim and Final Defense exams are scheduled through the electronic Signature System <https://ess.graduateschool.vt.edu/pages/login.php> and must be registered in the system at least two weeks prior to the date of the exam. The exam cannot take place unless the

graduate school has received approval for the scheduled date from all committee members and the chair has received an email from the grad school. The graduate school will cancel exams if faculty have not approved the date and time within three days of the exam request. Exams will be scheduled only on days when classes are in session. Exceptions will be granted in extreme circumstances only at the request of the advisor.

Exams within the SOE occur in the following order for doctoral students:

Qualifying Examination (Doctoral)

The SOE requires doctoral students to take a qualifying examination. The nature of and procedures for the exam are determined by programs. The results are typically used to evaluate subject mastery, to determine deficiencies, and to assist in developing the Plan of Study. The completed Plan of Study must be submitted within 30 days after the qualifying exam.

Preliminary Examination (Doctoral)

The Preliminary Exam (Prelim) is required by the GSP, and is scheduled through the Electronic Signature System (<https://ess.graduateschool.vt.edu>). The Prelim usually occurs toward or at the end of coursework, and serves one of two purposes for the program and committee. Some SOE programs design the Prelim around integrating the specific material completed in coursework as an insurance that the student comprehends both the individual course content and the relationship of the total coursework completed. Other programs design the Prelim as a starting point for individual research, and expect an independent initial literature review on the topic of planned dissertation research. The faculty in each program should clarify the purpose and goal for the exam, and provide transparent information about the expectations and assessment process.

After successful completion of the Prelim, doctoral students are officially referred to as Doctoral Candidates.

Prospectus Examination (Doctoral)

The SOE requires a prospectus examination to secure approval from the advisory committee members for the candidate's dissertation research proposal. Typically, the Prospectus includes the first three chapters of a traditionally designed dissertation (Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology), and includes documentation to submit IRB forms if necessary. Scheduling the Prospectus exam should occur after the chair has approved the document. The exam preparation usually includes submitting the document to I-thenticate, then to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the agreed upon date. The exam includes a meeting with the committee in which the candidate presents and answers questions about the research plan. The goal of a Prospectus Exam is for the committee to help the candidate develop a research plan that is most effectively going to be able to answer the student's research questions. Programs may have specific requirements regarding the nature and timing of the prospectus exam. The faculty in each program should clarify the purpose and goal for the exam, and provide transparent information about the expectations and assessment process.

Prospectus examinations are not scheduled through the Graduate School. The form to request the prospectus exam should be submitted to the OAP three weeks before the exam date. The examination results form must be submitted to the OAP within two working days after the date of the exam.

Final Examination (Doctoral)

The final examination is held when the candidate has completed their dissertation research, analyses, and written the final document. This might be in the traditional format of the chapters included in the Prospectus as well as two additional chapters (Results and Discussion), or in a manuscript format including sections of the traditional document prepared in a format that is ready for submitting for publication. Scheduling the Final exam should occur after the chair has approved the document, including an I-thenticate report. The final exam is a meeting with the committee, who have had the document for at least two weeks. If a committee member identifies major concerns with the document that might result in an unfavorable vote, they are encouraged to contact the chair and candidate to discuss the concerns to allow the candidate an opportunity to make corrections prior to the final exam.

After successful completion of the Final Exam, the candidate can now be referred to as Doctor.

Candidates should be aware of the dates and deadlines required to complete their final exam if they wish to participate in the Commencement ceremony. These dates are updated annually and available at <https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/what-you-need-to-graduate/deadlines-for-academic-progress.html>. Generally, exams need to be held by the end of March in order to be able to participate in the spring ceremony, and at the beginning of November to participate in the fall ceremony.

APPEALS

Graduate Student Appeals

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements

The Departmental Appeal: School of Education

Whenever a School of Education student believes that any work has been improperly evaluated or that there has been unfair treatment, there are a series of steps that should be followed to try to resolve the problem.

The student is advised to confer with the Graduate School Ombudsperson about the situation and the appeal process.

The student is encouraged to take up the issue directly with the faculty member involved. This may be the student's committee chair, another faculty member, or an instructor responsible for a course. If the student is for any reason unable to approach the faculty directly, support for this communication can come from the Ombudsperson or the OAP Associate Director.

If, after earnest inquiry, the matter is not reconciled, the student should appeal the question to the Associate Director for Academic Programs within 6 months after the incident occurred. Any appeal received within 30 days before the end of the spring semester will be reviewed in the following fall semester. The student should prepare a written appeal that clearly indicates the complaint, previous attempts to reconcile the situation, and the desired solution, and submit it to the faculty member and the Associate Director, who will try to resolve the issue. If the faculty member involved is the Associate Director for Academic Programs, the student should consult with the Associate Director of Faculty Affairs or the SOE Director.

The Associate Director for Academic Programs can use a variety of actions as efforts to resolve the issue at the School level, in consultation with the Director of the School of Education. These actions may include meeting with the student, meeting with the faculty involved, and/or having a combined meeting of all persons involved. Additionally, the Associate Director can request an Appeals Committee review of the situation.

An Appeals Committee of three faculty who are not involved in the complaint can be called on an ad-hoc basis to review appeals. One of the faculty members can be a requested individual from the student appealing, if that faculty member agrees. If the student wishes to request a particular faculty be included, that request should be made to the Associate Director, not directly to the faculty member. The Committee will review the materials submitted, meet with the student and faculty separately, and make a recommendation to the Associate Director. The student and faculty shall be informed in writing of the results no later than one month in the academic calendar after the appeal was submitted to the Associate Director.

If the student thinks that his or her rights were abridged at the School level, the student may file a request for a review with the Dean of the Graduate School, as indicated in the Graduate School Policies and Procedures.