

# **Virginia Tech School of Education**

## **Graduate Requirements and Procedures**

Approved by the  
School of Education Graduate Task Force, 5.07.08  
Effective 8.25.08, Updated 8.19.09

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## **The School of Education at Virginia Tech**

Virginia Tech's School of Education is dedicated to enriching the lives of PK-12 children and youth, families, and communities through inquiry, leadership, and advocacy. We fulfill this mission with the preparation of educational professionals, applied research, and high impact outreach. Our mission clearly situates our work within the university's motto: "Ut Prosim – That I may serve." More information about the School of Education is available online at:

<http://www.soe.vt.edu/>

### **Introduction**

This document describes requirements and procedures that are specific for the School of Education (SOE). Students and faculty should refer to the Graduate School policies and procedures for requirements that must be met in all graduate degree programs.

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

This document includes the same headings as used in the Graduate School policies and procedures. For those sections that indicate "no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements," please refer to the Graduate School policies and procedures.

It should be noted that in sections providing SOE requirements, these requirements do not replace the Graduate School policies but are in addition to those of the Graduate School.

Programs within the SOE may also implement requirements in addition to those of the Graduate School and SOE. Please refer to program websites for additional information.

The major responsibility for knowing and completing all Graduate School, SOE, and program degree requirements rests with the graduate student.

Changes in these requirements may be proposed to and approved by the SOE graduate curriculum committee.

### **Graduate Student Responsibilities**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements.

### **The Graduate Honor System**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements.

### **Graduate Program Responsibilities**

Each SOE program provides information about its graduate degrees and certificates on the program website. Links to these websites are on the SOE website: <http://www.soe.vt.edu/>

The SOE Associate Director for the Office of Academic Programs (OAP), Dr. Daisy Stewart, serves as the Graduate Director for the SOE to oversee 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 within the Learning Sciences and Technologies and Teaching and Learning departmental units. Kathy Tickle works with all graduate programs in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies departmental unit.

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Students are responsible for completing forms at the appropriate time and obtaining the required signatures, unless instructed otherwise by their advisors. 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 Director and Graduate Coordinator. (Note: Some forms require the signature of the Department Head, which for the SOE is the Graduate Director.)

SOE and Graduate School forms are available on the SOE website:  
<http://www.soe.vt.edu/oap/graduateforms.html>

The SOE and its programs are responsible for conducting an annual evaluation of the progress of each graduate student. Each spring the OAP will send an annual progress report form to all active students to complete and return to their advisors. Programs may have supplemental evaluation procedures. As indicated in the Presidential Policy Memorandum #229 (2003), the purpose of this procedure is to inform each graduate student of the program's expectations and assessment of satisfactory progress toward completion of a degree.

### **Changes**

The SOE and its programs reserve the right to make changes in fees, requirements, degree requirements, schedules, or courses offered.

### **Exceptions to Requirements**

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.

### **Student Life and Related University Policies**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Physical Examination
- Medical Insurance Coverage
- MEDEX Overseas Evacuation Program
- Automobiles

## **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. Initially, the student will 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, after earnest inquiry, the matter is not reconciled, the student should appeal the question to the Director of the School of Education within 6 months after the incident occurred. The student will prepare a written appeal that clearly indicates the complaint and desired solution and submit it to the Director, who will refer it to the School of Education appeals panel. The panel will be elected at the beginning of each academic year and will consist of one tenured faculty member elected by each of the three departmental units. If any of the panel members are directly involved in the complaint, that member will not participate in the panel, and the Director will appoint another tenured faculty member from that unit. The panel will review the materials submitted, meet with the student and faculty separately, and make a recommendation to the Director. The Director will take all reasonable and proper actions to resolve the question at the School level, in consultation with the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. These actions may include meeting with the student, meeting with the faculty who are involved, and having a combined meeting of all persons involved. The student and faculty shall be informed in writing of the results no later than one month after the appeal to the 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.

Note: If the Director is a party to the complaint, the student will take the issue to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, who will assume the responsibility for the appeal process.

#### **The University Appeals Procedure**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements.

### **Graduate Application and Admission**

Some programs within the SOE have additional admission requirements beyond those of the Graduate School, such as GRE scores, 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.

## **Credentials**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements.

## **International Applicants**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Legal Status and Financial Certification
- English Placement Test
- SPEAK Test for International Graduate Teaching Assistants
- Attending at Extended-Campus Locations
- Requirements for Assistantships and Employment

## **Admission Categories and Graduate Status Classifications**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Regular Status
- Provisional Status (Master's Only)
- Conditional Acceptance
- Non-degree Status
- Commonwealth Campus Status
- Graduate Certificate Status
- Professional Certification Status

## **Visiting Graduate Student Status**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements.

## **Eligibility of Faculty/Staff for Graduate Degrees**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements.

## **Undergraduates Taking Graduate Courses**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Seniors
- Dual Student Status
- Combined Student Status (Architecture Only)
- Five-Year Bachelor/Master's Degree (Honors Program)

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

This status is not currently available for students in the School of Education. The Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies is considering changes in this graduate status, and requests from programs to participate in this category are not being accepted until further notice.

## **Enrollment and Registration Procedures**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Continuous Enrollment
- Registration at the Time of Examinations and for Degree Completion

- Leave of Absence
- Readmission
- Changes of Status
- Change of Graduate Program
- Change of Campus
- Simultaneous Graduate Degrees

## **General Academic Information**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Grading System
- Grade for Thesis/Dissertation/Major Paper

## **Incomplete and X Grades**

Students who receive an incomplete (I) or an X grade in any SOE course will have no more than one year after the end of the term in which the student was enrolled in the course to complete and submit assignments to the instructor and request a grade change.

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Grading System Requirements
- Repeating Courses
- Auditing
- Graduate Credit
- On-line Courses/Independent Study in Absentia/Continuing Education

## **Academic Progress**

### **GPA Requirements**

Some programs in SOE may require a higher GPA than the Graduate School minimum of 3.0.

### **Probation Due to Unsatisfactory Grades**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements.

### **Satisfactory Progress toward a Graduate Degree**

All graduate students are to be reviewed at least once a year by their advisory committees. The overall evaluation may include GPA, courses with a grade of incomplete, progress on plan of study, preliminary exam performance, research performance, teaching performance, assistantship status and performance, general departmental citizenship, 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 by student and advisor. In this

situation, students are required to submit a plan to their advisor to satisfy unmet expectations. This plan will be reviewed by student's advisory committee and the student will be notified by the advisor whether they will be permitted to continue in the program. A decision to deny permission to continue in the degree program will be made by the graduate student's advisory committee and submitted to the Graduate Director (Dr. Daisy Stewart, Associate Director of OAP), to be recommended to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will dismiss the student for unsatisfactory progress following the recommendation by the advisory committee and SOE. The 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.

If the advisor determines 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.

## **Credit Hour Limits and Requirements**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Full Time Enrollment (Doctoral students should see the section on residency concerning full-time enrollment requirements.)
- Employed Graduate Students
- Virginia Tech Employees
- Fellowship Recipients

## **Graduate Assistantships**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Types of Assistantships
- Academic Eligibility to Hold a Graduate Assistantship
- Teaching Assignments for Graduate Students

## **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 program 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 by the advisor and committee 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 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 must be approved by the student's advisor and advisory committee, the SOE Graduate Director (Dr. Daisy Stewart), 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 Director, the plan of study should be entered and sent electronically to the Graduate School for approval, according to the following schedule.

**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 required qualifying examination.

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Transfer Courses on the Plan of Study
- Justification of "Old" Course Work
- Supporting Courses
- Courses not approved for Graduate Credit
- Plan of Study Changes
- Change of Thesis Option
- Grades on Plan of Study Courses
- Repeating Courses on the Plan of Study

### **Graduate Advisory Committees**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Committee Functions
- Committee Size and Composition
- Committee Service by Personnel Other Than Tenure Track Teaching/Research Faculty at Virginia Tech
- Changes in a Student's Advisory Committee

### **Credit Hour Requirements**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Master's Degree
- Second Master's Degree
- Simultaneous Degrees

## Education Specialist Degree

The Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree is a post master's program 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
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
  - Educational Leadership (K-12)
  - Higher Education

### Program Requirements

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

- completed a master's degree,
- attained a 3.3 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 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

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Doctoral Degrees
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
- Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

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

The SOE requires a minimum of 12 credits of research and evaluation courses for Ed.D. students and 15 credits for Ph.D. students. A minimum of 24 credits of dissertation 7994 is required for the Ed.D. and a minimum of 30 credits is required for the Ph.D.

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

At least two consecutive semesters of full-time enrollment (at least 12 credit hours per semester or in a single summer) must be completed at the Virginia Tech Blacksburg campus to fulfill the residency requirement. This requirement may be satisfied by full-time enrollment during consecutive fall and spring semesters, spring and fall semesters, spring semester and summer sessions, or summer sessions and fall semester. The Counselor Education, Educational Leadership, and Literacy Studies programs have been approved to permit their students to meet residency requirements at the Northern Virginia Center. See program websites for specific requirements.

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

Residency for the Ed.D. involves full-time study during two consecutive semesters. Full-time study is defined as enrollment in 12 credit hours per semester or in a single summer (including both summer sessions). Ed.D. residency could be met in two consecutive academic year semesters, one academic year semester preceded or followed by full-time summer enrollment (12 credits), or two consecutive summers of full-time enrollment (12 credits). See program websites for specific requirements.

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

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements.

## **Second Doctoral Degree**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS)
- Graduate Certificates

## **Examinations**

In addition to the Graduate School policies related to examinations, the SOE has the following requirements:

### **Scheduling Examinations**

- Forms to request scheduling examinations must be submitted to the OAP at least 3 weeks before the exam date.
- 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.

## **Examining Committees**

- Committee member attendance at an exam may be via technology. Any costs involved must be paid by the student.
- The exam card or form must be submitted to the OAP no more than one working day after the scheduled date.

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Successful Completion of Required Examinations
- Final Examination (Master's)

## **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. Qualifying examinations are not scheduled through the Graduate School. The results of the qualifying examination are reported to the OAP and become part of the student's official file. The completed plan of study must be submitted within 30 days after the qualifying exam.

## **Preliminary Examination (Doctoral)**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements.

## **Prospectus Examination (Doctoral)**

The SOE requires a prospectus examination to secure approval from the advisory committee members for the student's dissertation research proposal. This exam should be scheduled in a sequence that best ensures clarity regarding the research topic and procedures and provides effective communication among the student and committee members. Programs may have specific requirements regarding the nature and timing of the prospectus exam.

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 one working day after the date of the exam.

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Final Examination (Doctoral)
- Registration at the Time of Examinations
- Defending Student Status

## **Thesis and Dissertation**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Doctoral degrees
- Independent Effort
- Advisory Committee Approval of the Thesis or Dissertation
- Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD)

- Deadline for ETD Submission
- Degree Completion
- Copyrighting and Microform
- Intellectual Property

## **Graduation**

There are no supplemental or clarifying SOE requirements for any of the following sub-sections.

- Procedures for Graduation
- Graduation Clearance Procedures
- ETD Fees
- Commencement Participation
- Academic Regalia
- Degree Conferring Dates