Graduation Requirements

M.S. Building Construction Science & Management (BCSM)
Ph.D. Environmental Design & Planning (EDP)

Application for Degree

Students planning to graduate must file an Application for Degree to have their names appear in the Commencement program and to obtain a diploma. The fee for the Application for Degree can be found on the [Graduate School's web site](#).

The [Application for Degree form](#) must be submitted electronically through HokieSpa in accordance with Graduate School [deadlines](#). Deadlines vary based on whether you intend to participate in commencement during your final semester or in a subsequent semester.

Ph.D. students unable to meet deadlines for degree completion in time to participate in commencement during their final semester will have their degrees officially awarded by the Graduate School at the end of the following semester, and may participate in commencement exercises during a subsequent semester of their choosing. M.S. students do not receive diplomas during commencement and can therefore participate in the ceremony even if they have not completed all requirements by the specified deadlines.

Deadlines exist for the following major milestones:

- Application for Degree in HokieSpa (Ph.D. and M.S.)
- Final defense/final examination (Ph.D. and M.S.)
- Submission of Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (Ph.D. and M.S. Research Track-Thesis option only)

All deadlines must be met for a given semester to be awarded your degree in that semester. Students who file an Application for Degree but are unable to complete all requirements in time are responsible to submit a new Application for the appropriate term.

Pre-defense, Final Defense, and Final Examination

All graduate students (both Ph.D. and M.S.) must undergo a final examination administered by their advisory committee. This examination must be scheduled by the student with the Graduate School at least two weeks in advance by submitting a Request to Admit Candidate to Final Exam through the Electronic Signature System. Depending on the type of degree and options pursued, the requirements and nature of the final exam differ.

M.S. BCSM - Industry Track

M.S. Students in the Industry Track do not complete an independent research requirement and therefore do not need to complete a pre-defense and final defense of their research. The exit requirement for students in this track consists of a final oral examination in the student's last semester by members of the Industry Track Advisory Committee. It is the student's responsibility to register for the final examination for the scheduled ITAC meeting time and location by submitting a Request to Admit Candidate to Final Exam through the Electronic Signature System. Students must submit an unofficial transcript and Activity and Accomplishments Report for ITAC review no later than two weeks prior to the end-of-semester meeting to obtain a meeting time with the committee. The student's Advisory Committee must approve the exam before it is officially scheduled.

The ITAC will administer a final oral exit examination to assess the student's readiness to graduate, and the members of the student's individual committee will register their votes to determine whether or not the student has passed the final examination. Three outcomes are possible with the oral examination for Industry Track students, as follows:

- Pass - the student has satisfied all degree requirements and adequately demonstrated his or her learning via the oral examination. No additional actions are necessary.
- Conditional Pass - the student is deemed capable of satisfying degree requirements, but additional work is needed to meet those requirements. The committee will specify conditions that must be met by the student to complete degree requirements along with a timeline for completion. Typically these requirements can be met by the student with short term action that does not delay graduation.
- Fail - the student does not meet minimum requirements to complete the degree, and significant additional work must be done to meet requirements. This finding will delay graduation for the student and is likely to require one or more additional semesters of work. Students will work with the committee to develop a remediation plan and will retake the examination during the following semester's meeting of the ITAC.

Students will be provided with written feedback from the ITAC following the final examination, and will be responsible to take any recommended or required actions to address committee concerns. Students requiring special accommodations for the final examination must notify the ITAC in writing at least _three weeks prior to the scheduled meeting_ so that alternate arrangements can be made.

M.S. BCSM - Research Track (Thesis and Project & Report)

All Research Track students must prepare and defend a written document (report or thesis) describing their research study and its outcomes before their advisory committee. In most cases, students will undergo a closed pre-defense presentation with members of their committee, followed by a revision period during which they will address any concerns raised by their committee about the scope or quality of their work. Students should plan to provide their

committees with a complete draft of their written work no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled pre-defense to allow time for review. Following the pre-defense, the committee will make recommendations regarding how much time should be allowed before scheduling the final defense. The final defense occurs no sooner than two weeks following the pre-defense and only when all committee members agree that the student is ready to proceed. In the Department of Building Construction, the final defense of the student's research serves as the final examination required by the Graduate School for graduation. Both Thesis and Project & Report students must complete these steps. Project & Report students should choose the "non-Thesis" option when requesting the final examination.

The final defense/examination presentation must be advertised and open to the public, and must be formally scheduled with the Graduate School by submitting a Request to Admit Candidate to Final Exam using the online VT Graduate School Approval System **at least two weeks** in advance of the planned defense date. Scheduling the exam requires approval by all members of the student's committee, who may require submission of a revised document plus review time prior to approving the exam. Students should consult with their committee members and agree on a timeline for the final defense **before** scheduling the final exam with the Graduate School.

After the final defense has been scheduled with the Graduate School, students should reserve a room and prepare a brief announcement of the defense including date, time, location, title, name, and a short abstract. The announcement should be submitted via email to Lisa Cash for distribution to the faculty and graduate listservs in the department.

Ph.D. EDP - All Students
All Ph.D. students must prepare and defend a written dissertation describing their research study and its outcomes before their advisory committee. In most cases, students will undergo a closed pre-defense presentation with members of their committee, followed by a revision period during which they will address any concerns raised by their committee about the scope or quality of their work. Students should plan to provide their committees with a complete draft of their written work no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled pre-defense to allow time for review. Following the pre-defense, the committee will make recommendations regarding how much time should be allowed before scheduling the final defense. The final defense occurs no sooner than two weeks following the pre-defense and only when all committee members agree that the student is ready to proceed. In the Department of Building Construction, the final defense of the student's research serves as the final examination required by the Graduate School for graduation.

The final defense/examination presentation must be advertised and open to the public, and must be formally scheduled with the Graduate School by submitting a Request to Admit Candidate to Final Exam using the online VT Graduate School Approval System **at least two weeks** in advance of the planned defense date. Scheduling the exam requires approval by all members of the student's committee, who may require submission of a revised document plus

review time prior to approving the exam. Students should consult with their committee members and agree on a timeline for the final defense **before** scheduling the final exam with the Graduate School.

After the final defense has been scheduled with the Graduate School, students should reserve a room and prepare a brief announcement of the defense including date, time, location, title, name, and a short abstract. The announcement should be submitted via email to [Lisa Cash](#), for distribution to the faculty and graduate listservs in the department.

Final Research Document Submission
(M.S. Research Track and Ph.D. only)

After successfully completing the final defense of research, all research students must submit final revised copies of their written work for archiving by the University. For M.S. Thesis students, when the final exam is approved, an ETD archiving fee of $20 will be assessed to their student account. Doctoral students will be assessed a $45 ETD archiving fee. No fee will be assessed for students archiving their Project & Report in the departmental archive.

M.S. Thesis option and all Ph.D. students will submit their work using the Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) option within the [Electronic Signature System](#). Following the exam of the thesis/dissertation, students must **upload** their thesis or Dissertation within 2 weeks of the final exam. Any applicable supporting documentation for the ETD (such as copyright permission letters to reproduce items, IRB approval or exemption notices, UMI form, Survey of Earned Doctorates) must also be submitted to the Graduate School within 2 weeks of the exam as well.

M.S. students completing the Project & Report option must submit their work into the Departmental VTechWorks archive within two weeks of the final examination. VTechWorks is Virginia Tech's Google Scholar-indexed electronic repository. Work such as reports, papers, presentations, and other intellectual products not restricted by publisher copyright can be archived in VTechWorks and are accessible and easily found by anyone searching for scholarly works in Google Scholar. Instructions for submitting to the departmental archive are available here.

Graduate School Degree Clearance Requirements

The following items will be verified by the Graduate School to clear graduate students for graduation (see [Graduation Clearance Requirements](#)):

1. Students must be enrolled at Virginia Tech in the term in which the degree is awarded.

2. Filing of Application for Degree, payment of fee. This form makes an individual degree completion checklist available to the student on Hokie SPA. It must be submitted prior to the last day of classes of the term in which the student intends to graduate.
3. Submission of the Request to Schedule Final Examination, two weeks before the proposed examination date for students who have been enrolled during the last year. For those who have been out of residence for more than a year, and require Readmission, the Readmission process should be completed before requesting the Final Examination.
4. Taking Final Examination.
5. Submitting the final version of the thesis or dissertation, approved by the student's Advisory Committee through the Electronic Signature System, as an Electronic Dissertation or Thesis (ETD) within two weeks after the defense.
6. Submitting any applicable supporting documentation for the ETD (e.g., copyright permission letters to reproduce items from other publications, Institutional Research Board approval or exemption notices (if appropriate), UMI form, Survey of Earned Doctorates).
7. Payment of the archiving fee which is required of students at the time the ETD is submitted.
8. **Degree Completion** requires ETD approval by the Graduate School and completion of all other requirements for the degree.

Departmental Degree Clearance Requirements

Students with graduate studio space must return keys/equipment to the department administrative assistant.

Students with checked out equipment must return items to the department administrative assistant.

Students must complete a department exit interview, usually held during last week of classes.