

Residency Requirements for Doctoral Degrees

Residency, defined as full-time enrollment while physically present on a Virginia Tech campus, is a requirement of all doctoral students receiving a degree from Virginia Tech. Although some students elect to complete their entire degree while in residence, others choose to meet only the minimum residency requirement and then complete other degree requirements while physically residing elsewhere and maintaining regular communication and coordination with campus activities. A flexible approach to residency allows students to appropriately engage with the life of the university and academic scholarship while also meeting other professional and personal responsibilities.

Residency is not the same as enrollment; students who are physically located away from campus may remain enrolled in courses or research hours to meet their plan of study requirements. However, in addition to meeting overall enrollment requirements, doctoral students are required to demonstrate residency either by being physically present on campus for at least two consecutive semesters of full-time enrollment, or by preparing and following an alternative plan approved by the Graduate School that achieves the same ends.

Residency for the Ph.D. in Environmental Design & Planning is typically accomplished through at least **two consecutive semesters of full-time enrollment** on campus. During that time, students may take advantage of opportunities to cultivate immersion in scholarship and achieve the goals of residency. Students completing residency via full-time enrollment should understand residency goals and plan not only to complete required courses, but also to sustain scholarly engagement and immersion in research, scholarship, and professional development. No additional steps are necessary for students who intend to meet residency requirements through this path.

In cases where these requirements are not feasible or where significant benefit could be gained from an alternative approach, students may petition the Graduate School for approval of an **individual alternative residency plan**. Alternative residency plans require careful consultation with the student's advisor and committee, and should be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Chair in Building Construction to ensure all aims of residency are met. The request for approval of alternative residency plans by the Graduate School will be made by the Building Construction Graduate Chair on behalf of the student, the committee, and the department. Justification and documentation must be provided to the Graduate Chair to support the request, which is submitted to the Graduate Dean for review and approval. Individual alternative residency plans must be approved as early as possible, and no later than when the plan of study is submitted for approval by the Graduate School.

Proposals for individual alternative residency plans should be prepared by the student in conjunction with his or her advisory committee, and should include a description of how the alternative plan will help achieve the purposes and goals of doctoral residency. The individual plan should provide strategies to address all of the following goals achieved by residency:

Disciplinary depth and breadth

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

Scholarly immersion

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

Professional socialization

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

Professional practice

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

Additional information on doctoral residency requirements is available in the Graduate School Policy manual online at <http://graduateschool.vt.edu>.