

Graduate Student Handbook

2021 - 2022



VCU College of Engineering

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The University

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) has a long and rich history. In 1968 the Medical College of Virginia (MCV) and Richmond Professional Institute (RPI) merged to become Virginia Commonwealth University. The MCV Campus houses five schools: the Schools of Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy. It is also the site of VCU Health. The Monroe Park Campus houses one college: The College of Humanities and Sciences; two centers: VCU Life Sciences and VCU daVinci Center; and seven schools: the Schools of the Arts, Business, Education, Engineering, the Graduate School, Social Work and the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. A more detailed history may be obtained from the University's Web site: www.vcu.edu.

The College of Engineering

The College of Engineering (Engineering) is one of the newest at VCU beginning operation in July 1995 with undergraduate degree programs in Chemical Engineering (now Chemical and Life Science Engineering), Electrical Engineering (now Electrical and Computer Engineering) and Mechanical Engineering (now Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering). The existing Biomedical Engineering graduate programs (M.S. and Ph.D.) moved from the School of Medicine to the new College of Engineering. The first undergraduate engineering students entered in fall 1996 with a graduate date of spring 2000. In fall 1998, Biomedical Engineering began offering an undergraduate degree. The School began offering the M.S. and Ph.D. in Engineering degrees in fall 2000. The Compute Science program, which offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees, moved from the Department of Mathematical Sciences in the College of Humanities and Sciences to the College of Engineering in the fall 2001. In the fall of 2009, the M.S. in Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering program began matriculating students. In the fall of 2010, the M.S. in Computer Information Systems and Security program began matriculating students. The Ph.D. program in Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering was approved in 2014. Most recently, the new Ph.D. program in Pharmaceutical Engineering between the College of Engineering and School of Pharmacy was approved in 2019.

Administrative Offices

The administrative offices for the College of Engineering as well as the Departments of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Chemical and Life Science Engineering are located in the College of Engineering West Hall, 601 W. Main Street. The administrative office for the Department of Biomedical Engineering is located in the IEM Building, 601 W. Main St. The administrative offices for the Departments Computer Science and Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering are located in the College of Engineering East Hall, 401 W. Main Street.

Engineering's Office of Graduate Studies

Information on specific graduate programs of study, including the Commonwealth Graduate Engineering Program (CGEP), is available in Engineering's Office of Graduate Studies. The office can also help guide students on who to contact for transferring in courses, thesis and dissertation formats, leave of absence, funding opportunities and University available resources.

VCU Card

The VCU Card is the student ID card and provides access to many services across the University such as borrowing books from the libraries, after-hours access to authorized buildings and rooms, access to recreational buildings, and the access to ride VCU buses at no charge. Students can put money on the card allowing it to be used as a debit card at numerous establishments both on- and off-campus. More information about how to obtain your ID card and where you can use it can be found on the VCU Card's Web site: <https://vcucard.vcu.edu>.

Engineering Graduate Program Administrators

Biomedical Engineering (EGRB courses)

Dr. Henry Donahue	Department Chair	(804) 828-7956	hjdonahue@vcu.edu
Dr. Dean Krusienski	Program Director	(804) 827-1890	djkrusienski@vcu.edu

Chemical and Life Science Engineering (CLSE courses)

Dr. Frank Gupton	Department Chair	(804) 828-7789	bfgupton@vcu.edu
Dr. Nastassja Lewinski	Program Director	(804) 828-0317	nalewinski@vcu.edu

Computer Science (CMSC courses)

Dr. Krzysztof Cios	Department Chair	(804) 828-9671	kcios@vcu.edu
Dr. Preetam Ghosh	Program Director	(804) 827-3995	pghosh@vcu.edu

Electrical and Computer Engineering (EGRE courses)

Dr. Erdem Topsakal	Department Chair	(804) 828-1313	etopsakal@vcu.edu
Dr. Zhifang Wang	Program Director	(804) 828-5330	zfwang@vcu.edu

Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering (EGRM, EGRN and EGMN courses)

Dr. Gary Tepper	Department Chair	(804) 828-9117	gctepper@vcu.edu
Dr. Karla Mossi	Program Director	(804) 827-5275	kmmossi@vcu.edu

Pharmaceutical Engineering (PESC courses)

Dr. Thomas Roper	Program Director	(919) 260-5509	troper@vcu.edu
Dr. Sandro da Rocha	Program Director	(804) 828-0985	srdarocha@vcu.edu

Office of Graduate Studies

Dr. Gregory Triplett	Associate Dean	(804) 828-5387	getriplett@vcu.edu
Ms. Lori A. Floyd-Miller	Coordinator	(804) 828-1087	lafloyd@vcu.edu
Mr. Kelton Rasmussen	Program Analyst	(804) 828-6029	rasmussenkt@vcu.edu

GENERAL GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Advisor and Advisory Committee

Initial Advisor

Entering students are expected to report to their respective Graduate Program Director upon matriculation to the VCU College of Engineering. For students pursuing thesis M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, the Graduate Program Director will serve as the student's academic advisor until he/she has selected a research advisor. For students pursuing a non-thesis M.S. degree, the Graduate Program Director will serve as the advisor during the course of their degree. **(See forms section.)** The student's initial advisor (i.e. Graduate Program Director) will work with the student to schedule courses and select a Research Advisor (hereafter referred to as advisor).

Research Advisor

During the first semester of graduate study, students pursuing thesis M.S. and Ph.D. degrees are expected to choose an advisor. The successful completion of the requirements for both the thesis M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Engineering includes an original research project, the progress of which is guided by the faculty advisor and monitored by an Advisory Committee. The advisor holds the primary responsibility for providing guidance and counsel essential to the scholarly development of the student. Students should begin immediately to review Engineering faculty research interests and areas of scholarship (available on the Engineering Web site and program/concentration brochures). This review will assist each student in the advisor selection process. Remember to work with the departmental Graduate Program Director and the Engineering Office of Graduate Studies during this process.

Advisory Committee

After selection of an advisor, the graduate student immediately begins to develop a program of study and reviews possible research topics with his/her advisor. Once a research topic is chosen, an Advisory Committee can be formed. The advisor, in consultation with the student, appoints an Advisory Committee. For students pursuing a thesis M.S. degree, the Advisory Committee must be formed no later than the end of the first year of graduate school. For students pursuing a Ph.D. degree, the Advisory Committee must be formed no later than the end of the second year of graduate school. An Advisory Committee serves as both an examining and consultative body. The advisor usually serves as chair of the committee. The advisor and the Advisory Committee's function is to assist the scholarly development of the student. Committee members hold a special responsibility as a source of counsel for the student.

Full-time Engineering graduate faculty may serve on, and chair, graduate Advisory Committees. Affiliate engineering graduate faculty and VCU faculty may serve on an Advisory Committee but cannot serve as chair. Approval from the Engineering Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and the Dean of the VCU Graduate School are required for an affiliate graduate faculty member to serve as co-chair of a graduate Advisory Committee. The committee will conduct an annual review of student progress with written minutes of committee recommendations prepared by the student and signed by all Advisory Committee members. This should be submitted to the department graduate program director.

There must be at least three members (including the chair) on a graduate Advisory Committee for a thesis M.S. degree student. Two members must be from the program/concentration and one member must be from outside the program/concentration. There must be at least five members (including the chair) on a graduate Advisory Committee for a Ph.D. degree student. Three members must be from the program/concentration and two from outside the program/ concentration. Once the Advisory Committee is formed, the student must complete the appropriate form with required signatures and submit it to the Engineering Office of Graduate Studies. The Master's Advisory Committee requires **form M2** and the Doctoral Advisory Committee requires **form D2**. The student must submit the appropriate Advisory Committee form no less than six months before the final defense for the master's degree and six months before the second portion of the comprehensive exam (proposal defense) for the doctoral degree.

Plan of Study

Upon selection of an advisor, the student should begin (in consultation with the advisor) to develop a plan of study. The student's plan of study constitutes a tentative list of courses that are taken as part of the graduate degree program. A plan of study is dynamic and can be revised as the need arises. The student's advisor and Advisory Committee must approve the plan of study (**form M1 or D1**). DegreeWorks is another way you can track your plan of study and this can be turned in with electives showing on the form. DegreeWorks can be found through a student's e-Services account.

Graduate Degree Requirements

All full-time graduate students are expected to register for 9-15 hours of graduate credits per semester (fall and spring), exclusive of audited courses. This requirement includes directed research credits. For the summer, full-time status is also defined as 9-15 credit hours unless the student is on a paid assistantship. In that case, the full-time credit requirement is only 3 credits.

At least half of the credits required in the student's program must be those designated as exclusively for graduate students; that is, those at the 600-level or above.

Graduate students are required to remain in good academic standing through the course of their degree program. Unsatisfactory student performance includes:

- The assignment of a grade of "U," "D," or "F" in any course.
- Failure to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater.
- Failure to pass the qualifying or oral comprehensive examination.
- Lack of progress on and/or unsuccessful defense of thesis/dissertation.

Students must continue to make satisfactory progress toward their degrees. Unsatisfactory grades and unprofessional conduct are areas that may warrant review for possible termination from their programs. Unsatisfactory performance also constitutes grounds for the termination of financial assistance to the student.

Generally, a student may have no more than six semester hours or 20 percent of total semester hours attempted (whichever is greater) at "C" or below level ("D," "F," and "U") at graduation. Please check with your program to confirm their requirements.

Generally, the student's Advisory Committee is the examining body for the administration of the comprehensive examinations and the final examination. Graduate students may not take the

comprehensive examination for the Ph.D. degree if their overall GPA is less than 3.0 or if the GPA for courses within the program is below 3.0. Students may not take the final oral examination for the M.S. or Ph.D. degree if their overall GPA is below 3.0. Please check with your program to confirm their requirements.

In addition to these requirements, and those set forth by the University, students must meet the requirements for specific degrees set forth in the College of Engineering program listings.

Master's Program

Research and Thesis

Each student conducts a research study under the guidance of his/her advisor. They should receive training in responsible conduct of research. The study is reported in a thesis prepared according to standards set down by the VCU Graduate School in the University Graduate Council's *Thesis and Dissertation Manual*. Visit www.graduate.vcu.edu for more information.

When the advisor and the student determine that sufficient research has been completed to prepare a thesis, a meeting of the student's Advisory Committee will be scheduled to review the completed work. The Advisory Committee will then recommend that the student is ready to defend the research or must complete additional research. This meeting will occur at least six weeks prior to the anticipated defense date, and the result will be reported to the Engineering Graduate Office in writing by the Advisory Committee chair.

When the thesis has been completed and the advisor considers it acceptable and all the M.S. degree requirements have been satisfied, the advisor notifies the Engineering Office of Graduate Studies in writing and, in consultation with the candidate, sets the examination date. This date must be set and the Office of Graduate Studies notified at least 14 days prior to the proposed presentation date using an online link on the College of Engineering's Web site to announce the M.S. Thesis/Ph.D. Dissertation Final Defense.

The thesis is examined by the student's Advisory Committee for content. On tentative approval of the thesis, the student appears for a final oral examination by the Advisory Committee. The final examination will be limited to the subject of the candidate's thesis and related matters. A unanimous favorable vote of the candidate's committee shall be required for passing the final oral examination. The final examination shall be open to the public and its time and place, together with the candidate's name, department, and title of thesis, shall be announced at least seven days in advance. Upon successful defense of the thesis, the student may arrange at personal expense for his/her thesis to be bound for their personal library.

Admission to Master's Candidacy

Before admission to candidacy for the Masters (thesis option) program, students must have: (1) completed required course work, see bulletin for program exceptions, (2) fulfilled all additional departmental requirements, and (3) submitted forms M1, M2, and Admission to Master's or Doctoral Degree Candidacy (completed and signed) to the Engineering Graduate Studies Office. A student may seek admission to candidacy for the M.S. degree without first completing the research and thesis portion of the M.S. degree. The Advisory Committee will conduct an annual review of student progress with

written minutes of committee recommendations prepared by the student and signed by all Advisory Committee members. These minutes should be submitted to the department graduate program director.

Per the VCU Graduate Bulletin: “The degree candidacy form must be submitted **before** the student formally begins the final thesis/dissertation/research project **but no later** than the semester preceding the semester in which the student graduates. Failure to submit the degree candidacy form in a timely manner may delay graduation.”

Doctoral Program

Qualifying and Comprehensive Examinations

In order to advance to doctoral candidacy, the student must pass both qualifying and oral comprehensive examinations (proposal defense or Ph.D. candidacy examination). Graduate students may not take either exam if their overall GPA is less than 3.0. In the event of failure, the student may retake the qualifying and comprehensive examinations one time only. The re-examination requires the approval of the student’s Advisory Committee. For additional details, see the Graduate Program Director or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination(s) focuses on the subject matter deemed critical as a foundation in the program and must be completed by the end of the first 18 months of graduate study end of second year in special circumstances. (ECE has 16 months for M.S. to Ph.D. and 24 months for B.S. to Ph.D.) The qualifying examination is largely based on material covered in required course work and its application to theoretical and practical problems. This examination consists of questions from at least three topic areas.

Contact your department’s graduate program director for your specific departmental requirements. The department’s graduate program director is responsible for overseeing the administration of the qualifying examination. The questions are prepared and graded by Engineering faculty and, when appropriate, faculty from other VCU schools or college. The results must be reported to the Engineering Office of Graduate Studies on form D2.

Oral Comprehensive Examination – Proposal Defense

After successful completion of the qualifying examinations, the student will submit one copy of an original Dissertation Research Proposal based upon their proposed research project to each member of the student’s Advisory Committee. The student’s Advisory Committee will decide within ten business days if the proposal is suitable for defense and notify the committee chair. If the proposal is deemed suitable for defense, a defense date will be scheduled. If the proposal is not suitable, the student will be given one month to correct the deficiencies and resubmit the proposal. The committee will once again review the proposal for suitability and, if approved, a defense date will be scheduled. The Oral Comprehensive Exam should be completed by the end of the third year with written minutes of committee recommendations and signatures from each Advisory Committee members. This should be submitted to the department Graduate Program Director. The results must be reported to the Engineering Office of Graduate Studies on the VCU Admission to Doctoral Candidacy form.

Admission to Doctoral Candidacy

Before admission to candidacy for the doctorate, students must have: (1) completed required course work, see bulletin for program exceptions, (2) successfully completed the qualifying and oral comprehensive examinations, (3) fulfilled all additional departmental requirements, and (4) submitted forms D1, D2, and Admission to Master's or Doctoral Degree Candidacy (completed and signed) to the Engineering Office of Graduate Studies. The Advisory Committee will conduct an annual review of student progress, with written minutes of committee recommendations prepared by student and signed by all Advisory Committee members. This should be submitted to the department Graduate Program Director. Per the VCU Graduate Bulletin: "The degree candidacy form must be submitted **before** the student formally begins the final thesis/dissertation/research project **but no later** than the semester preceding the semester in which the student graduates. Failure to submit the degree candidacy form in a timely manner may delay graduation."

Dissertation Research and Defense

The doctoral student must conduct a substantial original investigation under the supervision of the permanent advisor and prepare a dissertation reporting the results of this research and analyzing its significance in relation to existing scientific knowledge. Student should receive training in responsible conduct of research. There should be a student advisory committee meeting no later than three months prior to dissertation defense to certify student readiness to complete the dissertation. When the dissertation has been completed, copies in accepted form and style must be submitted to the members of the Advisory Committee. The examiners for the dissertation are the student's Advisory Committee members. These examiners decide whether or not the candidate's dissertation for defense is acceptable. The dissertation should be prepared according to standards set down by the VCU Graduate School in the University Graduate Council's *Thesis and Dissertation Manual*. Visit www.graduate.vcu.edu for more information.

If the Advisory Committee accepts the dissertation for defense, the candidate appears before them for a final oral examination. This date must be set and the Engineering Office of Graduate Studies notified at least 14 business days prior to the proposed presentation date using the online link of the College of Engineering's Web site to announce M.S. Thesis/Ph.D. Dissertation Final Defense.

The final oral examination shall be open to the public and limited to the subject of the candidate's dissertation and related matters. The final oral examination/defense will conclude with written minutes outlining remaining items prior to conferment of the Ph.D. degree. A favorable vote of the candidate's Advisory Committee which can include no more than one negative vote shall be required for passing the final oral examination. All committee members must vote. The results must be reported to the Engineering Office of Graduate Studies on the VCU Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Approval Form. **Evidence of at least one published paper and one additional paper submitted to a peer-reviewed journal or juried conference proceeding is essential prior to conferment of degree.** Upon successful defense of the dissertation, the student must submit the dissertation electronically through VCU Scholars Compass, ProQuest and complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates. The ETD Approval Form will need to be completed and submitted to the Engineering Office of Graduate Studies for signatures before being submitted to the Graduate School's Dean's Office. For more information about the submission process visit: <http://graduate.vcu.edu/student/thesis.html>.

TERMINATION AND APPEALS PROCESS

Graduate students in VCU's College of Engineering have a right to appeal termination. The student assumes the burden of proof in this appeal.

The University's appeal process can be found in the bulletin:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/appeal-process-students-dismissed-vcu-graduate-program/>

Initiating an Appeal

When a student has been terminated from a program and believes the termination is unjustified, not in accordance with stated rules and regulations, or there are extenuating circumstances, the student shall discuss the termination first with the Graduate Program Director. The Graduate Program Director will explain how the decision to terminate was determined. If the student continues to believe that the termination was unwarranted, a written appeal may be submitted to the chair of the department. Students appealing termination assume the burden of proof. The appeal shall state and support, with all available evidence, the reasons why the student believes the termination should be reversed. The written appeal must be submitted within ten business days after the termination letter from the Dean of the VCU Graduate School is received. Appeals submitted after the deadline will be heard only in exceptional cases as determined by the College of Engineering's Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. Students may remain enrolled throughout the appeal procedures.

Mediation

The chair of the department shall review the appeal and decide if the decision to terminate should be upheld within ten business days of receipt of the written appeal. If the decision to terminate is upheld, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Engineering. If the student appeals to the Dean of the College of Engineering, the student shall submit to the dean in writing the written appeal and all supporting documentation and the chair shall submit all documentation supporting the decision to terminate within 14 business days of the chair's decision and notification to the student.

The Appeal Review Committee

The Dean of the College of Engineering or his/her designee shall form an Appeal Review Committee (a standing school committee whose members shall serve a term of one year) and designate the chair. The committee shall consist of five faculty members, one from each department. Any committee member may request to excuse himself from the committee due to a conflict of interest. The appellant may challenge the committee's membership for cause within five business days of being informed of the membership. The dean shall determine if there is sufficient cause to remove the challenged committee member. A minimum of three committee members must review any appeal.

The committee has the option of either reversing or upholding the decision to terminate. The committee shall meet initially to examine the written appeal and the department chair's recommendation. It can require the department and the College of Engineering's Office of Graduate Studies to turn over to the committee any academic records, correspondence or course records that it deems relevant. After examining the materials, the committee may, by a majority vote, decline to hear an appeal that it judges

to be patently without merit. Otherwise, the committee will authorize its chair to arrange a date for a hearing. The chair of the committee shall meet with all relevant parties prior to the hearing to explain the rules and procedures of the hearing.

The Appeal Review Hearing

Termination appeal hearings will be closed (only relevant parties determined and agreed upon by the committee may attend). The student may have with them an advisor of their choice (who may not be an attorney), with whom they may consult but who will not participate in the questioning of witnesses and presentation of evidence. The committee shall ask any member of the VCU community whose testimony it deems relevant to be available at an agreed upon time to give testimony. Either party may present additional witnesses as long as they remain within their allotted time and their testimony is directly relevant. Witnesses other than the appealing student shall be excluded from the hearing except when testifying.

A hearing shall begin with the student outlining the reason for the appeal and presenting all supporting evidence. The Graduate Program Director will provide justification as to why the student was terminated. Each party will have a maximum of one hour to present a position. After examining rules and regulations and considering extenuating circumstances, the committee shall determine in executive session whether the termination was justified. No termination may be reversed except by a majority vote. When the committee has reached a decision, the committee chair shall submit to the Dean in writing the decision and the reasons for it. The dean shall communicate in writing the decision of the committee to the appealing student, the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, the department chair, and the Graduate Program Director. If the termination has been reversed, the dean shall also notify the Dean of the Graduate School. The evidence, proceedings, and the final decision of the committee shall remain confidential. All documents shall be held in a confidential file by the dean for one year. All documentation not returned shall be destroyed by the Dean one year later.

Appeal to the Graduate School

If all program/department and/or school appeal processes fail to resolve the termination issue, the student has the option to appeal to the graduate dean. He/she must provide the Dean of the Graduate School with written notification of appeal and reasons within 14 business days of the conclusion of the school's appeal procedures.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS

Graduate students in VCU's College of Engineering have a right to appeal course grades based on specific requirements outlined in the bulletin. The student assumes the burden of proof in this appeal.

The University's grade appeal process can be found in the bulletin: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/university/grade-review/>.

Initiating an Appeal

When a student has evidence that a final grade from a course has not been assigned properly and not in accordance with stated rules and regulations, or there are extenuating circumstances, the student shall provide a written grade appeal to the department chair. Students appealing a grade assume the burden of proof. The appeal shall state and support, with all available evidence, the reasons why the student believes the grade should be change. The written appeal must be submitted within 14 calendar days after the beginning of the next semester.

Mediation

The chair of the department shall attempt to mediate an amicable solution within two weeks of receipt of the written appeal. If the complaint is not resolved, the chair shall forward the student's appeal to the Dean of the College of Engineering or his/her designee. The chair also shall submit to the dean in writing the recommendation made to the two parties regarding the appropriateness of the grade. If the grade being appealed was assigned by the chair of the department, the dean shall assume the mediation responsibility. If the grade being appealed was assigned by the dean, the mediation responsibility will fall to the appropriate vice president.

The Grade Review Committee

The dean shall form a grade review committee and designate the chair. The committee has the option of either raising the grade or leaving the grade unchanged. The committee shall consist of one nonvoting faculty chair, two faculty members and two students selected by the dean from disciplines whose methods and techniques of teaching and testing are as similar as possible to those of the discipline of the course in question. If the course is multidisciplinary and the instructor(s) whose grade is being appealed does not belong administratively in the school in which the course was taught, the committee shall have at least one of the faculty members from the instructor's school.

Either party may challenge the committee's membership for cause within 5 business days of being informed of the membership. The dean shall determine if there is sufficient cause to remove the challenged committee member.

The committee shall meet initially to examine the written appeal and the department chair's recommendation. It can require the faculty member(s) to turn over to the committee grade records for that class or section and any tests, papers and examinations by students of that class that they may possess. The committee may require the student bringing the appeal to turn over all tests, papers or other evaluations that have been returned and all existing evidence that an improper grade was awarded. The committee shall disregard any claim that a test or paper that has been returned to a student was unjustly graded unless that test or paper is produced for the committee's inspection.

After examining the materials, the committee may, by a majority vote, decline to hear an appeal that it judges to be patently without merit. Otherwise, the committee will authorize its chair to arrange a date for a hearing. The chair of the committee shall meet with each party prior to the hearing to explain the rules and procedures of the hearing.

The Appeal Review Hearing

Grade appeal hearings will be open, closed or partially open (i.e., a few close associates of each party may attend) by agreement of the appealing student and the faculty member(s) and the chair of the committee of the appealing student.

Both parties may have with them an adviser of their choice (who may not be an attorney), with whom they may consult but who will not participate in the questioning of witnesses and presentation of evidence unless the opposing party and chair agree to it. The committee shall ask any member of the VCU community whose testimony it deems relevant to be available at an agreed-upon time to give testimony.

Either party may present additional witnesses as long as they remain within their allotted time and their testimony is directly relevant to the course at issue. Witnesses other than the appealing student and the faculty member(s) shall be excluded from the hearing except when testifying. A hearing shall begin with the student outlining the reasons for the appeal and all evidence that exists of an improper grade. The faculty member(s) shall then explain the criteria used for the original grade assigned. Each party will have a time period not to exceed two hours in which to present a position.

The committee shall determine in executive session whether the grade was justified according to the course in which the grade was given. If the evidence is that the grade was determined according to the stated objectives, criteria and grading procedures of the course, the committee shall uphold the grade. The committee should also take into account that purposes, methods, requirements and grading criteria differ from course to course and that difference is a legitimate characteristic of a university and its faculty. Further, the grade in some courses may be partly or solely determined by a faculty member's professional judgment, which in itself cannot be overturned without evidence that the judgment was arbitrarily or capriciously rendered. The committee shall consider (a) whether the faculty member(s) articulated the criteria to be used (some criteria may be implicit within the discipline), (b) whether those criteria were actually used to determine the final grade and (c) whether the results of the evaluation were communicated to the student.

No grade may be changed except by a vote of at least three out of four voting members. When the committee has reached a decision, the committee chair shall submit to the dean in writing the decision and the reasons for it. The dean shall communicate in writing the decision of the committee to the appealing student, faculty member(s) and the department chair. If the grade has been changed, the dean also shall notify the University's Registrar.

The evidence, proceedings and the final decision of the committee shall remain confidential. All documents shall be held in a confidential file by the dean for one year. The party from whom a document was obtained may request that it be returned at the end of the year. All documentation not returned shall be destroyed by the dean one year later.

GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

The following section lists all the programs offered by the College of Engineering. The bulletin is the official record for the University and the links for each program are provided.

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/>

BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Biomedical Engineering, Accelerated B.S. to M.S.

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/engineering/biomedical-engineering/biomedical-engineering-bs/#acceleratedbsandmstext>

Biomedical Engineering, Master of Science

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/biomedical-engineering/biomedical-engineering-ms/#degreerequirementstext>

Biomedical Engineering, Doctor of Philosophy

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/biomedical-engineering/biomedical-engineering-phd/>

Biomedical Engineering, Doctor of Philosophy/Medicine, Doctor of (M.D.) combined program

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/dual-degree-opps/md-biomedeng-phd/>

CHEMICAL AND LIFE SCIENCE ENGINEERING

Chemical and Life Science Engineering with a concentration in chemical engineering, Accelerated B.S. to M.S.

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/engineering/chemical-life-science-engineering/chemical-life-science-engineering-bs-concentration-chemical-engineering/#acceleratedbsandmstext>

Chemical and Life Science Engineering with a concentration in life science engineering, Accelerated B.S. to M.S.

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/engineering/chemical-life-science-engineering/chemical-life-science-engineering-bs-concentration-life-science-engineering/#acceleratedbsandmstext>

Engineering, Master of Science with a concentration in chemical and life science engineering

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/engineering-ms-concentration-chemical-life-science/#degreerequirementstext>

Chemical and Life Science Engineering, Doctor of Philosophy

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/chemical-life-science-engineering/clse-phd/#degreerequirementstext>

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer Science, Accelerated B.S. to M.S.

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/engineering/computer-science/computer-science-bs/#acceleratedbsandmstext>

Computer Science with a concentration in cybersecurity, Accelerated B.S. to M.S.

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/engineering/computer-science/computer-science-bs-concentration-cybersecurity/#acceleratedbsandmstext>

Computer Science with a concentration in data science, Accelerated B.S. to M.S.

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/engineering/computer-science/computer-science-bs-concentration-data-science/#acceleratedbsandmstext>

Computer Science with a concentration in software engineering, Accelerated B.S. to M.S.

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/engineering/computer-science/computer-science-bs-concentration-software-engineering/#acceleratedbsandmstext>

Computer and Information Systems Security, Master of Science

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/computer-science/computer-information-systems-security-ms/#degreerequirementstext>

Note: Admissions is currently suspended for this program.

Computer Science, Master of Science

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/computer-science/computer-science-ms/#degreerequirementstext>

Computer Science, Doctor of Philosophy

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/computer-science/computer-science-phd/>

ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Computer Engineering, accelerated B.S. to M.S.

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/engineering/electrical-computer-engineering/computer-engineering-bs/#acceleratedbsandmstext>

Electrical Engineering, accelerated B.S. to M.S.

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/engineering/electrical-computer-engineering/electrical-engineering-bs/#acceleratedbsandmstext>

Engineering, Master of Science with a concentration in electrical and computer engineering

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/engineering-ms-concentration-electrical-computer/#degreerequirementstext>

Engineering, Doctor of Philosophy with a concentration in electrical and computer engineering

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/engineering-phd-concentration-electrical-computer/#degreerequirementstext>

MECHANICAL AND NUCLEAR ENGINEERING

Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering, Master of Science

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/mechanical-nuclear-engineering/mechanical-nuclear-engineering-ms/#degreerequirementstext>

Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering, Doctor of Philosophy

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/mechanical-nuclear-engineering/mechanical-nuclear-engineering-phd/#degreerequirementstext>

PHARMACEUTICAL ENGINEERING

Pharmaceutical Engineering, Doctor of Philosophy

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-engineering/pharm-eng-phd/#degreerequirementstext>

COMMONWEALTH GRADUATE ENGINEERING PROGRAM

The Commonwealth Graduate Engineering Program (CGEP) is a distance learning graduate program of five universities in the State of Virginia: George Mason University (GMU), Old Dominion University (ODU), University of Virginia (UVA), Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and Virginia Tech (VT). CGEP offers qualified individuals the opportunity to earn a master's degree part time and the ability to participate in engineering courses by means of on-line learning technologies, both synchronous and asynchronous.

Course Transfer Rule

CGEP students may earn up to 50% of the graded credit hours needed to satisfy the minimum requirements for their graduate degree through transfer from another CGEP university. All such credits must have earned grades of "C" 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 course. All transfer courses must be approved on the student's Plan of Study and must have been completed within the time limits prescribed for satisfying degree requirements. It is the student's responsibility to work with the graduate program director to transfer a course to VCU.

Registration Policies

Course registration policies and procedures vary from university to university. The applicable registration policies for a specific course are those of the offering university. Students should refer to the individual university CGEP website for details on the applicable registration policy.

For Full-Time VCU Students: If VCU is your home institution and you are registered **full-time** in the semester you enroll in a CGEP course: (1) Complete the application form found on Blackboard in the "Resources for Engineering Graduate Students" folder under "Graduate Student Forms," (2) Contact your faculty advisor to verify that the CGEP course will count toward your degree, (3) Obtain your advisor's signature on the form, (4) Register at both your host institution and here at VCU for the parallel course. Your tuition for the CGEP course is paid only at VCU. Your final grade will be added to your VCU transcript at the end of the course.

For Part-Time VCU Students: If you will be registered **part-time** in the semester you enroll in a CGEP course: (1) Complete the application form found on Blackboard in the "Resources for Engineering Graduate Students" folder under "Graduate Student Forms," (2) Contact your faculty advisor to verify that the CGEP course will count toward your degree, (3) Obtain your advisor's signature on the form, (4) Register with and pay your tuition and fees directly to the host institution. Once you receive your final grade, you may have to request a transcript from the host institution. Policies can vary at each institution. Check with your course instructor for guidance.

Further course registration information can be found on Blackboard in the "Resources for Engineering Graduate Students" folder under "Graduate Student Forms."

An up-to-date listing of the available courses and registration processes at each of the CGEP universities is maintained on the CGEP website: <http://cgep.virginia.gov/>.

GRADUATE STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

VCU Honor System

Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to the intellectual and academic success of a diverse student body; research and discovery that advances knowledge, inspires creativity, and improves human health; and the global engagement of students, faculty, and staff that transforms lives and communities. In pursuit of these goals, the university's core values are accountability, achievement, collaboration, freedom, innovation, service, diversity, and integrity.

VCU recognizes that honesty, truth, and integrity are values central to its mission to advance knowledge and student success both in the world VCU students will enter, or return to, once they have graduated and in the university community as a microcosm of that world. In a community devoted to learning, a foundation of honor must exist if that community is to thrive with respect and harmony. Therefore, all members of the university community must conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty, ethics, and integrity at all times. Additional standards of academic and professional integrity consistent with this Honor System may apply to students in professional programs.

Because academic dishonesty is a violation of the profound trust of the entire academic community, the Honor System intends to:

- Foster an environment at VCU where academic dishonesty is not tolerated;
- Prevent any student from gaining, or attempting to gain, an unfair advantage over other students through academic misconduct;
- Define what constitutes academic misconduct and what conduct is expected of all members of the university community;
- Cultivate a centralized system of education and awareness of the Honor System; and
- Instill in members of the university community their responsibility for upholding academic integrity by recognizing that:
 - There is NO neutral stance when dishonesty occurs;
 - Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of academic dishonesty is not a neutral act;
 - Failure to take action detracts from a community of trust; and
 - Knowingly allowing others to represent the work of others as their own is as serious an offense as submitting another's work as your own.

It is important to report EVERY suspected incident of academic misconduct to ensure consistency across courses and departments, due process rights, appropriate response to repeated academic misconduct, and protection from unfounded allegations of misconduct.

VCU Statement on Safety

What to know and do to be prepared for emergencies at VCU:

- Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (www.vcu.edu/alert/notify). Keep your information up-to-date in e-Services.
- Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
- Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
- Know where to go for additional emergency information (www.vcu.edu/alert).
- Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects.

More information can be found at the VCU Police Department's Web site: <https://police.vcu.edu/>.

Statement on Americans with Disabilities Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require Virginia Commonwealth University to provide an 'academic adjustment' and/or a 'reasonable accommodation' to any qualified individual with a physical or mental disability who self-identifies as having such. Students should contact the Disability Support Services office on the Monroe Park Campus (828-2253) or Division for Academic Success on the MCV Campus (828-9782) for appropriate academic adjustments or accommodations.

To view services that the University provides please visit: <http://equity.vcu.edu/ada/>.

Title IX

20 USCA Sec.1681(a) Provides that, no person in the U.S. shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program receiving Federal financial assistance. The VCU Title IX leadership team ensures that all incidents of gender inequity, sexual misconduct, violence, exploitation, inappropriate language and harassment are addressed. The Title IX leadership team has oversight of VCU's internal Civil Rights Act enforcement process and is responsible for making reports regarding Title IX incidents, resolution of internal complaints and external changes, and success of training and campus trends to the VCU Board of Visitors, president, provost, vice presidents and deans. Details can be found at: <http://equity.vcu.edu/titleix/>.

Laboratory Safety

Laboratory safety training is required for everyone working in a laboratory and must be completed before starting work in a laboratory. At a minimum, each student must complete the Fundamentals of Laboratory Safety course located in BioRAFT (<https://vcu.bioraft.com>). Additional training is available in BioRAFT and may be assigned by the department, Principal Investigator (PI), Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO) or responsible lab manager/supervisor based upon risks identified in a laboratory hazard assessment.

Facilities Access

Each student's VCU Card number will be programmed into authorized buildings/rooms for access. All College of Engineering room access key requests must be made by filling out the Key Request Form which includes the approval signature of the Department Chair or faculty supervisor and emailing it to egrkey@vcu.edu. Electronic swipe access must be requested by the Faculty Supervisor/PI by filling out the Electronic Swipe Access Request Form on the website <http://www.egr.vcu.edu/school-engineering-operations-management/forms/swipe-access-form/>.

Contact Information

Virginia Commonwealth University has four exchanges for telephone numbers, 828-xxxx and 827-xxxx, 225-xxxx, and 440-xxxx. When calling within the university, it is only necessary to use the last digit of the three-digit prefix, followed by the four-digit suffix. Thus, 77033 is actually 827-7033.

Important Dates

The 2021-22 academic calendar is available at <http://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/>.

AROUND CAMPUS AND OTHER INFORMATION

Recreation Centers

There are recreation centers located on both campuses. The Monroe Campus recreation center, Cart Street Gym, is located at 101 South Linden Street. The MCV recreation center is located off 10th St. and Turpin St. They post their hours at the beginning of each semester. Students need their VCUCard to gain access. The Web site for Recreational Sports has facility information as well as programs available to students: <http://www.recsports.vcu.edu/>.

Bookstores

There are two bookstores located on both campuses. The Monroe Campus Bookstore is located at the West Broad Street Parking Deck. The MCV bookstore is located at 10th and Leigh Streets, in the N Deck. Bookstore hours can be found on the VCU Barnes & Noble Web site: <http://vcu.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?storeId=55552&catalogId=10001&langId=-1>.

Libraries

There are two main libraries for VCU. The library on the Monroe Campus is the James Branch Cabell Library located 901 Park Ave. The VCU Campus Connector drops students off directly in front of this library. The library on the MCV campus is the Tompkins-McCaw Library located at 509 N. 12th Street. Library hours and other information on what the libraries have to offer can be found on their Web site: <https://www.library.vcu.edu/>.

Computer Services

VCU Technology Services provides computer support to the University to make sure technology resources are available anywhere at any time. They offer IT support, a software center to download packages and help with e-mail. Their Web site is: <http://www.ts.vcu.edu/>.

There is also a computer store on campus called RamTech. There are excellent discounts for VCU students at the store and is a great place to browse and ask questions while researching your next computer. <http://apps.bsv.vcu.edu/RamTech/Index.html>

Parking and Transportation both at VCU and with the City of Richmond

The College of Engineering strongly recommends students obtain parking from the University. The Parking and Transportation Office is responsible for the management and maintenance of all university-owned parking spaces and for enforcement of parking policies and procedures. Signs at lot entrances designate all decal/permit-controlled lots. Vehicles not displaying the appropriate decals or permits will be ticketed when found parked in these areas and are subject to being towed.

To obtain information on the cost of the different lots and obtain a VCU parking pass, students can visit their Web site: <http://www.parking.vcu.edu/parking/>. Students living in university-operated housing may purchase 24-hour subscriptions on a per semester basis to the West Main Street Deck or Jefferson Street Deck.

Automobile/Motorcycle Licensing

Out-of-state residents enrolled full-time at an accredited Virginia school may drive in Virginia with their home-state licenses and vehicle registration plates.

However, out-of-state students with a driver's license who are gainfully employed here, full-time or part-time, are required to be licensed to drive in Virginia, and their vehicles must be registered by Virginia. New residents must obtain Virginia driver's licenses within 30 days of residency.

To obtain a drivers' licenses and/or vehicle registration for the Commonwealth of Virginia please visit the Department of Motor Vehicles Web site: <https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/#/>.

Vehicle Inspection

Vehicle inspection is required immediately after registration. This must be done at an official inspection station. Equipment checked includes, but is not limited to, brakes, lights, steering, signal devices, suspension, mirrors, horn, windshield glass and wipers, tires exhaust system, license plate mounting, safety belts, emission control devices and hood latch. Numerous garages provide this service.

City Decals

Virginia localities also register residents' vehicles. The City of Richmond requires purchase and display of a city decal on vehicles registered in Virginia except those displaying a decal from another locality. Students with no locality decal must purchase a Richmond decal from the City:

<http://www.richmondgov.com/Finance/FAQ.aspx>.

Bicycles

On-campus residents are advised to register their bicycles with the VCU Police Department. There is an online registration located at: <http://www.bikes.vcu.edu/safety-regulation/bike-registration/>.

City Buses

Mass transportation in Richmond and Henrico County is provided by the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC), with express routes operating during the peak traffic periods between downtown Richmond and outlying areas. The VCUCard with a VCU Student Transit Pass (obtained from the Parking and Transportation Office) is a bus pass for students to ride the GRTC buses. Senior citizens and the disabled may ride for reduced fares. GRTC schedules are available in the Commuter Student Lounge of the Commons, 907 Floyd Ave. More information about the transit pass is located here: <http://www.parking.vcu.edu/transportation/transit-pass/>.

Student Health Services

Student Health Services provides quality outpatient care and public health services to students as part of your student health fee. Student Health Services is located at 1300 West Broad Street, Suite 2200. Students can obtain cold and flu medicine inexpensively. Student Health Services on the MCV campus is located in the VMI building, 1000 East Marshall St., Suite 305. Information on making appointments, the staff and hours can be found on their Web site: <https://students.vcu.edu/health/>.

Graduate Student Association

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) at VCU is committed to facilitating programs that enhance the academic skills, professional development, and social environment of all graduate students. The GSA also serves as an advocate for the issues and needs of graduate students at VCU. Just by being a graduate student, students are automatically members of the GSA. With that membership comes many opportunities. We are working hard to do more for all graduate students at VCU. Become more informed by joining GSA Listserv. Students who join Listserv will receive announcements and important information about the GSA. Students are invited to GET INVOLVED and attend GSA meetings and socials. For additional information, please visit the GSA website at <http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/life/association.html>.

FORMS

The following pages include a list of mandatory forms to be filled out during the various stages of degree completion and a checklist of degree requirements.

All forms are found online at:

<https://egr.vcu.edu/academics/student-services/resources-forms/>

Plan of Study for the M.S. Degree (Form M1)

Plan of Study for the Doctoral Degree (Form D1)

Appointment of Master of Science for Thesis Advisory Committee (Form M2)

Doctoral Committee Approval and Qualifying Exam Results (Form D2)

Notice of Dissertation Proposal Defense for the Ph.D. Degree

Notice of Final Defense Examination for Degree of M.S. and Ph.D.

Admission to Master's or Doctoral Degree Candidacy

ETD Approval Form

Graduation checklist for all Graduate Students, Graduate Student Advisors, and Graduate Program Directors

The total number of semester credits required for graduation depends upon the degree program. Specific information may be found under degree program descriptions. In addition to the specific requirements listed by the department, the following graduation checklist for graduate students, advisers and program directors summarizes all general requirements for graduation as determined by the University Graduate Council.

- Candidates enrolled at time of application/reapplication to graduate (i.e., semester in which candidates plan to graduate).
- Overall graduate GPA is greater than or equal to 3.0.
- Graduate GPA based on all graduate course work attempted after acceptance into program.
- For repeated courses, both original grade and repeat grades included in calculation of graduate GPA.
- No more than six credit hours or 20 percent of total credit hours attempted (whichever greater) at C or below level (D, F, U). **Note: ECE does not allow any grades below “B” to be used for degree requirements.**
- No course work approved for transfer below grade of B; no course work approved for transfer included in calculation of GPA.
- Graduate course work (500 level or higher) only may be applied to a graduate degree with at least one half of required course work designated exclusively for graduate students (600 or higher).
- All Incompletes (I) converted to letter grade by last day of class of semester in which candidate plans to graduate.
- All grades of Continued (CO), Progress (PR) and Not Reported (NR) converted to letter grades by last day of class of semester in which candidate plans to graduate.
- All course work taken within prescribed time limits (M.S., six years; Ph.D., eight years with any extensions approved by the Graduate School).
- All requirements for thesis/dissertation (if applicable) completed by the deadline published in the [Academic Calendar](#) of the semester in which candidate plans to graduate, including
 - Final defense of thesis/dissertation.
 - Signature sheet with all approval signatures, including graduate dean’s and, if applicable, documentation of IRB or IACUC approval number.
 - Required copies submitted to VCU Libraries, with appropriate forms and fees, for binding, copywriting (if applicable), etc., according to instructions in University Graduate Council’s Thesis/Dissertation Manual and/or VCU Libraries Electronic Thesis/Dissertation procedures and program/school handbooks. (Candidate should confirm with adviser/program director all internal schedules for submission of copy, defense and approval.)
 - Submission of Survey of Earned Doctorates to graduate dean (doctoral students only). To complete the survey electronically, go to <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/sed>.
 - Students must settle all financial obligations with VCU Student Accounting Department.

Procedures for Graduating with the M.S. or Ph.D. Degree

In addition to all academic requirements for graduation, candidates for certificates, the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in the College of Engineering must complete the following steps:

The VCU Office of Records and Registration will alert you by e-mail when the graduation checkout and application process begins each semester. If you intend to graduate that semester, please read that message carefully and follow all procedures.

In order to complete the application process and have your information printed accurately in the Commencement Program, you will need to complete this process by the date provided by Records and Registration. **YOU CANNOT APPLY LATE TO GRADUATE.**

To initiate the process, you must complete each of the following steps:

1. Go to e-Services: <http://www.eservices.vcu.edu/>
2. Select the Students Button
3. Enter your e-ID and e-ID Password
4. Select the Student tab and choose Student Records
5. Select Apply to Graduate and follow the instructions to start the checkout procedure
6. After completing the graduation checkout through e-Services, select the following link to obtain the graduation package: http://rar.vcu.edu/graduation_instructions.html

By completing these steps, you will have a) notified the Office of Records and Registration of your intent to graduate and b) gathered pertinent information for your graduation application package. You will be required to complete the graduation package and provide it to the appropriate dean's office.

Please note that initiating the e-Services Apply to Graduate checkout procedure for a program will prohibit future registration in that program. If you initiate the e-Services Apply to Graduate checkout procedure by mistake (i.e. by clicking on the Submit Request button) or too early in your academic career, please contact the Office of Records and Registration ([804-828-1349](tel:804-828-1349)) immediately so that the action can be rescinded and the registration restriction removed.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of Records and Registration at ([804-828-1349](tel:804-828-1349)).