SOM Degree Completion Workshop

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Sanger Hall, Room 1-055
Overview

- Who should be here?
- Why are you here?
- Definitions
- What to do if you have a problem

Degree Completion Process
- Before applying for graduation
- Applying for graduation
- Before a final defense
- Handling thesis/dissertation
- After a successful final defense
- Due dates
- FAQs, Q&A
Who should be here?

- Essential for all students that **will have** a thesis or dissertation
- Some information for students **without** a thesis or dissertation
- Does not apply to students in MPH or Certificate programs

Why are you here?

- Multiple, specific steps to degree completion
- Not intuitive steps
- Time-consuming steps
Definitions

• Academic requirements (courses, research, final defense, etc.)

• Degree completion
  • processes in addition to meeting all academic requirements
  • required to earn degree and be eligible for graduation
  • driven by VCU, Graduate School and SOM policies
  • cannot modify, alter, circumvent, ignore or otherwise not follow degree completion steps if you want your degree

• Commencement or graduation ceremony

• Awarding of degrees
What to do if you have a problem

Advisor

Graduate Program Director

Graduate Education Office
Before applying for graduation

- Will all academic requirements possibly be met this semester? (DegreeWorks, Advisor, GPD)
- Are you registered in semester of completion? (GradTrak or eServices)
  - Register after discussing with Advisor and Program Director
  - Considerations: degree completion date, degree program, visa, financial aid, etc.
- Degree candidacy form (GradTrak) signed/filed with Grad Ed Office?
- Correct any problems immediately
- When all ok, proceed to “Applying for Graduation”
Applying for graduation

• Complete *TWO* graduation applications
  • eServices: Student Tab -> Student Records -> Apply to Graduate
  • Hardcopy Application to Graduate: [https://medschool.vcu.edu/graduate/student_res/graduation_application/](https://medschool.vcu.edu/graduate/student_res/graduation_application/)
    • Review instructions, select boxes with advisor
    • Part I A&B: complete, obtain original signatures
    • Part II: complete, original student signature
      • School = Medicine, Major = Biochemistry, Biostatistics, etc., Concentration = N/A or enter specific track if applicable, Degree = MS, PHD, etc.
  • Parts III and IV: do not complete
  • Include current VCU transcript
  • Deliver signed form + transcript to Grad Ed Office, Sanger 1-055

• Both are due by September 14, 2018
Before a final defense

• Meet with Advisor and Graduate Advisory Committee to define thesis/dissertation content and organization (many, many weeks before anticipated defense)
• Complete thesis/dissertation
• Identify a date/time/location for final defense that works for Advisor and Graduate Advisory Committee
• Input approved final defense date/time/location via GradTrak -> Exam Scheduling
  • Print “Notice of Final X Examination” form, obtain original signatures
    • Notice of Final Defense Examination—Ph.D. Program
    • Notice of MS Oral Final Examination—M.S. Program
  • Submit signed Notice of Final X Examination (plus MS thesis) to Grad Ed office
• Submit thesis/dissertation to committee PER THEIR DEADLINE 10 OR MORE WORKING DAYS BEFORE DEFENSE
• Complete all above steps AT LEAST 10 WORKING DAYS BEFORE DEFENSE
Handling your thesis/dissertation

- See https://graduate.vcu.edu/student/thesis for
  - Thesis and dissertation guidelines
  - Required forms and instructions related to
    - ETD approval form (hardcopy)
    - VCU Scholars Compass
    - Survey of earned doctorates (PHD only)
    - Other
- DO NOT reserve the Graduate School’s Conference Room for your defense
After a successful final defense

- Complete corrections to thesis/dissertation in response to Advisor and Graduate Advisory Committee
- Complete all actions at https://graduate.vcu.edu/student/thesis including
  - ETD PDF upload at Scholar’s Compass (keep email notification)
  - Survey of earned doctorates (PHD only, keep certificate of completion)
- Complete final forms and obtain original signatures, gather other documents
  - Application to Graduate, Part I C (provided to student in exam packet)
  - ETD Approval (approval and animal/human subjects, embargo on publication)
  - Email acknowledgement for Scholar’s Compass ETD upload
  - Certificate of Completion for Survey of Earned Doctorates (PHD only)
- All final documents submitted together to Graduate Education Office (Sanger 1-055)
- VCU awards degrees later (Spring-June; Summer-September; Fall-January)
## SOM Due Dates for Fall, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both graduation applications submitted</td>
<td>noon, September 14, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notice of X Examination submitted to Grad Ed</td>
<td>noon, November 19, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last week for final defense</td>
<td>December 3-7, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final signed paperwork submitted to Grad Ed</td>
<td>noon, December 13, 2018</td>
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Do not follow other deadlines.
Questions, FAQs

• Does a graduation application in one semester carry-forward to another semester? No. Students must submit an application in the semester of anticipated degree completion.

• What if I submit a graduation application for a semester, but don’t complete my degree in that same semester? Send email to Mr. Greenwald.

• Do I need to complete my current graduate degree if I am accepted into MD or DDS program at VCU? Yes, those programs require students to complete their current degree prior to enrolling. VCU Graduate School does not allow enrollment in two programs simultaneously.

• What if I am struggling with scheduling my defense? Contact your advisor and program director.

• What if one of my advisory committee members cannot attend my scheduled defense? Contact Dr. Grotewiel.
Questions, FAQs

• Do all signatures need to be original. Yes.

• Must all signatures on ETD and Graduation Application be on the same pages? Ideally yes, but not required.

• Do I need bound copies of my thesis or dissertation? Not for Grad Ed office, but consider personal and program needs.

• Can I impose a delay on the availability of my ETD? Yes. Select 1 year, 5 years, or never on the ETD form. Selection of never requires letter of justification from advisor.

• When is my degree awarded? Degrees are awarded as indicated elsewhere in this slide deck.

• What if I need to document my degree completion prior to awarding of my degree? Contact Dr. Grotewiel.

• What if I fake some of my degree completion documents? The Grad Ed Office will report the alleged incident to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.
Immediate Action Items for Students

- Discuss degree completion time-line with advisor
- Carefully complete “Before applying for graduation”
- Apply for graduation
  - eServices and hardcopy (GradTrak)
  - Due Friday, September 14th, 2018