

PhD Student Guidelines



VCU

College of Engineering

PhD Requirements

- With MS in CS or related
 - Didactic: 12 credits (4 courses)
 - Research: 38 credits
 - Seminar: 1 x 4 credits (4 semesters)
 - Total credits: 53 credits minimum
- With BS (or MS in unrelated)
 - Didactic: 24 credits (8 courses)
 - Research: 42 credits
 - Seminar: 1 x 6 credits (6 semesters)
 - Total credits: 72 credits minimum
- Required courses:
 - CMSC 501: Advanced algorithms
 - CMSC 603: High performance distributed systems
 - CMSC 702: Seminar

>= 50 of your courses
must be at the 600 level
- PhD Student -> PhD Candidate
 - **Complete 75% didactic courses**
 - Plan of study
 - Dissertation Committee
 - Proposal Defense
- PhD Candidate -> Dr.
 - Publication requirement
 - Dissertation Research
 - Defend your dissertation

PhD Requirements

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).

FORM



- Plan of Study for the Doctoral Degree

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

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PhD Requirements

- Selects a Dissertation Committee **within 24 months** of enrollment.
- Selection must be approved by the CS Graduate Program Director.
- Committee consists of 5 faculty members, including the primary Research Advisor.
 - 3 committee members must be from the CS graduate program
 - 2 committee members from outside; whenever possible, one of the committee members should be from outside of VCU.
- This committee votes to approve or not the student's dissertation proposal and the final Ph.D. dissertation defense and makes the recommendation to award or not the Ph.D. degree. All members of the committee must be members of the VCU graduate faculty.

PhD Student -> PhD Candidate

- Complete 75% didactic courses
- Plan of study
- **Dissertation Committee**
- Proposal Defense

PhD Candidate -> Dr.

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PhD Requirements

- The Dissertation Proposal consists of the **research plan** and **initial results**. It includes a thorough **literature review** of the topic and enough information to judge the feasibility, scope and potential impact of the research.
- The student will submit one copy of the Dissertation Research Proposal to each member of the Dissertation Committee **two weeks before the proposal defense**.
- All faculty and students can ask questions during an open part of the defense, followed by more questions by the Dissertation Committee during the closed session of the defense. **This constitutes an Oral Comprehensive Exam.**
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PhD Requirements

TIMING!!

This must happen no later than **three months** prior to the planned *dissertation defense*.

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PhD Requirements

- Typically, this happens during CS Seminar Fridays at noon
- Coordinate with seminar coordinators:
 - Dr. Damevski kdamevski@vcu.edu
 - Dr. Bulut ebulut@vcu.edu

Ensure to give them a minimum of three months notice

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PhD Requirements

- **Fill out forms!!**
 - **Before** the proposal defense
 - Form: Notice of dissertation proposal defense

Notice of dissertation proposal defense for the Ph.D. degree

 - **After** the proposal defense
 - Form: Committee Approval and Qualifying Exam Results

Doctoral Committee Approval and Qualifying Exam Results

 - Form: Admission to Doctor Degree Candidacy

Admission to Master's or Doctoral Degree Candidacy
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PhD Requirements

- One accepted journal paper or published high-quality conference paper in a student's research area
- One manuscript submitted for review to a journal or a high-quality conference
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PhD Requirements

Just remember two gets you a degree but it won't get you a job ... especially in academia.

It will also seriously annoy your advisor

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PhD Requirements

- Complete at least the following research and seminar credits:
 - 38 (students entering with M.S. degree)
 - 42 (students entering with B.S. degree)
- Conduct an original investigation under the guidance of the advisor
- Prepare a dissertation reporting the results of this research and comparing its significance in relation to existing scientific knowledge.
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PhD Requirements

- The final oral examination is normally limited to the subject of the candidate's dissertation and related matters.
- All committee members are required to vote, and a favorable decision by the Dissertation Committee with no more than one negative vote is required for passing the examination.
- The committee can approve the final oral examination conditionally, subject to the corrections required by the committee, to the satisfaction of either the Advisor or the entire Dissertation Committee.
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PhD Requirements

- The doctoral candidate will submit individual copies of the complete dissertation to the Dissertation Committee.
- If the committee accepts the dissertation for defense, the candidate appears before them for a final oral defense
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PhD Requirements

- **Fill out forms!!**
 - **Before the defense**
 - Form: Notice of final defense

[Notice of final defense examination for degree of Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy](#)

- **After the proposal defense**
 - Form: ETD Approval Form

[ETD Approval Form](#)

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