
Plan of Study

All M.S. and Ph.D. degree-seeking students are required to file a Plan (or Program) of Study with the Graduate School of Virginia Tech. The document serves as an outline of the anticipated academic details making up the student's course of study. Students work with their advisors in developing the plan which is then approved by the advisory committee and the Graduate Program Chair. The plan is submitted on paper to the Graduate Coordinator who enters it into the university database system and sends it to the Graduate School for final approval. The Plan of Study (POS) is the first major benchmark assessed by the Graduate School as it monitors student progress through all steps of the degree-seeking process, and it is the first thing checked when students are being cleared for graduation. ***Plans of study should be submitted to the Graduate School according to the following schedule:***

- M.S. Plans: By the end of the second semester of study**
- Ph.D. Plans: By the end of the third semester of study**

Instructions and Notes for the Student:

Students are to submit a rough draft of the plan to the Graduate Coordinator before any signatures are obtained so that it can be checked for problems, errors etc.

All courses on the plan (including supporting courses) must be taken for a letter grade except for those approved to be taken on a pass-fail (P/F) basis. Do not include audited classes. Transfer credits cannot exceed 50% of the graded course credits needed to satisfy the minimum requirements for an SBES degree. The Graduate School must have a copy of official transcripts for courses being transferred before the Plan can be approved.

Check the SBES website for minimum degree requirements, sample plans of study, and the fill-able Plan of Study form.

Making Changes to the Plan:

Keep in mind that the plan is a "projection" into the future and as such, it is subject to change when circumstances dictate. Before the Graduate Coordinator sends your plan electronically to the graduate school, it can be altered and edited at will (with advisory committee approval). However, *once the Graduate School has approved it, it can only be changed by means of the procedure given below.*

To make a change you must go to the Graduate School website and fill out the proper paperwork. There are two (2) separate forms for this purpose at <http://www.grads.vt.edu/forms/index.html>: one for plan changes, and one for advisory committee changes. Follow the form instructions and gather signatures (except for Department Head or Graduate Program Chair). Bring/send the form to the Graduate Coordinator for final processing. WFU students can send the completed form by scan/email or fax to 540-231-9738, marked "ATTN: Tess".

Additional Important Information:

- ◆ Once the plan is entered into Banner, you can view it on Hokie Spa to track its approval status.
- ◆ Be aware that if you have any courses on your plan which you took **over five years ago**, measured from the semester you submit the plan, the Graduate School will require a [Course Justification Form](#) completed by your committee. This form is also found at the website mentioned above. *The completed form should be sent to the Graduate Coordinator at the Tech campus so that it can be submitted when the Plan of Study (POS) is filed.*
- ◆ If a member of your committee is someone who does not have a VA Tech ID number, you must have that person fill out a [Non-Virginia Tech Committee Member Registration form](#). The form must be accompanied by a vita, and the packet needs to be sent to the SBES Graduate Coordinator on the VT campus for processing through the Graduate School. This **must** be done before that committee member can be included on the Plan of Study.

Remember: All forms must go through the Graduate Coordinator's office.