

# Frequently Asked Questions About Graduate Requirements:

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(Approved by GARC, 1/23/08; Revised on 04/30/12)

The GARC prepared the following FAQ page to address questions that have arisen on several occasions in the recent past. This should be used as a reference for both students and faculty.

- **How many hours must a doctoral student take? What courses count toward the degree?**

The College of Arts and Sciences requires a 72-hour doctorate. A minimum of 24 hours must be in graded graduate-level course work (including Research Problems EVSC 9995).

- **What about students who enter our Ph.D. program with a Master's in hand?**

The College still requires a 72-hour doctorate with a minimum of 24 hours in graded graduate-level course work. However a maximum of 6 credits of graded course work may be transferred from a Master's program at another institution; the UVA Graduate School requires a minimum of 18 credits of graduate level course work be taken within the Graduate School at UVA. Additionally a total maximum of 24 credits may be transferred from a Master's program at another institution (only 6 of these can be graded course work though). If a student is awarded 9-20 transfer credits, their in-residence standing in the Graduate School is increased by one semester; if the student is awarded 21+ transfer credits, their in-residence standing is increased by one year (this does not affect eligibility for financial support). Based on our current understanding of these policies, it is not beneficial for incoming Ph.D. students with existing Master's degree to transfer any more than the allowed 6 credits of graded course work. For students with prior graduate degrees at UVA, all credits taken within the UVA Graduate School as either an EVSC MA or MS student may count toward a subsequent Ph.D. graduate degree at UVA.

- **Does the Department Seminar count toward the M.A., M.S. and Ph.D.? May it be counted more than once?**

The Department Seminar (EVSC 7092) may be counted once among the 24 credits of graded course work required for the M.A., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees. For students who completed the M.S. or M.A. in EVSC, they may also count the seminar one more time for the Ph.D.

- **May graduate level courses taken under the auspices of Continuing and Professional Studies prior to the student enrolling in the graduate program be counted toward graduate degree requirements?**

A maximum of 6 credit hours may be used, and these courses may not have been used to satisfy any requirement for any other degree at UVA.

- **What about courses taken while a student was a UVA undergraduate?**

Undergraduate UVA students who are enrolled in a UVA graduate program may count up to 6 "excess" graduate level credits taken while the student was enrolled as an undergraduate toward the Ph.D. degree. "Excess" is defined as graded courses taken as an undergraduate student over and

above all requirements for the Bachelor's degree. Under no circumstances will courses be credited toward both the Bachelor's and Ph.D. degrees.

- **May an undergraduate student who was enrolled in a dual-listed 4000/7000 level course at the 4000-level later count this as a 7000-level course?**

No.

- **May pass/fail (i.e. credit/no credit) or audited courses be used to fulfill any graduate requirements?**

No, students must receive either a letter grade or a "satisfactory" result for a course to count.

- **How does the course work requirement differ for M.S. and Ph.D. students?**

M.S. students are required to take 24 hours of graded course work, including the Graduate Area Requirements (one course in each area). Ph.D. students must take the Graduate Area Requirements plus one 3-4 credit advanced (7000-level) course. However, for Ph.D. student, the remaining graded course work may be satisfied by Research Problems – this is not the case for Masters students.

- **What are the ramifications of a course being given an EVSC vs. an EVxx (EVEC, EVAT, EVHY, EVGE) mnemonic?**

For a course to be counted as meeting a Graduate Area Requirement, it must have the appropriate EVxx label (i.e. not EVSC). Any 5000- or 7000-level EVxx course may be used to meet this requirement. If a course is inherently interdisciplinary, is a "tools" course, or if for some reason is not appropriate for an Area Requirement, it should be listed as EVSC. In addition, EVxx one- or two-credit courses or seminars do not fulfill Area Requirement for that discipline.

- **How many credits should a student register for in a given semester?**

M.S. and Ph.D. students should enroll for 12 credits in each semester, which will be a combination of graded regular courses, Research Problems, and Non-Topical Research. M.A. students should enroll for 15 credits in each of their two academic semesters (the Graduate School at this point does not permit summer courses to count for credit, so this allows M.A. students to meet their 30-credit requirement in one academic year.

Note: First-year students must enroll in a minimum of 9 hours of graded course work credit in each academic semester (this may include regular courses, Department Seminar, and Research Problems).

- **May University-allocated travel or research funds be spent after graduation?**

No. All funds allocated from University resources must be spent prior to graduation.

- **What documents need to be filed at the time of the comprehensive examination?**

- 1) A completed "Comprehensive Exam" [form](#)
- 2) A complete copy of the exam (questions and answers).

- **What documents need to be filed at the time of the defense?**

- 1) A completed "Defense Decision" form
- 2) The College of Arts and Sciences Final Examination form
- 3) A copy of a distinct manuscript (published or in a form to be submitted for publication) from research that arose directly from the dissertation.

▪ **Must a student be enrolled in the semester they graduate?**

Yes, as either a regularly enrolled student or on Continuous Enrollment (permitted if all credit requirements have been met and the student has already set a defense date). Students seeking Continuous Enrollment must complete the Continuous Enrollment form and get it signed by the Director of Graduate Studies (GARC Chair). If regularly enrolled, Ph.D. students must be registered for 12 credits, but Master's students may register part-time in their final semester. Tuition costs are eliminated or reduced with Continuous Enrollment and part-time enrollment, respectively, however, student loans are not deferred, the student may not be eligible for UVA health insurance, and these options are not available to foreign students holding visas.

▪ **How do I post a notice of my defense?**

- Defenses (thesis, dissertation, and proposal) are open to the Department. (The oral portion of the Ph.D. comprehensive exams is also open to the faculty.) Students are required to post announcements of any of these events at least 7 days prior.
- **Announcements should be made as follows:** A notice of title, date, time and place must be sent by email to all faculty members in the department. (envisci-faculty@virginia.edu). Additionally, a notice no smaller than 8 1/2" by 5 1/2" giving the same information should be posted on the bulletin board set up for that purpose in the mail room. (Please remember to remove the notice after the event.) You may feel free to post additional notices elsewhere, but the mailroom is a must.

▪ **Do I have to file an annual report?**

According to the "rules" set out by the faculty, all graduate students are required to submit an annual report if they receive some kind of financial aid from the Department. In practice, all graduate students do submit a CV, which is used to determine Departmental fellowship and or TA support. Another reason for this, however, is to provide productivity information to University administration or others interested in our program. The information is helpful to us in promoting the graduate program both inside and outside the University.

▪ **What number should I use in registering for Non-Topical Research?**

Master's students should sign up for EVSC 8998 or EVSC 8999. Ph.D. Students use either EVSC 9998 or EVSC 9999. Officially, Master's students who have not yet defended their proposal use EVSC 8998, and those who have use EVSC 8999. Ph.D. students use the same model. Make sure you register for the appropriate section with your faculty advisor as the instructor. Remember to sign up for enough Non-Topical Research credits to bring your total to at least 12 hours every semester.

▪ **How do I submit a petition?**

There are a variety of reasons one might submit a petition to the GARC. A common petition is to request that a course other than one specified by its mnemonic identification be used to satisfy the Graduate Area Requirements. Petitions are essentially letters to the GARC making the request. The letter must include the rationale (justification) for asking for a variance in the requirements. For example, if a course is sought to be used as a replacement for a standard course in fulfillment of the

Area Requirement, the course requested should be named, the course(s) to be replaced should be named, and a justification given. If the requested course is not a regularly scheduled course (if it is, for example, a first-time or one-time offering), a syllabus or course description from the instructor should be included as part of the petition. If you have questions about the content of your petition, see any GARC member. All petitions, regardless of the request, must be signed by your advisor. No action will be taken without an advisor's signature showing advisor approval of the requested change in plan. Furthermore, all petitions are to be submitted in advance. Petitions to make use of coursework already taken to fulfill academic degree requirements may not be approved. For specific questions see the GARC Chair (Director of Graduate Studies) or a GARC member.