

**Guidelines for Graduate Program Directors and Advisers
for
E-services Graduation Checkout/
Graduate School Application to Graduate Process**

I. E-mail notification of all graduate students

- A. At the beginning of each semester, all matriculated graduate students will receive an e-mail reminder from Records & Registration/Graduation Office to initiate the application to graduate process if they intend to graduate **in the current semester**.
1. The online E-services process is available and required for undergraduate and graduate students only. Students in professional programs (D.D.S., D.P.T., M.D., Pharm.D.) should continue to follow application to graduate guidelines provided by their professional program advisers unless otherwise notified.
 2. Students enrolled in more than one undergraduate and/or graduate program (i.e., B.S. and M.T., B.S. to M.S., Graduate Certificate/M.S., Graduate Certificate/Ph.D., etc.) may initiate the E-services graduation checkout procedure for both programs at the same time; however, they still must complete a separate application to graduate package for each program from which they intend to graduate.
 3. Students who intend to graduate from both a graduate and professional program (i.e., M.D./Ph.D.) may initiate the online E-services graduation checkout procedure for the graduate program only and will need to apply to graduate from the professional program according to the guidelines provided by their professional program advisers.
 4. **NOTE:** All graduate students in the **School of Medicine** are asked to complete a preliminary review before initiating the online E-services graduation checkout procedure and are referred to the School of Medicine guidelines or to their advisers/graduate program directors regarding application to graduate procedures.
- B. The e-mail notification will be sent to the student's official VCU e-mail address.
1. The University's Student Information System automatically generates an official VCU e-mail address for each student when the Graduate School Admissions Office records an admit decision for the student on the system.
 2. Instructions for activating the VCU e-mail address are included in each student's graduate admission packet of information, or are available online at <http://www.vcu.edu/it/>. Students are encouraged to activate their accounts immediately, since the VCU e-mail address is the official mechanism by which official VCU business is communicated to all students.

3. Faculty are encouraged to remind students (i.e., at new-student orientations, on course syllabi, in advising sessions, etc.) of the need to activate and use their VCU e-mail addresses and that faculty will use VCU e-mail addresses only for formal communications to their students.
- C. The e-mail will include submission deadlines for students.
1. Advisers will be notified of their processing deadlines via separate e-mails from R&R/Graduation Office to all Deans and from the Graduate School in order to minimize the last minute submission of applications to advisers.
 2. Students may apply to graduate for a current semester only. Retroactive awarding of degrees is not allowed, and processing for future graduation periods will not be available until e-mail notification for that semester has been sent.
 3. The graduation checkout process may still be initiated by students and processed by advisers after the posted deadlines; however, the posted deadlines **MUST** be met in order to ensure that students' names, etc. will be included in the appropriate Commencement program (December, May graduations).
- D. The e-mail will remind graduate students that they must be enrolled in the semester in which they intend to graduate.
- E. The e-mail will remind students that initiation of the online E-services checkout portion of the application to graduate process will prohibit future registration in the program.
1. If students initiate the online E-services checkout by mistake, they should contact **immediately** either R&R/Graduation Office (828-1917) or the Graduate School (828-6916) to have the action rescinded and the registration restriction removed.
 2. **NOTE:** This procedure has been in place since the implementation of SIS+.

II. E-mail notification of graduate program directors

- A. In the future, the e-mail notification to students will be copied to all deans, department chairs and directors to alert them of the processing deadlines for the current semester.
- B. Additionally, the Graduate School will forward a copy of the e-mail reminder to all graduate program directors to confirm that the student notification has been sent and to confirm the adviser deadline for completion of preliminary review and submission of the approval sheet and commencement program/diploma information to R&R/Graduation Office.
- C. Graduate program directors and faculty will be directed to the Reporting Center @ VCU to access various reports/queries that exist to assist them in the application to graduate process.

Go to <http://iserver.adm.vcu.edu/reports/>
 Click on VCU Internal
 Click on Login

Follow instructions to log in (If you do not have access, contact Elise Via in Records/Registration at esvia@vcu.edu or Sherry Sandkam in the Graduate School at ssandkam@vcu.edu.)

D. To view individual graduate student transcripts, select Advising E-services:

Enter student's Social Security number

For Advising Code, use the word "advising" in lower case

Click Login

E. To view Graduation Reports, select Student Records Reports and:

1. Select Graduation Application List with no degrees posted to check status of application to graduate process.
2. Graduate program directors should access this report throughout the semester to track the status of those students who have applied to graduate.
 - a) Code 1 = Student has successfully completed the online E-services portion of the graduation checkout process.
 - b) Code 2 = R&R/Graduation Office has received Part II and Part III of the Application to Graduate – For All Graduate Students with preliminary review and approval signatures.
 - c) Code 5 = R&R/Graduation Office has received Part II with final review and approval signature (Code 5 is a temporary code that will disappear within a day of the degree posting, after which graduated students will move to the Graduation Application List with Degrees Posted listing).

F. Select Graduation Application List with degrees posted to confirm posting of degrees.

G. Other available reports on the Student Records Reports site that will assist with the ongoing advising of graduate students and the application to graduate process:

1. Registered Student Listing
2. Graduate Students with GPA less than 3.00 (includes all course work taken since matriculation, so may not be a "pure" graduate GPA)
3. Graduate Students with a C, D, F, or U Grade (semester specific)
4. Missing and Incomplete Grades
5. Graduate and Professional Students – Open Matriculations
6. Graduate Students with a "W"

NOTE: A request has been submitted to add official VCU e-mail addresses to the Registered Student Listing and Graduate and Professional Students – Open Matriculations reports.

III. Graduate students who do not plan to graduate in the current semester should disregard the e-mail.

IV. Completion of online E-services portion of application to graduate checkout procedure

A. Students planning to graduate in the current semester should proceed to the E-services web site https://iserver.adm.vcu.edu/AIS/STU/S_ESERV_HOME.html to complete the online E-services portion of the graduation checkout procedure.

B. Student logs on to E-services.

NOTE: Advisers cannot access student E-services screens, since access requires both student SSN/ID and Pin No.; however, advisers can access student transcripts via the Advising E-services process described above.

C. Student selects the option for Academic Record.

D. Student selects the option for Graduation Checkout, which takes the student to the Academic Program and Graduation Checkout screen.

E. If academic program information in boxed area is incorrect, student should exit E-services and contact adviser to correct this information.

F. If program information is correct, student should complete Steps 1-4.

1. STEP 1:

a. Student should check the box for each program from which he/she intends to graduate **in the current semester** and

b. Click on the Graduation Checkout button to notify R&R/Graduation Office of intent to graduate **in the current semester**.

NOTE: Student is reminded that clicking on this button will prohibit future registration in the program.

c. If student is unsuccessful, he/she will receive a message to exit the system and contact R&R/Graduation Office.

d. If student is successful, the screen will display a message to that effect and will instruct the student to click the "Return to graduation checkout" button to return to the Academic Program and Graduation Checkout screen to complete steps 3 and 4 in the process.

e. Student will see that the check beside the program name(s) have been replaced with a red N/A and will see a message posted in the academic program box to the effect that "degree checkout for this program has been completed."

- f. The day after the student successfully completes the online E-services graduation checkout procedure, the student's name will appear in the "Graduation Application List With No Degrees Posted" report on the Student Records Reports Web site. The Code of 1 indicates that R&R/Graduation Office has been notified officially of the student's intent to graduate in the current semester.
2. STEP 2: Student should print a copy of the Academic Program and Graduation Checkout screen with the message showing the student has officially completed the online E-services checkout step of the application to graduate process.
3. STEP 3: Student should click on the Return to the Academic Record button to return to the Academic Record screen.
 - a. The student should select the graduate transcript option.
 - b. The student should print an unofficial copy of the graduate transcript to attach to the graduation application.
4. STEP 4: Student should exit the E-services system and go to the Graduation Forms Web site address provided at the bottom of the Academic Program and Graduation Checkout screen to complete the application to graduate forms (www.vcu.edu/enroll/forms/graduation).
 - a. Student must exit E-services to go to the Graduation Forms Web site, since the E-services software does not allow for linkages to outside Web sites.
 - b. Students may cut and paste the Forms Web site address.

NOTE: In order to minimize the chance that students may complete the forms without initiating the online E-services portion of the graduation checkout procedure, there is no direct link to the Forms Web site from other VCU web pages.

V. Completion of Application to Graduate documentation for submission to advisers for review and approval

1. The graduation forms for completing Step 4 of the application to graduate process are provided in PDF format so that the student can complete the forms online, print and save in document form. Adobe Acrobat Reader is required. Mac OSX users: Preview will allow you to view and print these forms, but will not allow for you to fill out the forms. You may download Adobe Reader at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html>. This will allow you to fill out and print the form. However, a full version of Acrobat is necessary to save the completed document on either a Mac or PC.
2. A separate set of graduation forms must be completed and submitted for each program from which a student intends to graduate

3. Students are reminded that they should have first completed steps 1 – 3 on E-services. If the student has not done so, the student should go to the E-services Web site provided in the original e-mail notification to complete the online E-services portion of the graduation checkout process first.
4. Graduate students are instructed to complete and submit the following to their academic advisers:
 - a. One copy of the Academic Program and Graduation Checkout screen with the message showing that the student has successfully completed the online E-services degree checkout portion of the process (**printed from E-services**)
 - b. One copy of the unofficial graduate transcript (**printed from E-services**)
 - c. One copy of the Application to Graduate – For All Graduate Students (Parts I through IV)
5. Special instructions for submission of these forms for School of Business and School of Allied Health Professions students are provided. All other graduate students are instructed to submit their applications to their academic advisers.

NOTE: All graduate students in the **School of Medicine** are asked to complete a preliminary review before initiating the online E-services graduation checkout procedure and are referred to the School of Medicine guidelines or to their advisers/graduate program directors regarding application to graduate procedures.

6. A direct link to the Application to Graduate for Graduate Students is provided. The application consists of:
 - a. Part I: Instructions/Checklist including
 - 1) Instructions for students and advisers regarding submission of documentation and the approval process
 - 2) A checklist, divided into current and pending actions, summarizing for all advisers and graduate program directors the academic policies and requirements for graduation as determined by the University Graduate Council and articulated in the Graduate Studies at VCU section of the Graduate and Professional Programs Bulletin
<http://www.vcu.edu/bulletins/>
 - b. Part II: Approval Sheet, requiring a preliminary review/approval, a final review/approval, and a process by which advisers can notify R&R/Graduation Office of students who do not complete their programs of study by the end of the current semester.

Please note:

- 1) Preliminary and final approval signatures indicate that all graduate academic advisers, program directors and deans' designees are confirming their review of all **current and pending** documentation against all major, school, Graduate School and Graduate

- Council degree requirements, are certifying that all degree requirements have been fulfilled, including (if applicable) the successful defense of thesis/dissertation **and all related T/D processing**, and are approving the candidate for the awarding of the degree.
- 2) The final approval signature confirms that **all pending actions have been finalized** (especially the conversion of all temporary grades to final grades and the submission of all documentation related to thesis/dissertation processing, including copies to the VCU Libraries for binding).
 - 3) **R&R/Graduation Office DOES NOT CHECK these pending actions. Submission of Part II: Approval sheet with the final approval signature(s) in Section C is confirmation to R&R/Graduation Office that the deans' designees have done so.**
 - 4) No degree will be posted, nor will any diploma be released until R&R/Graduation Office has received a copy of this signed form (or an approved substitution, i.e., an e-mail listing to expedite processing of graduations for participation in Commencement and release of diplomas for May Commencement. Program directors who confirm graduates' names via e-mail lists should still submit a copy of the approval form with all final approval signatures as soon as possible for R&R/Graduation Office's official records.)

Whenever possible, please remind students to complete a final check of their academic records BEFORE they exit the university to ensure that all temporary grades have been converted, that the record accurately reflects their academic histories and that the degree is posted. The university is required to maintain student files, documentation supporting grading actions, student correspondence, etc. for three years only. Students frequently leave with grades of Incomplete still recorded for courses that were not required for their graduate programs. These Incompletes convert to F's after they have graduated; however, students do not realize that this action has occurred until they request transcripts, sometimes as much as a decade later, at which point, it is almost always impossible to obtain documentation to support the change of grades.

C. Part III: Commencement program/diploma information

1. Information must be submitted no later than the deadlines provided in the e-mail notification to the student in order to ensure inclusion in the appropriate commencement programs.

NOTE: Eventually the information on this form will be collected via an online database and submitted by the student directly to R&R/Graduation Office.

2. Students are required to sign a statement at the bottom of this form acknowledging that they are responsible for settling all financial obligations with the Office of Student Accounts and that the University will not release official transcripts or diplomas until all financial obligations are met.

D. Part IV: Graduation worksheet (OPTIONAL)

1. This form is labeled Optional, since some program directors have indicated a preference to work directly from/on the academic transcript.
2. Any program wishing to use the worksheet should instruct their graduate students to complete and submit the form in addition to the required documentation.

Changes in the application to graduate procedure represent the first step in moving toward a process that, with the implementation of the new student information system, will be driven by a degree audit program and an online approval process. Your feedback and that of your students is encouraged and will be greatly appreciated. Comments may be directed to either Elise Via in Records/Registration at esvia@vcu.edu or Sherry Sandkam in the Graduate School at ssandkam@vcu.edu.