

Completing a degree PhD

Unofficial information for CEE graduate students who are in the last semester of their degree program

Do you plan to graduate this semester?

- You are in the final semester of your degree program and plan to apply for your degree and graduate
- Steps to complete degree:
 - Are you registered?
 - Have you applied for your degree?
 - Have you informed Graduate School about commencement attendance?
 - Have you arranged for a final exam with your committee?
 - Have you scheduled the final exam with the Graduate School?
 - Have you checked your progress to degree on HokieSpa?

Steps to complete degree - Are you registered?

- All graduate students planning to graduate **MUST** be registered in the semester in which they plan to graduate (Fall, Spring, or Summer)
 - Registration can be normal registration like courses, project and report hours, research and thesis hours, or research and dissertation hours
- OR
- Registration can be SSDE ([Start of Semester Defense Exception](#)) - a special lower price 1 credit hour for students who only need to take the final exam. Students using SSDE in Fall or Spring must hold the final exam within the first 5 weeks of the semester. Students using SSDE in Summer have the entire Summer semester to hold the final exam.
 - Students using SSDE don't register themselves - fill out the SSDE form and submit it to Graduate School. Graduate School will register you for the one special SSDE credit hour.

Steps to complete degree - Have you applied for your degree?

- Apply for your degree (AFD = “Application for Degree”) on HokieSpa under “Degree Menu”
- AFD charge is \$25
- IF you are not able to complete the AFD on HokieSpa, use the [Degree or Certificate Conferral Request Form](#)
- You will have to use this form if you are:
 - Pursuing a simultaneous degree (2 graduate degrees at the same time)
 - A direct PhD student pursuing a MS degree

Contact Graduate Coordinator if you are not able to complete the AFD on HokieSpa - you will have to schedule your final exam in a different way

Steps to complete degree - Have you informed Graduate School about commencement attendance?

- In HokieSpa → Degree Menu, choose “Commencement Intentions Form”
- You can choose to participate in Spring Commencement or Fall Commencement (or not participate at all)
- In HokieSpa → Degree Menu, international students can choose “International Invitation for Commencement Request” to generate an invitation letter for family members who are outside of the US
- * *Pay special attention to PhD final exam deadlines - dates are different depending on if you plan to attend the commencement ceremony*
- Questions about the commencement ceremony should be directed to the Graduate School

Steps to Complete Degree - Have you arranged a final exam with your committee?

- *All graduate students hold a final exam* - this will be your dissertation defense
- Send your completed dissertation to your Chair/committee to review before scheduling the final exam
- Arrange a date, time, and location for your final exam with your Chair and committee
- Your program admin can help you reserve a room for the dissertation defense
- [Pay attention to the Graduate School's deadlines for defending in a semester](#)

Steps to Complete Degree - Have you scheduled your final exam with the Graduate School?

- *All graduate students hold a final exam and this must be scheduled with the Graduate School [here](#)*
- Exams must be scheduled at least two weeks ahead of the exam date
- Be prepared to upload an [iThenticate report](#) when you schedule the final exam
- Graduate School will officially approve the exam and send an email verification to your committee
- Pay attention to the [deadlines to defend in a semester](#)

Steps to Complete Degree - Have you scheduled your final exam with the Graduate School? continued

- Within 2 weeks after your final exam, upload your dissertation in the [exam scheduling system](#) after making any corrections or revisions recommended by your Chair/committee
- [Pay attention to dissertation submission deadlines](#)
- Your committee members will go into the exam scheduling system and approve your dissertation after you submit it
- Graduate School will contact you if any formatting corrections are needed

Steps to Complete Degree - Have you checked your degree progress on HokieSpa?

- In HokieSpa → Degree Menu, you can find a graduation checklist monitored by the Graduate School
- Graduate School's [What You Need to Graduate](#)