2025-2026

ADVISING HANDBOOK

FOR VIRGINIA TECH STUDENTS

VIRGINIA TECH™

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VIRGINIA TECH™

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

Virginia Tech offers numerous academic support services. The following are some that are commonly used by first-year students.

The Student Success Center (SSC); www.studentsuccess.vt.edu; Gilbert Place, Suite 2001; 540-231-8440

- Individual tutoring and peer academic coaching (appointments through Navigate)
- Drop-in group tutoring (no appointment necessary)
- Student success seminars on topics such as: Time Management, Effective Learning Strategies, Overcoming Procrastination, and Test Taking skills
- Peer educator training
- UNIV 1004: College Success Strategies
- LAHS 1014: Academic Success through Personal Investment and Responsibility
- Student employment opportunities: tutors, peer academic coaches, and work study

Cook Counseling Center; www.ucc.vt.edu; Gilbert Place, Suite 2400; 540-231-6557

- Outreach Presentations and Workshops
- Animal Assisted Programs - Therapy Dogs
- Embedded Counselors in Academic Departments, Liaison Counselors, Support Groups, and Residential Well-being Counselors
- On demand and scheduled telehealth visits via TimelyCare
- Cook Connect Sessions to explore needs and connect to resources, supports, or treatment
- Individual and group therapy
- Crisis intervention
- Psychiatry Services

Cook Counseling Center has expanded services and options to allow for a flexible, multi-faceted approach to meet emerging and varying needs. Students can begin by scheduling a Cook Connect Session. Students, Staff, and Faculty now have free, 24/7 access to virtual care services with TimelyCare – the virtual health and well-being platform from TimelyMD, register at https://timelycare.com/virginiatech

Writing Center; www.lib.vt.edu/study-learn/writing-center; 2nd Floor Newman Library just past the elevators

The Virginia Tech Writing Center is a free service for all Virginia Tech undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff. They help with writing assignments from any university course and provide assistance with anything writing-related — from brainstorming topic ideas to issues of development, organization, or editing. They can also help with writing projects that are not linked to classes.

View all options and schedule an appointment here: https://vt.mywconline.com/

Note: If you do not wish to create an account in WC Online, you may call the Writing center director at 540-231-9270 for help with scheduling an appointment instead.

Comm Lab; www.lib.vt.edu/study-learn/comm-lab; 2nd Floor Newman Library, Rooms 2032 and 2034

The CommLab extends the classroom experience and provides support for class assignments and special projects. Graduate and undergraduate students trained in public speaking and group work are available to help students with all areas of the speech making process. They also have videotaping capabilities. Students who wish to be videotaped should state that when making an appointment.

Appointments are strongly encouraged and can be made here: https://liberalarts.vt.edu/research-centers/comm-lab.html

Coaches are available to help with:

- Topic Selection
- Researching appropriate data
- Organizing and refining information
- Outlining main points
- Source citation
- Speech delivery
- Visual aids (e,g. PowerPoint, posters, etc.)

Career & Professional Development; www.career.vt.edu; Smith Career Center, Washington Street and West Campus Drive; 540-231-6241
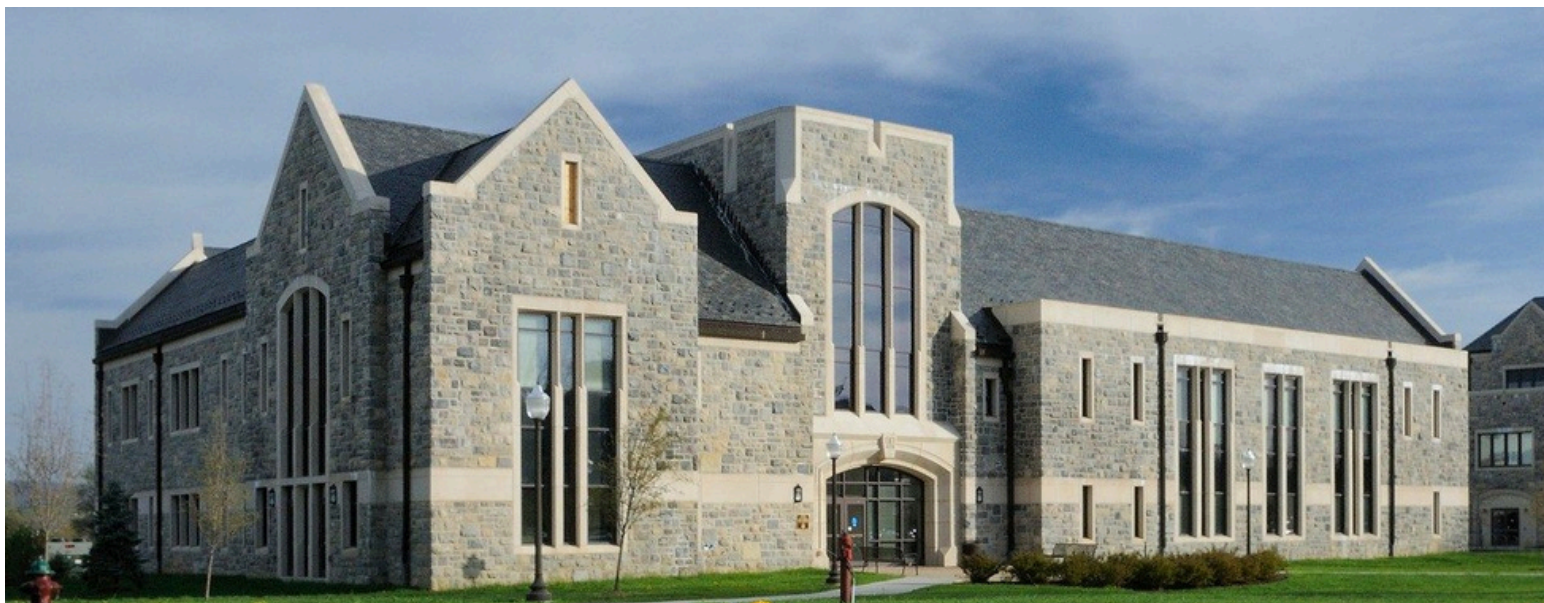
Career advisors in Virginia Tech's office of Career and Professional Development (CPD) provide services, programs, and resources that empower undergraduate and graduate students to discover and pursue meaningful opportunities that lead to a fulfilling career. Through career coaching, online resources, workshops, career fairs, and collaborative partnerships CPD supports students with:

- Exploration of self, majors, and career pathways
- Seeking work-based learning during college
- Securing post-graduation employment
- Planning for graduate or professional school

Career and Professional Development can also assist you with writing resumes and cover letters, finding ways to obtain work experience, the job search, interview skills, and much more!

Exploring VT Majors; https://student.advising.vt.edu/major-exploration/majors-exploreatvt.html

On this site you will find a listing of all undergraduate majors offered at Virginia Tech. This resource will help you learn about the subjects and fields associated with them.

Your choice of a major can fall into place once you pinpoint your career goals and areas that spark your interest. Mentally note which courses you enjoyed in high school (and college if you've already had any college courses). It is likely that this exercise will lead you to a major - or simply confirm the choice you've already made.

If you would like to change your major, speak with your academic advisor regarding the change of major process and to see if your intended major is restricted or not. A list of the restricted majors can be found on the University Registrar's website. Transitional advising appointments are also available to help you with the change of major process, understanding the requirements to change into a restricted major, and to help you select appropriate courses for the new major.

 You can use HokieGPS to help you map your plan of study and co-curricular activities throughout your undergraduate career.

Catalog
Click HERE to be directed to the website.

The Undergraduate Catalog (online at https://catalog.vt.edu/) answers many student questions, including those about academic policies, financial information, major/degree requirements, academic eligibility, and Virginia Tech course offerings. You are responsible for knowing the information contained in the catalog which is linked above. A new catalog is published each year. Since you are beginning your time here at VT in Fall 2025 you will follow the 2025-2026 catalog year throughout your time at VT, because it is the year you started taking classes.

Pathways General Education
Click HERE to be directed to the website.

As a Virginia Tech student, you will be required to fulfill general education course requirements regardless of your major. All undergraduate students at the university are required to fulfill general education course requirements in English, mathematics, science, social science, humanities, etc.

Generally, these requirements are completed in your first and second years. Some majors are flexible when selecting which general education courses can be used to fulfill degree requirements; other majors recommend specific general education courses which meet program specific requirements. Your advisor will assist you in selecting courses that apply toward your major or majors you are considering.

Electives

Electives are courses that you choose to take, as opposed to a specific course that is required for your degree. There are, however, several types of electives. Consult page 16 of this handbook and/or your advisor for more information.

Teacher Education

Teacher licensure at Virginia Tech is provided through Educator Preparation Programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, depending on the endorsement area. There are also opportunities for student leadership in professional organizations, volunteer classroom experiences, and licensure test preparation materials. An academic advisor can guide you in the selection of the most appropriate undergraduate major and path to licensure based on your teaching interest, prior coursework, and future academic goals. The College of Liberal Arts Human Sciences has a professional academic advisor assigned to education and pre-education students. If you are interested in obtaining a teaching license through Virginia Tech, contact Sarah Jarrett at sarahjarrett@vt.edu to determine which path is appropriate for you.

Global Education

In any given year, Global Education sends more than 900 students overseas to as many as 40 different countries in a range of programs. The Global Education Office provides counseling for you and your parents in financial aid, credit transfer, and how to fit global education into a four-year college curriculum that may already seem tight. Attend the Global Education Fair held on the Drillfield during fall semester to get additional information! Your advisor can tell you the specific date. You can also visit their website at www.globaleducation.vt.edu.

Transitional Advising
explore your options.

Transitional Advising offers students the opportunity to work with an advisor one-on-one to explore, plan, and implement the change of major process. Transitional Advising is intended for students outside of University Studies, and is directed to students who are in transition out of a particular major for various reasons and/or need assistance when not accepted into their desired major. More information can be found at www.advising.vt.edu/tr.

Changing Your Major

Virginia Tech has 3 common change of major times every year, with an online process through Hokie Spa. The approximate times coincide with add/drop opening which are 1) at the beginning of August, 2) late November, and 3) mid-April. This process only applies to a student's primary major. For second majors or degrees, students should meet with departmental representatives for directions.

125% Rule for In-State Tuition

In order to retain in-state tuition eligibility, students may not exceed attempted hours that total 125 percent of the minimum credit hours needed for a specific degree program. Students exceeding 125% will be assessed a surcharge for each semester of continued enrollment after exceeding the credit-hour threshold. For more information, contact your advisor.

Restricted Majors

Restricted majors require you to meet specific requirements before applying. These requirements may include taking specific courses, achieving a specified minimum grade point average (GPA), completing an application, appearing for an interview, attending one or more group meetings, or applying to transfer to the major during a specified time period. In some cases, meeting the minimum requirements for application DOES NOT guarantee your acceptance into the major. Some majors also have limits on the number of internal transfers they can accept, so only the applicants with the best qualifications are accepted (best performance in major-related courses, best overall GPAs, etc.). Acceptance into these majors is very competitive. Consult your advisor about applying to a restricted major. You will use the Change of Major Application in Hokie Spa when you are eligible to apply.

Helpful Hint
from prior Virginia Tech students:

"Do NOT miss registration deadlines!"

REGISTRATION

You should always consult with your academic advisor prior to a registration period. This is also a very important time to check the University Registrar's website (www.registrar.vt.edu) for registration dates, add/drop dates, and other deadlines. You are responsible for meeting all registration deadlines.

Course Request Process

Course request takes place in October (for spring semester courses) and March (for fall semester courses). Most majors require you to meet with your academic advisor prior to submitting your course request on Hokie Spa. If you do not submit a course request, you will have another opportunity to register for classes using add/drop. However, this is an unreliable way to get classes as they may be full. Submit a course request each semester! Warning: If you have a hold on your record you will not be able to submit a course request. Take care of holds prior to course request!
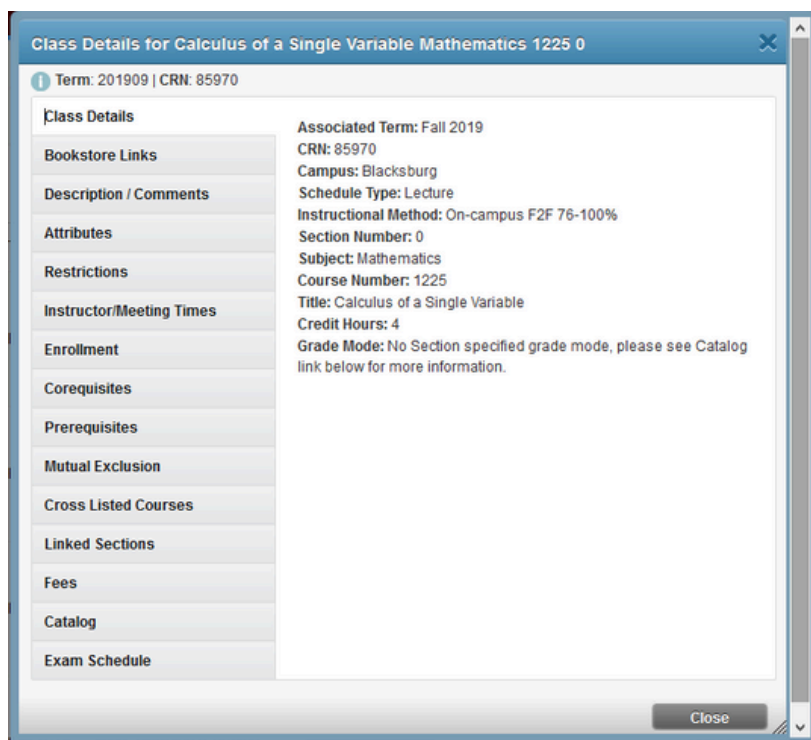
Navigating the Class Schedule

The class schedule is a listing of courses being offered. To search for classes, go to Hokie SPA and click on "Course Registration and Schedule Menu, Registration (Add/Drop) and Schedule" and "Browse Classes."

- Select the term in which you would like to search for classes. Then select the subject or prefix of the course and the course number, then press search.

  Example: MATH 1 will give you all 1xxx MATH sections, MATH 12 will give you all MATH 12xx sections, MATH 122 will give you all MATH 122x sections, and MATH 1225 will give you only MATH 1225 sections.

- Click on the Title of the course to view the course details, comments, restrictions, course description, and much more.

Class Details for Calculus of a Single Variable Mathematics 1225 0

Term: 201909 | CRN: 85970

Class Details
Bookstore Links
Description / Comments
Attributes
Restrictions
Instructor/Meeting Times
Enrollment
Corequisites
Prerequisites
Mutual Exclusion
Cross Listed Courses
Linked Sections
Fees
Catalog
Exam Schedule

Associated Term: Fall 2019
CRN: 85970
Campus: Blacksburg
Schedule Type: Lecture
Instructional Method: On-campus F2F 76-100%
Section Number: 0
Subject: Mathematics
Course Number: 1225
Title: Calculus of a Single Variable
Credit Hours: 4
Grade Mode: No Section specified grade mode, please see Catalog link below for more information.

Close

Add/Drop Process

Once course request results are available, there is a schedule adjustment period called "add/drop" that allows you to revise your schedule. The add/drop procedure can be used when students failed to submit a course request, need to change time(s)/day of classes due to scheduling conflicts, need to add or drop courses based on advisor recommendations, etc.

WARNING: Students with holds on their record cannot access add/drop. Take care of holds prior to the add/drop period! Make sure you complete the pre-registration requirements to access add/drop.

Semester Hour Enrollment

Minimum full-time enrollment for undergraduate students is 12 hours per semester in regular semesters (fall and spring). For each summer session, the minimum is five hours. Audit hours are not used in establishing minimum full-time enrollments. Before dropping below 12 credit hours, you should consider whether part-time status will affect the following: financial aid, health and car insurance, NCAA eligibility, on-campus residency, and scholarships.

Resignation/Withdrawal

You cannot drop all classes for a term using add/drop on Hokie SPA. To drop all classes, you must complete a resignation/withdrawal form available from the registrar's office website.

Force-add

When a class is full, the only way you can potentially add it is by force-adding. Whether or not you are able to force-add is up to either the department offering the class or the instructor who teaches the class.

Some departments have specific force-add procedures, and these are always posted on the student advising website (https://student.advising.vt.edu/) at the beginning of each add/drop period. If a department does not have its own procedure, then see the instructor of the class. If he/she agrees to add you to the class, you must get that instructor's signature on a force-add form. Force-add forms (if required) are available from the department of the class you are trying to add.

Once the instructor signs the form, turn it in to the department of the class for processing (e.g., if it is a PSYC class, turn the form in to the psychology department). You do not need your advisor to sign the form.
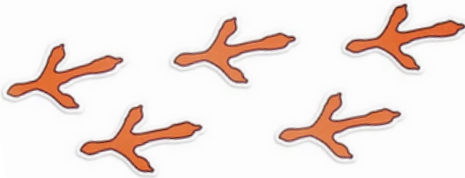
Researching a Course

Begin by looking the course up on the Class Schedule. Click on the CRN to find a course description and to see what the prerequisites might be and what other restrictions might apply. To get a more in-depth idea of what the course entails, find a syllabus for the course by contacting either the department housing the course or a professor currently teaching it. Looking at the class and professor rankings online might help, but they usually only reflect the opinion of students who really liked the class or really didn't like it. It is almost always better to make your decision based on what interests you.

Changing a Final Exam

You must submit a Final Exam Change Request Form no later than three weeks prior to the start of final examinations. Students are eligible to request a change in the time of a final exam if they have three or more exams scheduled to begin within 24 hours or if times for two exams conflict. Please note: In order to constitute three exams within 24 hours, the third exam must be in progress before the end of the 24 hour period.

Dropping a Course

Once you have registered for classes, you might later decide to drop a course. You can do this through the drop function available on Hokie Spa. However, there is a published deadline for dropping a course each semester and summer session. You can find the drop deadline posted on the Registrar's website -> Menu -> Dates and Deadlines -> Add/Drop & Course Request Dates. After this deadline, you cannot process a class drop through Hokie Spa; you can attempt a "late drop." Late drops are based on "extenuating circumstances" and you would need to complete paperwork through your academic dean's office. Use of the W Grade policy is not the same as dropping a course by the deadline, see page 14 for information on the W Grade policy.

Major Restricted Courses

When students are selecting courses, they may notice that a particular course has a "major restriction" that will not allow them to register for the course. This means that only students who are enrolled in a particular major can register for the course.

Advisor Assignment

Academic advisors are assigned by academic major. Generally, these assignments are made during the student's first semester of enrollment at Virginia Tech. To determine the name of your academic advisor, log in to Hokie Spa, click on "View your General Student Information." If no advisor is indicated, contact your academic department directly and request an advisor assignment. Students typically retain the same advisor throughout the program. However, whenever students change their major, another advisor from the new major is usually assigned.

Email

All students are responsible for reading their Virginia Tech email DAILY as information vital to academic and personal success will be communicated by email ONLY. You may have email that is sent to your official Tech email address electronically redirected to a different account (e.g., @aol.com, @hotmail.com, etc.) but you do so at your own risk. These risks can include lost mail or lost attachments. The university will not be responsible for the handling of email by outside vendors or by departmental servers. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with communications sent to his or her official vt.edu email address.

Advising Contacts by College

- Agriculture & Life Sciences — 540-231-6503
- Architecture, Arts & Design — 540-231-6416
- Business, Pamplin College of — 540-231-6601
- Engineering — 540-231-3244
- Liberal Arts & Human Sciences — 540-231-6770
- Natural Resources & Environment — 540-231-5482
- Science — 540-231-5422
- University Studies — 540-231-8440
- Vet Med (Public Health) — 540-231-6813

A
M
Advising Matters

Transfer Students
Click HERE to be directed to the website.

Virginia Tech is committed to supporting you as a transfer student, especially during the challenging and unique transition into a new learning environment. One of the most valuable resources you will have at Virginia Tech will be your college or departmental advisor, who is assigned to you by your department, and will generally serve in this role during your entire college career. This advisor can provide assistance and support to you in your adjustment to Virginia Tech by providing a welcoming point of contact, creating a sense of community, and connecting you to vital institutional resources that will help make you successful.

Many of the colleges and academic departments at the university also provide a required or optional Transfer Student First-Year Experience course. Participation in these courses will be addressed during Virtual Advising and Course Registration in summer. The courses are designed to get transfer students acclimated to their new surroundings and get them up to speed on such areas as university policies and protocol, support facilities, research opportunities, community resources and service opportunities in the region, academic deadlines, student success strategies, and learning skills development. With so many extracurricular activities available, as well as career fairs, undergraduate research, internship opportunities, and the search for graduate schools, the first-year courses help transfer students prioritize their choices. There are free campus-wide programs for transfer students designed to connect you to the VT community. For more information about these programs, visit the Transfer Advising website linked above. Take your first step toward academic success by contacting your advisor today!

Corps of Cadets Students

The top priority of all cadets is to succeed academically. The Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets has many programs to help you with this, including classes on learning, tutoring, a mentorship program, and ceremonies to recognize academic achievement. You will have mandatory quiet study hours. Additionally, there are upper-class cadets who serve as academic officers who will monitor your progress and assist you.

The first year is the most important at Virginia Tech, and fall is the most important semester of your college career. Work hard this year and your remaining time at Tech will go much more smoothly. Take advantage of all the resources and learn to manage your time. Your first year is a great time to develop.

Should you have any questions about your academics or expectations, make an appointment with your deputy commandant, who will be identified during your first day in the corps. Your deputy commandant and the cadet chain of command are here to help you achieve your goals.

HokieGPS (Graduation Plan for Success)

HokieGPS is a comprehensive way for you to plan your courses, time, and activities at Virginia Tech. While planning your courses is a central piece of this process, it is also crucial to begin thinking about your long-term goals, extra- and co-curricular activities, and other aspects of your college career. HokieGPS is available on Hokie Spa and it will help you do all of this.

Upon completing HokieGPS, you will:

1. Have outlined a tentative framework for your time at Virginia Tech, including classes, extra- and co-curricular activities, and future goals, and you will be able to visualize the timeline in which this may occur.
2. Be able to navigate university resources necessary for planning and putting into action your academic and life goals.
3. Be able to articulate the importance of co-curricular activities related to your academic endeavors.

Schedule to attend an academic planning workshop with a peer advising ambassador! Click HERE for more information.

Advising Ambassadors
hokies helping hokies

Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS)

The Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) is a computer-generated report for undergraduate and associate-level students. The audit identifies the graduation requirements that have been completed and those that still need to be fulfilled. Please refer to the Registrar's Office website HERE, for instruction on how to request a degree audit report.

Satisfactory Progress Toward Degree

Upon having attempted 72 semester credits (including transfer, advanced placement, advanced standing, and credit by examination) students must:

- Be enrolled in a degree-granting program, and
- Be certified at the close of the academic year by their department as making satisfactory progress toward a degree based upon pre-established minimum criteria (from departmental program requirements) that must be met for departmental certification, and
- Have an in-major GPA of 2.0 or above and maintain an in-major GPA of 2.0 or above until graduation.

It is important that you understand and meet the satisfactory progress policy set forth by your academic major. Failure to do so could force you to change your major or to leave the university.

UNDERSTANDING GRADES

Calculating Your GPA

(Refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for more info: https://catalog.vt.edu/) There are two electronic GPA calculators on Hokie Spa that you can use; however, it is also useful to understand how to calculate your GPA by hand. Following is an example:

The grade points (or quality points) earned for a class are calculated by multiplying the credit hours by the grade point value for the grade earned. For example, earning an "A" in a 3-credit course totals 12 points for that class. The GPA is found by adding all of the points earned and then dividing by the total number of attempted credit hours.

IMPORTANT: Pass/fail classes/hours failed count in your GPA, but pass/fail classes/hours passed do not.

Example: Sample Grade Report

Primary Major: US - University Studies
Academic Standing: Good Standing

Subject	Course	Campus	Level	Title	Grade	Credit Hours	Quality Points
BIOL	1105	Blacksburg	UG	General Biology	C+	3.000	6.90
BIOL	1115	Blacksburg	UG	General Biology Lab	B-	1.000	2.70
ENGL	1105	Blacksburg	UG	Freshman English	B+	3.000	9.90
ENT	2004	Blacksburg	UG	Insects and Society	C+	3.000	6.90
HNFE	1004	Blacksburg	UG	Foods and Nutrition	C+	3.000	6.90
MATH	1025	Blacksburg	UG	Elementary Calculus	A	3.000	12.00

	Attempted Hours	Passed Hours	Earned Hours	GPA Hours	Quality Points	GPA
Current Term:	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	45.30	2.83
Cumulative:	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	45.30	2.83

The GPA is calculated as follows (QP=quality points; CR=credits):

C+	(2.3QP)	x	(3CR)	=6.9
B-	(2.7QP)	x	(1CR)	=2.7
B+	(3.3QP)	x	(3CR)	=9.9
C+	(2.3QP)	x	(3CR)	=6.9
C+	(2.3QP)	x	(3CR)	=6.9
A	(4.0QP)	x	(3CR)	=12
Total			16CR	45.30 QP

GPA = 45.3 / 16 =2.83

Midterm Grades

During your first fall term of enrollment, you will receive a midterm report. On this report, you will have only "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" grades. Satisfactory is received if you have a C or better in a course and unsatisfactory is received if your grade is a C- or lower. The midterm grade will not be a part of your transcript, but it is a way of letting you know how you are progressing in your classes. You are strongly encouraged to meet with your advisor and your instructors to discuss unsatisfactory grades.

IMPORTANT POLICIES

W Grade Policy

If you find yourself struggling in a class after the six-week semester deadline to drop a course, you should discuss this with your advisor as soon as possible. An option your advisor may bring forward based on your discussion is the W Grade Policy, especially if you are failing the course. The W grade policy allows currently enrolled students to designate a course status of Withdrawn (W) to no more than three (3) courses during their academic career.

- Courses processed as a W grade will remain on the student's transcript with a grade of W.
- A W grade may not be applied after the last scheduled regular class in the term.
- This policy cannot be applied to courses with penalties applied by the University Honor System.
- Hours marked as W grade will continue to count toward hours enrolled for purposes of financial aid and tuition assessment.
- YOUR DECISION TO APPLY THE W GRADE POLICY TO A CLASS IS IRREVOCABLE AND CANNOT BE APPEALED.

Taking Courses Elsewhere

If you plan to take a course at another institution and have the credit transfer back to Virginia Tech, you should always discuss this with your advisor well in advance of enrollment. The following information is of importance.

- If attending a Virginia community college, refer to the VCCS Transfer Guide for equivalent courses (www.transferguide.registrar.vt.edu). If the course(s) you wish to take are listed in the guide, it is approved for transfer and no additional approval/paperwork is necessary for Virginia Tech prior to enrollment. Make sure to read all the comments associated with classes in the guide, if applicable.
- If attending a four-year institution in Virginia or any out-of-state institution, refer to the Transfer Equivalency Database (TED) as a starting point (www.transferguide.registrar.vt.edu). If the course(s) you wish to take are listed, you will still need to complete the ATC form and additionally you may need to provide a course description for each course you wish to take. A representative from your college dean's office will review your request and respond to you via email regarding approval.
- On completion of the course(s), whether at a Virginia community college, a four-year institution in Virginia, or any out-of-state institution, request that an official transcript be sent to the Virginia Tech Registrar, 250 Student Services Building, 800 Washington St., Blacksburg, VA 24061, so credit can be awarded.

SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF VT!

1. Academic Eligibility Policy
Continued enrollment at Virginia Tech is a privilege.
- Good Standing - Cumulative GPA is 2.0 or higher.
- Academic Warning - Students earning less than a 2.0 term GPA, but with cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher, will be placed on academic warning without notation on the academic transcript. Students on academic warning may be required to meet with the appropriate undergraduate assistant or associate dean of their college and to sign an academic contract. Failure to complete an action plan (academic contract) may result in prohibition from future enrollment(s).
- First Academic Probation - Cumulative GPA is below 2.0; student has one semester at Virginia Tech to rescind this probation by earning a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher OR earning at least a 2.5 GPA for each semester of enrollment until good standing is attained.
- First Academic Suspension - Student fails to rescind academic probation (Student has cumulative GPA below 2.0 at the end of the probationary semester OR the student does not earn at least a 2.5 GPA for each semester of enrollment until good standing is attained). Student may not return to Virginia Tech for one full academic semester (Fall or Spring).
- Second Academic Probation - Student returning from first academic suspension is automatically on second academic probation and must meet the eligibility requirements for continued enrollment (i.e. student must earn a semester GPA of at least 2.0, with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 after the next semester of enrollment OR must earn at least a GPA of 2.5 each semester of enrollment until cumulative 2.0 GPA is attained). If not, student is immediately placed on second academic suspension.
- Second Academic Suspension - Student returning from first academic suspension has not met the eligibility requirements for continued enrollment (i.e. student must earn a semester GPA of at least a 2.0, with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 after the next semester of enrollment OR must earn at least a GPA of 2.5 each semester of enrollment until cumulative 2.0 GPA is attained). Student on second academic suspension may not return to Tech for one full academic year.
- Third Academic Suspension - Student returning from second academic suspension is automatically on third academic probation and must earn at least a semester GPA of 2.0 for continued enrollment at Virginia Tech. After that, the student must earn at least a semester GPA of 2.5 for each subsequent semester of enrollment until academic good standing is attained If not, student is automatically placed on final suspension.
- Final Suspension - Student does not meet returning performance requirements during third academic probation (returning from second academic suspension) and is permanently dismissed from Virginia Tech.

2. Attempted Hours
All course work found on your Hokie Spa transcript. This includes:
- Courses you've passed (including duplicated courses)
- Courses you've failed
- Advanced Placement (AP) credit
- Credit by exam
- Courses transferred from other colleges or universities
- Courses to which you've applied the W Grade Policy
Please note: The "attempted hours" indicated on the unofficial transcript reflects only academic course work attempted at Virginia Tech.

3. Blue Book/Green Book
A small notebook with soft blue/green covers, available at the University Bookstores, that some professors require students to use when writing essay exams.

4. Catalog
The Undergraduate Catalog (online at https://catalog.vt.edu/) answers many student questions, including those about academic policies, financial issues, major/degree requirements, academic eligibility, and Virginia Tech course offerings. You are responsible for knowing the information contained in the catalog.

5. Cognate
A term used by some departments to describe a specific area of study that basically functions like a minor.

6. College
Virginia Tech is a university made up of eight colleges which include:
- Agriculture & Life Sciences
- Architecture, Arts & Design
- Business, Pamplin College of
- Engineering
- Liberal Arts & Human Sciences
- Natural Resources & Environment
- Science
- Veterinary Medicine
Please note: University Studies functions independently as an academic unit of Virginia Tech.

7. Co-op Program
Cooperative Education Program, in which students alternate terms of on-campus full-time study with off-campus full-time work for an employer with a need for students in particular majors. Contact Career and Professional Development for additional information.

8. Corequisite
A course that must be taken before, OR at the same time as, another course Click on the timetable's course request number for any course corequisites.

9. Course Request Number (CRN)
This is the unique identifier number for each section of a course and is found in the Class Schedule. You use this CRN to schedule your classes.

10. Credit Hour
Think of this as a unit of measure for college courses. Courses vary in their number of credit hours because they vary in the amount of intellectual effort they require. Your academic progress is measured in part by the number of credit hours you complete:
- 30 credit hours - you're a sophomore
- 60 credit hours - you're a junior
- 90 credit hours - you're a senior regardless of how many courses you have yet to complete to graduate

11. Dean
A dean is an administrator within a college. Please contact your academic college to determine who your dean(s) is/are.

12. Dean's List
Students who earn a 3.4 GPA on 12 or more hours attempted (A-F) achieve Dean's List. Pass/fail hours do not count toward Dean's List eligibility and summer sessions are not included in Dean's List eligibility. Students who achieve Dean's List will receive an email invitation to request a Dean's List Certificate.

13. Department
This is an administrative unit at the university that offers classes and majors. Each department has a main office where you can ask for information or ask to be referred to faculty in your interest area.

14. Drop/Add
Hokie Spa transaction for adding and dropping courses to your class schedule. Strict deadlines enforced!

15. Duplicated Credit
Some courses have similar content, and are said to "duplicate" each other. If you take both of them, you cannot count the credit for both toward graduation. Both grades, however, will appear on your unofficial transcript and will apply toward attempted hours.

16. Global Education
Virginia Tech sponsors a wide variety of global education programs to provide opportunities for intercultural experiences that are important in all disciplines. Students who plan to study abroad should discuss the transfer of credits earned with their academic dean prior to leaving the Virginia Tech campus. All credits to be transferred to this university for use toward degree completion should be approved before they are taken. This is particularly true of courses completed in foreign universities for which there is not Virginia Tech equivalent.
Fore more information about global education opportunities, contact the Global Education Office at 526 Prices Fork Road, Room 131, or consult this website: www.globaleducation.vt.edu.

17. Elective
A course you choose to take, as opposed to a course that fulfills any general education, major, or minor requirements. There are several kinds of electives:
- Free elective - you are free to choose whatever course you want (provided, of course, that you are eligible to take it).
- Restricted/controlled elective - elective courses chosen from an approved list of courses; some majors require some restricted electives, and others do not.
- Technical elective - similar to a restricted elective in that it is chosen from a preapproved list from your department.

18. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives students certain rights with respect to their education records. Among these rights are:

- The right to inspect and review their records.
- The right to request an amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records. One exception that permits disclosure without student consent is a disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests, such as an academic advisor.

Take your questions to the University Registrar.

19. Field Study
A course composed of work experiences approved by a specific department in order to augment classroom activities. Usually requires 2.5 GPA to participate.

20. Force-add
The procedure that allows students to enroll in classes already full to their capacity. Some departments handle all force-adds into their courses; others simply require students to attend the first class meeting with a force-add form for the instructor's signature. Force-adds are NOT guaranteed.

21. General Education (Pathways)
General Education provides a set of learning experiences to develop and empower you with a broad base of knowledge and transferable skills. Completion of these requirements, which are based on the year you entered Virginia Tech, are required of ALL undergraduates. www.pathways.prov.vt.edu

22. Grades
Use the electronic GPA calculator through Hokie Spa found under the Grades Menu section.
OR
Calculate your GPA yourself by first assigning points to each of your letter grades. The corresponding values are as follows:

A=4.0, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, B=3.0, B-=2.7, C+=2.3, C=2.0, D+=1.3, D=1.0, D-=0.7, F=0.0

The points earned for a class are calculated by multiplying the course credit hours by the point value for the grade earned. The GPA is found by adding all of the points earned and then dividing by the total number of attempted credit hours. Pass/fail classes/hours that you fail count in your GPA; pass/fail classes/hours that you pass do not.

23. Hold
Holds are placed on student records for various reasons, including unpaid fines, failure to attend advising meetings, failure to submit immunization records, etc. Only the department that placed the hold on your record can remove the hold. With a HOLD on your record, you will not be able to register for classes on Hokie Spa.

24. Honor Code, Honor System
This defines academic behavior that is not acceptable for Virginia Tech students, including cheating, plagiarism, and falsification. The Honor System, governed by a student chief justice, administers the Honor Code.

25. Honors College
Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher. Students must be invited into the Honors College.

26. Incomplete (I Grade)
Final course grade which may be given when course requirements - other than the final exam - have not been completed due to illness or extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control. The "I" grade is the prerogative of the instructor. Incomplete grades are automatically converted to "F" after the student's first subsequent term of enrollment unless course requirements are satisfied.

27. Independent Study
A course involving extensive reading and tutorial sessions with a faculty supervisor.

28. Internship
A period of work, usually off-campus, for which a student may receive either course credit or payment (not both). Internships are arranged or approved through an academic department and complement the student's program of study.

29. Koofer
Copy of a test from a previous term. Some professors make koofers available; others do not. Those who do make their tests available will tell the class.

30. Foreign Language Requirement
Virginia Tech's entrance requirement is completed with two years of study in a single language in high school or with completion of a second-semester college-level course. Some majors/departments require three years of the study of a single foreign/classical language in high school. Consult your advisor!!

31. Late Drop of Course(s)
Extraordinary circumstances necessitate a request to drop a course after the university's six-week drop deadline. Poor performance in a course or the desire to avoid academic probation/suspension is NOT an appropriate reason for requesting to drop a course after the deadline. A student must remain in at least 12 credit hours in order to maintain full-time status.

32. Leave of Absence
A student may experience a situation that impacts their ability to maintain continuous enrollment (health, family obligations/emergency, military service, financial hardship, academic reasons, or any other personal reason). Procedures for requesting a leave of absence can be found HERE.

33. Major
A program of study or group of selected courses required for an academic degree in a particular subject.

34. Minor
A group of courses, fewer than the number required for a major, students take in order to pursue an interest in a subject in addition to their major. Most often, specific courses must be completed.

35. Option
A subdivision of a major, most often used to identify programs of study within a major or offered by one department.

36. Prerequisite
A course that must be successfully completed BEFORE you enroll in another course. The first course is a prerequisite because it contains knowledge or skills you need to have mastered before you take the second course.

37. Program Planning
Meet with your academic advisor three to four weeks prior to course request week and select courses for the following semester. Come in with a list of courses you plan to request and discuss how they will fit into your academic plan of study.

38. Reading Day
The day between the last day of classes and the first day of final exams, used to prepare for exams.

39. Recitation
A smaller group section of a larger lecture that gives students a more comfortable setting for discussion.

40. Registration Procedures
Course request takes place in October (for spring semester courses) and March (for fall semester courses). Students who do not submit a course request are left only with the option of drop/add in order to schedule classes, which is a very unreliable way to get the courses you need. Submit a course request each semester via HokieSPA and entering your desired CRN Warning: Students with holds on their record may not be able to submit a course request and are not allowed to drop and add courses. Take care of holds prior to course request week!

41. Repeated Courses
If you earn C-, D+, D, D-, or F grades and you repeat the course, the grades for both attempts will be calculated into your GPA, but the semester hours for only one attempt will count toward graduation. If you earn a grade of "C" or above on a course, and repeat it, you may receive only a grade of pass or fail, and the credit hours for the repeated course will not count toward graduation.

42. Resignation and Withdrawal
The act of officially ending your enrollment in ALL of your courses in current or future semesters. (A student withdraws no later than the first day of the semester; no dean's signature is required). After the first day, students are resigning and a dean's signature is required. The form for withdrawing and resigning is the same.

43. Restricted Courses
Restricted courses are usually open only to students in certain majors or only to students at certain academic levels. Sometimes it is possible to force-add restricted courses once the semester begins.

44. Restricted Majors
When a major is "restricted" for internal transfer it means that students must meet certain criteria in order to transfer into the restricted major. Restricted majors are usually in high demand and the admission process can be competitive in nature. Advisors can provide specific requirements and application information.

45. Section (of a course)

A course may be offered in several sections each semester, with each section meeting at a different place and possibly at a different time, and with a different instructor, but which basically have the same content. Each course section has its own CRN.

46. Semester

A semester is half of the academic year; the academic year lasts from late August until early May. Classes at Virginia Tech are semester-long; there are no year-long classes at the undergraduate level. (A summer term counts as a semester, but each summer session is about half the length of a regular semester).

47. Sequence

A pair of courses with content closely related, and with sequential course numbers (ending in 5 or 6) that indicate which "comes first" in some logical order. If the courses are listed in the catalog with a hyphen between them, then the first course is a prerequisite for the second (ENGL 1105-1106). If they are separated by a comma, the courses may be taken in any order (HIST 1115,1116).

48. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

SSD coordinates a variety of services for students with disabilities. The SSD office exists to assist the university with its mission of promoting students' academic success, personal growth, and development of life skills. SSD works to ensure that students with disabilities receive equal access to curricular and co-curricular opportunities in the academic community.

49. Special Study

A unique course designed for a group of students or an experimental course. There may be several sections of a special study offered by a department, each having different topics. Read the timetable listing carefully!

50. Student Success Center (SSC)

Located on the 2nd floor of Gilbert Place, SSC promotes student excellence by facilitating programs dealing with transition to college, study skills (including time management, dealing with stress, procrastination, testing, goal setting, etc.), project success, UNIV 1004, tutoring, and structured study hall, among others. A complete listing of programs can be found at www.studentsuccess.vt.edu.

51. Syllabus

A course outline, given to students at the beginning of each semester. Information may include: purpose of the course; prerequisites and corequisites, if any; instructor's contact info; homework assignments; schedule of tests; grading policy, etc.

52. TA or GTA

Abbreviation for "teaching assistant" or "graduate teaching assistant." These are students working on graduate degrees who are paid to assist professors in teaching lecture courses or to teach labs or sections of introductory courses.

53. Transcript

The official record of your course work at Virginia Tech. Order copies through Hokie Spa under the transcripts and certifications menu. All holds must be removed before ordering. Most institutions require that a transcript be sent directly to the University Registrar.

54. Transferring Credits

Credit for approved course(s) will transfer to Virginia Tech ONLY if:

- you have an official transcript sent to the Virginia Tech Registrar, 250 Student Services Building, 800 Washington St., Blacksburg, VA 24061 as soon as you complete the course(s);
- you earn a grade of "C" or better (not C-) in the course(s);
- the material in the course(s) does not duplicate material in courses for which you already have credit at Virginia Tech.

Pass/fail courses do NOT transfer. Pre-authorization is often required. CONSULT YOUR ADVISOR!

55. Undergraduate Research

An individual research project carried out by students under faculty supervision. Student sets up the course with a specific faculty member in a specific academic department.

56. Upper Division

Refers to course work at the junior and senior level.

57. W Grade Policy

This policy allows currently enrolled students to designate a course status of Withdrawn (W) to no more than three (3) courses during their academic career at Virginia Tech. If you have not already applied the policy to the maximum of 3 courses, this is the mechanism to drop a course after the normal six-week drop deadline date in a semester. You must meet with your advisor to initiate a W Grade. Courses processed as a W Grade will remain on the student's transcript with a grade of W. See page 14.

58. Work Study

A financial aid program that enables students to earn part of their expenses by working at certain specified jobs, most often on campus. Consult the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, 200 Student Services Building, for additional information.

WELCOME to Virginia Tech!

The following two pages are a recommended guide to help you be successful during your first year at Virginia Tech. It directs you step by step through your fall and spring semesters, which will form the foundation for your remaining years at Virginia Tech. Numbers beside each item will refer you to a specific page in the handbook with related information, if applicable.

FALL

- Read Undergraduate Catalog HERE!
- Do you have a daily planner? If not, buy one.
- Find your department website and bookmark it.
- Learn the language of Virginia Tech! 15
- Schedule and attend the first meeting with your academic advisor.
- Find a good place to study.
- Review syllabi and put due dates in your planner.
- Develop academic strategies and study skills (daily, weekly, monthly).
- Explore minors, majors, education abroad, and other opportunities. Attend Majors & Minors Fair and Education Abroad Fair.
- Schedule introductory meetings with your professors.
- Review grades before the last day to drop a course. 13
- Seek tutoring if needed at the Student Success Center. 3
- Attend info sessions for things like education abroad.
- Prepare tentative list of classes for next semester. 12
- Register for an academic planning workshop with an Advising Ambassador to start on your HokieGPS. 12
- Schedule and attend the second meeting with your academic advisor.
- Midterm grades: Are changes needed in study habits? If so, attend a study skills seminar. 3
- Learn to calculate your GPA by hand and on Hokie Spa. 13
- Complete Spring Course Request on Hokie Spa. 8
- Review final exam schedule and check for conflicts. 9

  Happy Thanksgiving!

- Review "W" grade policy. 14
- Based on your expected GPA, does your spring schedule need adjustment?
- Review academic eligibility policy (Undergraduate Catalog) and department satisfactory progress rules.
- Schedule and attend the third meeting with your academic advisor.
- Attend study retreat sponsored by the Student Success Center. 3

  Good luck on final exams!

Have a wonderful semester break!

SPRING

- What GPA do you need to earn? 13
- Evaluate academic strategies. Are there any changes needed?
- Review syllabi and record due dates in planner.
- Do you have a good place to study?
- Meet with your academic advisor.
- Evaluate choice of major. Review HokieGPS. 12
- Visit office of Career & Professional Development for info on career exploration and summer internships. 6
- Schedule meetings with your professors.
- Seek tutoring if needed at the Student Success Center. 3
- Explore minors, majors, education abroad, and other opportunities.
- Review grades before the last day to drop a course. 13
- Consider getting work experience during spring break.
- Where will you be living next year? Attend any off-campus housing fairs or apply for on-campus housing.

Enjoy Spring Break!

- Review degree requirements for your major. 5
- Prepare tentative list of classes for next semester. Start on your HokieGPS. 11
- Meet with your academic advisor.
- How are your grades?
- Will you be taking summer classes? Consult with your advisor to complete the appropriate forms.
- Complete Fall Course Request on Hokie Spa. 8
- Review final exam schedule and check for conflicts. 9
- Follow up on Career & Professional Development items at the Smith Career Center such as internships, summer employment, etc.
- Calculate expected GPA for both term and cumulative. 13
- Review academic eligibility policy (Undergraduate Catalog) and department satisfactory progress rules.
- Meet with your academic advisor.
- Review the "W" grade policy. 14
- Based on your expected GPA, does your schedule need an adjustment?
- Attend study retreat sponsored by the Student Success Center. 3

Good luck on final exams!

Have a wonderful Summer!

2025-2026

ADVISING HANDBOOK
FOR VIRGINIA TECH STUDENTS

VIRGINIA TECH™