

DEPARTMENT OF
CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

2025–2026



SCHOOL *of* ENGINEERING
& APPLIED SCIENCE
Department of Civil and
Environmental Engineering

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1. Introduction

We welcome you to the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) at the University of Virginia (UVA). Our department has a long-standing commitment to excellence in education, research, and public service. Our mission is to educate future engineers charged with conceptualizing, creating, and maintaining infrastructure that serves society and protects the environment, and to generate and disseminate knowledge that advances sustainable, resilient, and equitable communities. In CEE, we recognize that everyone benefits when people with different backgrounds, cultures, and disciplines work together. We are committed to sustaining a vibrant and inclusive community in which everyone is welcome and supported.

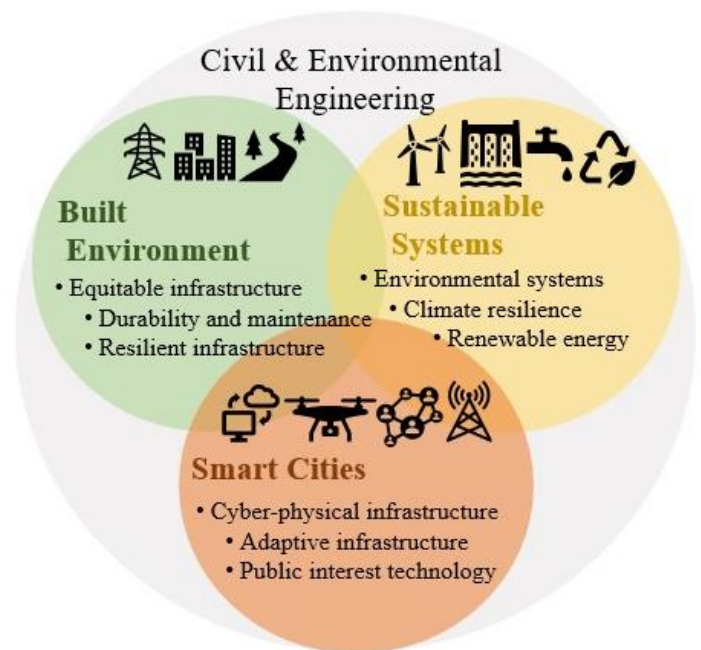
CEE at UVA offers several graduate degrees for advanced study in civil and environmental engineering, including *Master of Engineering* (ME) in Civil Engineering, *Master of Science* (MS) in Civil Engineering, and *Doctor of Philosophy* (PhD) in Civil Engineering. The ME, MS, and PhD degrees form the core of the CEE graduate educational program and are offered in five tracks or areas of specialization:

- Construction Engineering and Management (CEM)
- Environmental and Water Resources Engineering (EWRE)
- Infrastructure Systems Engineering (ISE)
- Structural Engineering (STR)
- Transportation Engineering (TRN)

In CEE, we aim to transform how we design, build, operate, and maintain infrastructure as sustainable and smart systems in the service of society. To do this, we seek to be a department that merges traditional methods and knowledge in civil and environmental engineering with novel approaches from systems engineering, sustainability science, and cyber-physical systems through offering three interdisciplinary research areas that emphasize the new perspectives and priorities in civil and environmental engineering for addressing pressing societal challenges:

- [Built Environment](#)
- [Sustainable Systems](#)
- [Smart Cities](#)

This handbook has been prepared to assist you to make the transition into our graduate program and to serve as a resource for you during your pursuit of a graduate degree. Graduate school is a place to explore the boundaries of the possible and develop your scholarship potential to the highest level, while seizing the opportunity to interact with a wide range of talented students and faculty colleagues. We welcome you as a partner in learning and as a colleague in CEE.



2. General Academic Rules

[University Registrar](#) and the [UVA Engineering Office of Graduate Programs](#) provide a comprehensive guide for general academic rules and requirements.

2.1. CEE Academic Requirement for ME, MS, and PhD Degrees

The following table provides a summary of academic requirements for the graduate degrees offered in CEE at UVA. For more information about CEE-specific expectations, rules, and requirements, please refer to §3 (for ME), §4 (for MS), and §5.2 (for PhD).

	ME	MS	PhD
Credit Hour Requirement	30 ⁽¹⁾	30 ⁽²⁾	72 ⁽³⁾
CEE Seminars	Encouraged to attend	Required to attend	Required to attend
Qualifying Exam	N/A	N/A	Required Milestone
Dissertation Proposal	N/A	N/A	Required Milestone
Final Oral Presentation	N/A	Required Milestone: Thesis Defense	Required Milestone: Dissertation Defense
Final Written Report	N/A	Required Milestone: MS Thesis	Required Milestone: PhD Dissertation

⁽¹⁾ ME students can pursue a research-based project or a paid/unpaid professional internship for course credit. This will count towards the requirement for the degree.

⁽²⁾ Refer to §4.3 for more information.

⁽³⁾ Refer to §5.3 for more information.

2.2. Apply for Graduation

All graduate students must apply in SIS to graduate and be placed on the degree list in the semester in which they are expected to graduate by the deadline set and announced by the SEAS Graduate Registrar.

2.3. Time Limit

For MS degree, all requirements must be completed within five years after matriculation to the graduate program.

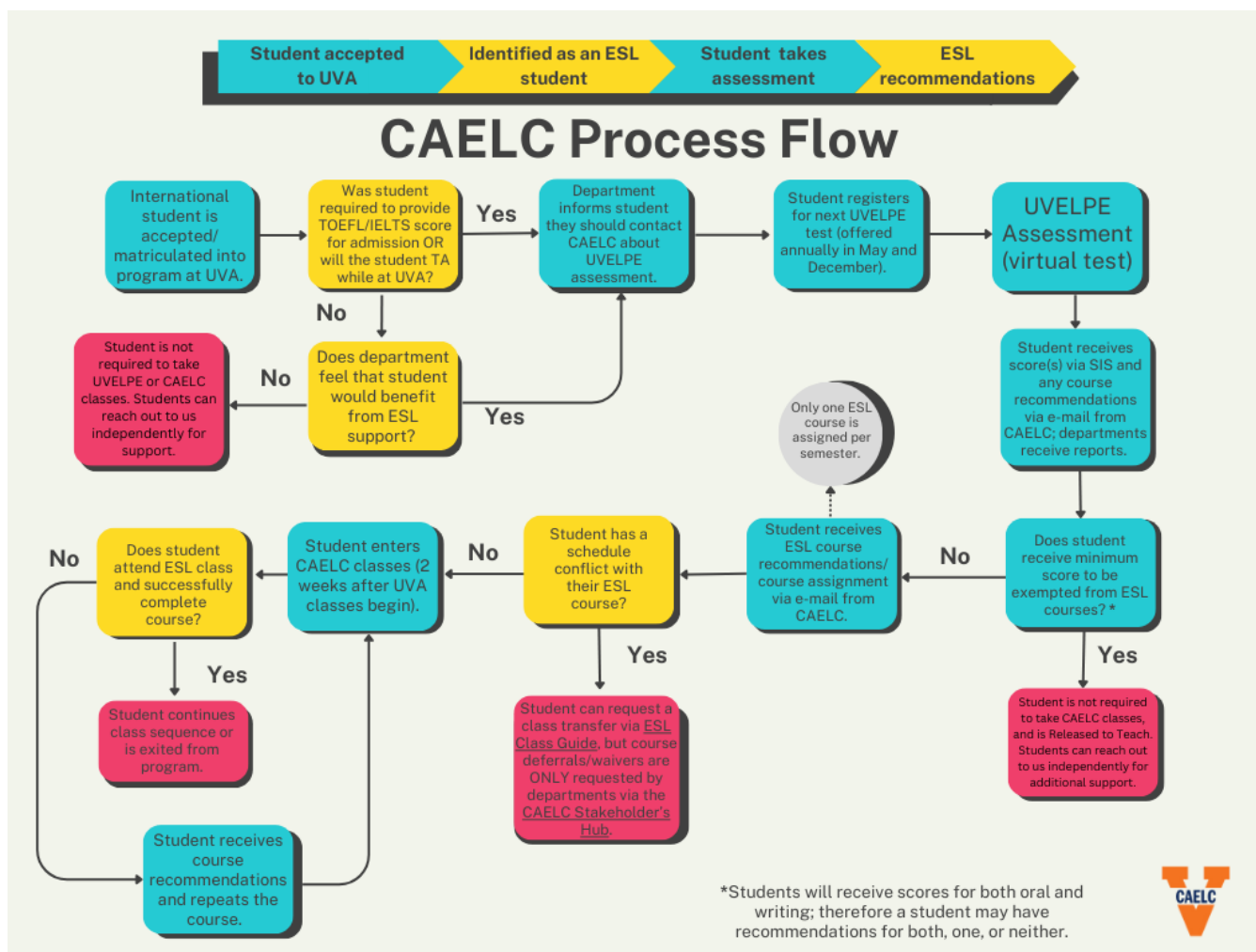
For ME and PhD degrees, all requirements must be completed within seven years after matriculation to the graduate program.

2.4. English Language Proficiency

All incoming (new) graduate students whose first language is one other than English are required to take the University of Virginia English Language Proficiency Exam (UVELPE) unless they have been exempted from TOEFL or IELTS.

All prospective graduate teaching assistants whose first language is one other than English are required to take the oral section of the UVELPE Test. There are no exemptions from the UVELPE Oral Test. A score of at least 55 is required for permission to begin teaching without completion of appropriate oral language training.

The UVELPE test is administered by the Center for American English Language and Culture (CAELC). For more information about the UVELPE test as well as the testing times and registration, please visit [CAELC website](#).



Depending on the UVELPE score, some students may need only one course, while others may need more to complete their requirements. CAELC will inform new graduate students of their ESL class placement for the first semester based on their UVELPE score, as well as the possible course pathway they have to follow in subsequent semesters based on their recommended level. CAELC generally uses the correlation charts below to determine which ESL courses are required based on the student's UVELPE score; however, these are general guidelines, and actual placements may vary. Each student's scores and language needs are evaluated individually, and CAELC communicates specific placement decisions and course requirements directly to the student.

Writing Class Placement

- **ESL 901:** Assigned if Grammar is below 80 and/or Language is below 7.
- **ESL 902:** Assigned if Rhetoric is below 7, but Grammar is above 80 and Language is above 7.

Oral Class Placement

- **ESL 905:** Assigned if the Oral score is below 40.
- **ESL 907:** Assigned if the Oral score is exactly 40.
- **ESL 909:** Assigned if the Oral score is 45.
- **ESL 911:** Assigned if the Oral score is 50.

- **ESL 917:** Assigned if the Oral score includes a “P” designation (e.g., 40P), indicating a pronunciation requirement.

Students must either achieve a score of 55 on the oral component or successfully complete ESL 911 in order to be released for teaching responsibilities. This includes any role that requires direct interaction with students, such as holding office hours, leading discussion sections, or giving lectures.

The number and sequence of ESL courses required will depend on a student’s starting level. Students placed in lower-level courses (e.g., ESL 901 or ESL 905) expect to follow a multi-semester progression, completing subsequent courses in the series. CAELC provides individualized guidance based on placement to help students plan accordingly.

Students who wish to request a waiver or deferral of an assigned ESL course must submit a written request to the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the semester in which the course is required. The Director of Graduate Studies will review the request and, if appropriate, submit a formal waiver or deferral petition to the School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS) Graduate Office, which makes the final decision.

It is important to note that waiver requests are rarely approved, as ESL course placement is based on standardized assessment and intended to support academic success. Deferral requests are considered only in cases of documented scheduling conflicts or other compelling academic reasons. Students should plan their course schedules accordingly and are encouraged to communicate early if issues arise.

2.5. Vacation and Leave Policy

UVA Engineering students who are funded through graduate assistantships and UVA Engineering graduate fellowships are required to pursue their training on a full-time basis, devoting each day of the normal work week (M-F), plus any additional time required by their research projects and academic courses.

The number of hours a week of an assistantship appointment is devoted to the duties of the research and/or teaching assistantship. All remaining academic requirements for a student’s degree, such as classes, thesis or dissertation research, and service activities are in addition to the assistantship appointment hours.

Additionally, the following guidelines for holiday and leave time have been established by the SEAS, and in some cases University policy. These represent the minimum leave to which a graduate student is entitled. Individual graduate programs might not have a formalized system for accounting for time off; if so, time off monitoring falls under the honor system and is the responsibility of the student. Students should consult with their advisor for approval with as much advance notice as possible for any planned leave. Students or faculty with questions or concerns should consult with their program’s director of graduate studies.

These policies do not supersede any HR policy. In addition, these policies do not create a contractual relationship with any student and the policies may be reviewed and amended annually by the UVA Engineering Graduate Studies Committee.

Graduate students are entitled to observe the following 12 days as holidays: Day Before New Year’s Day, New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Election Day, Day Before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Day, Day After Thanksgiving, and two winter break days: December 24 and December 25. In years for which a holiday falls on a traditional weekend (Saturday or Sunday) the holiday may be observed on the closest traditional business day (Friday or Monday).

Graduate students are allowed three weeks (15 traditional work days, counting all days Monday through Friday) of time off per year. This time off is not broken down into specific types (e.g. personal time, vacation, sick time); rather, it is combined into one flexible time off type. Students shall continue to receive pay (stipend or wage) during approved time off and holidays. The times between academic terms, the summers, and spring break are considered active parts of the training period and are not free times. Students taking courses are expected to attend all classes and take exams as scheduled. To the extent possible, time off should be arranged with the research supervisor, and teaching supervisor, where applicable. Students cannot be asked to provide documentation from a health care provider to use time off. Time off should be prorated for students who receive less than 12 months of support.

Time off can be accrued from one year to the next year only with the prior written approval of the student's advisor and only up to a maximum of 15 traditional work days (counting all days Monday through Friday), to allow for international travel, for example.

For additional information, visit [Vacation and Leave](#) section of the SEAS Academic Rules.

2.6. Internship Policy for MS and PhD Students

The SEAS Graduate Studies Internship Policy establishes the rules and procedures governing the internships for MS and PhD students. Students who are interested in doing an internship must carefully review and follow the procedure established in [Policy ENG-GRA-002](#).

2.7. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training for MS and PhD Students

Starting in the Fall of 2025, all Engineering MS and PhD students are required to have successfully completed RCR training in order to be eligible to enroll and receive graduate assistantship funding (regardless of the funding source). This new requirement reflects the School's commitment to fostering a culture of research integrity and compliance with federal guidelines, and it aligns with best practices across peer institutions. The training is free through the CITI Program and will take approximately 3 hours to complete. This training can be completed in multiple settings and will be valid for 4 years after completion.

For more information about RCR training, visit the Office of the Vice President for Research [website](#).

2.8. Parental Accommodation for Graduate Students on Assistantship

Recognizing the need for graduate students to fulfill parental obligations, [PROV-028](#) defines eligibility and accommodations available to graduate students who experience a Parental Accommodation Event while appointed as a GTA or GRA. Students must carefully read the eligibility criteria and the procedures laid out in the policy.

Eligible students who anticipate a need for Parental Accommodation funding as outlined in [PROV-028](#) should contact, in writing and at the earliest opportunity, the SEAS Assistant Dean for Graduate Affairs, Amy Clobes, to confirm their eligibility and request approval for the terms of their accommodation. Students should copy their advisor, CEE Department Director of Graduate Studies, and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs (gradstudies@virginia.edu) on this request.

2.9. First Destination Survey

As the final milestone, all graduate students in SEAS must complete the First Destination survey informing the school whether employed, continuing education, military service, volunteering, or still seeking employment.

2.10. Financial Aid

Most admitted MS and PhD students receive financial aid. Funding offers take the form of GRAs, GTAs and/or various Department or SEAS fellowships. Funded offers also include tuition waivers and health insurance.

Some MS and PhD students may be funded by external fellowships (e.g., NSF GRFP) or third-party entities (e.g., employer, government, military agencies).

We do not offer graduate assistantships (GRA, GTA) to ME students. However, we offer a select number of scholarships, up to \$4,000 each, for our top ME applicants. All On-Grounds ME applicants are automatically considered for these awards.

2.11. Ombuds

Students are strongly encouraged to express their comments and concerns regarding their experiences in CEE graduate programs with the CEE Director of Graduate Studies, CEE Associate Chairs, and CEE Department Chair.

In addition, there is a university ombuds that can be reached at ombuds@virginia.edu, with additional contact information [here](#). The ombuds should be considered by the students as an individual who is available for confidential discussion of concerns regarding students' education. [This site](#) explains the purpose and limitations of the ombuds, with additional student resources provided [here](#).

Students are welcome to request a meeting with either the CEE Graduate Program Director or the University Ombuds at any time.

2.12. Administrative Forms

It is important that graduate students submit administrative forms related to degree requirements in a timely manner to the CEE Student Services Coordinator. These forms can be found on the SEAS [website](#).

3. Master of Engineering (ME) Program

The Master of Engineering (ME) degree is a coursework-based graduate professional degree for those wishing to pursue careers in industry, consulting, or government. Our program is designed to provide a blend of fundamental knowledge and professional skills needed by practicing engineers. The ME program is an intensive, non-thesis program that may be completed on Grounds as a full-time student or online as a student in the [Virginia Engineering Online \(VEO\)](#) program.

3.1. Faculty Advisor

Upon admission to the ME program, ME students are appointed an advisor for consultation and academic planning.

On-Grounds ME students are required to meet with the faculty advisor before the start of each semester to plan their course selection and career objectives.

Online ME students are required to meet with the faculty advisor at least once a year to plan their course selection and their graduation timeline.

3.2. Program Requirements

ME students must complete a minimum of 30 graded engineering graduate-level credits (5000 level and above) to satisfy the SEAS academic requirements while maintaining a minimum grade point average of 3.0.

While the ME degree does not require a thesis, students may pursue a research-based independent study project for course credit. With approval from their faculty advisor, students may count up to two electives (3 credits each) toward their degree by conducting supervised research under the direction of a faculty member.

Students may also choose to gain professional experience through a paid or unpaid internship for course credit. With prior approval from their faculty advisor, students may count one elective (3 credits) toward their degree requirements through an approved internship or other relevant professional experience. Credit is granted based on the academic component of the experience, which must be documented and evaluated by a faculty supervisor.

VEO students should refer to [VEO program website](#) for information regarding the program requirements.

Students in the ME degree program may wish to plan their study around one of the following five areas of specialization:

- [Construction Engineering and Management \(CEM\)](#)
- [Environmental and Water Resources Engineering \(EWRE\)](#)
- [Infrastructure Systems Engineering \(ISE\)](#)
- [Structural Engineering \(STR\)](#)
- [Transportation Engineering \(TRN\)](#)

On-Grounds ME students are required to prepare a plan of study under the guidance of the ME program faculty advisor prior to or at the beginning of the first semester. Online ME students are recommended to prepare a plan of study under the guidance of the ME program faculty advisor at the beginning of the first semester.

The plan of study may be revised, if necessary, at any time.

3.3. Transfer Credits

ME students in the On-Grounds degree program may transfer a maximum of 12 graduate course credits into their program of study, and courses for transfer must have been completed with a grade of B or better.

ME students in the VEO program may transfer a maximum of 15 graduate course credits into their program of study. Graduate courses with grades of C or better may be transferred for UVA VEO students. VEO students should refer to [VEO program website](#) for more information regarding transfer credits.

Note that all transfer credits are subject to the approval of the student's faculty advisor, the CEE Department Director of Graduate Studies, and the SEAS Graduate Office.

The request must be submitted online using the form available on the SEAS [website](#) (See Transfer Credits section).

3.4. Academic Standing

Good academic standing is defined as a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 and Satisfactory grade(s) in research and in teaching, when applicable. Unsatisfactory work during any semester, a cumulative grade point average of less than 3.0, and/or failure of a milestone may be considered a sufficient reason for withdrawal of financial assistance or for enforced withdrawal from the graduate program.

3.4.1. Academic Warning

Graduate students may incur academic warning (formerly known as academic probation) any fall or spring semester in which they fail to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0. Students on academic warning have one semester to increase their cumulative grade point average to 3.0 or above, or they will be placed on academic suspension. VEO students have two semesters of enrollment to increase their cumulative grade point average.

3.4.2. Academic Suspension

Students who do not raise their GPA to 3.0 during their academic warning will incur academic suspension. Without an approved academic suspension appeal, students are permanently academically suspended from the SEAS and are not eligible for readmission.

3.4.3. Academic Suspension Appeals

Students should consult [PROV-019: Student Academic Suspension Grievance](#) for the policy and procedure through which students can raise concerns about academic suspension decisions. Academic suspensions may be appealed within 30 days of notification of the suspension. Engineering graduate students who wish to appeal an academic suspension should submit a written grievance as outlined in PROV-019 by email to gradengineering@virginia.edu, where it will be received and adjudicated by the School Designated Official, the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

3.5. Special Circumstances

Students pursuing a bachelor's degree in an engineering field at UVA are encouraged to start the ME in Civil Engineering program during their fourth year, with appropriate guidance from their academic advisor and approval from course instructors (as necessary). As 4000-level classes may not be used toward the ME degree, students are encouraged to take 5000- or 6000-level classes with instructor approval. More information can be found on [UVAccelerate program website](#).

Students without a bachelor's degree in an engineering field may apply for admission to the ME program; however, they might be required to complete certain prerequisite or corequisite courses. Any such requirement will be communicated to the student as part of the admission process.

3.6. Seminar Series

CEE Seminar Series is a weekly event during the academic year that brings together CEE faculty and students to learn about new research and practices in different areas of civil and environmental engineering. Research presentations are given by Distinguished Speakers from within the university community as well as nationally and internationally recognized researchers and engineers in academia and industry. The weekly seminars also include talks and presentations from CEE graduate students as well as presentations geared towards professional development.

ME students are *encouraged* to attend the weekly CEE seminars, however, attending the seminars is not a requirement for the ME program.

3.7. Outcome Assessment Forms

In the semester that ME students are planning to graduate and before the examination period begins, students must work with the ME program faculty advisor and the CEE Student Services Coordinator to complete and submit three Outcome Assessment Forms: Engineering Analysis Assessment, Engineering Design Assessment, and Engineering Technical Writing Assessment.

These forms are available from the SEAS [website](#) and must be submitted online.

3.8. First Destination Survey

After successful completion of the program assessment forms, all ME students must complete the First Destination survey informing the school whether employed, continuing education, military service, volunteering, or still seeking employment.

4. Master of Science (MS) Program

The Master of Science (MS) degree is a graduate degree with a focus on research. The MS program is well suited for students interested in continuing on to a PhD, providing strong preparation for advanced research. At the same time, the MS program also equips students with the skills and knowledge needed for careers in industry, consulting, or government. Our program is designed to provide a blend of research skills, fundamental knowledge development, and professional skills needed for careers in research and industry. SEAS academic requirements for MS students and steps to graduation can be found on the [Office of Graduate Programs website](#).

MS students should check regularly the accuracy and completeness of their academic requirements report in the Student Information System (SIS) frequently, at least at the start and end of each semester and in consultation with their faculty advisor.

4.1. Faculty Advisor

An MS student must work closely with a faculty advisor who guides their academic progress, research, and professional development. Students must have an advisor to enroll and are required to have an advisor at all times while in the program. An advisor must be UVA faculty.

A student may be co-advised by two advisors. It is expected that both advisors will be UVA faculty. If, however, a student wishes to be co-advised by a non-UVA faculty, the non-UVA co-advisor must be faculty at another institution and have a courtesy appointment in the student's home department.

4.2. Overview of the Program Requirements

The Master of Science (MS) degree in Civil Engineering requires satisfactory completion of all required coursework and the successful defense of an MS thesis. In addition, MS students are required to attend CEE seminars during the first year of their studies.

4.3. Coursework Requirements

MS students must complete a minimum of 24 graded engineering graduate-level credits (5000 level and above), of which at least 12 credits must be civil engineering courses (CE designation), and a total of 30 credits consisting of graded coursework and research (CE 8999) to satisfy the SEAS academic requirements while maintaining a minimum grade point average of 3.0.

MS Students may wish to plan their study, with approval from their advisor, around one of the following five areas of specialization:

- [Construction Engineering and Management \(CEM\)](#)
- [Environmental and Water Resources Engineering \(EWRE\)](#)
- [Infrastructure Systems Engineering \(ISE\)](#)
- [Structural Engineering \(STR\)](#)
- [Transportation Engineering \(TRN\)](#)

4.4. MS Thesis

MS students must satisfactorily present and defend a thesis based on independent, original research supervised by the student's MS advisor. The MS thesis defense is conducted orally and publicly in front of the MS thesis committee.

4.4.1. Thesis Committee

The MS thesis committee must review and approve the student's academic requirements report, written thesis, and oral thesis defense. Students are required to consult with their advisor when forming their MS thesis committee.

The MS thesis committee must include a minimum of three members and meet both SEAS and CEE requirements as outlined below.

1. At least three members must be UVA faculty.
 - As defined by SEAS [Academic Rules](#), for the purposes of committees, UVA faculty are considered to be tenure/tenure-track faculty or Academic General Faculty (Research) who hold an appointment at UVA.
2. At least two members must be SEAS faculty.
 - SEAS faculty are UVA faculty (as defined above) who hold a *primary* appointment in the SEAS.
3. At least two members must be CEE faculty
 - CEE faculty are UVA faculty (as defined above) who hold a primary or secondary appointment in CEE.
 - A UVA faculty member who holds a courtesy appointment with CEE does not count as a CEE faculty member.
4. One committee member must be identified as the Committee Chair.
 - The Committee Chair must not be the student's advisor (or co-advisor) and must hold a primary appointment in CEE.
5. Students may also include a fourth voting member on their committee, who may or may not be a UVA faculty member. If the fourth member does not meet the SEAS definition of UVA faculty, they are considered an External Member.
 - As defined by SEAS [Academic Rules](#), External Members are any qualified committee members who are not considered UVA or SEAS faculty as defined above. This includes UVA-based Academic General Faculty (non-Research track), professional research staff, adjunct faculty, lecturers, qualified staff, and emeritus faculty, or any qualified non-UVA personnel. A CV or bio sketch is required for all External Members and should be submitted to the Engineering Graduate Registrar with the committee form. Failure to submit sufficient documentation may disqualify the External Member from the committee and delay degree milestone timeline.
6. If a student wishes to include more than four committee members, they must request approval from the CEE Director of Graduate Studies in advance and provide a written justification for the expanded committee.
7. In cases where an MS student is co-advised, the secondary advisor may serve on the committee, but only in a non-voting capacity. This ensures appropriate balance between advising and evaluation roles on the committee. Alternatively, if both advisors are to serve as voting members, the committee must include at least five members.

Students are referred to "Committee Requirements and Guidelines" document for additional details on committee structure and eligible faculty members.

Once the MS thesis committee is selected, students must request the appointment of the Committee by completing and submitting the Appoint or Modify MS Committee form online. The form can be found on the SEAS [website](#) (under MS Committee Appointment section). After department approval, the form will be routed to the SEAS Graduate Registrar for approval. Students must confirm with all committee members that they are willing to serve on the committee and are strongly encouraged to consult with the CEE Student Services Coordinator or

the Director of Graduate Studies to ensure that the committee meets both departmental and SEAS requirements.

The MS thesis committee must be officially approved *at least two weeks before the date of the defense*. To allow time for review, potential revisions, and full processing, students are expected to submit the form *no later than three weeks* before the scheduled defense. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the form is submitted in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in delays or the need to reschedule the defense.

4.4.2. MS Thesis Defense Timing

With the approval of their MS advisor and Committee Chair, students must coordinate with their committee members and schedule a date for the MS thesis defense. Students must pay attention to the defense deadlines set and announced by the SEAS Graduate Registrar at the start of each semester.

All members of the thesis committee must be available either virtually (online) or in person at the date and time of the scheduled defense. There are no exceptions to this requirement unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been reviewed and approved in writing by the CEE Director of Graduate Studies in advance.

Once the defense date is confirmed, and with their advisor's approval, students must send their thesis document to the thesis committee *at least one week* prior to the defense. This one-week requirement is a minimum; students should ensure their committee has ample time to thoroughly review the thesis before the defense. There are no specific formatting requirements for the thesis document, but it should include: a title page, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, abstract, and references list. Students are highly encouraged to get examples from their advisor, their peers, or from [Libra website](#) to use as references or templates for formatting.

A public announcement of the MS thesis defense must be sent out by CEE Student Services Coordinator *at least one week* before the defense. To facilitate this, students must fill out the announcement template available in the shared One Drive folder and send it to the CEE Student Services Coordinator *at least two weeks* prior to the defense.

4.4.3. MS Thesis Defense

The MS thesis defense is conducted orally and publicly in front of the entire thesis committee, which was previously approved by the SEAS Graduate Registrar's Office. The defense is designed to test the student's knowledge of their field of research. The first part of the MS thesis defense, which should last approximately 30 minutes, is an oral presentation of the thesis by the student. This will be followed by a one- to two-hour oral defense before the thesis committee.

A student who does not perform satisfactorily in the defense may, with the recommendation of two-thirds majority of the thesis committee, be granted a future thesis defense after being given adequate time to prepare.

One week before the defense, students must submit the M.S. Thesis Defense Report and Assessment form, available on the SEAS [website](#) (MS Thesis Defense) and notify the CEE Student Services Coordinator. The form will be routed to the Committee Chair who will complete it after the defense.

To complete their MS degree, the student must submit their approved thesis, along with the [Thesis/Dissertation Cover and Approval Pages Form](#) to Libra, the online archive of UVA, by the deadline that is announced by the SEAS Graduate Registrar at the start of each semester. Students should discuss any copyright/embargo issues with their advisors prior to the upload. For more information on Libra and instruction of how to upload, please visit the [Office of Graduate Programs website](#) and the [Libra's Electronic Thesis/Dissertation \(ETD\) Submission Checklist](#).

4.5. Seminar Series

As an essential component of the graduate program in CEE, MS students are required to enroll in CE 7001 (with zero credit hours), attend the CEE seminars, and receive a Satisfactory grade in their first year of the program.

CEE Seminar Series is a weekly event during the academic year that brings together CEE faculty and students to learn about new research and practices in different areas of civil and environmental engineering. Research presentations are given by Distinguished Speakers from within the university community as well as nationally and internationally recognized researchers and engineers in academia and industry. The weekly seminars also include talks and presentations from CEE graduate students as well as presentations geared towards professional development.

4.6. Academic Standing

Good academic standing is defined as a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 and Satisfactory grade(s) in research and in teaching, when applicable. Unsatisfactory work during any semester, a cumulative grade point average of less than 3.0, and/or failure of a milestone may be considered a sufficient reason for withdrawal of financial assistance or for enforced withdrawal from the graduate program.

4.6.1. Academic Warning

Graduate students may incur academic warning (formerly known as academic probation) any fall or spring semester in which they fail to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0. Students on academic warning have one semester to increase their cumulative grade point average to 3.0 or above, or they will be placed on academic suspension.

4.6.2. Academic Suspension

Students who do not raise their GPA to 3.0 during their academic warning will incur academic suspension. Without an approved academic suspension appeal, students are permanently academically suspended from the SEAS and are not eligible for readmission.

4.6.3. Academic Suspension Appeals

Students should consult [PROV-019: Student Academic Suspension Grievance](#) for the policy and procedure through which students can raise concerns about academic suspension decisions. Academic suspensions may be appealed within 30 days of notification of the suspension. Engineering graduate students who wish to appeal an academic suspension should submit a written grievance as outlined in PROV-019 by email to gradengineering@virginia.edu, where it will be received and adjudicated by the School Designated Official, the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

4.7. First Destination Survey

After successful completion of the MS thesis defense upload to Libra, all MS students must complete the First Destination survey informing the school whether employed, continuing education, military service, volunteering, or still seeking employment.

5. PhD Program

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Civil Engineering is a mentored opportunity to become an expert on a specific research topic and train for a career involving independent research. SEAS academic requirements for PhD students and steps to graduation can be found on the [Office of Graduate Programs website](#).

PhD students should frequently check the accuracy and completeness of their academic requirements report (ARR) in the Student Information System (SIS).

5.1. PhD Advisor

A PhD student works closely with a faculty advisor who guides their academic progress, research, and professional development. Students must have an advisor to enroll and are required to have an advisor at all times while in the program. An advisor must be UVA faculty.

A student may be co-advised by two advisors. It is expected that both advisors will be UVA faculty. If, however, a student wishes to be co-advised by a non-UVA faculty, the non-UVA co-advisor must be faculty at another institution and have a courtesy appointment in the student's home department.

5.2. Overview of the Program Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree at UVA requires successful completion of required coursework plus the three following major milestones:

- PhD Qualifying Exam
- PhD Dissertation Proposal
- PhD Dissertation Defense

Other requirements for the PhD degree in Civil Engineering at UVA include the following:

- **Seminar:** CEE PhD students are required to enroll in CE 7001 (with zero credit hours), attend the seminars, and receive a Satisfactory grade in their first year of the program.
- **Publication:** PhD students are *expected* to generate peer-reviewed publications from each technical chapter of their dissertation. Publications must be peer-reviewed, co-authored with advisor and with the student as first author. Typically, one or more first-authored peer-reviewed publications will have already been accepted by the time of the PhD defense. Sufficiency of the publication record is determined by the student's Doctoral Committee.
- **Conference/Seminar Presentation:** PhD students are required to present their research at least once at a conference, CEE Seminar Series or other public venue approved by the Doctoral Committee.

5.3. Overall Timeline

In our PhD program, students have significant ownership over their academic journey and are responsible for actively progressing toward graduation. Therefore, it is incumbent on the PhD student to regularly communicate with their advisor and Doctoral Committee to make sure that their progression through the program is following a timeline that is suitable to and in accordance with the expectations of the PhD advisor and the program.

Typically, it takes between 4 to 5 years to successfully complete all the requirements and the milestones of the PhD program in CEE. Students who enter the program with a master's degree are typically able to complete required coursework and take the PhD qualifying exam in year 1. It may take those students who enter the program with a bachelor's degree longer to complete the

required coursework. The PhD Qualifying Exam milestone must be completed by the end of the second year. There must be a minimum of two full semesters (counting summer or unenrolled semesters) between a student's dissertation proposal and their final examination (dissertation defense). However, students are highly encouraged to complete this milestone by the end of year 3 of their program.

All requirements for a PhD degree in Civil Engineering at UVA must be completed within seven years after matriculation to the program

5.4. Coursework Requirements

The PhD program in Civil Engineering requires relevant coursework to help students access foundational knowledge in their discipline while striking a balance between depth and breadth. A minimum of 24 engineering, graduate-level credits are required for all PhD students in SEAS at UVA.

PhD students who have earned a master's degree in a STEM field will receive an automatic bulk transfer of 24 graduate credits toward the SEAS coursework credit requirement. Students who receive a bulk transfer of credits for 24 credits are required to enroll in two CEE courses (six credits) during their PhD program at UVA.

PhD students who have earned a master's degree in a non-STEM field will receive an automatic bulk transfer of 12 graduate credits toward the SEAS coursework credit requirement.

PhD students who receive a bulk transfer of credit may not transfer any additional credits toward the PhD degree. PhD students who earn an ME or MS degree at UVA enroute to a PhD in CEE may use credits from their MS/ME to satisfy the coursework requirement for PhD. For more information, refer to SEAS [policy on Transfer Credit](#).

PhD students who do not hold a master's degree may wish to develop their plan of study, with approval from their advisor, around one of the following five areas of specialization:

- [Construction Engineering and Management \(CEM\)](#)
- [Environmental and Water Resources Engineering \(EWRE\)](#)
- [Infrastructure Systems Engineering \(ISE\)](#)
- [Structural Engineering \(STR\)](#)
- [Transportation Engineering \(TRN\)](#)

5.5. PhD Committee Requirements

PhD students in CEE will form two formal committees during the course of their degree program:

- PhD Qualifying Exam Committee: formed to oversee and evaluate the student's qualifying exam.
- PhD Doctoral Committee: formed to oversee and evaluate both the student's dissertation proposal and dissertation defense.

These two committees may consist of the same or different members, provided each committee meets the specific composition requirements described below. This section outlines the requirements for both committees, along with relevant definitions and School of Engineering policies. Students are referred to "CEE Committee Requirements and Guidelines" document for additional details on committee structure and eligible faculty members.

5.5.1. Definitions of Committee Member Types

The following definitions are based on [SEAS academic policies](#) and apply to both the Qualifying Exam and Doctoral Committees. Only for the purpose of committees, SEAS defines committee member types as follows:

- **UVA Faculty:** Tenure/tenure-track faculty or Academic General Faculty (Research) who hold an appointment at the University of Virginia.
- **SEAS Faculty:** UVA faculty (as defined above) who hold a *primary appointment* in SEAS.
- **CEE Faculty:** UVA faculty (as defined above) who hold an appointment (primary or secondary, *excluding courtesy appointment*) in CEE.
- **Outside Member:** A UVA faculty member whose *primary appointment* is outside the student's home department (CEE).
- **External Member:** Any qualified individual who is not considered UVA faculty as defined above. This includes UVA-based Academic General Faculty (non-Research track), professional research staff, VTRC research scientists, adjunct faculty, lecturers, qualified staff, and emeritus faculty, or any qualified non-UVA personnel. A CV is required for all External Members and must be submitted with the committee form. The CV should include the highest degree attained, institution, year, and relevant expertise.

5.5.2. PhD Qualifying Exam Committee Requirements

PhD students must work with their advisor to form a committee to oversee and evaluate their Qualifying Exam (QE). The PhD QE committee must include *four members* and meet the following requirements:

- At least three CEE faculty members, as defined in §5.5.1
- One committee member must be identified as the Committee Chair. The Chair must not be the student's advisor (or co-advisor) and must hold a primary appointment in CEE.
- In cases where a student is co-advised, the secondary advisor may serve on the committee, but only in a non-voting capacity. This ensures appropriate balance between advising and evaluation roles on the committee. Alternatively, if both advisors are to serve as voting members, the committee must include five members.

5.5.3. PhD Doctoral Committee Requirements

PhD students must work with their advisor to form a doctoral committee that oversees and evaluates both the dissertation proposal and dissertation defense. The Doctoral Committee must include *at least five members* and meet the following requirements:

- A minimum of four UVA faculty members, as defined in §5.5.1.
- A minimum of three SEAS faculty members, as defined in §5.5.1.
- A minimum of three CEE faculty members, as defined in §5.5.1.
- One committee member must be identified as the Committee Chair. The Chair must not be the student's advisor (or co-advisor) and must hold a primary appointment in CEE.
- The committee must include at least one Outside Member, as defined in §5.5.1.
 - A UVA faculty member who holds a courtesy appointment in CEE does not count as a CEE faculty member but may count as an Outside Member.
- External Members, as defined in §5.5.1, are allowed to serve as voting members.
- A minimum of three committee members in the proposal must also be on the student's dissertation defense committee. Any exemption from this requirement must be approved by both the CEE Director of Graduate Studies and the SEAS Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

- If a student wishes to include more than six committee members, they must request approval from the CEE Director of Graduate Studies in advance and provide a written justification for the expanded committee

5.5.4. Committee Appointment Process

Once the Qualifying Exam Committee or PhD Doctoral Committee is selected, students must formally request the committee appointment by completing the Appoint or Modify PhD Committee form, available on the SEAS [website](#) (under the PhD Committee Appointment section). After departmental approval, the form is routed to the SEAS Graduate Registrar for final approval.

Students must confirm with all proposed committee members that they are willing to serve on their committees and are strongly encouraged to consult with the CEE Student Services Coordinator or the Director of Graduate Studies to ensure the committee meets all departmental and SEAS requirements.

The committee must be officially approved at least *two weeks before any milestone event* (Qualifying Exam, Dissertation Proposal, or Dissertation Defense). To allow sufficient time for review, possible revisions, and full processing, students must submit the form *no later than three weeks before the scheduled milestone date*. It is the student's responsibility to ensure timely submission of the form. Failure to do so may result in delays or rescheduling of the milestone.

Per SEAS [policy](#), at least three members of the approved Doctoral Committee at the time of the dissertation proposal must remain on the committee at the time of the dissertation defense. There are no exemptions to this requirement; any exceptional cases require approval from both the CEE Director of Graduate Studies and the SEAS Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

If a student wishes to make any changes to the Doctoral Committee between the dissertation proposal and the dissertation defense, they must re-submit the Appoint or Modify PhD Committee form for approval. Note that the new form must be submitted no later than three weeks prior to the scheduled defense date.

5.6. PhD Qualifying Exam

The purpose of the PhD Qualifying Exam (QE), also referred to as the comprehensive exam or PhD exam, is to assess the student's research aptitude and confirm that they have the skills and knowledge base necessary to conduct original research and to make a substantive contribution in their field. The exam provides an opportunity for students to receive early, individualized feedback regarding their strengths and weaknesses in research and foundational knowledge. The PhD QE in CEE consists of two parts, written and oral. Successful students will demonstrate that they can:

- understand, interpret, and critically evaluate relevant literature,
- apply technical/engineering tools, data analysis, concepts, coursework and/or approaches to gain insight on real-world and/or research problems,
- effectively communicate results in both oral and written formats, and
- answer questions and respond to critical feedback when sharing, defending, and revising their ideas.

5.6.1. Timing

CEE PhD students are required to successfully complete the PhD QE *no later than the end of their second year in the program*. Delayed examination is subject to the approval of the student's PhD advisor and the CEE Director of Graduate Studies.

PhD students who move their study to UVA from another institution in concurrence with their faculty research advisor moving to UVA and who have passed a PhD QE or its equivalent at the previous institution may, with the approval of the CEE Director of Graduate Studies, have their

PhD QE milestone satisfied. Formal documentation from the previous institution is required to demonstrate the successful completion of the PhD QE or its equivalent.

One week before the oral exam, students must submit the PhD Qualifying Exam Form, available on the SEAS [website](#) and notify the CEE Student Services Coordinator. The form will be routed to the Committee Chair who will complete it during the oral exam.

5.6.2. Exam Structure and Procedure

Before the start of each Fall and Spring semester, CEE doctoral students are asked to complete a survey indicating whether they plan to take their QE during that term. If so, they must also provide the names of their anticipated committee members. This process allows faculty members to plan and coordinate the exam schedule for student examinees in advance. Students will then receive detailed instructions and deadlines from the Director of Graduate Studies regarding the formation of the QE committee and the various components of the exam. These instructions will also include a designated window during which the oral component of the exam should be scheduled. All members of the committee must be available either virtually (online) or in person, at the date and time of the oral exam. There are no exceptions to this requirement unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been reviewed and approved in writing by the CEE Director of Graduate Studies in advance. The written exam date is two weeks before the oral exam. Once the date for oral and written exams are determined, the student should then work backward from those dates to complete the activities summarized below.

In preparation for the exam, a student examinee should complete a two-page document that (i) outlines their research area and explains how it will advance the knowledge in their PhD discipline; (ii) describes how their past, current, and future coursework aligns with their research and career goals; and (iii) describes how the expertise of each of their committee members is relevant to their research and career goals. Finally, for part (iv), the student should develop a preliminary reading list (e.g., research papers, book chapters, policy briefs) organized by topic to be used in their QE.

No later than one month before their scheduled written exam date, the student must send this four-part document, together with their *Academic Requirements Report* from SIS to the committee chair. The committee chair will then send these documents to the committee members. The committee is expected to provide feedback within one week of receiving the documents. During this same week, the student should meet individually with each committee member to discuss expectations for their portion of the exam and whether any revisions to the reading list are needed. Based on this feedback, the student must submit a finalized version of the four-part document, including the revised reading list, to the committee chair *no later than two weeks before the scheduled written exam date*. It is recommended that students start this process early so they can have a thoughtful, engaged dialogue with the committee, time to prepare a comprehensive reading list, and a clear expectation of the type of questions to expect.

The committee members will then prepare their questions based upon the research overview, finalized reading list, coursework history, and discussed exam format. The committee chair will then collect all the questions and send them to the student with the necessary instructions at the date and time set for the written exam.

The student will work on the written exam for a duration determined by the committee chair, but this period will not exceed seven days. At the end of the exam period, the student will submit the answers together with any supplementary document to the committee chair who then shares them with the committee.

The oral exam will consist of two parts: a brief prepared presentation summarizing the student's responses to the questions and the questions from the committee. Questions from the committee are typically built from the answers on written exam but may also include additional questions.

There is no stipulated duration for the oral exam, but students should reserve at least a 2-hour block. Once the oral exam has concluded, each committee member will re-score their questions using the criteria of the CEE Qualifying Exam Assessment Form (oral score column). The committee chair is responsible for collecting and organizing feedback from the committee and then communicating it to the student after the exam.

5.6.3. Exam Outcome

The outcome of the exam is determined collectively by the QE committee choosing from four options: pass with distinction, pass, pass with remediation, or fail. The committee weighs both parts of the exam (written and oral) at its discretion when determining the outcome. The committee chair is responsible for communicating the outcome of the exam and delivering feedback from the committee to the student after the exam.

Students who receive a result of “Pass with Remediation” must complete all required remedial work, as specified by the committee, within a timeframe determined by the committee and no later than six months after the original exam date. Students who fail the exam must retake it within six months. Failure to complete the remediation successfully within the allowed timeframe, failure to retake the exam within six months, or failure to pass the exam after a second attempt will result in dismissal from the PhD program.

5.7. PhD Dissertation Proposal

The PhD dissertation proposal marks the second key milestone in a doctoral student’s journey. The dissertation proposal consists of a written document and an oral presentation (i.e., proposal defense). This milestone allows the student’s committee to make three important determinations:

- To assess whether the student’s knowledge of their chosen area and their understanding of relevant literature is adequate to complete a PhD.
- To recommend coursework, approaches/techniques and other resources that would facilitate or enhance the proposed work.
- To evaluate whether or not the proposed work, if completed, would constitute an acceptable basis for a doctoral dissertation.

5.7.1. Timing

Students are strongly encouraged to form their PhD Doctoral Committee soon after completing their QE milestone. Students can take their dissertation proposal as early as the semester following successful completion of their QE. There must be a minimum of two full semesters (counting summer or unenrolled semesters) between a student’s dissertation proposal and their final examination (dissertation defense). Students are highly encouraged to complete this milestone by the end of the third year of their program.

The student is responsible for working with their advisor and their committee to schedule a date for the defense that works for everyone. All members of the committee must be available either virtually (online) or in person, at the date and time of the scheduled defense. There are no exceptions to this requirement unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been reviewed and approved in writing by the CEE Director of Graduate Studies in advance. Once the defense date is confirmed, and with their advisor's approval, students must send their proposal document to the Committee *at least one week* prior to the defense. This one-week requirement is a minimum; students should ensure their committee has ample time to thoroughly review the proposal document before the proposal defense.

A public announcement of the dissertation proposal defense must be sent out by CEE Student Services Coordinator *at least one week* before the defense. To facilitate this, students must fill out

the announcement template available in the shared One Drive folder *at least two weeks* prior to the defense. The CEE Student Services Coordinator will confirm that all the necessary requirements have been met for scheduling a dissertation proposal defense.

One week before the proposal defense, students must submit the PhD Dissertation Proposal and Admission to Candidacy Report and Assessment Form, available on the SEAS [website](#) and notify the CEE Student Services Coordinator. The form will be routed to the Committee Chair who will complete it during the proposal defense.

5.7.2. Dissertation Proposal Structure

The dissertation proposal consists of a written document and an oral presentation. The written document should discuss the proposed work, contributions, preliminary results to date, and research timeline in a concise manner. Proposal documents should not exceed 15 single-spaced pages (or 30 double-spaced pages) excluding title page, abstract, table of contents, references, appendices, and supplementary materials. There is no formatting requirement for the proposal document, but the students are highly encouraged to consult with their PhD advisor.

All members of the committee evaluate the proposal and generate a preliminary assessment of the candidate's achievement of the following research skills: a) identifying relevant problems of interest, b) interpreting existing literature, c) generating hypotheses, d) collecting data (via experiment, observation, modeling and/or simulation), e) interpreting results and drawing conclusions, f) communicating results (in oral and written formats), g) answering questions and defending their work, and h) commenting/critiquing on the work of others.

The dissertation proposal defense is advertised within CEE and SEAS. All interested parties are welcome to attend. The candidate gives a brief overview of their proposed dissertation research (approximately 35 minutes), then takes questions from the audience followed by questions from their committee. The total duration of the dissertation proposal defense is at the discretion of the student's committee, but students should reserve at least a 2-hour block.

5.7.3. Dissertation Proposal Outcome

The focus of the dissertation proposal is to foster student growth, rather than simply determining pass or fail. After the proposal defense, the committee deliberates privately to decide on the outcome. As part of this process, the committee also reviews the student's transcript to recommend any additional coursework or relevant training, if necessary.

The committee chair will then communicate the committee's decision to the student and their advisor. In some cases, the committee may request revisions to the proposal or ask for further clarification on specific questions before making a final decision.

If a candidate does not pass the defense, they must retake it within six months. The committee chair is responsible for determining an appropriate format and timeline for the second defense. Students who fail to pass on their second attempt will be dismissed from the PhD program.

5.8. PhD Dissertation Defense

Dissertation defense is the culminating step of the PhD degree. The purpose of PhD Dissertation Defense is to confirm that the completed research constitutes a meaningful contribution to the body of knowledge in the field of Civil and Environmental Engineering and to demonstrate competence in the field of the dissertation research and to ensure that the written quality of the final document is adequate to highlight the value of the work.

5.8.1. PhD Dissertation Document

The PhD dissertation document is a unique and individualized document that represents the student's own scientific and engineering interpretation/thinking about the research and design accomplishments they have made during their time in the CEE PhD program. The PhD student should take tremendous pride in their accomplishments and embrace their individuality as a scientist and engineer when assembling and summarizing the body of work from their PhD experience.

While there are no specific formatting requirements for the dissertation document, it should include: title page, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, abstract, and references list. Students are highly encouraged to work with their PhD advisor and committee to prepare a satisfactory document. Students are also encouraged to get examples from their advisor, their peers, or [Libra website](#) as references or templates for formatting.

5.8.2. Timing

PhD students are eligible to defend their dissertation once they have completed all other requirements of the PhD program. There must be a minimum of two full semesters (counting summer or unenrolled semesters) between a student's successful completion of the dissertation proposal and their dissertation defense (or final examination). It is the student's responsibility to check the Academic Requirements Report in SIS.

With the approval of their PhD advisor, the student must coordinate with their committee members and schedule a date for the PhD dissertation defense. Students must pay attention to the defense deadlines set and announced by the SEAS Graduate Registrar at the start of each semester. All members of the committee must be available either virtually (online) or in person, at the date and time of the scheduled defense. There are no exceptions to this requirement unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been reviewed and approved in writing by the CEE Director of Graduate Studies in advance.

The candidate should circulate the dissertation document to the committee *no later than one week before the dissertation defense date*. Note that the one-week requirement should be considered as the minimum. It is imperative that the candidate gives their committee sufficient time to review the dissertation ahead of the defense.

The first part of the dissertation defense (approximately 40 minutes) is an oral presentation of the dissertation research followed by questions from the public. This is followed by questions from the committee. The total duration of the dissertation defense is at the discretion of the student's committee, but students should reserve at least a 2-hour block.

A public announcement of the dissertation defense must be sent out by CEE Student Services Coordinator *at least one week* before the defense. To facilitate this, students must fill out the announcement template available in the shared One Drive folder *at least two weeks* prior to the defense. The CEE Student Services Coordinator will confirm that all the necessary requirements have been met for scheduling a dissertation defense.

One week before the defense, students must submit the PhD Dissertation Defense Report and Assessment Form, available on the SEAS [website](#) and notify the CEE Student Services Coordinator. The form will be routed to the Committee Chair who will complete it during the defense.

5.8.3. Exam Outcome

After the dissertation defense, the committee deliberates privately to decide on the outcome. The committee chair will then communicate the committee's decision to the student and their advisor.

In some cases, the committee may request revisions to the dissertation or ask for further clarification on specific questions before making a final decision. The committee chair is responsible for establishing a timeline for the student to submit the revised dissertation.

While exceedingly rare, it is possible for the student to fail the dissertation defense. The possibility for re-examination is determined by the committee. The best way for the student to avoid failure is to have clear and frequent communication with their PhD advisor and committee about everyone's expectations and whether or not expectations have been met; that way, there should be no surprises when it comes to the dissertation defense.

5.8.4. Publication of PhD Dissertation Document

After successful completion of the dissertation defense, PhD students must submit their approved dissertation, along with the [Thesis/Dissertation Cover and Approval Pages Form](#) to Libra, the online archive of UVA, by the deadline that is announced by the SEAS Graduate Registrar at the start of each semester. Students should discuss any copyright/embargo issues with their advisors prior to the upload. For more information on Libra and instruction of how to upload, please visit the [Office of Graduate Programs website](#) and the [Libra's Electronic Thesis/Dissertation \(ETD\) Submission Checklist](#).

5.9. Seminar Series

CEE PhD students are required to enroll in CE 7001 (with zero credit hours), attend the seminars, and receive a Satisfactory grade in their first year of the program.

CEE Seminar Series is a weekly event during the academic year that brings together CEE faculty and students to learn about new research and practices in different areas of civil and environmental engineering. Research presentations are given by Distinguished Speakers from within the university community as well as nationally and internationally recognized researchers and engineers in academia and industry. The weekly seminars also include presentations from CEE graduate students as well as presentations geared towards professional development.

5.10. First Destination Survey

After successful completion of the PhD dissertation defense and upload to Libra, all PhD students must complete the First Destination survey informing the school whether employed, continuing education, military service, volunteering, or still seeking employment.

5.11. PhD Survey of Earned Doctorates

After successful completion of the PhD dissertation defense, all PhD students must complete the [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) and submit a copy of the Certificate of Completion via email to the Engineering Graduate Registrar's Office.

5.12. Academic Standing

Good academic standing is defined as a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 and Satisfactory grade(s) in research and in teaching, when applicable. Unsatisfactory work during any semester, a cumulative grade point average of less than 3.0, and/or failure of a milestone may be considered a sufficient reason for withdrawal of financial assistance or for enforced withdrawal from the graduate program.

5.12.1. Academic Warning

Graduate students may incur academic warning (formerly known as academic probation) any fall or spring semester in which they fail to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of

3.0. Students on academic warning have one semester to increase their cumulative grade point average to 3.0 or above, or they will be placed on academic suspension.

5.12.2. Academic Suspension

Students who do not raise their GPA to 3.0 during their academic warning will incur academic suspension. Without an approved academic suspension appeal, students are permanently academically suspended from the SEAS and are not eligible for readmission.

5.12.3. Academic Suspension Appeals

Students should consult [PROV-019: Student Academic Suspension Grievance](#) for the policy and procedure through which students can raise concerns about academic suspension decisions. Academic suspensions may be appealed within 30 days of notification of the suspension. Engineering graduate students who wish to appeal an academic suspension should submit a written grievance as outlined in PROV-019 by email to gradengineering@virginia.edu, where it will be received and adjudicated by the School Designated Official, the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

5.13. Annual Academic Progress Review for Doctoral Students

In CEE, we are committed to maintaining strong and nurturing graduate programs. Conducting annual reviews of PhD students' academic progress is a major step towards this goal. An annual review of academic progress will have several benefits. An annual review of academic progress helps the student progress successfully through the graduate program by allowing timely diagnosis of deficiencies, clarification of expectations for academic performance, and identification of opportunities for improvement. An annual review will also help the department see our programs from the perspectives of our doctoral students and can be used to evaluate the program's quality and assess its progress towards its goals and missions. To this end, all CEE PhD students, except those in their first semester of the program, are required to participate in the annual review process, which takes place at the beginning of the fall semester each year. Failure to participate in the Annual Review process will result in a "U" grade in the student's research credit.

5.14. Conference Travel Grants

In CEE, we are committed to supporting the professional development of our doctoral students by facilitating opportunities for them to present their research and engage with the broader scientific community. To this end, the Department will provide up to \$1,500 for doctoral students to attend a scientific conference to enhance the students' professional growth, increase the visibility of their research, and foster networking opportunities within their academic and professional communities. This grant is contingent upon a one-to-one match by the student's advisor.

5.15. Changing from the PhD Program to the MS Program

At any point in time with the permission of the student's PhD advisor(s), a student may request to change from the PhD Program to the MS Program. If a student is considering this path, they should talk with their PhD advisor(s) and the CEE Director of Graduate Studies to understand the timing, financial, and research-related implications of making this change. Making the official switch to the MS Program from the PhD Program also requires the student to submit a Plan Change Form, available on the SEAS [website](#).