

# DEGREE CANDIDACY

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A graduate student admitted to a program or track requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Degree candidacy requirements vary from program to program and may include but are not limited to such milestones as successful completion of all or a portion of all required didactic course work, the passing of written and/or oral comprehensive examinations, the identification of the thesis/dissertation adviser and/or committee, and/or the successful defense of the thesis/dissertation prospectus.

Upon satisfactory completion of degree candidacy requirements, the graduate student must submit a notice of admission to master's or doctoral degree candidacy form (available on the Graduate School website (<https://graduate.vcu.edu/current-students/progress-to-degree/degree-candidacy/>)) to his/her program director. The student's signature acknowledges that he/she has read and understands the policies regarding course registration as well as continuous enrollment requirements (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/registration-policies/>). Both the program director and the school's dean or dean's designee must sign the form to confirm the student's eligibility for admission to degree candidacy and forward it to the graduate dean for final approval and recording of admission to degree candidacy. The graduate dean will formally notify the student of admission to degree candidacy.

The degree candidacy form must be submitted **before** the student formally begins the final thesis/dissertation/research project **but no later** than the semester preceding the semester in which the student graduates. Failure to submit the degree candidacy form in a timely manner may delay graduation.

A graduate student approved for degree candidacy must register for at least one graduate credit hour at VCU each fall and spring semester until the degree is awarded. Students must be enrolled during their graduation semesters. Graduate students with approved leaves of absence are exempted from continuous enrollment requirements for the LOA period. **Students should note that while a leave of absence temporarily suspends the continuous enrollment requirement, it does not extend the time limit for completion of the degree.**

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University Graduate Council