Important Academic Dates and Deadlines
This information only applies to students completing ALL required coursework for their program and students eligible to graduate in Spring 2022. The dates and deadlines listed below are to keep you on track for degree completion and graduation this semester.

Spring 2022 Masters/EDS Deadlines
May 11 Final Exam Defense (Submit request 2 weeks prior to defense date)
May 27 Electronic Thesis/Dissertation

Spring 2022 PhD/EDD Deadlines
PhD/EDD Students planning to participate in Commencement for 2022 follow dates below, if not follow the dates above for Masters/EDS.
Mar 24 Final Exam Defense (Submit request 2 weeks prior to defense date)
Apr 7 Electronic Thesis/Dissertation
**Non-Thesis ONLY Programs (MNR, MIT, MBA, MEng...)**

**May 16**  **Non-Thesis Final Exam/Evaluation**

Each respective program will send out an email with detailed instructions for Final Exam/Evaluation scheduling towards the end of the semester to ensure you are on track for degree completion and exam scheduling.

**Important:** An approved Plan of Study is required to Apply for Degree Conferral and to Schedule your Final Exam! You can check to see if you have an approved Plan of Study in Hokie Spa. **If you do not have an approved Plan of Study, please reach out to your department for assistance!** Your department will work to complete your Plan of Study and ensure that it is received with the Graduate School for Final Approval.  [Link to Schedule Final Exam](#)

All students graduating are required to have a Final Exam scheduled with the Graduate School for degree awarding.

| **Save the Date! Events, Info Sessions, Workshops, etc** |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Mar 25      | Celebrating Graduates Happy Hour, Ballston Local |
| Mar 26      | GSA Hokie Hikers’ Day Out                     |
| Mar 26      | Holi, Festival of Colors, NVC                 |
| Mar 29      | First Generation Affinity Group (more info to come) |
| Mar 30      | Women in Transportation 2022                  |
| Apr 8-10    | ACCelerate Festival                            |
| Apr 20-21   | Hokie Pop-Up Shop                              |
| Apr 27      | Virtual CPT Workshop for International Students |
| May 15      | 2022 Spring VT Commencement in the DC Region  |

**New Facebook Group for VT DC Graduate Students**

In order to provide informal space for discussion and peer-to-peer information sharing, we've set up a Facebook group and encourage you to join in. It's our hope that many people will contribute to the group and it can be a living and useful resource.

**About - VT Grad School DC Community**

*This group is for Virginia Tech graduate students in the Washington, D.C. area. One of our primary goals is to make it easier for new students to learn about life in this region and how to succeed in their academic life. Students from all majors and campuses are welcome to participate!*

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/vtdcgradcommunity](https://www.facebook.com/groups/vtdcgradcommunity)
VT COVID Testing Program in the DC Region

The university’s COVID testing program in the DC Region is through a mail-in testing program. The test kits are distributed in the library. An overview of instructions is shown below. Please be patient as we bring this new program online, and remember that the program is for people without symptoms. If you are experiencing COVID symptoms, please contact your health care provider.

1. Register online to pick up a test. The scheduling website is https://app.acuityscheduling.com/schedule.php?owner=20170330&appointmentType=29318318
2. Select Falls Church or Arlington on the website to see available pickup times.
3. Pick up your test from the NVC Library (1st floor) or Arlington Main Desk (2nd Floor) as scheduled. You will need to show ID. Hokie Passport is preferred, but another government-issued ID such as a driver’s license or passport is acceptable.
4. **DO NOT ADMINISTER THE SELF-TEST IN THE LIBRARY.** Preferred locations are your private office, home, or car. You can also administer the self-test outside, or in some part of the building where you can be far away from other people.
5. Carefully follow the sampling and shipping instructions included with the test kit. On Mondays and Tuesdays between noon and 4 pm, the NVC library will have a collection box at the service desk. The regular UPS driver will pick up completed test kits from this box. Outside of these hours, you must ship your test through UPS from a nearby office or public collection box.
6. Tests are processed by the testing company, and the results will be communicated to the university by Friday. Negative test results will be communicated by email only. Positive results will be communicated by either EH&S (for employees) or Schiffert Health (for students) using a combination of email and phone.

International Students Important Information

**Virtual CPT workshop, Wednesday 04/27/22, 5-6 pm**

Eligible F-1 students may apply for Co-Op/CPT by completing the following at least 30 days before the internship’s start date in Summer 2022:

**Step 1:** Apply for Co-Op with the graduate school. The CPT course (GRAD 5944 or 7944) is a 1 credit course that should be added to you POS for the Summer 22 term before submitting this step.

**Step 2:** After grad school approval, apply for CPT with an immigration advisor using IntlHokies > F-1 Curricular Practical Training > CPT request.

**For International Students Graduating in Spring 2022**

Please take a moment to look at the program end date listed on page 1 of your most recent I-20.
If the end date is **not** listed as **05/15/2022** – please send Jessica Mullins a message this month. Your program end date in SEVIS will need to be shortened. This date edit is needed in order to be eligible to apply for post-completion OPT.

**Jessica Mullins**, mullins1@vt.edu
Assistant Director for DC International Student Services (DC ISS)
Virginia Tech Graduate School in the Greater Washington DC metro area

Virtual zoom advising appointments can be booked [here](#).

**VT Graduate Student Commencement in the DC Metro Region, Spring 2022, May 15th, 1pm at the GMU CFA**

The [Commencement website](#) for the DC Area is live. Please bookmark this page as it will be updated frequently during the semester. Here are the summary details:

**Date:**
Sunday May 15th, 2022

**Venue:**
GMU Center for the Arts
4373 Mason Pond Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030-4444

**Schedule:**
- 11:30 am  Student Check-in begins on Main Level
  - **All participating students should be checked in by 12:30 pm.**
- 12:15 pm  Doors open to the Auditorium for Guests to be seated
- 12:30 pm  Faculty Line-up
- 12:50pm  All Students seated by program in the Auditorium
- 1:00 pm  Processional
- 3:00 pm  Light reception for graduates and their guests in the Main Lobby immediately following the Commencement.

**Degree Conferring Dates**
In order to participate in Commencement, please make sure you have completed the necessary work by the [Degree Conferring Dates](#). If you have any questions, please contact the Graduate Student Services Office (GSSO) at 703-538-8327 or see [here](#) for more information or to make an appointment. **Please note the important Dates and Deadlines Workshop offered by the GSSO on February 23rd at 6:30pm for those who plan on graduating in Spring 2022.**

**Regalia**
Regalia is required for attending Commencement, and celebrating your academic achievements! Order by April 30th to ensure you will receive the regalia in time for the ceremony.

**PhD**
- Hoods are edged with dark blue
• Doctoral gowns are faced with black velvet with three bars across the sleeves.
• Tassels are gold

Masters
• The colors for the edging of hoods for master's students are determined by the college and discipline granting the degree. You can find the proper hood color here
• Tassels of caps are black

Both Master’s and PhD regalia can be ordered from the VT Bookstore through the following link: https://colleges.herffjones.com/college/vt/.
• Click on "Keeper Cap and Gown" (Order Now),
• From the drop down, choose "Graduate School"
• "Washington, DC Ceremony"
• "Degree Type" (You can select Masters or Doctors)

Graduate Student Speaker Competition (Deadline Extended!)
Each year we invite students to submit a speech for the Graduate Student Speaker Competition. If selected, the graduating student will have the opportunity to attend the Faculty/VIP Reception prior to the Commencement, and give remarks in front of family, friends and graduates! Speeches should be no longer than 10 minutes. The deadline for submission has been extended to April 1, 2022 and the applicants will be notified by April 15, 2022.
To participate please fill out this form: https://forms.gle/j7Tgz8HRXibxFbR6

Images and Reflections Photo Slideshow
We welcome submissions of photos or short videos that tell the story of your student experience at Virginia Tech. Submit them using this Google Form or email them to Susan Merten at smerten@vt.edu.

VT Commencement Pop Up Flower Shop
As with previous years, there will be a pop up flower shop selling VT flowers and some swag outside the Commencement venue. If you would like to review the bouquets and/or pre-order, see here.
Events, Workshops, etc.

Celebrating Graduate Students

Happy Hour

March 25th, 4-6pm

Ballston Local, VTRC-Arlington

Come celebrate the outstanding work of the Virginia Tech graduate community in teaching, research and service in the DC Metro Area! All students, faculty, advisors, and staff welcome. Free appetizers and giveaways. Sponsored by the Innovation Campus, and the Departments of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering.

March 25

CELEBRATING GRADUATE STUDENTS

HAPPY HOUR

Ballston Local
900 N Glebe Rd, Arlington, 22203

4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Sponsored by the Innovation Campus, Department of Computer Science, and the Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Free appetizers, giveaways & more!

Special Guest Dr. Lance Collins, Vice President and Executive Director of Virginia Tech’s Innovation Campus

Saturday Soccer Group, Every Weekend, Looking for More Players!

Every Saturday from 10:30-11:30 at George Mason High school training fields. If anyone wants to join the group, there is a WhatsApp Group run by students. Contact Aziz @ hamdani@vt.edu.
Hokie Hikers’ Day Out, March 26th, 10am

Holi, Festival of Colors, March 26th, 3:30pm at the NVC
Women in Transportation 2022 Panel Discussion, March 30th, 12-1pm

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) and the Virginia Tech chapter of WTS International (previously Women’s Transportation Seminar) are co-hosting a free Women’s History Month panel event in conjunction with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) on March 30th 12-1pm, via zoom.

The event: “Roads, Rails, Runways, Riverways: What’s your path to a career in transportation?” will feature expert women leaders from NTSB who will share the paths that led them to their current roles and answer questions from attendees.

Women in Transportation 2022 | Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (vt.edu)

ACCelerate Festival, April 8-10

The Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT), in partnership with the Smithsonian’s Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation, will host ACCelerate: the ACC and Smithsonian Creativity and Innovation Festival from April 8-10 at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

ICAT invites all members of the Virginia Tech community to come and experience the multi-day festival, including three Virginia Tech exhibitions. Admission is free and open to the public. View the campus notice for details.
Hokie Shop, April 20-21, at the Northern Virginia Center

Wednesday, April 20 / 3-7 pm
Thursday, April 21 / 11 am-4 pm

Virginia Tech Hokie Shop, Virginia Tech's official bookstore, will host a two-day pop-up shop, April 20-21, at the Northern Virginia Center (next to the West Falls Church metro stop) in the greater Washington, D.C., metro area.

• Wednesday, April 20, 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.
• Thursday, April 21, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m

The Hokie Shop is open to everyone - Virginia Tech students, employees, alumni and community members in the D.C. area. An assortment of merchandise will be available, from clothing, to gifts and collectibles, graduation accessories and memorabilia. In addition, activities will be set up on the lawn in front of the NVC - Cornhole, Jenga, Connect Four and the Spin to Win Wheel.

MetroLab Student Cup Competition, March 25th

MetroLab Network is a non-profit organization supporting the effort of cities and universities working in partnership on innovation projects. Your university is a member of this network, and we wanted to make you aware of a competition event for students working on innovation with local partners. The MetroLab Student Cup is an opportunity for students to showcase their work, with the finalists presenting at our summit where local government and university leaders will attend.

Students can submit completed civic research projects for awards of $1000 and the chance to be featured as the MetroLab Network Innovation of the Month through our partnership with GovTech.
What types of projects are eligible?
We are looking for projects that provide new analysis, policy, or technical insights to civic challenges. Civic challenges include improving government, community services, social services; creating new mobility options; rethinking urban spaces; improving public health, and more. Preference will be given to projects that can demonstrate that research responded to a community-identified issue, was done in partnership with a civic partner (i.e. a state or local government or agency, a regional or neighborhood civic association, or a non-profit focused on community engagement or service delivery), and has produced or will have measurable impact for the community.

What does the competition process look like?
Interested students should complete the online application by 11:59 p.m. (EST) on Friday March 25th, 2022. The application asks for a project description as well as a few other key details about partnership with civic organizations. Finalists will be selected in April and will present their projects to a team of judges from government and civic organizations. Up to 5 winners will be selected in a final pitch competition during MetroLab Network’s Annual Summit in June, with one grand prize winner who will be featured in the MetroLab Network Innovation of the Month series.

Where should I direct questions?
If you have question about the application process please direct questions to elias.gbadamosi@metrolabnetwork.org

Jobs
Working with Professors Buehler and Hankey on a project for the National Park Service
We are looking for two graduate students to work with us on a project for the National Park Service and the Highway Safety Center at UNC Chapel Hill in the Washington, DC area. For this project, students will work with Professors Steve Hankey and Ralph Buehler on the tasks listed below. The hourly rate will be $20 per hour working between 10 to 20 hours per week. The position will be available in the last weeks of the spring semester and focused on summer 2022.

Responsibilities will include:
Conduct validation counts at pedestrian and bicycle counters along federal trails. This will include temporary installation of cameras to record traffic and processing these videos.
Download data from counters along federal trails to compare to the data collected by video.
Troubleshooting counters (i.e. identifying counters that do not work and what issue has caused a malfunction).

Students should be able to work independently and correspond with professors and fellow team members as needed. Students should have transportation to reach the counters. This can
be by bicycle or by car (and then on foot to access the counters). The project may purchase an e-bike to facilitate travel, but delivery times may be long due to supply chain issues.

Please submit your CV and a short statement indicating your interest in this project and your qualifications to hankey@vt.edu and ralphbu@vt.edu. We will then follow up with Zoom interviews for interested candidates. Please submit materials by 8 April 2022.

**GSSO Part-Time Student Event Assistants**
The Graduate Student Services Office, based in Falls Church, would like to hire some students as event assistants. You must be legally eligible to work in the U.S. for the university. The position description and application instructions are listed in this document. Applications from interested candidates are due by March 31, 2022.

**International Food Markets**
Northern Virginia boosts an international array of grocery stores and markets. This section highlights some of them in our area. Many of these places are small mom and pop stores, while others are big supermarkets. Can’t find fresh garam masala for your red lentil dal? Searching for soursop for a fresh morning fruit shake? Stop by some of these special markets from around the world to freshen up your dishes with spices, produce and desserts from all corners of the globe.

The **German Gourmet**
5838 Columbia Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041

Their write-up pretty much says it all. One thing they left out are the seasonal cards and the German Advent Calendars – some come with the typical chocolates in each day door. They stock German skin products as well. Wunderbar!

“The **German Groceries, Bratwursts, Beers and more!** German Gourmet is your go-to source for all of the wonderful German foods you remember. Come see the condiments, sauce and soup mixes, pickles, spaetzle, baking aids, coffee, tea, snacks, jams and honey, beers, wines, cookies, chocolates and snacks. And Christmas? You bet! Stollen, Lebkuchen and all the holiday favorites. We also offer products from Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and more.”
Escape to DC!
The National Cherry Blossom Festival, March 20th to April 17th
The National Cherry Blossom Festival is one of the most popular events in the DC Region. For so many of the locals, this blooming of the Cherry Trees around the Tidal Basin, is among the first harbingers of the spring season. Suddenly, after months of cold weather and greyness, the earth begins to revive with colorful spring flowers and tree blossoms. These beautiful, old trees were gifts of friendship given to the United States from Japan in 1912. For over a hundred years, our region has celebrated their blooms.

The Tidal Basin, run by the National Park Service, is always a nice walk but take time to see the cultural sights such as the Japanese Stone Lantern – when it is lit, the Festival is officially open. There is also the Japanese Pagoda which was gifted in 1958. You can read about it in this excellent interactive piece by the Washington Post from last year. As you go around the Tidal Basin Loop Trail, there are several important memorials to Martin Luther King, Jr, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Thomas Jefferson and other treasures to see.

This year the peak bloom is predicted for March 22-25th. Its only a few weeks away so start planning to visit the Tidal Basin. In the past, I’ve gone just before or just after the peak bloom and it has always been amazing, and less crowded! If you go really early in the morning, you can nab a parking space nearby. Otherwise, take the Metro, the Smithsonian Metro Station is probably the closest depending on where you are coming from. Or reserve a parking spot in advance. The Cherry Blossom Festival website recommends “convenient and affordable parking in advance through SpotHero, the nation’s leading parking reservations app. To reserve your parking spot, visit the National Cherry Blossom Festival SpotHero Parking Page and book a spot with rates up to 50% off drive-up.”
Welcome to the Virginia Tech Graduate School in the DC Metro Region

The Newsletter is compiled, written and edited by Susan Merten. It is circulated every Friday. Please send information of interest for graduate students by COB Wednesday to smerten@vt.edu

Connect with the VT Graduate School through the following sites

- Graduate Student Assembly - VT-National Capital Region
- VTGradSchDC
- NVC Website

VT Graduate School in the DC Metro Region

Kenneth H. Wong
Associate Dean for Graduate Education
And Director of the Northern Virginia Center (NVC)
Room 412, khwong@vt.edu or (703) 538-8312

Susan Merten
Assistant to the Associate Dean and Director of the NVC
Room 410, smerten@vt.edu or (703) 538-8310

GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICES Office (GSSO)
Contact: gssoncr@vt.edu or (703) 538-8327. To schedule appointments, click here

Corinne Julien
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