

# University Requirements for Graduate Degrees & Certificates

## Completion of Requirements

Graduate students who complete their graduate degree or certificate within eight years following admission to Old Dominion University will follow the requirements in the catalog in effect at the time of their first enrollment. For military service exception, see the policy on Sudden Withdrawal and Prolonged Absence Due to Military Mobilization under Requirements for Graduate Degrees and Certificates. If a catalog other than the catalog of the year of initial enrollment is to be used, written permission of the graduate program director and dean or designee must be obtained. Graduate students should consult their advisors to determine if any out-of-date credits may be re-validated by examination.

In all cases, students must have been duly admitted to the University and an academic program of study and meet all of the requirements for graduation in one catalog. Students may not create their own degrees or certificates by selecting partial requirements from more than one catalog.

## Prior Learning Assessment Credit Options at the Graduate Level

Old Dominion University offers Prior Learning Assessment, a program for assessing graduate-level knowledge gained through work and life experience and self-study. Students should meet with their advisors or distance learning representative to determine how Prior Learning Assessment credit affects their degree planning. A student may ordinarily earn a maximum of six semester hours at the graduate level through the following mechanisms:

1. Knowledge-based examinations.\* Upon approval of the student's graduate program director and the appropriate chair and/or dean of the college involved, a student may take a knowledge-based examination, and with a satisfactory score, receive academic credit for the course(s).
2. External examinations. Upon approval of the student's graduate program director and the appropriate chair and/or dean of the college involved, a student may submit satisfactory scores of professional examinations that are evaluated and recommended for graduate-level credit by the American Council of Education, and receive academic credit for the relevant course(s).
3. Credit for training. Upon approval of the student's graduate program director and the appropriate chair and/or dean of the college involved, a student may submit documentation of completion of professional and/or military training that is evaluated and recommended for graduate-level credit by the American Council on Education, and receive academic credit for the relevant course(s).
4. Portfolio development. Upon approval of the student's graduate program director and the appropriate chair and/or dean of the college involved, a student may develop a portfolio for a graduate-level course(s) offered by Old Dominion University to earn academic credit. Portfolios are submitted to and assessed for credit by the appropriate department and/or college involved.

The following regulations for Prior Learning Assessment credit apply:

1. Prior Learning Assessment credit may be granted upon the written recommendation of the student's graduate program director and the chair of the department/school (or designated faculty assessor) having jurisdiction over the courses involved.
2. Applicability of Prior Learning Assessment credit toward a specific degree program is subject to departmental/school approval.
3. A student may not receive credit for the same course in which any grade has been previously awarded, including W (withdrawal), F (fail), or O (audit).

4. No letter grades will be entered on the student's transcript for Prior Learning Assessment credit. This credit will be treated in the same way as transfer credit: a "XP" (Pass) will be assigned and it will not count in the student's grade point average.
5. A student should request Prior Learning Assessment credit as early as possible upon admission to degree status. A student must meet with the degree program advisor and the director at the beginning of his or her academic career at Old Dominion University to determine how the Prior Learning Assessment program may be applicable to the degree.
6. Satisfactory scores for knowledge-based examinations and professional examinations are determined by the appropriate department/school and/or dean of the college involved.
7. Necessary documentation for academic credit for professional training is determined by the appropriate department/school and/or dean of the college involved.
8. A maximum of six semester hours of graduate credit may be earned through Prior Learning Assessment mechanisms. The six hours is included in the maximum number of graduate credits that may be transferred into a graduate program at Old Dominion University. The student must be aware of individual degree program requirements. Programs may grant exceptions in the case of approved inter-institutional programs or in extraordinary circumstances with the approval of the dean or designee of the Graduate School.
9. A student in a certificate or endorsement area may earn a maximum of six credit hours through Prior Learning Assessment credit to apply to a certificate, endorsement or teacher licensure program. Prior Learning Assessment hours gained in these programs would be applicable to approved degree programs at Old Dominion University. In an approved graduate degree program at Old Dominion University, a graduate student who has earned six credit hours in a certificate or endorsement program that is applicable to the degree program has met the maximum number of Prior Learning Assessment credit hours. No additional Prior Learning Assessment credit may be applied to that graduate degree program.
10. Prior Learning Assessment credit earned at another institution may be re-evaluated by Old Dominion University faculty at their discretion to determine whether credit may be awarded at Old Dominion University.

## Procedures for Prior Learning Assessment

Students wishing to receive academic credit for departmental examinations, training or portfolio development through Prior Learning Assessment should do the following:

1. Contact the Prior Learning Assessment representative to discuss possible challenges. The Prior Learning Assessment representative and student will discuss guidelines on requesting approval to challenge a course(s) through the available Prior Learning Assessment options.
2. Submit a resume and cover letter demonstrating learning outcomes based upon prior learning to the Prior Learning Assessment representative.
3. The Prior Learning Assessment representative will submit the documentation to the department chair, or a designated faculty assessor, who will examine the request and determine eligibility to challenge the course(s). The department's decision will be forwarded to the Prior Learning Assessment representative who will then notify the student.
4. Once determination is made that the student is eligible to challenge the course(s) through Prior Learning Assessment, the student will complete and return to the Office of Prior Learning Assessment the appropriate intake request form. At this time, the student's account will be billed, and the appropriate Prior Learning Assessment fee should be paid. Specific instructions for completing the process will be available from the Office of Prior Learning Assessment.

If the conclusion for the portfolio assessment process results in a negative decision of the award of credit, a student may appeal the decision to the college having the responsibility for the course(s) for which credit is sought. The basis for a portfolio assessment appeal is the student's charge that the

assessment decision was awarded through prejudice or caprice. The burden of proof rests with the student.

Students must initiate appeals in writing within three weeks of receiving the completed portfolio evaluation form. The appeal must be written to the Prior Learning Assessment representative.

The Prior Learning Assessment representative will forward the appeal letter to the appropriate department chair. The chair will review the student's appeal. The chair will get input from the student and from the faculty assessor and may form an independent committee to review the appeal. The chair makes the decision on the validity of the appeal. If the chair concludes there is no cause for complaint, the student has the right to appeal to the dean of the college.

If the faculty assessor is the chair, the student may go directly to the dean. The dean will follow the procedures as outlined above. The decision of the dean of the college is final.

### External Examinations

External examinations, including CLEP and DANTES, are administered through the Credentialing Center. Students wishing to receive academic credit for external examinations should contact the Credentialing Center at 757 683-6089. Additional information is available from the website at <https://www.odu.edu/academics/academic-records/score-analysis/clep-dantes>.

### Prior Learning Assessment Fees\*

Students participating in the Prior Learning Assessment program are responsible for assessment fees as follows:

1. External Examination. Students are responsible for the testing fees for external examinations such as CLEP and DANTES, and should check with the Credentialing Center at Old Dominion University for fee information. There is no additional Prior Learning Assessment fee for the granting of academic credit for external examinations.
2. Departmental Examination. The Prior Learning Assessment fee is equal to 30% of the current approved in-state on-campus rate for undergraduate and graduate courses.
3. Training Evaluation. The assessment fee for training not previously evaluated by Old Dominion University is equal to 20% of the current approved in-state on-campus rate for undergraduate and graduate courses. For information about training programs that have been evaluated by Old Dominion University (and therefore incur no additional fee), visit the Prior Learning Assessment web site at: <https://www.odu.edu/academics/academic-records/evaluation-of-credit/prior-learning>.
4. Portfolio. Portfolio assessment fee equal to 50% of the current approved in-state on-campus rate for undergraduate and graduate courses.

Fees are based on the credit hours attempted and are not refundable if the student does not receive credit as a result of the evaluation. There is no appeal of the fee charge. The fees must be paid at the time the student is approved to submit a portfolio, departmental examination or training documentation for evaluation.

For more information call (757) 683-5650, visit the web site at <https://www.odu.edu/academics/academic-records/evaluation-of-credit/prior-learning> or email [priorlearning@odu.edu](mailto:priorlearning@odu.edu).

\* All fees are tentative and subject to final approval by the Board of Visitors and/or the president. Current Prior Learning Assessment fees are available on the website at <http://www.odu.edu/priorlearning>.

### Exceptions

In exceptional circumstances, an additional six semester hours of graduate credit may be awarded using Prior Learning Assessment at the request of the graduate program director and with the approvals of the chair or designee and the dean or designee of the college involved. Prior Learning Assessment fees may also be waived under established inter-institutional agreements or in exceptional circumstances at the request of the graduate program director

and with the approvals of the chair or designee, the dean or designee of the college involved, and the Office of Prior Learning Assessment.

## Graduate Credits by Transfer

A maximum of twelve (12) semester hours of graduate credit earned as a non-degree graduate student at Old Dominion University may be applied toward a graduate degree program; additional credits may be applied from approved graduate certificate programs within ODU. An extra combined maximum of twelve (12) graduate credits may be applied toward a graduate degree program from another accredited institution, if those credits were not part of a conferred degree, or through Prior Learning Assessment (see the Graduate Catalog Policy on "Prior Learning Assessment Credit Options at the Graduate Level"). Programs may grant exceptions to the number of transfer credits in the case of approved inter-institutional programs or in extraordinary circumstances with the approval of the dean or designee of the Graduate School. Students beginning their graduate studies at another institution and wishing to follow their faculty mentors who may have relocated to Old Dominion University will have their total allowances for transfer credits evaluated on a case-by-case basis and approved by the dean or designee of the Graduate School. Without exception, a majority of the total credits for the completion of a graduate degree or graduate certificate must be earned at Old Dominion University (see the Graduate Catalog Policy on "Institutional Credit Requirements for Graduate Degrees and Graduate Certificates"). Transfer credit will be given only for those courses that are certified as being applicable toward a comparable degree or certificate at the institution that offered the courses, and that were completed with a grade of B or better. Specifically, in-service courses that are established especially for groups of teachers and are not intended by the home institution to be part of a degree program will not be acceptable for transfer at Old Dominion University. Exceptions to this regulation may be made only with the approval of the graduate program director and, the dean of the college. In case of doubt, it is the responsibility of the student to show that the course in question would be acceptable toward a comparable degree at the home institution.

No credit toward a graduate degree may be obtained by examination (except through the Prior Learning Assessment options noted above). Credits earned at another institution for a graduate degree may not transfer, however, experiences gained in those courses could be evaluated with Prior Learning Assessment with appropriate credit given. No credits may be transferred or be eligible for Prior Learning Assessment if they are older than eight years.

**Process:** Students who wish to transfer allowable credit earned prior to admission to a degree program at Old Dominion University must submit a special request for evaluation of transfer credits through the graduate program director to the Office of the University Registrar. Following admission to a degree program, students must obtain written permission from the graduate program director before registering for a course at another institution with the intention of transferring the credit for that course toward a graduate degree at Old Dominion University. In no case is a transfer of credit final without the signed approval of the graduate program director and the academic dean overseeing the program on the Evaluation of Transfer Credits Form.

## Evaluation of Transfer Credits

In the case of a student who has changed programs of study at Old Dominion University, the graduate program director of the new program may or may not accept any previously transferred course work or work completed in the former programs.

Credits accepted for transfer from another institution will satisfy partial hour requirements, but grades earned in such courses are not calculated in the student's overall grade point average.

No credits will be accepted toward the degree or certificate if more than eight years old unless properly validated by examination.

# Institutional Credit Requirements for Graduate Degrees and Graduate Certificates

A majority of the total credits for the completion of a graduate degree or graduate certificate must be earned at Old Dominion University. Some colleges, schools, and departments may have additional requirements that must be fulfilled. Students interested in applying for transfer credits and/or prior learning assessment credits should refer to the Graduate Catalog policies on Prior Learning Assessment Credit Options at the Graduate Level and Graduate Credits by Transfer.

## Graduate Assessment Requirement

Old Dominion University has developed an institution-wide plan to assess the quality of its graduate academic degree programs. In addition, students are asked to assess their experiences with support services, University administration, and other aspects of their University experience. Students will complete the assessment at the end of their graduate degree program.

Prior to the completion of degree requirements, all graduate students must complete their assessment. Students will receive advanced notice of their eligibility to complete the measures, which may be accessed through the University's site at [www.odu.edu](http://www.odu.edu). Failure to complete the assessments normally precludes the student's right to receive his or her graduate degree. Assessment results are used to improve student learning and the educational experience at Old Dominion University, and they do not become part of students' records. Confidentiality is assured, as only aggregate data are reported and used in analyses.

## Responsible Conduct of Research Policy

1. All graduate students who were admitted or readmitted to a degree or graduate licensure program as of fall 2010 must complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) basic course. The basic course includes the following modules: Misconduct (falsification, fabrication, and plagiarism); Data acquisition, management, sharing and ownership; Mentor/trainee relationships; Publication practice and responsible authorship; Peer review; Conflicts of interest; and Collaborative research. Completion of the RCR modules will be tracked through the CITI website and is a graduation requirement. The RCR modules must be completed prior to completion of 12 semester hours. Students who fail to complete this requirement will have a registration hold placed on their records. As appropriate to their general field of study, students may complete the Biomedical Social and Behavior Research, Physical Science, or Humanities RCR track offered by CITI to fulfill this requirement. Graduate students who are admitted into a certificate program only or are considered non-degree-seeking without being affiliated with a licensure program are exempt from this requirement.
2. All investigators conducting human subjects research protocols (both Exempt and Non-Exempt) as well as all graduate students enrolled in Thesis and Dissertation projects involving human subjects are required to complete the CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) Program for Human Subjects Research.
3. All investigators conducting animal subjects research protocols as well as all graduate students enrolled in Thesis and Dissertation projects involving animal subjects are required to complete the LATA (Laboratory Animal Training Association) training program.

## Time Limits

All requirements for a graduate degree or graduate certificate must ordinarily be completed within an eight-year period. Exceptions to these time limits must be approved by the graduate program director and the college dean or designee. Graded coursework older than eight years at the time of graduation must be re-validated by an examination before the work can be applied to a graduate degree. Courses identified as research, thesis or dissertation that were graded pass/fail do not require re-validation. See the "Policy on Re-validation of Out-of-Date Graduate Credit."

Students whose graduate study is interrupted by military service will be granted an extension of time for program completion for the period of their military service, not to exceed five years. In such cases, graded coursework older than eight years at the time of graduation must still be revalidated.

## Graduate Certificate Programs

Graduate certificate programs are available to both non-degree and degree seeking graduate students. These certificates are ideal for students who want to explore areas of professional interest or meet accreditation requirements.

They also provide the opportunity for students to further their knowledge and become more competent in their profession. The University's minimum requirement for admission into a graduate certificate program is completion of a bachelor's degree. Some colleges, schools, or departments have additional requirements, such as a degree in a particular area or specific coursework. Students seeking a graduate certificate accept responsibility for adhering to the minimum requirements as well as those applied by the department where the certificate is managed.

Graduate certificate programs generally include a minimum of nine credit hours and a maximum of 21 credit hours. An overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or above in all courses specified as a requirement for the certificate is required for the award of a graduate certificate.

Certificates of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS) are for students seeking a formal award certifying completion of study beyond the master's degree in an academic or occupational field of study. These programs are intended for professional licensure or professional development and may be completed prior to or concurrently with doctoral studies. These programs generally require a minimum of 24 credit hours. Students must have a 3.0 overall GPA in the required courses to be awarded a certificate of advanced graduate study.

## Master's Degrees

This section specifies the minimum requirements for a master's degree from Old Dominion University. Some colleges, schools and departments have requirements in addition to the requirements described below. In seeking a master's degree, each student accepts responsibility for the following University requirements as well as any imposed by the major department.

The master's degree is awarded in recognition of the candidate's command of a comprehensive body of knowledge and ability to perform productively in the field of study. All master's degrees require a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate credit. Any variation within an individual program's approved degree framework, including course substitutions, must be approved in writing by the graduate program director in consultation with the student's faculty advisor when appropriate.

## Thesis and Non-Thesis Option

Candidates for the master's degree at Old Dominion may have the choice of two options: the thesis option or the non-thesis option. The choice will depend upon the availability of the two options within the selected discipline, the professional interests of the candidate, and the advice and approval of the appropriate graduate program director.

### Thesis Option

A minimum of 30 semester credits is required, including 24 semester credits in approved course work and six semester credits in research. The candidate is required to prepare and present a thesis or equivalent creative work. A final oral examination covering the research is required. A comprehensive written and/or oral examination covering the program of study may be required.

### Non-Thesis Option

A minimum of 30 semester credits of approved course work is required, including one or more courses at the conclusion of study that deal directly with special topics and/or training related to current problems or research in the discipline. A comprehensive written and/or oral examination, or an approved equivalent, on the program of study is required.

## Student Advising

### The Master's Degree

The graduate program director in consultation with the student, will assign a graduate advisor who must be certified for graduate instruction. An annual evaluation may include student's performance in courses, assistantships (teaching, research), the development and re-evaluation of his/her plan of study, guidance in selecting projects and mentors, preparation and scheduling of qualifying/comprehensive or equivalent exams, time management, and obtaining employment or further education. The advisor's annual evaluation and recommendation will be shared with the student and the graduate program director.

### Program of Study

Prior to completion of 12 semester hours, the degree candidate is required to prepare a program of study with the guidance of the advisor. The purpose of the program of study is to ensure that the student organizes a coherent, individualized plan for the course work and research activities. The program of study is to be consistent with the requirements for the degree as described in the catalog and must be approved by the graduate program director. The successful completion of the program of study, along with the collateral reading, research, practica, etc., will enable the student to demonstrate the high level of professional competence required of all graduate students in their respective fields.

### Master's Examination

A comprehensive written examination and/or oral examination, or its equivalent, is required under the non-thesis option and, depending on the program, may be required under the thesis option. The examination tests the candidate's competence in the fields covered by the program of study. The nature of the master's examination will depend on the degree sought and the requirements of the major department and examining committee. A program may propose, through the appropriate college graduate committee and academic dean, replacing the master's examination with an equivalent requirement. Such equivalent requirements shall be approved by the dean of The Graduate School. For further information, the student should consult the section on requirements under each degree program.

The examining committee is appointed by the graduate program director with appropriate notification to the student. The examining committee is composed of a minimum of three members who may or may not be those who serve as advisors or members of the thesis committee. Members are expected to be certified for graduate instruction in the major department/school and college. This examination may not be scheduled until all major requirements have been satisfied.

The results of the examination must be received in the Office of the University Registrar at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester. In order to pass the final examination or approved equivalent, a master's degree candidate must have a favorable vote from a majority of the examining committee. A student who has failed the examination may repeat it once. Students who fail the comprehensive examination twice cannot subsequently elect a thesis option. At the discretion of the graduate program director, a student who passes the examination but does not graduate within twelve months may be required to repeat the examination.

### Thesis Committee

The graduate program director, in consultation with the student, appoints a thesis committee of at least three members, two of whom must be full-time current ODU faculty members. All committee members must either be graduate certified at the appropriate level or have the academic backgrounds and research interests necessary to counsel, direct, and evaluate the student's proposed research and progress toward completion of the program of study and the thesis. The graduate program director approves the constitution of the committee and ensures that all committee members are graduate certified.

Two of the committee members must be full-time Old Dominion University faculty. The third member may be one of the following: a full-time University faculty; an adjunct, part-time, or emeritus University faculty; or a non-ODU academic or professional with special knowledge of the thesis

subject area. No more than one-third of the committee's membership can be individuals external to the University.

The committee chair must be full-time Old Dominion University faculty, be certified for graduate instruction at the highest level, and be an authority in the field of specialization of the proposed thesis. Research faculty based in the University's research centers may also serve in the role of chair when graduate certified at the appropriate level with a University department or school. Researchers or faculty at affiliated external research institutions may also serve in the role of chair when specifically designated by memoranda of understanding. External, part-time, adjunct, and/or emeriti faculty may serve in the role of committee co-chair with the approval of the graduate program director and the dean or designee. Full-time University faculty who are appointed to the committee who transition to emeriti status or who leave the University may continue to serve, but if they were chair, they will become co-chair with one of the remaining full-time faculty assuming the role of chair.

Replacement of the thesis committee chair or any other substantial change in the composition of the thesis committee initiated by the student requires that the reconstituted thesis committee re-evaluate and re-approve the thesis prospectus. Committee changes that occur outside of the student's control (e.g., faculty retirement, faculty loss of graduate certification) may or may not require a prospectus re-evaluation pending a discussion among the student, new and continuing committee member(s), and graduate program director.

Decisions to determine whether or not the thesis prospectus, final thesis written document, and oral defense of the thesis passes must have the majority approval of the thesis committee. All committee members sign where relevant on University forms reporting the thesis outcomes.

### Thesis

The candidate for the master's degree whose program of study includes a thesis is required to prepare and present a thesis (or equivalent in creative work) acceptable to the thesis director and committee, the graduate program director, and the appropriate academic dean. The thesis must represent in content and methods the skills, disciplines and knowledge required for graduate study, including competence in written language. The character of the final work must testify to the distinction of the student and standards of the University. The thesis or equivalent creative work must be worthy as a culminating experience for graduate study. Candidates will be required to defend the thesis in an oral examination. The Thesis Acceptance Form must be submitted to the Office of the University Registrar upon completion of Part A of this form. The Thesis Delivery Form must accompany this form.

The candidate should consult the Guide for Preparation of Theses and Dissertations available from the Graduate School web site or from the Dean's office of the appropriate college.

### Change From Thesis to Non-Thesis Option

A student who wishes to change from the thesis option to the nonthesis option for the master's degree must obtain the permission of the thesis advisory committee and the graduate program director. The permission must be forwarded to the Office of the University Registrar prior to the last semester for the intended graduation using the Change of Status Form. The candidate must meet all requirements of the nonthesis option. A maximum of three credits earned in thesis research can be counted toward the degree requirements for the nonthesis option. The thesis advisory committee must indicate that the thesis research work was productive in and of itself and warrants credit as a special problem or special topics course.

### Departmental Requirements

Individual colleges and/or programs may establish requirements above and beyond those set by the University as minimum. Students are obligated to follow the requirements of the appropriate graduate program section of the catalog in effect at the time of their first enrollment for this degree.

### Education Specialist Degrees

This section specifies the minimum requirements for an education specialist degree (Ed.S.) from Old Dominion University. Some colleges, schools and

departments have requirements in addition to the requirements described below. In seeking an education specialist degree, each student accepts responsibility for the following University requirements as well as any imposed by the major department.

The education specialist degree is normally granted at the end of the sixth collegiate year of study and as such falls between the master's degree and the doctorate in time; however, it is not necessarily viewed as intermediate between the two degrees. The education specialist degree provides advanced professional preparation for various positions in education.

For admission to an education specialist program, the University requires a master's degree from an accredited institution and a minimum grade point average of 3.00. Some programs have additional requirements such as a minimum Graduate Record Examination (GRE) aptitude score, grade point average, and graduate courses in specific areas.

The education specialist degree requires a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate credit beyond a master's degree. All requirements for the degree must be completed within a six-year period. Students must pass a written comprehensive examination and satisfy research requirements. Specific course requirements are found in the appropriate section of this catalog. Any variation within an individual program's approved degree framework, including course substitutions, must be approved in writing by the graduate program director in consultation with the student's faculty advisor when appropriate.

## Doctoral Degrees

This section specifies the minimum requirements for a doctoral degree from Old Dominion University. Some colleges, schools and departments have requirements in addition to the requirements described below. In seeking a doctoral degree, each student accepts responsibility for the following University requirements as well as any imposed by the major department.

The doctorate is the highest degree awarded at Old Dominion University, and it represents the summit of academic achievement. The University offers four doctoral degrees:

1. Doctor of Engineering (D.Eng.)
2. Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.)
3. Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.), and the
4. Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Doctoral degrees require at least 78 hours of study beyond the bachelor's degree or 48 hours beyond the master's degree, unless a professional accreditation specifies otherwise. Any variation within an individual program's approved degree framework, including course substitutions, must be approved in writing by the graduate program director in consultation with the student's faculty advisor when appropriate.

### Doctor of Engineering

The purpose of the Doctor of Engineering program is to provide the Commonwealth and the nation with exceptionally educated engineering practitioners. These individuals will have developed high-level capabilities to provide innovative solutions in specialized engineering endeavors. The graduates of the program will meet the highest standards for advanced level engineering and leadership positions in industry and government.

The curriculum consists of a minimum of 48 credit hours of graduate work beyond the master's degree, including 18 credit hours of common courses, 18 credit hours of graduate coursework in the student's area of specialization, and 12 credit hours of applied doctoral project.

### Doctor of Nurse Practice

This program is designed to develop the roles and practice skills of advanced practice nurses including nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, clinical nurse specialists, nurse anesthetists, and nurse executives. Nurses enrolled in this program will be prepared to serve as leaders, researchers, clinicians, and executives capable of transforming lives and the healthcare of the communities they serve. Specific emphasis is on addressing the needs of underserved and vulnerable populations.

### Doctor of Physical Therapy

The professional doctorate degree in physical therapy (D.P.T.) provides individuals with the knowledge, skills, and clinical internship experiences required to sit for licensure in any jurisdiction in the United States. This curriculum is comprised of a series of required didactic and clinical education courses prescribed in a specific sequence that offers students the knowledge, professional skills and competencies necessary for entry into the practice of physical therapy. In the place of a dissertation, each student is required to develop a selected case study based upon the observations of a patient examined and treated during one of the clinical internships, a research proposal, and a research project with platform and poster presentations. In addition to satisfactorily completing the didactic and clinical education curriculum, students must pass both written and oral comprehensive examinations prior to graduation.

The curriculum consists of 117 credit hours over a three-year, nine-semester period of time including summers. There are five full-time clinical internships in the three years of study totaling 40 weeks.

### Doctor of Philosophy

Programs leading to the Ph.D. are designed to help superior students develop the capability to become creative leaders in their chosen fields. The degree is awarded upon mastery of the subject area, the development of appropriate research skills, and a concentration of knowledge in the field of specialization.

It is important to recognize that the attainment of this degree is not a matter of accumulating course credits and satisfying residency and language or research skill requirements, even though minimum requirements for these categories are set forth by the University. The final basis for granting the degree shall be the candidate's knowledge of the field of study and his or her demonstrated ability to do independent, original, scholarly research.

Each graduate program is responsible for setting out the requirements and procedures appropriate to its area of study. The requirements and regulations set forth below are to be construed as the minimal requirements established by the University. Students also are obligated to meet all additional requirements established by the appropriate graduate program.

### Prerequisites for Admission

The applicant must complete the appropriate application for admission, submit official transcripts of all college- or university-level work, and supply letters of recommendation and official results of test scores as specified by the individual program. Baccalaureate and post baccalaureate work must reflect superior performance.

### Minimum Requirements

Minimum degree requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy which must be considered in preparing the preliminary plan of study are:

1. Satisfactory completion of at least 48 semester hours of post-master's course work, including the dissertation or equivalent level of performance course work;
2. Demonstrated competency in research skills as required by the specific graduate program;
3. The passing of written and oral candidacy examinations at the end of the program of course work;
4. The completion of a dissertation representing independent, original research worthy of publication in a refereed scholarly journal; and
5. The successful oral defense of the dissertation before an appropriately selected committee of faculty knowledgeable in the field of the dissertation research.

## Student Advising

### The Doctoral Degree

Before completion of nine semester hours, the graduate program director, in consultation with the student, will assign a program advisor or advisory committee. The advisor or advisory committee members must be certified for graduate instruction and will meet with the student at the end of each semester to evaluate student's academic progress. Among the advisor's/

advisory committee's responsibilities are a review of student's performance in courses, assistantships (teaching, research), the development and re-evaluation of his/her plan of study, guidance in selecting projects and mentors, preparation and scheduling of qualifying/comprehensive or equivalent exams, time management, and obtaining employment or further education. These annual evaluations are signed by the advisor/advisory committee and the student. The evaluation is filed in the student's record and a copy given to the graduate program director.

## Plan of Study

Before completion of nine semester hours, the student shall prepare a plan of study with the aid and approval of the advisor or advisory committee. The plan of study also should be approved by the graduate program director to ensure that it meets established requirements. Failure to present the plan on time may prolong the period of study for the degree. Before drawing up and approving the plan the graduate program director should verify that there is on file a set of transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work the student has taken. When appropriate, a diagnostic examination also may be used in developing a plan of study.

The successful completion of all work indicated on the approved plan of study is a fundamental prerequisite to the granting of the degree.

## Research Skills

Program skill requirements reflect the University's expectations of one or more significant skills distinct from the dissertation but fundamental to doctoral and postdoctoral research. Specific skill requirements vary with programs. Traditionally, a reading knowledge of one or more foreign languages has been required; more recently a demonstrated proficiency in computer science or quantitative methodology has been introduced.

Under University policy, each academic program leading to the Doctor of Philosophy establishes its own requirements for research skills. Responsibility for the level of competency, the nature of validating the competencies, and the standards utilized in the evaluation rests with the department/school that offers the program. Descriptions of individual programs should be consulted for appropriate regulations and procedures. Information about schedules of examination, standards, and general procedures is available from all departments/schools and graduate program directors.

The research skills requirement must be met before taking the candidacy examination. For specific information, the student should consult the appropriate program, school or college.

## Candidacy Examination

The written and oral components qualifying a student for candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy are comprehensive in nature. The graduate program director is responsible for coordinating the administration of the written and oral candidacy examinations and will appoint a committee to administer the exams. The examination committee will be made up of at least three faculty members, all of whom must be graduate certified. Before taking the qualifying examinations, the student must meet the appropriate departmental, school and college requirements and have the recommendation of the advisor or advisory committee. The examinations are taken near the end of the student's coursework. The candidacy examinations are usually taken during the semester in which the last formal graduate courses listed in the study plan are taken.

When the student and the advisor or advisory committee have determined that the examination should be taken, the student should obtain a Request for Permission to Take the Ph.D. Candidacy Examination no later than one month before the date of the first examination. The student should secure the signature of the advisor or advisory committee and submit the form to the graduate program director, who will verify that the student meets the prerequisites for the candidacy examinations. The graduate program director should be consulted on the schedule of the examinations. Once permission has been granted, postponement of the examinations must have the approval of the graduate program director.

After successful completion of the written examination, an oral examination, which must be taken prior to the end of the next semester, is given

addressing topics discussed in the written examination and possible additional materials. The oral examination is a serious and integral part of the qualifying procedure.

A student must pass both the written and oral candidacy examinations. The written examination must be passed before the oral examination may be taken. For either the written or oral examination, more than one negative vote from the examining committee will result in a failure. A failed written examination must be retaken successfully within one year. A student who passes the written examination on the first attempt need not repeat the written exam in the event of failing the oral exam. A failed oral exam, which also may be attempted a second time, must be retaken prior to the end of the next semester.

Neither the written nor the oral examination can be passed conditionally. A pass cannot be made contingent upon doing extra courses, additional projects, etc.

The examination committee will report, in writing, to the graduate program director and the dean the results of the examinations.

Students must be registered in any semester in which they are scheduled to appear for the examination.

## Dissertation Committee

After the candidacy examinations have been passed, the dissertation committee is formed to supervise the dissertation research, which begins with the approval of a topic. Membership of the dissertation committee may overlap with the advisory committee if one has already been established (see section under Student Advising). Faculty who agree to serve on a dissertation committee understand that they are committed to serve until the dissertation is completed.

The student selects a dissertation committee chair and may consult with the graduate program director for assistance in doing so. The committee chair must be full-time Old Dominion University faculty, be certified for graduate instruction at the highest level, and be an authority in the field of specialization of the proposed dissertation. Research faculty based in the University's research centers may also service in the role of chair when graduate certified at the appropriate level with a University department or school. Researchers or faculty at affiliated external research institutions may also serve in the role of chair when specifically permitted by memoranda of understanding.

The dissertation committee chair, in consultation with the student, appoints a dissertation committee of at least three members who are graduate certified at the appropriate level and who have the academic backgrounds and research interests necessary to counsel, direct, and evaluate the student's proposed research and progress. At least two committee members must be full-time current ODU faculty members. At least one member must be from outside the student's department/school at ODU or a non-ODU academic or professional with special knowledge of the dissertation subject area. Faculty may not serve as the outside committee member in the department/school of their primary appointment. No more than one-third of the committee's membership can be individuals external to the University. The graduate program director approves the constitution of the committee. The dean of the college or designee approves the final constitution of the committee and ensures that all committee members are graduate certified.

External, adjunct, and/or emeriti faculty committee members may serve in the role of committee co-chair with the approval of the graduate program director and the dean or designee.

Emeriti faculty who were appointed to the committee while they were full-time faculty may continue to serve as one of the members after receiving emeritus status but cannot continue as chair of the committee although co-chairing is permissible. This or another replacement of the dissertation committee chair or any other substantial change in the composition of the dissertation committee initiated by the student may require that the reconstituted dissertation committee re-evaluate and re-approve the dissertation prospectus. Committee changes that occur outside of the student's control (e.g., faculty retirement, faculty loss of graduate certification) may or may not require a prospectus re-evaluation pending a

discussion among the student, new and continuing committee member(s), and graduate program director.

Decisions to determine whether or not the dissertation prospectus, final dissertation written document, or oral defense of the dissertation passes must have the majority approval of the dissertation committee. All committee members sign where relevant on University forms reporting the dissertation outcomes.

## Change in Dissertation Committee

Changes must be made in advance of the oral dissertation defense. Changes made in the dissertation committee are made only with the approval of the graduate program director and the college dean.

## Advancement to Candidacy

Advancement to candidacy is a formal step that occurs after the student:

- Passes the Ph.D. written and oral candidacy examinations,
- Submits a topic that is approved by the dissertation committee chair, and
- Completes formal course work.

Once these requirements have been met, the graduate program director must file the "Advancement to Candidacy" form with the Office of the University Registrar. Please check with the appropriate graduate program director for further information.

## Dissertation Preparation

General regulations and procedures governing the submission of a doctoral dissertation are given in the Guide for Preparation of Theses and Dissertations. Full information, including detailed procedures and qualifications for undertaking a doctoral dissertation, is available in the student's major/school and should be obtained by the student and the dissertation advisor at the beginning of the planning for research and writing of a dissertation.

After approval of the dissertation proposal, the chair of the dissertation committee shall recommend the student's admission to candidacy to the graduate program director and the dean.

## Oral Dissertation Defense

The format of a defense is determined by the dissertation committee with the approval of the graduate program director. The defense is chaired by the chair of the dissertation committee. The chair will act as moderator, ruling on questions of procedure and protocol that may arise during the defense. The chair of the defense represents the college dean, to whom he or she makes a complete and prompt report on the defense. The chair should also promptly notify the graduate program director of the results of the defense.

The oral dissertation defense is scheduled for the time and place approved in the request for the dissertation defense. A two-week lead time is required for scheduling. This information is published in the appropriate University news media. The oral dissertation defense is open to the University community; all interested members are encouraged to attend the examination.

The aim of the defense is to explore with the candidate the methodological and substantive contributions of the already approved dissertation. Majority approval by the examiners constitutes successful completion of the defense of the dissertation. In case of failure, the dissertation committee may recommend that the candidate be dropped or be allowed re-examination no earlier than three months after the first examination.

Satisfactory performance on this examination and adherence to the regulations outlined above complete the requirements for the degree. The Dissertation Acceptance and Processing Form must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar with the completed dissertation upon completion of requirements for the degree.

## Dissertation Load Registration

All doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy are required to be continuously registered for an appropriate number of dissertation

units during each semester and summer session. (See "Graduate Student Registration Requirement.")

## Thesis and Dissertation Procedures

Graduate students who plan to write theses or dissertations should obtain a copy of the Guide for Preparation of Theses and Dissertations from The Graduate School's web site (<http://www.odu.edu/graduateschool/>) for use in conjunction with any style manual preferred or required by their respective departments/schools or colleges. Minimum University requirements for the preparation of theses and dissertations are contained in the guide; departments/schools and/or colleges may set additional requirements.

Information regarding compliance with policies regulating research involving human subjects, animals, radiation, potential biohazards (e.g. recombinant DNA), lasers, controlled substances, or hazardous materials and policies regarding intellectual property can be found on the Office of Research web site at <https://www.odu.edu/researchoffice> (<https://www.odu.edu/researchoffice/>).

All research involving human subjects, animal care and use, radiation, potential biohazards, lasers, controlled substances, or hazardous materials requires the approval signature of the appropriate review committee chair or designee, or safety officer, prior to the initiation of any research activities.

Students should be aware that in most cases, the University owns intellectual property created with University resources and can claim an interest in the intellectual property. Intellectual property must be disclosed to the Office of Research using an invention disclosure form. In order to fulfill its contractual obligations, and to adhere to the Policy on Patents and Copyrights, it may be occasionally necessary for the University to temporarily delay publication of a thesis or dissertation that contains potentially patentable information in order to ensure the availability of worldwide patent protection. Such situations would arise when a faculty member directing the research, under his/her duty as a University employee, discloses potentially patentable subject matter to the Office of Research. A student's degree requirements can still be fulfilled even though publication of the thesis or dissertation is delayed.

Presentation of a thesis or dissertation in partial fulfillment of degree requirements necessitates submission of the finished original work to the dean of the college for final approval, following oral defense and signature approval by the thesis/dissertation committee and graduate program director. Approval of the dean of the college should be obtained prior to reproduction of the original work, in the event corrections need to be made.

The University has adopted an Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) submission process which has replaced mandatory productions of bound copies. Instructions for submitting the thesis/dissertation to ProQuest, after the dean of the college has given final approval, can be found on The Graduate School's web site (<http://www.odu.edu/graduateschool/>) or within the Guide for Preparation of Theses and Dissertations. If desired but not required, students can obtain hard copies via ProQuest or another vendor. The Registrar should also receive the Master's or Doctoral-relevant Result of Examination and document Acceptance and Processing forms. The ETD process and submission of forms to the Registrar should occur no later than the last day of classes of the semester in which the degree will be taken. The date on the title page of the thesis/dissertation should be within the same semester that the student intends to graduate.

## Leave of Absence

A candidate who finds it necessary to be excused from registration for a semester must report formally, before the beginning of the semester, to the dissertation committee and the graduate program director and request by petition a leave of absence using the Leave of Absence from Doctoral Program form. A leave of absence may not exceed one year and may not be repeated. During a leave of absence, the candidate will not be entitled to assistance from the dissertation committee or to the use of University facilities. The granting of leave of absence does not change the candidate's responsibility for meeting the time schedule for the completion of degree requirements.