

## I've been accepted! Now what?

Congratulations on your acceptance to Virginia Tech! We look forward to welcoming you to our community. This guide is designed to provide you with a brief introduction to graduate life at Virginia Tech.

You probably have received a letter from your department indicating that they recommended your acceptance to the Graduate School. You also should receive your official letter of acceptance directly from the Graduate School. This guide may accompany that mailing. Please inform your department of your intent to attend Virginia Tech.

Read on to learn more about what you need to do to become an "official" Virginia Tech student!

## Graduate Community at Virginia Tech



The Graduate School is committed to building graduate community and enhancing the graduate education experience. With programming events such as Orientation and Graduate Education Week, there are a variety of ways for students to expand their peer and professional networks, interact with faculty, and explore areas of interest beyond the classroom.

*Pictures (from top to bottom):*

- Hospitality and Tourism luncheon with faculty
- Meeting friends at the metro
- A scene from the Graduate Student Research Exposition
- Graduate Student Orientation



## Checklist for New Students

The Graduate School recommends that new students complete these tasks in the following sequence.

*May be completed prior to or upon arrival:*

1. Locate and secure permanent housing.
2. Contact your academic department and ask for the name of your advisor. Discuss the classes you will be taking in your first semester with your advisor.
3. Activate your PID.
4. Purchase health insurance (mandatory for international students in F or J visa status, optional for domestic students).
5. Register for classes on Hokie SPA.
6. After you register for classes, you will be billed for tuition and fees. An e-bill will be generated and submitted to your vt email. Check Hokie SPA for your balance and make sure to pay by the date indicated.

*Must be completed upon arrival:*

7. Participate in Graduate Student Orientation (optional, but encouraged).

*International students also must:*

1. Check in with the International Student Advisor in the Northern Virginia Center. Bring your passport, I-94 card, and I-20 or DS-2019 form.
2. Participate in the mandatory Orientation Program. Details will be posted at [www.ncr.vt.edu](http://www.ncr.vt.edu).
3. Take the English Placement Test (EPT) pending score on TOEFL.

# Getting Started

## National Capital Region



Virginia Tech

Graduate School

**GRADUATE SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES**  
**telephone: 703/538-8327**  
**e-mail: [gssso@nvc.vt.edu](mailto:gssso@nvc.vt.edu)**  
**[www.ncr.vt.edu](http://www.ncr.vt.edu)**

## Relocating to the National Capital Region

### Housing Options

Virginia Tech, National Capital Region does not offer on-campus housing for graduate and professional students. The Graduate Student Services Office, located in Suite 200 at the Northern Virginia Center, can assist with housing in the area. Rooms and houses for rent are also posted on the bulletin boards located in the kitchen of the second floor.

### Parking Permits

Students may park in the lower lot adjacent to the Northern Virginia Center or at the West Falls Church Metro lot across from the Northern Virginia Center. Students must pay for parking.

## Academic Preparation

### Your PID (Personal Identifier)

Once you have received your official acceptance from the Graduate School, you will need to create your Personal Identifier or PID. You will use your PID and password to access your VT e-mail account, Hokie SPA, Blackboard, Filebox, My VT, the university libraries' databases, and more. For more information, visit [www.computing.vt.edu/accounts\\_and\\_access/pid](http://www.computing.vt.edu/accounts_and_access/pid).

### Hokie Passport (Student ID Card)

Your Hokie Passport is your Virginia Tech student identification card. Be prepared to show the card to university officials upon request. You will need to bring a picture ID to receive your Hokie Passport. Hokie Passports are issued at the Hokie Passport Office in Blacksburg. A representative from the office visits the National Capital Region, each semester to take photos. Students will receive notification of these dates by e-mail and may check [www.ncr.vt.edu](http://www.ncr.vt.edu) for details. For further information, e-mail [gso@nvc.vt.edu](mailto:gso@nvc.vt.edu).

### Class Registration

Each department possesses its own unique set of degree and registration requirements. New students should first consult with their department's graduate advisor prior to registering for any classes.

Virginia Tech allows students to register for classes during two windows of time, pre-registration (course request) and registration (drop/add). Students who are admitted to Virginia Tech well in advance of their term of enrollment may be able to request courses early using pre-registration. If you are not able to enroll during pre-registration, you will be able to enroll during the registration period. Students must have established a PID (personal identifier) before they can register during either period. The dates for these

registration periods are posted on the Registrar's website, [www.registrar.vt.edu/registration](http://www.registrar.vt.edu/registration). Students register using the HokieSPA website (see below). Additional registration guidance is available online in the Graduate School's New Student Handbook, [www.grads.vt.edu/admitted](http://www.grads.vt.edu/admitted).

### Tuition Payment

You must register for classes before you can pay your tuition and fees. After registering for classes, a bill will be generated. The bill will include tuition, comprehensive fees, and other charges you may have incurred. Please check your account status on Hokie SPA and pay any outstanding charges prior to the payment due date.

### Purchasing Books

Students will find the books that they need for their classes by visiting the virtual bookstore at <http://www.bkstr.com/>. You may also choose to purchase them from a commercial or online retailer.

## Funding Opportunities

Virginia Tech offers numerous opportunities for graduate student funding including assistantships, fellowships, scholarships, and financial aid. Explore all of these options in detail on the Financial Matters web pages, found at [www.grads.vt.edu](http://www.grads.vt.edu). Students seeking assistantships should contact their departments to learn of available positions.

## Student Tools and Resources

### Hokie SPA (Student Personal Access)

The Hokie SPA interactive website includes the Timetable of Classes and allows you to submit your course request, drop and add courses, view your exam schedule, and see your grades. You are responsible for providing address updates through Hokie SPA, a billing address (if different than your mailing address), change of name, etc. You must activate your Virginia Tech PID before you can access this site, [www.hokiespa.vt.edu](http://www.hokiespa.vt.edu).

### Graduate Student Listserv

Pertinent information of importance to graduate students will be sent by e-mail via the Graduate Student Listserv, [ncr\\_students@listserv.vt.edu](mailto:ncr_students@listserv.vt.edu), a distribution list that reaches all graduate students. This listserv is used only to notify students of timely concerns. Please review any notices sent to you by the Graduate School. A calendar of events and important notices are also posted on the Graduate School website, [www.grads.vt.edu](http://www.grads.vt.edu), and the National Capital Region website, [www.ncr.vt.edu](http://www.ncr.vt.edu).

## Caring For Yourself and Your Family

### Student Medical Insurance

Because of the possibility of serious illness or injury requiring treatment beyond the services of the Schiffert Health Center, students are encouraged to purchase medical insurance. Purchase of medical insurance coverage is mandatory for international students and their accompanying dependents. Students interested in purchasing medical insurance through the university should visit the Graduate Student Services Office located in Falls Church, Virginia or review [www.grads.vt.edu/financial/insurance](http://www.grads.vt.edu/financial/insurance).

### Medical Insurance Benefits for Students with Assistantships

Students who have graduate assistantships and purchase the university's medical insurance plan may be eligible for benefits. Please visit the Graduate School's health insurance web page for information regarding this program at [www.grads.vt.edu/financial/insurance/ga\\_benefit](http://www.grads.vt.edu/financial/insurance/ga_benefit).

## International Students

The Graduate School's International Graduate Student Services has prepared a variety of materials and programs to help you transition to graduate life at Virginia Tech. These services include:

- A comprehensive mailing of pre-arrival information that you will receive via post with your immigration documents.
- A website containing helpful pre-arrival information, [www.nvc.vt.edu/resources/international](http://www.nvc.vt.edu/resources/international).
- An orientation program for international and domestic students (see below).

## Orientation Activities

Each fall and spring, the Graduate School offers Orientation, an event designed to provide new students with the tools and information that they need to make informed choices about their graduate study at VT. Visit [www.ncr.vt.edu](http://www.ncr.vt.edu) for information about our next orientation. Information will also be sent out via e-mail.