Unofficial information for CEE Graduate Students

We are glad you will be part of the Charles E. Via, Jr.
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

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Topics to Be Covered

- Everything is Hokie
- VT ID number
- PID (personal identifier)
  - Hokie Passport
  - Hokie SPA and MyVT
- Graduate Advisors
- Registration
- Bursar ($)
- Graduate School
- OUR DEPARTMENT
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- Summary
Everything is Hokie

- The HokieBird is the VT mascot
- The mascot looks like a turkey
- A Virginia Tech fan is a “Hokie Fan”
- Many things you encounter will have the word “Hokie” attached (Example: Hokie passport=student ID card)
- The origin of the word "Hokie" has nothing to do with a turkey. It was coined by O. M. Stull (class of 1896), who used it in a spirit yell he wrote for a competition.
- For more info on “Hokie”, go to: http://www.vt.edu/about/traditions/hokie.html
VT ID number

- Your VT ID number is a nine-digit number that identifies you in the VT system.
- It should start with a “9”
- This is the number asked for by VT staff when checking your records
- You should memorize this number
- Use this number at VT, but never use your social security number (except when filling out original payroll paperwork)
- In email and forms, please only include the last FOUR digits of your VT ID number.
A “PID” is a personal identifier

It is often used to identify you at VT also, but please know the difference between PID and VT ID number.

You obtain a personal identifier through computing service: http://www.computing.vt.edu/ (you will need your VT ID number to do this)

A PID is used by you to log into VT online services (Hokies SPA, MYVT, etc)

A PID serves as your email account (example: John Doe’s PID=doej and his email address is doej@vt.edu)

Once you have a PID, you will have an email account, this is all set up when setting up the PID.

Virginia Tech uses google for the email service, so when logging into your VT email, go to google mail and log in using your entire VT email (ex: doej@vt.edu)

You must have different passwords for the VT PID and the VT email through google.
The Hokie Passport is your student ID card.

Your Virginia Tech ID number will be on your Hokie Passport.

You can obtain a card after you are registered.

The Hokie Passport office is at 100 Student Services Building off of Washington Street.

The first Hokie Passport is free.

Once you have a Hokie Passport, you can ride the Blacksburg Transit buses for free.
Hokie SPA/MyVT

- Hokie SPA and MyVT are tools for students, faculty, and staff. The student can view academic, financial, and other pertinent information about their relationship with Virginia Tech.

- To log into Hokie Spa, go to: www.hokiespa.vt.edu To log in to MyVT, click “MyVT” on the top of the www.vt.edu page. Either system can be used. It is a matter of preference.

- You should register/schedule your classes through the registration drop/add section. There is a course request time (see registration slides)

- You may view the timetable of classes (this is a class list for what is actually being taught in a given semester and the details)

- You can check your student financial account (look under account summary)

- You can view your paycheck information (Hokie Team section of Hokie SPA) once you have been entered into the university pay system.

- Change your mailing address and update your information

- Handle any other issues concerning your records at Virginia Tech
Graduate Advisors

- Temporary advisors are usually not assigned until you arrive. Some program areas may assign earlier, check with the program area faculty coordinator.

- **DO NOT** ask for one early. Information online will get you mostly prepared. See the academic information through the website for your program area.

- Review the information provided at your program area’s website about classes, compare those classes to the timetable of classes for the upcoming semester and GET REGISTERED when drop/add is open.

- Get a meeting with your temporary advisor after you arrive and ask him/her to look over your registration. After talking to your advisor, make changes to your schedule no later than the last day to add classes.

- The program areas assign advisors differently. When you arrive, check in with the staff person for your area and you will get instructions. For area staff- see the “our department” slide.
Registration

- Registration deadlines can be found at: [http://www.registrar.vt.edu/](http://www.registrar.vt.edu/). You can also find the deadlines on the timetable of classes page, look on the left hand menu and click the semester.

- Course request is a time when current students (and accepted students who are sure they will attend) can request the classes that they would like to have in the next academic semester. If a student participates in course request, a schedule will be created for them just before the regular drop/add opens for the semester.

- Drop/Add is the place to drop or add a class on your schedule. It is only open during certain times of the year.

- For classes with full enrollment in the CEE department, you will need to ask to be “force added” to the class by going to [www.cee.vt.edu/forceadd](http://www.cee.vt.edu/forceadd). This does not guarantee that you will be added, it is a request. There are many factors that control force-adds. We will correspond with you about it. FYI- students who were not at VT for the undergraduate degree must do force add requests for all 4000 level classes.

- For OTHER departments’ force adds, contact the department office who teaches that class for instructions about force adding in their department. A request does not guarantee a place if room capacity will be exceeded.
Registration (cont.)

- Information about classes that you may be required to take in your graduate program, can be found at the individual website for each graduate program area, go to: [www.cee.vt.edu](http://www.cee.vt.edu) and then choose your program area from the main page.

- In our department, RESEARCH HOURS are divided into sections. If you need these hours, please register with the CRN corresponding with the instructor that you are working with. Use CEE 5904 for M.S. non-thesis (Project & Report), use CEE 5994 for M.S. with a thesis, and use CEE 7994 for Ph.D. When you register for research, only one hour shows initially. You must change this by clicking the blue linked hour and changing it to the number needed.

- Most all classes should be taken in a “normal” A-F grading mode. We will discuss grading modes during orientation. To change a grading mode, click the grade mode listed after you register if it is blue linked. If there is not a blue link, then only one grading mode is offered.

- Contact the CEE Graduate Student Coordinator, 540-231-6069 if you have problems with registration AFTER you read all the information.
The Bursar’s office is the place where students make payments to Virginia Tech (payments can also be made online)

The Bursar’s website is: http://www.bursar.vt.edu/

Tuition rates and fees can be viewed on the Bursar’s webpage

Please note that as an engineering student, there is an extra engineering fee that is listed below the main fee table for graduate students.

The Bursar’s office is at 150 Student Services Building

E-Bills/statements are snapshots in time and do not change. E-bills have due dates listed. For updated information, look at your account summary.

IF YOU ARE NOT REGISTERED FOR CLASSES, you will not have charges for tuition. Likewise, if you are only registered for one class, your charges will only be for the classes currently registered.

Please be aware of the deadlines and late fees. If the department is paying for some of your tuition, just pay the part that you owe by the deadlines.

Contact the bursar’s office if you have questions about your bill

If you are on an assistantship, contact the CEE Graduate Student Coordinator if you have questions about department coverage for tuition. Tuition information is on your contract. Please see the slide at the end about understanding assistantships.
Graduate School

- Graduate School is currently located in the Graduate Life Center (GLC) at Donaldson Brown.

- Graduate School and the department work together to help you complete your degree.

- International students MUST check in with Graduate School’s immigration officers on arrival. Required orientation for international graduate students is provided online.

- Please go to: www.graduateschool.vt.edu for information.

- Throughout your program of study, Graduate School has check points that require proper attention and paperwork (example: A PhD student needs to file electronic paperwork to request and record a preliminary exam).

- Please review the Graduate Catalog on their website.
Our Department

- For help from the department you may email Lisa K. Burns (the Graduate Student Coordinator) at lkburns@vt.edu
- The main department number is 540-231-6635
- Temporary faculty advisors are assigned AFTER you arrive.
- Check in with your area staff members when you arrive:
  - Debbie Cooper (SEM) – 107 Patton Hall, 231-4607, decooper@vt.edu
  - Rachel Hill (GEOT & CEM) 120 Patton Hall, 231-7406, rahill@vt.edu
  - Sandi Wagener (TISE) 200 Patton Hall, 231-6635, swagener@vt.edu
  - Beth Lucas – (EWR) 418 Durham Hall, 231-4595, blucas06@vt.edu
- ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND ORIENTATION FOR THE CEE DEPARTMENT. ETHICS TRAINING FOR YOUR DEGREE PROGRAM IS INCLUDED. PLAN TO ARRIVE AROUND AUGUST 10\textsuperscript{TH} (for a fall semester) OR January 5\textsuperscript{th} (for a spring semester start).
Insurance

- The Student Medical Insurance office, 110 Student Services Building (0361), oversee the graduate student health insurance.

- If a student is on an assistantship for 50% or above, a subsidy is available to pay for most of their annual premium. You must use “payroll deduction” to receive the subsidy. When you register online USE the “subsidiary plan.”

- Website for information about health insurance benefits: [http://www.co.vt.edu/Risk/studenthealthinsr/](http://www.co.vt.edu/Risk/studenthealthinsr/)

- Assistantship holders must have their position entered on the system by the department BEFORE the insurance office will process your insurance form. You must come to the main office to fill out payroll paperwork AS SOON AS YOU ARRIVE ON CAMPUS.

- The VT health insurance runs August 1-July 31 each year. The premium for the entire calendar year is paid in the academic year time frame (Aug.-May).

- You must sign up for the insurance EACH YEAR.

- Aetna is the current provider. Here is the website: [https://www.aetnastudenthealth.com/](https://www.aetnastudenthealth.com/) you can only sign up at certain times of the year.

- International students MUST have health insurance. You may buy a policy that is not VT, but your must prove that you have insurance to the student medical insurance office. Holds will be placed on accounts if this is not done immediately.
Immunizations

- Information about the health center at VT can be found: [http://www.healthcenter.vt.edu/](http://www.healthcenter.vt.edu/)

- New students must provide immunization histories. Please read information: [http://www.healthcenter.vt.edu/new_student/index.html](http://www.healthcenter.vt.edu/new_student/index.html)
Housing Offices

■ On-campus graduate student housing info:
  http://www.housing.vt.edu/contracts/applying/graduate.php

■ Off-campus housing info:
  http://www.studentcenters.vt.edu/vtoch/about_vtoch/about_vtoch.html
Traveling to Blacksburg

- If flying into Roanoke, VA (it is a small airport, but the closest airport with commercial flights), there is a bus call the SMARTWAY that will bring you to Blacksburg for a very reasonable cost ($4.00) from the Roanoke Airport: [http://www.smartwaybus.com/](http://www.smartwaybus.com/) No service is available on Sunday though – check the schedule. Here is a map and the schedule: [http://www.smartwaybus.com/smartway.html](http://www.smartwaybus.com/smartway.html)

- Many of you might want to fly into the Washington DC area due to the cost. I recommend the DCA (Ronald Regan Airport) since it is on the DC metro and it is easy to ride to from DCA to Union Station in DC. DC is still about 4 hours from Blacksburg. Two ways to get to Blacksburg from Washington, DC are
  1) to take an Amtrak train from Union Station to Lynchburg, VA and then catch the SMARTWAY from Lynchburg to Blacksburg (on some days of the week you might have to change buses at the Roanoke Civic Center to Blacksburg). You have to buy certain train schedules to make this work with the bus. The SMARTWAY also provides a connector bus from the train station in Lynchburg, VA: [http://www.smartwaybus.com/connector.html](http://www.smartwaybus.com/connector.html)
  2) Ride the megabus from Union Station to Christiansburg, VA (the town right beside Blacksburg) [http://www.megabus.com/](http://www.megabus.com/) You can pick up the SMARTWAY from the Christiansburg stop into Blacksburg. However, if you choose the bus to Christiansburg that arrives at 3:00 am in the morning, you will have to wait a couple of hours to get to Blacksburg.

- Here is another webpage at VT to provide information on arrivals and temporary housing: [http://www.international.vt.edu/new_students/arrival_orientation_information/temporary_housing/index.html](http://www.international.vt.edu/new_students/arrival_orientation_information/temporary_housing/index.html) Note that temporary housing is available to all students no matter the nationality.
Information for new students on assistantships

- An assistantship provides tuition assistance in the same % as your work load. (20 hours of work per week =100% contract, 10 hours=50%, etc.)

- Tuition assistance includes: the BASE in-state amount + technology fee + library fee + engineering fee (if a department within the College of Engineering is paying you, otherwise you must pay this engineering fee) all in the same % as your work load. So someone who has a 50% assistantship will receive tuition assistance for 50% of these four charges. The student will have to pay the balance of these charges/fees + the comprehensive fees.

- Most students with assistantships have to pay the comprehensive fees for themselves. Comp. fees are listed on your contract. Please note that contracts made prior to the announcement of the new year’s rates will be adjusted for new rates once they are available. A new contract will not be made. Consult the bursar’s website for the updated amounts.

- If you are listed as an out-of-state student, a waiver for the out-of-state fees will be given based on earnings on the assistantship. If a student earns $2000 in an academic semester on assistantship, the out-of-state waiver will be given. The way to calculate the out-of-state waiver is: the base out-of-state minus the base in-state (do not try to calculate this by looking at the totals for in and out of state students). This waiver does NOT make you an in-state student. Full-time enrollment is required for the waiver each semester.

- To receive the health insurance benefits offered for those on at least a 50% assistantship, you must sign up for insurance each academic year and use the “payroll deduction” subsidiary plan system. A majority of the premium is paid by our Graduate School up front, a small amount will then be deducted (pre-tax) from your paychecks. These deductions will all be completed in the 9 month academic year but the insurance is good for a 12 month period. Students with fellowships that provide for the health insurance fees MUST use this system too, but they will be reimbursed each paycheck for the amount deducted from their assistantship paycheck for health insurance.

- Students on assistantships MUST to be in Blacksburg by August 10 for a fall semester. PLAN AHEAD.

- Students who will serve as graduate teaching assistants MUST attend the GTA workshop prior to classes.

- New students HAVE TO DO PAYROLL PAPERWORK before they begin working for the department. We require specific original documents. You will be sent this list by email.
Summary

- Memorize your VT ID number
- Get a PID
- Learn how to log into HOKIE SPA
- Get registered.
- Get a Hokie passport.
- Get familiar with departmental and Graduate School policies.
- International students need to check in immediately with Graduate School.
- Check in with your graduate program area within CEE when you arrive.
- Have a temporary advisor check your class selection
- Sign up/arrange for health insurance
- Provide proof of immunizations
- Find housing
- Students on assistantships MUST to do payroll paperwork at the department office BEFORE THEY BEGIN WORKING!!!!!