

MFA Thesis & Exam Timeline 2025-2026

Should you have any questions, please refer to the [Graduate School's commencement deadlines](#) (for Masters students) or contact Marie Trimmer (mtrimmer@vt.edu).

Here are [key terms](#) for all things thesis-related.

Note: Please keep in mind that what we call the “thesis defense” the Graduate School refers to as the “final exam.” Our MFA exam (a 48-hour written exam) must be completed before the thesis defense (a conversation between the student and their committee about their thesis and exam).

8 December	Submit Draft of Thesis to Thesis Director Director reads thesis. If revisions are requested, the director will always allow a minimum of two weeks to turn in the revised thesis. Director approves the thesis before the February 15th deadline to submit the approved draft to the committee’s readers. Please see the Graduate School’s ETD information at http://etd.vt.edu/ .
26 January	File up-to-date, accurate Plan of Study form You must have an up-to-date Plan of Study form to graduate. If you need to change your original plan of study, you will need to complete a Plan of Study Change form, and turn it into Marie Trimmer. To schedule your thesis defense, your Plan of Study will need to have first been approved by the Graduate School (and you can check on this in HokieSpa).
15 February	Submit Approved Draft of Thesis to Readers Readers review thesis. If revisions are requested, the readers will always allow a minimum of two weeks to turn in the revised thesis (which means revision suggestions would go to students by March 22nd). Readers approve the thesis before the April 7th deadline.
1 April	Submit Application for Degree on HokieSpa

7 April	<p>Deadline for Submission of Final Draft of Thesis to Thesis Director</p> <p>Director and readers approve final draft of thesis, and student and director together set the date for their MFA exam; student and committee together set the date for the thesis defense. Thesis must be run through iThenticate and report gone over with student (by director) before exam is scheduled.</p> <p>The exam and defense need to be completed before May 10. The Graduate School must have the date of the defense two weeks in advance, which means students MUST *schedule* their defense by April 26th.</p>
1 April – 26 April	<p>Student submits Request to Admit Candidate to Final Exam via the VT Graduate School Approval System.</p> <p>The MFA exam will consist of a single question, written by the thesis director and approved by the readers. The candidate will have 72 hours to write a response to the question. The exam should be completed and returned to the director at least 24 hours before the thesis defense.</p> <p>The defense is an extended conversation between the candidate and their committee. Candidates will be asked to talk at some length about the nature of their writing in general, and about their final thesis in particular. Candidates can expect to field questions about style, theme, content, and vision. Thesis directors or students will send the student's exam to committee members at least 24 hours before the defense.</p> <p>After the successful completion of the defense, the director and committee members electronically indicate this via the VT Graduate School Signature Approval System. (The Graduate School refers to the defense as the "exam." Our own MFA exam is something separate and different from the defense.)</p>

	The ETD should be uploaded as soon as the Graduate School receives the electronic approvals.
10 May	Absolute last day possible to defend your thesis, called the “Final Exam” by the Graduate School, and submit electronic exam approval by committee members.
May 26	Last day to submit your ETD to the graduate school.
5 July	Your ETD must have been approved by the Graduate School by this date, and all other requirements for graduation must have been met.