Admission to Master’s or Doctoral Degree Candidacy

The VCU Graduate School and the School of Medicine require that there be an awareness of policies and practices relevant to the research you may be conducting in the course of your studies. In addition, there is a need to ensure your awareness of requirements which must be met to qualify for degree completion. A signed statement attesting to your awareness and satisfaction of all relevant policies is required in the form of the “candidacy” form provided by the Graduate School (see http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/student/candidacy.html) for all Master’s and Ph.D. students. While advancement to degree Candidacy has different requirements for Master’s and Ph.D. students, initial submission of the Candidacy form is required as your permanent Advisor is identified.

Please note that submission of the Candidacy form does NOT require you to identify your Committee members and it does NOT serve as a request for approval of your Committee. This is done in GradTrak once your Candidacy form has been completed and submitted to the Office of Graduate Education (Rm. 1-055 Sanger Hall) in hard copy.

Degree Candidacy Form

The Degree Candidacy form used by the Graduate School actually fulfills two distinct objectives: 1) assurance that students and advisors are mutually aware of obligations related to the conduct of research involving human subjects or animals, continuous enrollment requirements and 2) as appropriate, an indication that “candidacy” status has been achieved as related to degree completion.

M.S. students

As there is no formal designation of “candidacy” status for M.S. students, for School of Medicine programs the completion of the Candidacy form will take place at the end of the first year of study. This is a point at which the major fraction of didactic requirements will have been fulfilled; students will have had an advisor identified and have initiated their thesis research.

Once the advisor has been identified, the Candidacy form should be completed with the student indicating (the top portion of the form) an awareness of the policies and, on the bottom of the form, signatures from the Advisor and Program Director verifying that the first three of the items listed are checked: 1) current GPA of 3.0 or above, 2) compliance with the minimum number / credit hours of C or below grades and 3) compliance with the rule requiring that at least half the courses be at the 600 level (see below).

The completed form will be submitted to the School of Medicine Office of Graduate Education and will be forwarded to the Graduate School.

Ph.D. students
For Ph.D. students the top portion of the Candidacy form will be completed on identification of the student’s advisor and submitted to the School of Medicine Office of Graduate Education.

On completion of the Oral Candidacy Examination, the bottom portion of the Candidacy form will be completed with signatures from the Advisor and Program Director verifying that the first four of the items listed are checked: 1) current GPA of 3.0 or above, 2) compliance with the minimum number / credit hours of C or below grades and 3) compliance with the rule requiring that at least half the courses be at the 600 level (see below) and 4) successful completion of written and oral candidacy examinations.

The completed form will be submitted to the School of Medicine Office of Graduate Education and will be forwarded to the Graduate School.

**Compliance with the “600 Level” Course Requirement**

This institutional rule is directed to having graduate students take at least half their required course work in courses “designated exclusively for graduate students”. There has been confusion with respect to the appropriate enumeration of courses historically and we are therefore attaching an addendum to the Candidacy form as it is forwarded to the Graduate School indicating a number of “500” level courses which meet the above definition. We can add to this list as needed.

With the agreement of the Graduate School, this protocol will limit concerns regarding compliance with the above requirement.