

Academic Employment Track for Ph.D. Students

Why an academic employment track for Ph.D. Students?

Many Ph.D. students are interested in obtaining an academic position after graduation. While most academic appointments have a teaching component, most Ph.D. programs give students no training in teaching and instead focus almost exclusively on training in disciplinary research skills (i.e., theory and quantitative methods). Disciplinary research skills are necessary for success in academia but they are not sufficient. There are other important skills that are needed if one wants to be successful in academia, especially in terms of teaching. Virginia Tech and the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics recognize that our students can be set apart from other students and programs by not only receiving the necessary training in theory and quantitative methods, but also by providing the student training in teaching. Our academic employment track is designed to give students training and skills related to teaching and academic positions that will make them more competitive in the academic job market, in addition to the normal research training. Our academic employment track goes beyond just giving the student teaching experience via being a graduate teaching assistant or teaching a course. Our academic employment track also gives the student training via courses in becoming a future professoriate.

What are the requirements for the academic employment track?

Students should make known their interest in pursuing the academic employment track within the first year of their Ph.D. program to help facilitate optimal timing of courses and activities.

The academic employment track in AAEC consists of three components or levels.

Courses

1. The Graduate School at Virginia Tech offers a “Future Professoriate Graduate Certificate” that can be obtained by taking a sequence of 9 additional credit hours in course work (beyond those required for a Ph.D.) that focus on teaching and scholarly activities beyond normal research. Students interested in the academic employment track would be allowed to start taking the courses in their 4th semester in the Ph.D. program. There are two required courses:
 - [GRAD 5104](#) Preparing the Future Professoriate (3 hours/3 credits. Taught Fall and Spring)
 - [GRAD 5114](#) Pedagogical Practices in Contemporary Contexts (3 hours/3 credits. Taught Fall and Spring)

and then 3 hours of electives from a list of courses provided by the Graduate School. Go to this link for a further description of the Future Professoriate Graduate Certificate.

<http://graduateschool.vt.edu/gs/tge/fp>

Required Teaching

2. The student will be considered for teaching at least one section of an undergraduate class under the supervision of a teaching mentor.

Students must take GRAD 5114 before they will be allowed to teach. Students wishing to teach must submit an application to the GAC (Graduate Advisory Committee) for review. The application will consist of an application letter explaining why they want to teach and their teaching philosophy, their transcript, their vitae, and a letter of support from their academic advisor. Students must pass the Qualifier exam and have approval for teaching by their academic advisor before they will be considered for teaching. The undergraduate program director will consult with the GAC to determine what courses and sections are available for teaching. The GAC, in consultation with the undergraduate program director, will make a recommendation to the department head regarding teaching assignments.

Teaching Mentor on Dissertation Committee

3. The student must have a teaching mentor on the dissertation committee.

The student must place the teaching mentor on their dissertation committee and is encouraged to engage in scholarly activity related to teaching with their committee. The teaching mentor will normally be an additional member to the minimum committee number requirement.

Upon completion of all components, the student will be designated an “Applied Economics Teaching Scholar.”