

# GRADUATE INFORMATION

## Graduate programs

The College of Humanities and Sciences offers the following graduate degree programs:

Biology, M.S.  
 Chemical Biology, Ph.D.  
 Chemistry, M.S. and Ph.D.  
 Clinical Psychology, Ph.D.  
 Counseling Psychology, Ph.D.  
 Creative Writing, M.F.A.  
 English, M.A.  
 Forensic Science, M.S.  
 Health and Movement Science, M.S.  
 Health Psychology, Ph.D.  
 History, M.A.  
 Integrative Life Sciences, Ph.D.  
 Interdisciplinary Studies, M.I.S.  
 Mass Communications, M.S. (through the Robertson School of Media and Culture)  
 Mathematical Sciences, M.S.  
 Media, Art, and Text, Ph.D.  
 Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, Ph.D.  
 Physics and Applied Physics, M.S.  
 Psychology, M.S. and Ph.D.  
 Rehabilitation and Movement Science, Ph.D.  
 Sociology, M.S.  
 Systems Modeling and Analysis, Ph.D.

### Post-baccalaureate certificates

Applied Social Research (graduate)  
 Applied Statistics (graduate)  
 Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies (graduate)

In addition to these degree programs, the College of Humanities and Sciences offers selected graduate courses in the Department of Philosophy and the School of World Studies (foreign languages and religious studies), but does not offer graduate degree programs in these areas.

## Graduate admission requirements

In addition to the general requirements for admission to graduate studies as stated in the Graduate study (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/>) section of this bulletin, persons seeking admission to any of the graduate programs in humanities and sciences should:

- Have a bachelor's degree in the discipline in which application for graduate study is made or, in some programs as noted, a bachelor's degree in some other appropriate area
- Submit Graduate Record Examination scores (some departments require the scores on the advanced GRE within the discipline; some departments accept LSAT and MAT scores in lieu of GREs)
- Have submitted letters of recommendation that comment on the applicant's ability to undertake graduate study in the specified area

All applications will be considered in terms of the specific requirements for admission noted in the description of the individual programs and of the applicant's ability to perform satisfactorily in the program for which he/she has applied. The judgment of that ability will be based on the supporting material submitted with the application. Some

graduate programs must limit enrollment to a fixed number of the best-qualified applicants. Final action on admission is taken by the dean of the Graduate School in consultation with the College of Humanities and Sciences and the program concerned.

Applicants whose applications reach the university after July 1 for the fall semester and after Nov. 15 for the spring semester may not have their applications processed in time for registration. The applicant whose application arrives late may be considered for admission as a special student, but there is no guarantee that the special student later will be accepted into a degree program.

## Graduate registration

Although most students register for the fall semester, which begins in August, they may arrange to begin graduate work during the spring semester with the exception of the programs in clinical and counseling psychology.

## Scholarships, assistantships, fellowships and other financial assistance for graduate students

The College of Humanities and Sciences seeks to attract and support graduate students of the highest caliber and to prepare them, through research and instruction, to meet local and national needs for highly trained men and women. Recognizing that financial limitations may inhibit some qualified students from applying, the college attempts to inform students of the options of various loans, grants and work-study opportunities that are available to them as well as assist them in financing their education by offering various forms of financial aid and facilitating the process of seeking financial assistance from external sources. Additionally, the college believes that the experience of being a teaching or research assistant reinforces the learning that takes place in the classroom. The value of teaching assistants also is recognized as being beneficial to the college's undergraduate programs.

Types of financial aid that are available to graduate students fall into three basic categories: aid that does not have to be repaid (grants, scholarships and tuition waivers), aid that does have to be repaid (loans) and aid that enables students to earn a portion of their school costs (work-study, graduate teaching assistantships and graduate research assistantships).

Offers of financial aid are based on financial need and/or skill and competency. Financial need is determined by information contained in the Federal Application for Student Aid completed by the student. Not all financial aid is based on financial need. To ascertain your eligibility for the different types of financial aid, contact:

VCU Office of Financial Aid

901 W. Franklin St.

Box 843026

Richmond, VA 23284-3026

(804) 828-6669

and the department to which you will be applying.

The university library has reference books listing other types of scholarships and grants. International students should contact:

Global Education Office

916 W. Franklin St.

Box 843043

Richmond, VA 23284-3043

(804) 828-6016

Graduate teaching assistantships and graduate research assistantships are forms of financial aid that provide teaching and research positions for graduate students within their field of study. These are not loans and do not have to be repaid because the student is actually earning income for services rendered. Usually graduate assistants must work the equivalent of 20 hours per week. Assistantships are awarded to students who have demonstrated academic excellence. Individual departments award the assistantships, which usually include payment of tuition; the teaching and/or research duties of graduate assistants vary among departments. Graduate students interested in seeking these teaching and research positions are advised to contact the departments to which they will apply for admission.

Graduate students applying for financial assistance should remember the following tips:

- Apply early
- Use federal tax forms to complete the FAFSA
- Save copies of all forms completed, including tax returns
- Check with the specific department for application requirements and deadlines

Students should assume they are eligible, not ineligible.

## The student adviser and the graduate committee

All departments offering graduate degrees in the College of Humanities and Sciences provide graduate students with advising either through a single adviser, the student's graduate committee or a departmental graduate committee. For details, students should consult the departmental director of graduate studies or the department chair.

## Graduate degree requirements

- Full-time graduate status shall consist of a minimum of nine and a maximum of 15 credits per semester. No more than 12 semester credits may be earned in a summer session. See the Graduate study (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/>) section of this bulletin for course load requirements for students awarded graduate assistantships.
- Graduate students are required to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 (B). Students who do not maintain a B average during the course of their program may be dropped from the program at any time on recommendation of the appropriate department committee to the dean of the Graduate School. If students earn less than a B on 20 percent or more of all attempted credits, their graduate status must be reviewed for continuation by the appropriate department committee.
- At least half of the credits required in the student's program must be those designated as exclusively for graduate students; that is, those at the 600 level or above.
- Graduate students must have earned an overall GPA of 3.0 (B) in order to receive a degree.

In addition to these requirements and those set forth in the Graduate study (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/>) section of this bulletin, students must meet the requirements for specific degrees set forth in the departmental listings. Students also should consult the continuous

enrollment policy stated in the Graduate study (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/>) section of this bulletin.

VCU requires registration for a defined credit-hour level during both the didactic and research phases of advanced degree training. For programs requiring the preparation of a thesis or dissertation, there is no obligatory linkage between the accumulation of credit hours and an expectation that a degree be awarded.

As a guide to monitoring the timely completion of the degree requiring a thesis or dissertation within the present enrollment framework, the accumulation of 80 credit hours for a master's degree and 180 credit hours for a doctoral degree can be taken to be reasonable credit maxima. Unless stated otherwise, these figures apply only to programs offered by the College of Humanities and Sciences.

Students are required to submit in advance of the date when they expect to receive a degree a graduation application form to the dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences. Deadlines for the submission of the graduation application form are listed in the academic calendars (<http://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/>); for departmental deadlines the student should consult the departmental adviser. Individual departments may require additional forms.

## Appeal procedures

Graduate students in the College of Humanities and Sciences have the right to appeal course grades or other academic actions on the grounds of a breach of due process. See the Graduate study (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/>) section of this bulletin for a summary of the grade review procedure. An appeal of an academic action other than a grade review is governed by the graduate student academic appeal procedure. A copy of this document can be obtained from department offices.