

GRADUATE INFORMATION

Admission

Admission to programs of the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs is available to qualified students on a rolling admissions basis. Since the demand for admission to some programs is high and space availability is limited, students are encouraged to apply well in advance of their proposed admission dates.

As outlined below, admission requirements vary by academic program. No application packet will be considered by the relevant program admissions committee until all the required materials have been submitted by the applicant.

Application forms and instructions for applying to all graduate programs are available on the Graduate School website (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu>).

Admission to a master's program from the certificate programs

The courses in the graduate Certificate in Criminal Justice program are the same as the master's courses and, with minimum grades of B and upon acceptance into the master's degree program, are fully transferable to the Master of Science in Criminal Justice program.

The courses that constitute the graduate Certificate in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness program represent the foundation for the HSEP master's degree. Completion of the HSEP certificate with a minimum grade of B in each course guarantees admission to the HSEP master's and waives the standardized test requirement; applicants are still required to follow the standard application process. All courses in the certificate can be applied to the Master of Arts in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

The graduate Certificate in Public Management and the graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management are designed for persons in professional positions who require a limited number of courses in contemporary management theory and skills. However, if a student later decides to pursue the M.P.A. degree, successfully completed certificate courses may be applied toward the degree. Successful completion of either certificate does not guarantee admission into the M.P.A. degree program.

All courses from the graduate Certificate in Urban Revitalization, graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems or graduate Certificate in Sustainability Planning may be applied toward the requirements of the Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree. However, successful completion of any certificate program does not guarantee admission into the M.U.R.P. program.

Provisional admission

In rare cases, applicants who do not meet the requirements for full admission may be accepted provisionally upon recommendation of the program's admissions committee. The conditions for earning full admission are provided by the program and include an assessment of academic performance after a specific number of hours or courses are completed. Provisionally admitted students who withdraw from any courses or receive an incomplete grade during the provisional period will be dismissed from the program. Provisionally admitted students who earn a GPA below 3.0 will not be eligible for an Academic Performance

Agreement. Students with extenuating circumstances may request an exception to this policy.

Provisional admission does not constitute a waiver of the requirement to submit a standardized test score if required by the program.

Re-admission after dismissal

If a student is dismissed from the VCU Wilder School, the student must wait a minimum of one year before applying for re-admission. Dismissed students will not be admitted to any other Wilder School graduate program for a period of one year after dismissal.

Continuous enrollment requirements and expectations

To remain in good standing, students must maintain continuous registration for each fall and spring semester (except for approved leaves of absence) until they have completed all requirements. Students who fail to register for two consecutive semesters will be dropped automatically from the program and must reapply for admission in order to continue. Exceptions to this policy will be made on an individual basis by petition. Students who reapply after having been dropped for failure to register continuously will be evaluated under the bulletin requirements in effect at the time of readmittance.

A minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale must be maintained. Compliance with other university regulations also is required.

Student appeals

Appeals for exceptions to policies must be made in writing to the Graduate Student Services and Advising office. Refer to the Wilder School website for contact information.

Students may submit an appeal to request a retroactive drop or withdrawal from a class or from all classes taken in a specific semester. The appeal process must be started within two semesters after the semester in question.

Part-time students

Since the school schedules many of its courses in the late afternoon or evening, its programs accommodate both full- and part-time students. Students also may take advantage of courses offered in the summer. Thus it is possible for a part-time student taking six credit hours per semester to finish the master's degree in four years or less.

Nondegree-seeking students

Nondegree-seeking students must have an undergraduate degree from an accredited institution prior to submitting an override request to register for any graduate-level course. Nondegree-seeking students can take no more than six credit hours without authorization from the appropriate program coordinator.

Financial aid information

Information and application forms for financial aid may be secured from the VCU Office of Financial Aid, Harris Hall, 1015 Floyd Ave., First Floor, Box 843026, Richmond, VA 23284-3026.

The L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs also offers a limited amount of financial assistance. Individuals interested in such assistance are urged to apply by March 30. Financial assistance available through the school includes:

- **Graduate teaching assistant positions** – Duties involve helping with the instruction of courses. The level of support varies according to the work level, financial need and scholarship.
- **Research assistant positions** – The stipend and number of positions depend upon the level of sponsored research carried out by the school each year.
- **Tuition fellowships** – There are a limited number of tuition fellowships for full-time students within the three master's degree programs.
- **T. Edward Temple Memorial Scholarship Award** – This award of approximately \$500 per year is given to an outstanding graduate student in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program each year.
- **The Senator Edward E. Willey Scholarship, the Virginia City Management Association/University Dr. T. Edward Temple Scholarship and the Leigh E. Grosenick Scholarship** – These scholarships are available to outstanding students in the Master of Public Administration program. Preference for these three scholarships is given to those who plan public careers in Virginia.
- **Internships** – Paid, on-the-job internships are widely available in the Richmond area and elsewhere and are encouraged. VCU graduates also have been successful in obtaining presidential management internships in the federal government, state-government professional positions and local government positions.

Transfer credit

With the consent of the admission committee or program coordinator, a maximum of six semester hours of appropriate graduate credit may be transferred and applied toward the Master of Science in Criminal Justice, the Master of Arts in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, the Master of Public Administration or the Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

For consideration to transfer, classes:

- Must be from a regionally accredited university
- Have been completed with a minimum grade of B
- Be no more than five years old
- Have not been applied to another degree

Schoolwide master's-level requirements

In addition to the program-specific requirements of the Master of Public Administration, the Master of Science in Criminal Justice and the Master of Urban and Regional Planning as outlined elsewhere in this bulletin, the Wilder School requires all master's-level graduate degree-seeking students to acquire competence in four broad areas:

1. Research methods
2. Planning and/or policy analysis
3. Public administration
4. Ethics

Competence can be demonstrated by completion of the following:

Course	Title	Hours
Research methods		
URSP/CRJS/GVPA/ PADM 623	Applied Research Methods	3
Planning/policy analysis		

Select one of the following:		3
PADM/GVPA 625	Policy Insights: Assessing Public Policies	
URSP/GVPA 632	Planning Theory and Processes	
Public administration		
PADM/GVPA 601	Introduction to Public Service and Administration	3
Ethics		
Select one of the following options:		3
Option A:		
PADM/GVPA/PHIL 683	Administrative Ethics	
Option B:		
A program-specific course through which ethical issues are imbedded and discussed within a public sector context. Such courses would include:		
CRJS 550	Professional Ethics and Liability	
PADM 661	Nonprofit Law, Governance and Ethics	
PADM 689	Capstone: Bridging Theory and Practice	
URSP/GVPA 632	Planning Theory and Processes	
URSP 635	Legal and Legislative Foundations of Planning	

Selection of courses to meet these competency requirements will be made by the student in consultation with an academic adviser. While each graduate of the Wilder School must demonstrate competence in each of the areas outlined above, substitutions for the specific courses may be made with the written approval of the appropriate graduate program coordinator.