ADDICTION STUDIES, MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.)

VCU, King’s College London and the University of Adelaide collaborate to offer students the opportunity to complete a fully online program of study to obtain a Master of Science in Addiction Studies conferred by all three universities.

Program goal

The mission of the International Program in Addiction Studies leading to a Master of Science in Addiction Studies degree is to offer students cross-cultural exposure to the critical prevention, treatment, research and policy issues facing the field. Through a collaboration arrangement including VCU, King’s College London and the University of Adelaide in Australia, students complete a program of study using distance-learning technologies to obtain the degree. The program is designed to prepare students for local, national and international policy positions, prevention/treatment program management and other leadership positions in the addictions field. This program will speed the dissemination of the latest international addictions-related knowledge, especially to remote locations around the world, and help students compare international perspectives and translate this knowledge into more effective prevention and treatment practices and evidence-based policies within their own countries.

Students in the program will:

1. Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the field of addiction science (including comparative international policies and practices) to prepare them for leadership roles in a variety of settings (including addiction research, policy and treatment venues).
2. Be able to synthesize and apply addiction-related knowledge, including comparative international perspectives and approaches, to address key issues related to the advancement of addiction science.
3. Develop the ability to design, implement and interpret experimental approaches which address key questions in addiction science.
4. Communicate both core knowledge of addiction as well as experimental design, result and interpretation in a variety of formats.

Student learning outcomes

1. Integrated knowledge of addiction science: The student will demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of the current elements of addiction science as related to disciplinary specialization and a more detailed understanding of the individual area of scholarship, including an appropriate familiarity with the research literature and the ability to evaluate and critique publication.
2. Problem-solving skills: Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of skill in the identification and selection of meaningful problems to be addressed in addiction research and practice, including the ability to defend said identifications and to design and develop appropriate methods to solve said problems as measured by rubric.
3. Research design: Students will demonstrate the achievement of an appropriate level of competence in the ability to appraise, develop and implement research studies.
4. Written communication skills: The candidate will use effective written communication skills to present information related to addiction causes, interventions, treatments and policies using appropriate vocabulary, figures, tables and citations.

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students.

Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master’s or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student’s graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student’s faculty regarding the student’s academic achievements and the student’s readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements.

Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements.

Other information

School of Medicine graduate program policies

The School of Medicine provides policies applicable to all programs administratively housed in the school. Information on master’s programs is available elsewhere in this chapter of the Graduate Bulletin.

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://www.graduate.admissions.vcu.edu).
Admission requirements

Prospective students should apply through the VCU graduate admissions portal at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://wwwgraduate.admissions.vcu.edu). Application to all three participating universities is accomplished through submission of the VCU graduate application. Once accepted, students are enrolled in all three universities and have access to the resources associated with all three schools. No on-campus classroom time is required to complete the degree.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/), applicants must:

1. Have qualified in a related discipline for an honors degree (level 2A or 1) or a bachelor’s degree from a recognized tertiary institution in the U.S. Any applicant who does not meet this criterion should have (in addition to an honors or bachelor’s degree) significant professional work experience and approval of the program committee.
2. Have a high level of proficiency in English, demonstrated by completion of a university qualification studied in the English language, or by meeting one of the following English language requirements: an IELTS score of 7.0, a TOEFL score of 600 (paper-based) or 260 (computer-based), or minimum grade C in GCSE English.

Degree requirements

In addition to the general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-reg/grad/graduation-info/), students are required to successfully complete a minimum of 36 credit hours, which can be done either full time (12 months) or part time (24 months). Six of the required credit hours are assigned to a final research project examining a relevant addictions-related topic. VCU, King’s College London and the University of Adelaide confer degrees jointly through a single diploma.

Curriculum requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IPAS 600</td>
<td>The Biological Basis of Addiction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPAS 601</td>
<td>Treatment of Addiction: Psychosocial Interventions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPAS 602</td>
<td>Public Health Issues and Approaches to Addictions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPAS 603</td>
<td>Addiction Policy</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPAS 604</td>
<td>Treatment of Addiction: Pharmacotherapies</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPAS 605</td>
<td>Treatment of Addiction: Critical Issues</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>IPAS 606</td>
<td>Research Methodology in Addictions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPAS 692</td>
<td>Research Project in Addictions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>36</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 36.

Graduate program director
Mary E. Loos, Ph.D.
Associate professor, Department of Psychology