

# ACCELERATED BACHELOR'S-TO-MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

VCU offers a number of accelerated bachelor's-to-master's degree programs that allow academically talented undergraduate students to earn both degrees in a minimum of five years by taking approved graduate-level courses during the senior year of their undergraduate program. Accelerated bachelor's-to-master's programs must be approved by both the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the University Graduate Council. Descriptions for accelerated programs are presented in the Undergraduate Bulletin and can be viewed on the opportunities tab of the participating programs.

To be eligible to enter an accelerated bachelor's-to-master's program, undergraduate students must have successfully completed a minimum of 30 hours of course work at VCU and be in good academic standing with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Individual programs may require higher academic achievement and/or standardized test scores for admission to accelerated programs. Prospective applicants should refer to the individual program section of the Bulletin for specific information on eligibility, including important deadlines.

Entry into an accelerated bachelor's-to-master's program begins with a consultation between the undergraduate student, adviser and graduate program director. Qualified students will be invited to submit an Accelerated Program Declaration Form, which must be approved by the graduate program director.

**At this stage, students should not submit an application to the graduate program.** If a student does submit an application to the graduate program, and if the program admits the student, significant negative billing implications can result. The student is an accelerated undergraduate student until the baccalaureate degree is conferred. Tuition and fees are assessed at the VCU undergraduate rate, including for the shared graduate courses. The accelerated student is not a graduate student at this point. **Admission to the graduate program is a separate step.**

Upon entry into the accelerated program, students complete the remaining baccalaureate degree credits, including designated shared graduate courses. Registration for the shared graduate courses may take place through direct registration if the unit has completed the necessary steps with Office of the University Registrar, or through a Special Action Form. Students may enroll in the shared graduate course work identified in the approved curriculum outlined in this Bulletin (or on the student's plan of study approved at the time of admission). Students may complete a maximum of 12 hours of approved graduate course work during the final year of their undergraduate career, which may be applied to both the undergraduate and graduate degrees, based on the standards specified below. Individual programs may set additional restrictions on the number of graduate credits that can be completed while the student is an undergraduate and applied to both the undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Students in accelerated bachelor's-to-master's programs may not utilize **the undergraduate students in graduate courses** option to complete more than 12 hours of graduate courses before conferral of the undergraduate degree. Graduate courses at the 600-level that have not been identified as part of the shared course work should not be attempted until the undergraduate degree has been conferred and the student's status has changed from undergraduate to graduate. No

graduate-level course work should be taken before the senior year. No undergraduate course work may be counted toward the master's degree.

In order to meet continuance standards, students in accelerated bachelor's-to-master's programs must achieve a minimum grade of 3.0 (B) in each graduate course identified in the approved curriculum in the Bulletin (or the student's plan of study approved at the time of admission) and attempted while in undergraduate status. Students who do not receive a minimum grade of 3.0 (B) in graduate course work taken in undergraduate status will be reviewed for possible dismissal from the accelerated program. Substitutions for any of the shared graduate course work must be approved by the undergraduate and graduate advisers before the last day of add/drop registration of the semester in which the student wishes to take the substituted course(s).

In order to be formally admitted to the graduate program, the accelerated student must follow the required steps for admission to graduate study outlined in the VCU Bulletin, including adhering to admissions deadlines. Accelerated students whose academic performance meets the minimum requirements set forth in the VCU Bulletin can expect to be accepted into the graduate program as a benefit to having participated and succeeded in an approved accelerated program.

The accelerated student must apply to graduate from their undergraduate program following the process outlined in the VCU Bulletin. The awarding of the baccalaureate degree is a distinct step that students must complete before moving into the graduate program. The student is officially admitted to the graduate program and the student record and classification is updated from the undergraduate to the graduate program. This update is necessary for tuition and fee assessment and the awarding/dispersing of the appropriate financial aid amounts. No student may be enrolled in an undergraduate and graduate program at the same time.

After the undergraduate degree is conferred, the accelerated student finishes the remaining master's degree requirements leading to the awarding of the master's degree. Tuition and fees are assessed at the graduate tuition rate.

## Participating programs

Some programs are accelerated at the concentration level; see the opportunities tab on the individual program or concentration tab to see a detailed description and plan of study. The following undergraduate programs participate in accelerated bachelor's-to-master's programs.

- B.A. in African American Studies
- B.A. in Art History
- B.S. in Bioinformatics
- B.S. in Biology
- B.S. in Biomedical Engineering
- B.S. in Business
- B.S. in Chemical and Life Science Engineering
- B.S. in Chemistry
- B.S. in Computer Engineering
- B.S. in Computer Science
- B.S. in Criminal Justice
- B.S. in Economics (offered in the School of Business and the College of Humanities and Sciences)
- B.S. in Electrical Engineering
- B.A. in English

- B.S. in Environmental Studies
- B.A. in Fashion
- B.S. in Finance
- B.A. in Foreign Language
- B.S. in Forensic Science
- B.S. in Health Services
- B.S. in Health, Physical Education and Exercise Science
- B.A. in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
- B.S. in Information Systems
- B.S. in Mathematical Sciences
- B.S. in Mechanical Engineering
- B.S. in Medical Laboratory Sciences
- B.S. in Physics
- B.A. in Political Science
- B.S. in Psychology
- B.S. in Science
- B.S. in Sociology