BIOINFORMATICS, ACCELERATED BACHELOR’S TO MASTER’S

The accelerated bachelor’s to master’s program in bioinformatics permits selected students majoring in bioinformatics to earn the Bachelor of Science and master’s degrees in a minimum of five years by taking certain graduate-level courses during the senior year of their undergraduate program. The program is restricted to students with strong credentials and a clear interest in a career in the field of bioinformatics.

Admission requirements and procedures

Regular admission

In order to be admitted formally into the program through the regular admissions process, a student must be a VCU bioinformatics major, must have completed 90 semester credit hours with a minimum overall GPA of 3.0, including a substantial amount of collateral and core course work within the major and evidence of strong academic achievement. An application must be submitted to the Graduate School.

Applicants should indicate which master’s degree program (Master of Science in Bioinformatics) is of interest to them. Applications will be screened by the bioinformatics admissions committee. Most students will be able to initiate the application process during the second semester of their junior year. Students provisionally accepted into the program will be notified in time to register for courses as accelerated students but will not be formally admitted into the program until they have completed all requirements listed above.

Following acceptance into the accelerated program, students must continue to meet the requirements stated above throughout the senior year, as well as the graduate student standards of performance specified in this Bulletin in order to be awarded formal acceptance into the graduate program, which typically takes place just prior to the fall semester of the fifth year.

Guaranteed admission

The bioinformatics master’s program participates in the Honors College Guaranteed Admission Program. This program allows highly qualified high school seniors who will be participating in the VCU Honors College to gain admission into selected VCU graduate programs without competing for that admission at a later date. In order to apply for guaranteed admission, the student must have obtained a combined score of 1910, in a single sitting, on the SATI, with neither score below 530, and have achieved a minimum 3.5 unweighted GPA (4.0 scale). Once accepted into the Guaranteed Admission Program, bioinformatics students must fulfill the requirements of the Honors College for graduation with University Honors, maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, progress satisfactorily in honors courses and meet course requirements of the bioinformatics graduate program in order to remain exempt from competing for admission into the master’s program. Guaranteed admission applicants will be screened by the bioinformatics admissions committee.

Shared credits for accelerated program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BNFO 620</td>
<td>Bioinformatics Practicum ¹</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or BNFO 508</td>
<td>Introduction to Bioinformatics Research</td>
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¹ For accelerated program students, BNFO 620 or BNFO 508 replaces BNFO 420 to meet the “oral communication” general education requirement. See adviser for appropriate course relative to thesis or non-thesis option in master’s program.