

DEGREE DEFINITIONS

Dual degree and dual degree and certificate programs

Dual degree programs (two degrees) and dual degree and certificate programs (one degree and one certificate) allow students to concurrently pursue study in two graduate or professional programs and receive two separate program completion credentials (diplomas). Both programs may be offered by VCU or combine one VCU program with one program offered at another regionally accredited domestic or international institution. All dual degrees with other institutions must have a formal academic agreement in place that is fully-vetted, approved and signed by the VCU provost and senior vice president for academic affairs and appropriately-designated signatory at the partner institution, and maintained in academic affairs. Students must meet all curricular and other applicable requirements of both programs.

Approved dual degree programs and dual degree and certificate programs that combine two VCU graduate or professional programs may share up to 20 percent of credits that apply to the requirements of both degrees. Individual programs may set more restrictive limits on the amount of credits that can be shared between degrees.

To ensure integration of curriculum across the two degree programs, students must be admitted and enrolled in both programs for at least one semester prior to degree conferral. Some dual degree programs require concurrent admission and acceptance to both programs prior to beginning study; see individual program pages in this Bulletin for information about the admission process and timing of the admission applications.

Joint degree programs

Joint degree programs consist of a single degree and curriculum that is delivered through a partnership between two or more VCU academic units or between VCU and one or more regionally accredited domestic or international institutions. For joint programs involving multiple institutions, students receive a single diploma bearing the names, seals and signatures of each of the participating institutions.

Accelerated degree programs

Accelerated degree programs allow completion of a program of study in fewer than the usual number of years, most often by attending summer sessions and carrying extra courses during regular academic terms following a prescribed plan of study.

Concurrent degrees

There are two types of concurrent degrees and both allow students to pursue candidacy and complete course work for two graduate or professional degree programs at the same time. The first is an approved dual degree program (defined above), which allows a limited number of course credits to be applied to both degrees. Students may also seek admission to and fulfill the requirements of two degrees that are not part of an approved dual degree program, in which case no credits are shared between degrees. Students interested in combining programs that are not part of an approved dual degree program must receive approval from both graduate programs and the Graduate School.

Sequential degrees

Alternate to dual degrees, which are concurrent, students may pursue candidacy in two graduate or professional degree programs in sequence, where all requirements for one degree are completed before beginning course work for the second degree. Sequential degrees do not share credits. Students apply for admission to the second program prior to completion of the first degree and begin course work in the second degree after conferral of the first degree.