GERONTOLOGY, MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.)

Program goal

The Department of Gerontology serves the people of the commonwealth of Virginia and the nation by providing educational programs related to the understanding of aging and promoting optimal aging. The department encourages education through discovery of new knowledge, interdisciplinary interaction, professional behavior and service to the aging network. The department's primary focus is to prepare individuals for positions in the network of aging services. These gerontologists are educated to serve as supporters of optimal aging for older persons and families and caregivers. The master's program provides quality education leading to careers as services providers, educators and researchers. The department also provides assistance and services to the community and engages in research and scholarly activities related to gerontology. The master's program is accredited by the Accreditation for Gerontology Education Council which "promotes professional mobility and enhances employment opportunities in positions that base eligibility upon graduation from an accredited school or program."

The Master of Science in Gerontology program offers a fully online delivery format.

The goal of the program is to ensure that students in the program will:

1. Understand the biological, psychological and sociological underpinnings of aging in U.S. society as established by Association for Gerontology in Higher Education core competencies.
2. Gain understanding and respect for the interdisciplinary team process in effective gerontological practice.
3. Through a lifespan biopsychosocialspiritual approach, gain understanding of empirically and theoretically based components contributing to optimal quality of life and performance in late life as well as knowledge and skills in best practices to promote optimal aging across the life span.
4. Gain understanding of the existing aging network across federal, state and local levels. Thorough understanding will enable students to successfully identify their niche in the aging network, contribute to a growing field and deliver effective eldercare services.

Student learning outcomes

1. **Connect gerontological theory to practice:** Students will demonstrate a holistic theoretical understanding of adult development and elderhood from a biological, psychological and social perspective and the ability to apply this knowledge to aging, using a strengths-based lifespan orientation.
2. **Integrate diversity, equity and inclusion in gerontological practice:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of how discrimination, oppression and marginalization based on age and intersectional identities impacts health and longevity. Students will be equipped with the knowledge to shape positive attitudes about aging and elderhood.
3. **Develop critical-thinking and problem-solving:** Students will demonstrate the ability to apply critical-thinking and problem-solving using gerontological research to evaluate best-practice approaches and the effectiveness of policies and services that support elders, their family members and the community.
4. **Uphold professional and ethical standards:** Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in an ongoing self-reflective process of their professional gerontological practice. Students will demonstrate the ability to uphold professional standards through individually and collaboratively applying ethical decision-making processes.
5. **Identify and respond to community need:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of older adult services and will be able to make contributions to community-identified needs through the successful delivery of services and effective communication with elders, their families, the community and the public. Community engagement will take the form of field work, research, grant writing, experiential learning opportunities, education and training.

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 (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/) 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. (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/)

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. (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy/)

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. (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/)

Apply online today. (https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/)

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
M.S.	Fall	May 1	
	Spring	Nov 1	
	Summer	Mar 1	

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

The program is open to qualified students who have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university or the equivalent, and maintained a minimum GPA of 3.0. A successful work experience may strengthen the admission credentials of applicants with marginal records. All applicants will complete an interview with Department of Gerontology faculty.

Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/), students must complete a 30-credit hour curriculum based on the core curriculum and can include the following optional specialty area of study:

Students should consult with their advisers for guidance with scheduling. It is required that students seek advising to determine how they will complete their five practice elective credit hours.

Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
Core courses		
GRTY 601	Biological and Physiological Aging	3
GRTY/PSYC 602	Psychology of Aging	3
GRTY 603	Social Gerontology	3
GRTY 604	Problems, Issues and Trends in Gerontology	4
GRTY 605	Social Science Research Methods Applied to Gerontology	3
GRTY 606	Aging and Human Values	3
Additional requirements		
GRTY 607	Field Study in Gerontology	4
GRTY 608	Grant Writing	2
Electives (Select five credit hours from one of the lists below.)		5
Total Hours		**30**

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 30.

Electives [1]

Course	Title	Hours
Assisted living administration		
GRTY 638	Long-term Care Administration	3
GRTY 639	Human Resource Management and Leadership for Gerontologists	1
GRTY 640	Financial Management for Gerontological Leaders	1
General electives		
ALHP 591	Special Topics	1-4
GRTY 610	Gero-pharmacology	1
GRTY 611	Death and Dying	3
GRTY 613	GLBT in Aging	2
GRTY 615	Aging and Mental Disorders	3
GRTY 616	Geriatric Rehabilitation	3
GRTY 629	Spirituality and Aging	2-3
GRTY 691	Topical Seminar	3
GRTY 692	Independent Studies	1-3

[1]

Additional electives, based on areas of interest, may be chosen in consultation with the student's adviser.

Accelerated opportunities

The department offers opportunities for qualified undergraduate students to earn both an undergraduate and graduate degree in a minimum of five years by completing approved graduate courses during the senior year of their undergraduate program. See the individual program pages in the Undergraduate Bulletin for details.

- B.A. in Philosophy and M.S. in Gerontology (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/accelerated-bachelors-to-masters/)
- B.S. in Health, Physical Education and Exercise Science with a concentration in exercise science and M.S. in Gerontology (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/kinesiology-health-sciences/health_physical-education-exercise-science-bs-concentration-exercise-science/)
- B.S. in Health, Physical Education and Exercise Science with a concentration in health science and M.S. in Gerontology (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/kinesiology-health-sciences/health_physical-education-exercise-science-bs-concentration-health-science/)
- B.S. in Health Services and M.S. in Gerontology (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/allied-health-professions/health-services-bs/#acceleratedbsandmsgerontologytext)
- B.S. in Sociology and M.S. in Gerontology (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/sociology-program/sociology-bs/)

Contact
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Program website: gerontology.chp.vcu.edu/programs/mastersprogram/ (https://gerontology.chp.vcu.edu/programs/mastersprogram/)