

# HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.)

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## Program goal

The Master of Arts in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness degree program is designed in the broadest interdisciplinary sense. Students will learn theoretical and practical knowledge that will prepare them for private or public sector employment in the expanding area of homeland security and emergency preparedness and/or further study in numerous areas of public policy. The curriculum focuses upon international and domestic security and preparedness issues related to terrorist threats, such as the 9/11 attack, and natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina. Since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, homeland security and emergency preparedness has become a critical aspect of governmental policy at the federal, state and local levels as well as within the private sector. The L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs believes that a stable and productive evolution of public and private sector policies in this area can only be achieved if academe recognizes and accepts its role in developing scholars, professional policy analysts and informed governmental decision makers.

The master's degree is an online, distance-learning program. VCU's program takes a broad interdisciplinary approach to preparedness that will give students the ability to see the larger organizational, social, political, ethical and economic aspects of disaster studies, in addition to the policy-making and implementation aspects. The scholarly study of homeland security and emergency preparedness rests at the intersection of national defense, emergency management, law enforcement and policy management. With expertise in criminal justice, geography, government (local, state, federal and foreign), international affairs, policy planning and public administration, the Wilder School is particularly well-suited for such a program. Its location in the state capital and situated just 90 minutes from the nation's capital also provides easy access to homeland security institutions and practitioners.

## Student learning outcomes

1. Students will achieve comprehension of the theory and practice of homeland security and emergency preparedness and be able to analyze policy and synthesize information in five key areas: risk and vulnerability analysis, strategic planning dilemmas of disasters and disaster preparedness, cybersecurity, institutional coordination, and intelligence operations and legal/constitutional aspects.
2. Students will develop advanced skills in expository writing and oral presentation.
3. Students will achieve comprehension of the theoretical and practical principles of emergency preparedness for both natural disasters and terrorist incidents and be able to analyze key topics related to natural disasters, emergency planning, terrorism and counterterrorism.
4. Students will perform research, policy analysis and risk assessment using several methodological and theoretical approaches to homeland security and emergency preparedness.
5. Students will also be able to evaluate scholarly and practitioner analyses of homeland security and emergency preparedness.

## 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.** (<http://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.** (<http://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.** (<http://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.A.	Fall	Jul 25	
	Spring	Dec 16	
	Summer	Apr 20	

## Special requirements

- These deadlines are designed to allow sufficient time for application review and admission processing. Applications may be submitted after the deadline; however, there is no guarantee of sufficient time for processing. Any application submitted too late for current semester processing will be considered for the following semester.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/>), selection is made on the basis of prior academic performance, professional accomplishments and other indicators of the ability to pursue graduate studies and a professional career in a field related to homeland security and emergency preparedness. The application for admission requires:

1. A transcript documenting the completion of a bachelor's degree
2. A personal narrative that clearly conveys professional goals and how they align with the objectives of the HSEP graduate program (This includes prior academic, work and/or life experiences related to the applicant's interest in homeland security emergency preparedness. The narrative should also address aptitude to successfully complete the graduate program as well as enhance the learning environment.)
3. Three letters of reference (including both academic and professional references if possible)
4. A current resume
5. A minimum 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) in the last 60 semester hours of undergraduate work

Students not meeting these requirements who have demonstrated advanced competency on a professional basis may be admitted to the program provisionally. The provisional period shall consist of the first nine hours of designated graduate work in which all grades must be no less than B. Provisional admission does not constitute a waiver of the requirement related to a standardized test.

## Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>), students must complete a minimum of 36 graduate credit hours with a cumulative minimum GPA of 3.0.

## Off-campus study

Web-based course delivery is designed around each course's own web-based site utilizing the Blackboard education system, which provides the following:

1. Course syllabus
2. Course reference materials and links to supporting websites
3. Course lectures

4. Faculty-student and student-student communications via weekly discussion topics
5. Student writing assignments

Participation in online discussions is mandatory and will count for a significant percentage of each student's grades. Written work is submitted, evaluated and returned to students via the Blackboard education system assignment function.

## Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
HSEP 501	Introduction to Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness	3
HSEP 502	Survey of Terrorism	3
HSEP 601	Foundations in Emergency Management	3
HSEP 602	Strategic Planning	3
HSEP 603	Risk Assessment	3
HSEP 610	Law Enforcement Policy and Judicial Precedent	3
HSEP 620	Private Sector Issues in Security and Preparedness	3
HSEP 623	Research Methods Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness	3
HSEP 628	Survey of Cyber Security	3
HSEP 640	Intelligence and Counterintelligence	3
HSEP 650	Public Health Preparedness	3
HSEP 690	Capstone Seminar	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>36</b>

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

Students who complete the requirements for this degree will receive a Master of Arts in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

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 program page in the Undergraduate Bulletin (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/government-public-affairs/homeland-security-emergency-preparedness-ba/>) for details.

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**Program website:** [wilder.vcu.edu/academic/security/grad.html](http://wilder.vcu.edu/academic/security/grad.html) (<http://wilder.vcu.edu/academic/security/grad.html>)