

# Academic Rules and Definitions

## Eligibility to Enroll

### ■ Undergraduates

All students enrolled for credit as degree-seeking or special (non-degree-seeking) students must demonstrate their eligibility. Students dismissed from other institutions for academic deficiency may not enroll in classes at VCU. This policy may be waived for students who have not been in attendance at the dismissing institution for at least one year.

A student may enroll in undergraduate classes if he/she –

- is currently enrolled or admitted to a degree program and is eligible to continue at VCU,
- or is a high school graduate or GED holder who has been out of school for at least one year,
- or is a transfer student who is eligible to return to the former institution or has been out of school for at least one year,
- or is a former VCU student who is eligible to return,
- or is a degree holder taking undergraduate courses,
- or is an eligible transient student.

A student who has not been out of high school a full calendar year must meet the undergraduate degree admission standards to study as a special (non-degree-seeking) student.

### ■ Graduate Students

Degree-Seeking Graduate Students: For information about admission to graduate programs, students should consult the VCU Graduate Bulletin or contact School of Graduate Studies, 901 W. Franklin St., Room B1A, 828-6916, or 1101 E. Marshall St., Room 1-024, 828-0732. Written inquiries should be addressed to Box 568, Richmond, VA 23298-0568.

New students not admitted to a VCU graduate program, but who hold baccalaureate degrees, may enroll as non-degree-seeking students but must complete Residency and Certification of Eligibility forms. Students should be prepared to document that they meet the course requirements (according to the VCU Graduate Bulletin) and should understand that they may be removed from the courses if they do not qualify.

Before enrolling in the graduate courses, students should be advised properly by the offering academic department. In the School of Business, credit for courses will not apply to a VCU graduate degree in business unless the student has been admitted previously to a degree program.

Questions concerning graduate school standards should be addressed to

**Sherry Sandkam, Associate Dean**  
**School of Graduate Studies**  
**901 W. Franklin St.**  
**PO Box 843051**  
**Richmond VA 23284-3051**  
**Phone: (804) 828-6916**

### ■ Senior Citizen Tuition Waiver

The Senior Citizen Higher Education Act of 1974 provides that any legal resident of the state who before the beginning of any term or terms in which he or she claims benefits of the act, and who has had legal domicile in the state for one year may, without paying tuition, register for and enroll in courses under the conditions outlined in the act as amended in 1982 and 1986.

The tuition-free policy shall apply except that the senior citizen shall be subject to fees established for the purpose of paying for course materials, such as laboratory fees, individualized music instructions, etc.

Senior citizens not enrolled for academic credit may not register for more than three courses in any one term or terms but may register each term. The Senior Citizens Act benefits shall be available to persons 60 years of age or older with the following legally mandated provisions:

1. The senior citizen shall be subject to admission requirements of the institution.
2. The institution shall determine whether or not it has the ability to offer the course or courses.
3. If the senior citizen has a federal taxable income of not more than \$10,000 during the preceding year, the individual may take a course for academic credit at no charge. If the person's taxable income exceeded \$10,000, the individual may only audit the course at no charge. A senior citizen, regardless of income level, may take a noncredit course at no charge.
4. The senior citizen shall be admitted to a course after all tuition-paying students have been accommodated. Senior citizens wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity to study at VCU should call (804) 828-1222 or the Office of Community Programs, (804) 828-1831.
5. A Senior Citizen Waiver form must be submitted to the Student Accounting Department for each applicable term. Forms are available at the Student Services Centers on both campuses.

## Terms of Continuance

### ■ Satisfactory Progress

In order to be making satisfactory progress, a student must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 ('C' average) on all work attempted at this university. Any student making satisfactory progress is eligible to return to the university the following term and may enroll for a normal class load of course work. Eligibility for financial aid may be impacted by academic progress.

### ■ Academic Warning

A student is placed on academic warning when the cumulative grade point average falls below 2.0 (or 'C') at the conclusion of any term of attendance (fall, spring, summer). Such notification will appear on the student's grade report. A student remains on academic warning for one term (fall, spring, summer) of attendance at the end of which time the student either obtains a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0, or is placed on academic probation.

### ■ Academic Probation

A student is placed on academic probation when the cumulative grade point average is below 2.0 (or 'C') for two successive terms of attendance. Such notification will appear on the student's grade report. A student on academic probation may not enroll for more than 12 credits per term of attendance. Students on academic probation are expected to improve their cumulative grade point average by achieving a term grade point average of 2.0 or better during each term of attendance (fall, spring, summer). Failure to do so results in academic suspension. A student will be removed from academic probation when a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0 is obtained.

### ■ Academic Suspension

A student is placed on academic suspension when the cumulative grade point average is below 2.0 (or 'C') for two successive terms of attendance and the following term grade point average is below 2.0 for any term, including the summer session. Notification of suspension will appear on the student's grade report; the student also receives a certified letter from Records and Registration stating the conditions of the suspension, and a notification of suspension is placed on the student's permanent record. Academic suspension indicates that the student has a record of continued unsatisfactory progress.

A student on academic suspension may not enroll at the university for two consecutive terms, including summer session (fall and spring, spring and summer, or summer and fall). Course work taken at another institution

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while the student is under academic suspension from VCU will be considered as part of the criteria for readmission, but the course work may not be used to increase the VCU grade point average. If the student is readmitted, the course work will be evaluated according to regular procedures.

A student may apply for readmission to VCU for the term following completion of the suspension period. A student readmitted after suspension enrolls under the status of academic probation and is subject to the provisions of that status. If a student readmitted after suspension fails to obtain a term grade point average of at least 2.0, the student will receive a second, and final, suspension. Under certain circumstances, the student may be considered for readmission after a period of separation of a minimum of five years.

### ■ Repeated Courses

An undergraduate student on the Academic Campus who repeats a course in which a 'D' or 'F' grade has been received on the first attempt may request that only the better grade be counted in computing the cumulative grade point average. A student may request this option at any time, but in order to insure that the cumulative grade point average will be adjusted on the next grade report, the request must be made before the last week of classes.

If more than one 'D' or 'F' grade is received in the same course, only one of these grades will be removed from computation. The grades for all attempts will continue to be recorded on the student's permanent record. Students may not repeat courses for which they have previously received transfer credit. A repeated course may be counted only once as credits earned for graduation.

Use of the repeated course option will place the student under current graduation requirements. If the student expects to graduate under the requirements of a University Bulletin in effect prior to 1984, the student should consult with his or her adviser or assistant dean before requesting the repeated course option.

### ■ Readmission Policy

Undergraduate degree-seeking students on the Academic Campus may sit out for three terms (including summer) and enroll in the fourth term without having to apply for readmission to the university provided they have not attended another college or university since last attending VCU, and provided they have not been suspended from VCU and are eligible to return.

An undergraduate degree-seeking student who does not attend VCU for four or more terms (including summer) must submit an application for readmission to

Undergraduate Admissions. A readmission applicant must meet the university's admission guidelines as well as any specific requirement for the major to which he is applying.

A student wishing to return to VCU after attending another institution will be considered as a transfer applicant and will be reviewed based on transfer admissions guidelines.

### ■ Student Progress

Students are encouraged to discuss progress in courses with their instructors at any time. Instructors will endeavor to provide some form of evaluation of students' academic achievement throughout the duration of the course.

Degree-seeking students are encouraged to work closely with their advisers as they progress through an academic program. If you are a degree-seeking student and don't know who your adviser is call your department or school. See the Directory of Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs on pages 16 and 17.

### ■ Change of Major

Students who wish to change their majors for fall 1999, must file a Change of Major Form by Sept. 3, 1999. These forms are available at the Student Services Center in Founders Hall. The change of major becomes official after the Office of Records and Registration has received the form signed by the dean or chairperson of the appropriate school or department. A change of major will not occur for current semesters after the deadline.

Before initiating a change of major, students should carefully review the requirements and prerequisites of the program they wish to enter. In certain programs – including those in the Schools of the Arts, Business, Education, Mass Communications and nontraditional studies – a candidate must fulfill additional requirements before being accepted as a degree-seeking student.

Students currently enrolled in an MCV Campus program who wish to change to a curriculum on the Academic Campus must file a Change of Major Form. Such students are subject to the continuance policy of the Academic Campus after the major has been changed. Students currently enrolled in an MCV Campus program who wish to change to another MCV Campus curriculum must go through the admission process outlined in the University *Bulletin*.

Credits previously earned at VCU or at another university, may or may not be applicable to the new major.

## The VCU Honor System

Congratulations on your enrollment at Virginia Commonwealth University. You are a member of a community of learning at VCU. All members of this unique community, including faculty, students and administrators, have agreed to act with honor and integrity in all matters. As a student at VCU, you will be expected to practice personal and academic integrity; respect the rights and property of others; honor the rights of others to their opinions, and strive to learn from the differences in people, ideas, and cultures.

In the academic community, the practice of academic integrity is of the highest priority. The honor system obligates each student to understand the types of conduct that are unacceptable, to refrain from acts of cheating and plagiarism, and to report those who violate these standards. The honor system assumes that each student's word can be trusted implicitly and that a violation of a student's word is a violation against the whole university community. The system's effectiveness depends upon each student's acceptance of responsibility for it. For example, a student who cheats creates at least three problems for self and others: loss of knowledge that may be beneficial in the future; an unfair advantage over classmates who have not cheated; and the possibility of forming a pattern of accepting lower standards of behavior that could lead to unethical conduct in other areas.

Your attention is directed to the VCU Honor System as printed in the *VCU Resource Guide*. You should be certain to obtain a copy of this publication, which is available from several distribution points on the campus, including the Commons and the Academic Campus Bookstore. Many of your professors will be discussing this policy and describing their expectations for your behavior in classes at the first class session.

The Honor System utilizes the Honor Pledge, which states, "On my honor, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." Instructors may give assignments to students in one of two ways: (1) as "Pledged" work, for which the student will sign a pledge statement indicating that the work was completed independently, or (2) as "Unpledged" work, which may be completed in collaboration with others as directed by the instructor. All work is considered to be pledged unless the instructor specifies otherwise.

It is your responsibility to be aware of, and to observe, the VCU Honor System and all of the policies and regulations at VCU. If you have a question about a policy, please feel free to call or stop by the office of the dean of student affairs, consult with your faculty adviser, or ask to see someone in the office of the dean of your school or college.