

# Academic rules and definitions

## Eligibility to enroll

### Undergraduates

All students enrolled for credit as degree-seeking or special (nondegree-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,
- is a high school graduate or GED holder who has been out of school for at least one year,
- is a transfer student who is eligible to return to the former institution or has been out of school for at least one year,
- is a former VCU student who is eligible to return,
- 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 (nondegree-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, (804) 828-6916, or 1101 E. Marshall St., Room 1-024, (804) 828-0732. Written inquiries should be addressed to P.O. Box 980568, Richmond, VA 23298-0568.

New students not admitted to a VCU graduate program, but who hold baccalaureate degrees, may enroll as nondegree-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.  
P.O. Box 843051  
Richmond, VA 23284-3051  
(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 semester or semesters 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 semester but may register each semester. 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 Tuition Waiver form must be submitted to the Student Accounting Department for each applicable semester. 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 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 semester 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 semester of attendance (fall, spring, summer). Such notification will appear on the student's grade report. A student remains on academic warning for one semester (fall, spring, summer) of attendance at the end of which time the student either obtains a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 or is placed on academic probation.

### Academic probation

A student is placed on academic probation when the cumulative GPA is below 2.0 (or "C") for two successive semesters 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 semester of attendance. Students on academic probation are expected to improve their cumulative GPA by achieving a semester GPA of 2.0 or better during each semester of attendance (fall, spring, summer). Failure to do so results in academic suspension. A student will be removed from academic probation when a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 is obtained.

### Academic suspension

A student is placed on academic suspension when the cumulative GPA is below 2.0 (or "C") for two successive semesters of attendance and the following semester GPA is below 2.0 for any semester, 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 semesters, including summer session (fall and spring, spring and summer, or summer and fall). Course work taken at another institution while the student is under academic suspension from VCU will be considered as part of the criteria for re-admission, but the course work may not be used to increase the VCU grade point average. If the student is re-admitted, the course work will be evaluated according to regular procedures.

A student may apply for re-admission to VCU for the semester following completion of the suspension period. A student re-admitted after suspension enrolls under the status of academic probation and is subject to the provisions of that status. If a student re-admitted after suspension fails to obtain a semester GPA of at least 2.0, the student will receive a second and final suspension. Under certain circumstances, the student may be considered for re-admission after a period of separation of a minimum of five years.

### Repeated courses

If a student repeats a course in which a "D" or "F" was earned on the first attempt, the student may request that only the better grade be counted in computing his or her cumulative GPA. The removed grade will still appear on the student's academic record but will not influence his or her GPA. An Historical Repeat Form must be submitted to the Student Services Center in order to request the repeat course option.

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. The student may not repeat courses for which he or she has previously received transfer credit. A repeated course may be counted only once as credits earned for graduation. This option is not available for graduate courses.

### Re-admission policy

Undergraduate degree-seeking students on the Academic Campus may sit out for three semesters (including summer) and enroll in the fourth semester without having to apply for re-admission 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 semesters (including summer) must submit an application for re-admission to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. A re-admission applicant must meet the university's admission guidelines as well as any specific requirement for the major to which he/she 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 do not know who your adviser is, call your department or school. See the directory of deans, directors and department chairs on pages 84-85.

### Change of major

Students who wish to change their majors must file a Change of Major form. These forms are available from the Student Services Center in Founders Hall, Room 104.

The change of major becomes official after the Office of Records and Registration has received the form signed by the dean or chair of the appropriate school or department. Students are encouraged to have changes to the Office of Records and Registration prior to the first week of classes in order for the school/department to return approved changes by the end of the add/drop period. A change of major will not occur for the current semester after the add/drop period.

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 Undergraduate and Professional Programs Bulletin.

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

### Financial aid academic requirements

For students who are receiving financial aid, please be aware that all students are required to make Reasonable Academic Progress (RAP) toward their degree. These RAP standards are based on regulatory requirements that must be met in order to continue receiving federal or state financial aid funds. At a minimum, all undergraduate students must earn at least a 1.00 GPA by the end of their first academic year and must maintain at least a

2.00 GPA by the end of their second academic year. Graduate students are expected to earn and maintain at least a 3.00 GPA. All students must complete and earn at least 67 percent of the course work attempted (remember attempted credits also include "W" withdrawals, "I" incompletes, repeated courses, "CO" continuing grades and all "F" grades), and students must complete their degree before attempting more than 150 percent of the credits necessary for their degree. For details on these financial aid requirements or procedures on how to appeal a financial aid suspension, please visit our Web site.

— — — [www.vcu.edu/enroll/finaid](http://www.vcu.edu/enroll/finaid)

Counselors also are available to answer your questions at the Office of Financial Aid, 901 W. Franklin St. (Shafer Court entrance) or you may call (804) 828-6669.

*Everything you need to know about us is on the web!*

<http://www.students.vcu.edu/commons/>



VCU is an EEO/AA institution. If you feel you need special accommodation because of a disability, please call Kirsten Hirsch at (804)828-6500.