

Graduate Student Services and Advising Office

Policies and Procedures Guide

2022 – 2023



VCU

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

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Dear Graduate Students,

Welcome to the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University! Continuing your studies is an important decision not taken lightly and we are pleased that you selected our school.

The Graduate Student Services and Advising (GSSA) office will serve as one of your primary resources throughout your time here as a student. In addition to assisting students with the admission process, GSSA provides comprehensive academic advising to each of our students in order to ensure timely completion of your chosen program while factoring in your non-academic goals.

My team will assist you by:

- Collaborating with you to create an academic plan that factors in your personal, professional, and academic goals
- Providing information about campus resources based upon your spoken and unspoken needs
- Strengthening your decision-making skills
- Guiding you through VCU and VCU Wilder School policies and procedures

As part of our effort to provide you support, we developed this Policies and Procedures Guide to highlight specific university and academic program policies, regulations, and procedures. You will also find course information for each of our programs, internship and scholarship information, and frequently asked questions. This guide details what to expect and what is required of you and I recommend you read this in conjunction with the VCU Graduate Bulletin (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/>).

I encourage you to contact the GSSA office with any questions or concerns you may have throughout your academic career.

Welcome to the VCU Wilder School family!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denia A. Lee-Hing". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Denia A. Lee-Hing, Ed.D.
Director of Graduate Studies

Graduate Student Services and Advising (GSSA) Office

The Policies and Procedures Guide has been developed to inform students about important university and academic program policies, procedures, requirements, and regulations. It is a one-stop document in which to find program courses and degree requirements for each of our master's degree programs (Criminal Justice, Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Public Administration, and Urban and Regional Planning) and graduate certificates. Important information on internships, scholarships, and employment opportunities is also included.

In addition to reviewing this Guide, all graduate students should read and be familiar with the Graduate Bulletin (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate>) and consult with the Graduate Student Services and Advising (GSSA) Office regarding VCU policies.

Graduate Student Services and Advising (GSSA) Office
Raleigh Building, First Floor
1001 W. Franklin St
(804) 828-6837 wsgradvise@vcu.edu

GSSA provides centralized student services, support, and academic advising for all graduate students in the Wilder School – from admission to graduation.

The GSSA mission is to support students through engaged problem-solving and administrative support in an affirming and trusting environment that encourages sustainable academic, professional, and personal achievements.

The vision of GSSA is to provide unparalleled service and consistently facilitate the success of our students.

We provide the following services:

- Manage admissions for eight post-baccalaureate graduate certificate programs, four master's degrees, and one doctoral program
- Provide information and referral services for, newly admitted, and current graduate students
- Developmental academic advising
- Receive, audit, and process graduation applications
- Manage the curriculum change process
- Implement policy and manage the Graduate Teaching Assistantship program
- Resolve cases related to academic performance and continuous enrollment
- Provide administrative support to graduate program chairs
- Conduct orientation for new students
- Encourage involvement in student associations and organizations

Our Team



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Important Dates

Please visit the following links for important dates:

- academiccalendars.vcu.edu/
- Final exam schedule: rar.vcu.edu/exams/
- VCU calendar of events: events.vcu.edu/

Programs

Master of Science in Criminal Justice



Program Chair: Amy Cook, Ph.D. Phone: (804) 828-7544

Email: cookak@vcu.edu

Website: wilder.vcu.edu/programs/criminal-justice

Bulletin:

bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/criminal-justice-ms/

Mission

The Master of Science (M.S.) in Criminal Justice (CRJS) assists in broadening and refining the understanding of criminal justice and criminological issues to facilitate career success and advancement. The mission of the program is to develop critical-thinking skills among the students through the use of current criminal justice and criminological topics, reports, and research findings.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will communicate effectively about criminal justice issues/policies using well-reasoned evidence from empirical studies to support their arguments and/or positions.
- Students will demonstrate critical thinking and articulation of major issues related to the field in a diverse socio-cultural context while also understanding the diversity of lived experiences.
- Students will integrate their knowledge of existing theoretical and methodological frameworks to evaluate policy issues related to criminal justice and to be able to communicate to community stakeholders about the consequences of policy implementation.
- Students will make impactful contributions to their fields, surrounding community and public policy through ethically responsible active participation and leadership in their careers.

Degree requirements

- Students must complete a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours (required core courses and approved electives)
- Students must have an overall minimum GPA of 3.0
- Students who do not have at least one year of professional-level experience are encouraged to take a three-credit-hour internship as part of the 30 semester hours.

Required Courses (6 courses, 18 credits)

CRJS 501 – Principles of Criminal Justice

CRJS 550 – Professional Ethics and Liability

CRJS 617 – Law and Criminal Justice Policy

CRJS 620 – Seminar in Criminology

CRJS 623 – Research Methods for Government and Public Affairs

CRJS 690 – Criminal Justice Policy Analysis

Electives (4 courses, 12 credits)

Select 12 credits in consultation with an advisor.

Criminal Justice Thesis Guidelines

Criminal Justice students may elect to complete a thesis during their program. Students will be required to register for six credits in total (CRJS 798 - Thesis Research and CRJS 799 - Thesis), which will be applied towards the elective requirements for the degree.

Steps	Action(s) Required	Forms and Document Needed
Begin developing concept paper	Register for CRJS 798 (Thesis Research)	Request override Wilder School Override form: https://goo.gl/forms/lqNLS6BYprlNiZ4V2
Finalize concept paper and identify a thesis chair		
Select additional thesis committee members	Provide CV for any non-VCU faculty members who do not have graduate faculty or affiliate faculty status	Request for Approval of Thesis Committee form*
Finalize proposal and share with committee		
Defend thesis proposal	Coordinate with Chair and Committee	- Proposed Approval form* -Master's Degree Candidacy form: https://graduate.vcu.edu/student/candidacy.html
Coordinate revisions to your paper with Chair and Committee	-Register for CRJS 799 (Thesis)** -If you are in your final semester, submit your graduation application via eServices	-Request override Wilder School Override form: https://goo.gl/forms/lqNLS6BYprlNiZ4V2 -Review Thesis/Dissertation Manual: https://graduate.vcu.edu/student/thesis.html
Final defense	-Provide committee with a copy of the final thesis two weeks before final defense -Schedule a room for final defense via GSSA -Review the ETD Checklist and submit the ETD Approval form -Upload final thesis to VCU Scholars Compass	-ETD Checklist and Approval form: https://graduate.vcu.edu/student/thesis.html -VCU Scholars Compass link: https://graduate.vcu.edu/student/thesis.html

*Please complete and submit form through email or in person to Graduate Student Services and Advising (GSSA) office – wsgradvise@vcu.edu; Raleigh building, Rooms 1007 and 1009.

**If a student does not finish the thesis while taking CRJS 799, the student must register for one credit of a Directed Research class for each semester until the thesis is completed.

Master of Arts in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness



Program Chair: Maureen Moslow-Benway, Ph.D. Phone: (804) 475-6496

Email: mmoslowbenwa@vcu.edu

Website:

wilder.vcu.edu/programs/homeland-security-and-emergency-preparedness

Bulletin:

bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/homeland-security-emergency-preparedness-ma

Mission

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

- 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 four key areas: risk and vulnerability analysis, strategic planning dilemmas of disasters and disaster preparedness, institutional coordination and intelligence operations, and legal/constitutional aspects.
- Students will develop advanced skills in expository writing and oral presentation.
- 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.
- Students will perform research, policy analysis, and risk assessment using several methodological and theoretical approaches to homeland security and emergency preparedness.

- Students will also be able to evaluate scholarly and practitioner analyses of homeland security and emergency preparedness

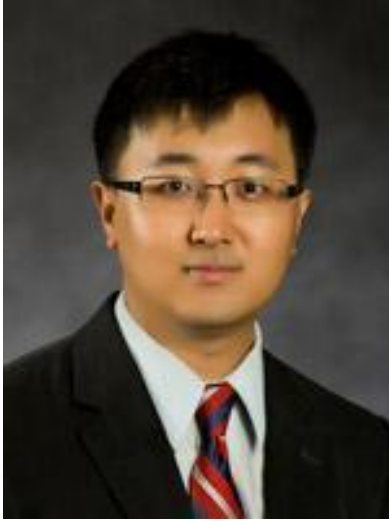
Degree Requirements

- Students must complete a minimum of 36 graduate credit hours
- Students must have an overall minimum GPA of 3.0

Required Courses (12 courses, 36 credits)

HSEP 501 - Introduction to Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness HSEP 502 - Survey of Terrorism HSEP 601 - Emergency Management: Response Planning and Incident Command HSEP 602 - Government, Industry, and Community Strategic Planning HSEP 603 - Risk Assessment HSEP 610 - Law Enforcement Policy and Judicial Precedent	HSEP 620 - Private Sector Issues in Security and Preparedness HSEP 623 - Research Methods for Government & Public Affairs HSEP 628 - Survey of Cyber Security HSEP 640 - Intelligence and Counterintelligence HSEP 650 - Public Health Preparedness HSEP 690 - Capstone Seminar
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Master of Public Administration



Program Chair: Myung Jin, Ph.D. Phone: (804) 828-8812
Email: mhjin@vcu.edu
Website: wilder.vcu.edu/programs/public-administration
Bulletin:

bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/public-administration-mpa-generalist-curriculum/

Mission

The mission of the Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) program is to develop creative, principled leaders who understand the demands placed upon local, national, and global public and nonprofit institutions and are equipped with skills in program management and policy analysis. Applying theory and practice, the program addresses complex social problems while advancing collaborative, effective, equitable and ethical democratic governance.

Program Accreditation

Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA)

Program Goals

The Master of Public Administration program's mission supports a "generalist" conception of public administration. This seems quite appropriate as the students come from diverse academic and employment backgrounds and find jobs in a wide variety of government and nonprofit organizations.

The program's mission includes the following goals:

- Prepare professional public managers, public officials, and citizens to meet the challenges of public service in both government and nonprofit sectors
- Advance the state of knowledge in the field of public administration through scholarly research and publications
- Serve the profession and local, state, federal, and international communities by extending faculty expertise and intellectual resources.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will participate in and contribute to the policy process.
- Students will lead and manage in public governance.
- Students will analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.
- Students will articulate and apply a public service perspective.
- Students will communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Degree Requirements

The M.P.A. program is designed to meet the graduate educational needs of pre-service and in-service professionals for careers in public management and analysis in the public and nonprofit sectors. In addition to the general VCU Graduate School requirements, M.P.A. students must meet the following requirements:

- Students must complete a minimum of 36 graduate credit hours (required core courses and approved electives) with an overall minimum GPA of 3.0.
- Students who do not have at least one year of professional level experience in the public sector or in a nonprofit agency are required to earn three additional hours of credit in a public service practicum/internship (for a total of 39 graduate credit hours for the degree).
- Students who are required to take the practicum/internship will usually do so during the summer between the first and second years or during the last semester of course work. The practicum must include a minimum of 300 hours as required by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). The scheduling of the practicum will be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of those students who pursue the degree on a part-time basis. Each practicum will be negotiated between VCU and the host agency, including the scope of work to be performed by the student, the type and extent of supervision, both within the agency and from the university, and the stipend (if applicable). A learning contract will be executed among the department, the agency and the student. A written student project is required to complete the internship.
- All students are required to complete the courses in the core curriculum unless competence in the subject matter can be demonstrated on a basis of previous experience or course work. Coursework that is waived must be replaced by approved substitutions in order to meet the minimum 36 (or 39) graduate credit hours for the degree.
- Students must complete ALL core courses successfully (grade of C or higher), with a minimum of 24 credit hours, in order to be eligible for Capstone (PADM 689).

Required Courses (8 courses, 24 credits)

PADM/GVPA 601 - Principles of Public Administration

PADM 602 - Public Administration Theory

PADM 607 - Public Human Resource Management

PADM 609 - Financial Management in Government

PADM/GVPA 623 - Research Methods for Government and Public Affairs

PADM 624 - Quantitative Methods for Public Administration

PADM/GVPA 625 - Public Policy Analysis

PADM 689 - Seminar in Public Administration: Integration of Theory & Practice (Capstone)

It is recommended that PADM 601 and 623 are to be taken in the first semester of coursework.

The Capstone class is intended to be a culmination of M.P.A. coursework with the goal of connecting theory and practice. Student groups work directly with local government and nonprofit agencies. Therefore, students must complete ALL core coursework prior to taking the capstone course. Exceptions to this policy will be determined by the program chair.

Electives (4 courses, 12 credits)

In consultation with an adviser, select 12 credits from any additional graduate-level PADM, CRJS, GVPA, HSEP or URSP courses; other courses (e.g., non-WS courses) may be selected with permission of the program chair.

The Public Administration Internship

M.P.A. students who do not have at least one year of professional level experience in the public sector or in a nonprofit agency are required to complete PADM 693: Public Administration Practicum (3 credit hours) or GVPA 693: Internship (3 credit hours). The determination of whether a student must complete the internship should begin with a discussion between the student and the program chair. Based on this discussion, a student should either decide to take an internship or request a waiver.

Purpose

The public service internship provides the student with work experience and a realistic exposure to an organizational-bureaucratic environment. This experience should develop the student's awareness of the internal dynamics of an organization and of the value and attitudes of public employees to both their clientele and their administrative-political superiors.

The internship should give the student the opportunity to become aware of their obligations as a professional and to the public. The internship will address the experiential needs of the pre-service student by providing: (1) a laboratory for students to integrate classroom knowledge with specific job situations and apply this knowledge to organizational problems; (2) an environment in which the student can learn how to engage effectively with others in mutual goal-directed activities; and (3) a means for students to understand the work processes common in public and nonprofit agencies. The student should gain experience coping with organizational routines, potentially observe mediation in conflict situations, and observe the complexity and ambiguity common to professional organizational life. The internship may be one of the few opportunities the pre-service student has to test the skills and attitudes development discussed in the academic program.

Because of the individual focus of the internship, each student's experience is unique. Work assignments have varied from narrow research projects to general involvement in a wide range of agency policy and management decisions, depending upon the needs of the agencies and the degree of involvement by the agency internship supervisor.

All internships are intended to be at the beginning professional level in an agency. If a student has special skills and abilities, the internship could be at a higher level. To the extent possible, students secure internships in agencies of their choosing, ensuring that the first taste of public or nonprofit experience is in an area of interest to the student. Although the intern should handle real work assignments, it should be remembered by all supervisory personnel - both on the job and academic - that the major reason for the internship is to provide a learning experience. The internship should be carefully integrated into the student's overall academic program.

Arranging the Internship

To request approval for an internship, contact the Wilder School's Office of Student Success. Please note, proposals for internships are due the semester before the internship will begin.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. The deadline for earned academic credit for internships will be reviewed and approved by the Office of Student Success based on the internship timeline and semester calendar. Visit <https://wilder.vcu.edu/students/student-success/internships/>

The program chair will approve all internship placements after consulting with the Internship Coordinator. If the student identifies their own internship, they must request approval for the placement in advance, provide a job description and the contact information for their supervisor.

Academic Elements of the Internship

During the internship period, students are assigned written work by the Office of Student Success, which is to be completed on students' own time. The first assignment outlines the specific work that is being completed and the final assignment is an academic term paper that integrates the theory learned in classwork with the on-the-job experience.

Following procedures and using evaluation instruments common to the agency's practice, the intern is evaluated by an immediate supervisor. It is expected that these ratings will be at the satisfactory or higher levels of performance evaluation. The academic papers and the evaluation of the intern become a part of the student's record. A course grade of "pass" or "fail" is assigned by the Office of Student Success. Regardless of whether compensation is involved in the internship, the time applied by the student must equal the 300-hour minimum requirement, the experience must be arranged formally with the Office of Student Success, and all of the written requirements must be satisfied for the student to receive credit for the internship.

Waiving the Internship

If a student would like to request an internship waiver due to work experience that may exempt the student from the internship, the student must submit a formal, written rationale to the M.P.A. assistant chair by email for consideration. The rationale should address the three purposes of the internship and M.P.A. Student Learning Outcomes, stating specifically how the professional experience directly fulfills (or fulfilled) the purposes of the internship. Students must attach a copy of their resume to the email. The assistant chair will

either approve or deny the request for a waiver.

Begin with (1) an introductory paragraph that describes why you are writing and introduce your past employment role and responsibilities. (2) Follow with the three purposes of an internship (integration of knowledge with job situations and application to organizational problems; engaging effectively with others in mutual goal-directed activities; and understanding the work processes common in public and nonprofit agencies) providing for each an explanation of how your work experience applies and would justify an exemption. Include specific examples of how your experience relates to Student Learning Outcomes. (3) Describe and reflect on how you have learned through your work experience.

Using a Wilder Fellowship for the M.P.A. Internship

Students successfully completing at least one year of a Wilder Graduate Scholars' Fellowship will receive credit for their internship only if they register for PADM 693 and visit the Office of Student Success to ensure they comply with all internship requirements.

Exemption from Required Courses

A student may petition for an exemption (waiver) from a course requirement, under the same conditions and in the same manner as requesting transfer credits. The decision will depend on concurrence from faculty. If the exemption is granted, because the M.P.A. requires the completion of 36/39 credit hours to graduate, the student must take another approved course to replace the exempted course. The replacement course must be approved by the Chair, M.P.A. Program, pertinent M.P.A. faculty and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Shared Credits

Students pursuing the MPA and a certificate concurrently need to complete their certificate before, or at the same time, as their MPA, if they intend to share credits between the two programs. Current MPA students who decide to pursue a certificate must apply prior to the beginning of their second year, and/or after completing 18 credit hours. Students beginning the program with a certificate and then applying toward the MPA may carry forward the certificate credits earned and apply them (with grade B or above) toward the MPA, either as electives in the case of the nonprofit certificate, or both core and electives if pursuing the certificate in public management. Certificates in other programs may be eligible for shared credits with review and approval of MPA faculty.

Independent Study

For those subjects in which a student is interested and academically prepared for, but formal course offerings are not available, enrollment in an independent study course is recommended. Students may choose to conduct original research or select a substantive project. The course designation used is PADM 697 Directed Research in Public Administration. To pursue an independent study, the student must have the sponsorship of a faculty member in the Wilder School. It is not mandatory for the faculty member to be on the public administration faculty.

The course is designed as an academic, rather than practical, endeavor, which includes readings, ongoing meetings between the faculty advisor and student, and an academic product(s). Please see the Independent Study Syllabus/Guidelines at Appendix A.

The student will propose a project or subject for investigation and, with advisement, will negotiate the appropriate number of credit hours. A directed research proposal will be filed with the program chair (the form is found in Appendix A). This form will contain a short description of the research or subject of inquiry, the name of the supervising faculty member, the proposed date for completion, and the number of credit hours to be earned.

All paperwork and approvals must be signed by both the supervising faculty member and submitted to the program chair by the beginning of the semester in which the course will be taken.

Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.)/ Juris Doctor (J.D.) Dual-Degree

Bulletins:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/public-administration-mpa-jd-university-richmond/>

<http://lawcatalog.richmond.edu/dual-degree/index.html>

Program accreditation

Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration

Overview

A cooperative arrangement with the University of Richmond School of Law makes it possible for students to receive a law degree from the University of Richmond and the Master of Public Administration from VCU. The dual degree program is designed to provide its graduates with competency in both public administration and law. This competency is applicable to areas of practice drawing upon knowledge and skills from each of these fields. The program brings together persons interested in both the broader aspects of public policy and government affairs and the law. It also brings together two fields that require complementary knowledge and skills that may be directed toward solving problems that are associated with the affairs of the government and nonprofit sectors. This integration of education in public administration and law draws on the contributions that each discipline can make to a professional knowledge base for practice in both fields.

Application process

Application for admission to each program must be made separately to VCU and the T.C. Williams School of Law of the University of Richmond and the candidate will be subject to the admission requirements for the respective programs at each institution. Only students admitted to both programs will be eligible for the dual degree program.

Once admitted to the program, students are encouraged to meet with their advisers at both VCU and the University of Richmond to review the proposed course of dual degree study, keeping in mind the timelines and requirements for each program.

Students in the dual degree program may begin their studies at either institution and the primary program during the student's first year of study will determine the sequence of courses to be completed. Students must spend the entire first year at either VCU or the T.C. Williams School of Law, but may attend either institution in subsequent years. The first-year curriculum at the law school must be completed in its entirety during a single academic year.

Students who are accepted into the dual degree program are permitted to apply 12 credit hours of work in the M.P.A. degree program toward meeting the graduation requirements in the T.C. Williams School of Law and up to 12 credit hours of work in the law school are applied as elective credits toward meeting the degree requirements for the M.P.A. This credit application enables participants in the dual degree program to complete the requirements for the J.D. and the M.P.A. in an estimated four years of full-time course work after the completion of 99 or 102 credits, rather than a minimum of 123 or 126 if the degrees were pursued separately. Applicants for this program are required to meet all admission and academic standards of the T.C. Williams School of Law of the University of Richmond, the VCU Graduate School and the M.P.A. program.

Appendix A – Directed Research/Independent Study Project

Syllabus/Guideline

Course description and objectives:

The graduate independent study is designed for individual students to develop their knowledge and understanding of a substantive or theoretical area of scholarship of their own. In order to gain approval of an independent study a faculty member must agree to supervise their work. Students are expected to work primarily on their own, with some guidance and feedback from a faculty member. Students should expect to commit 150 hours to the independent study per 3 credit hours. Up to six credits of independent study can apply as elective requirements of the MPA

Reading lists:

Depending on the situation, students may be provided with a reading list by the faculty member directing the independent study, or they may be asked to design their own reading list. The reading for the course should include approximately 100 pages (3 articles or 5 book chapters) per week from scholarly journals and books (not textbooks). Students who design their own reading lists should use the library databases to identify and access the most current scholarship on the topic of interest. Students are discouraged from using popular, nonacademic, and internet sources. Students should create a timeline for reading the assignments, designating specific readings to each week. The timeline should be submitted to the instructor by the end of the 2nd week of classes and must be approved by the instructor.

Weekly writing submissions:

Students are expected to submit written work to their faculty directors on a regular basis (weekly, monthly at faculty discretion). These submissions should be summaries, as well as critical reflections of the readings for the week. The submissions should be proofread, well-written and well-organized. Students should put the same effort and level of writing into the weekly submissions as the final paper. Instructors will provide feedback on each submission with respect to writing, organization, and approach to topic.

Final paper:

Each independent study should result in a substantial final paper of approximately 25 pages. The paper should be well-written and organized, including introduction, subheadings, conclusion and bibliography. Sources should be consistently cited throughout the text as well as in the bibliography. At the semester mid-point, students should provide the instructor with a one-page paper proposal that includes a specific focus within the topic. The instructor must approve the proposal. Examples of foci include: critical review of the literature, comparison of various approaches, a research proposal, etc.

Meetings with instructor:

Students are required to meet with the instructor a minimum of 3 times – once at the beginning, once at mid-point to discuss the paper proposal, and once at the end to discuss the final paper.

Grading:

Students will be graded on the following:

Weekly submissions (30%)

Final paper (50%)

Compliance with course expectations as outlined above (20%)

Approval for Directed Research/Independent Study

Instructions: Please have your faculty supervisor sign this form, and then submit it to the M.P.A. program chair at the time of your registration for a PADM 697 course.

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Academic Term: _____ Section: _____ Credit Hours: _____

Faculty Supervisor: _____ Date Due: _____

Summary of the Proposed Independent Study Project

Student Signature: _____

Faculty Advisor: _____

Program Chair: _____

Master of Urban and Regional Planning (M.U.R.P.)



Program Chair: Xueming (Jimmy) Chen, Ph.D. Phone: (804) 828-1254

Email: xchen2@vcu.edu

Website: www.wilder.vcu.edu/programs/urban-and-regional-studies-planning/

Bulletin:

bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/urban-regional-planning-murp/

Mission

The Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree program advances social justice and quality of life through planning, designing and evaluating options to create, enhance and sustain the social, economic and environmental conditions that improve communities. The program maintains a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Program Goals

- Prepare students to connect knowledge, skills and values to reflective action that informs their work in planning and related fields
- Recruit and retain excellent students
- Produce research and service that advances planning knowledge, practice and the public good through scholarship, civic engagement, and professional work
- Promote diversity and inclusion broadly as a primary feature and strength of the M.U.R.P. program

Program Accreditation

Planning Accreditation Board

Student learning outcomes

- Students will understand the historical, legal and theoretical contexts in which planning operates.
- Students will understand the functions and processes of an equitable, sustainable and livable community; how planning practice strives to achieve and maintain such communities; and the impact of these actions for future planning.
- Students will appreciate the approaches and perspectives of planning across world regions and how that differs from planning approaches in the U.S.
- Students will think critically, analyze and assess information, and exhibit technical competence related to plan and policy analysis, long-range plan creation and current planning practices (i.e., implementation and enforcement).
- Students will engage with diverse planning constituencies via effective communication, listening, empathy and understanding.
- Students will communicate effectively through use of writing, oral, visual and design skills.
- Students will evaluate questions and approaches using principles of diversity, inclusion, social justice and sustainability to guide planning in a democratic society.
- Students will lead and engage in civic action and the political process through innovative planning

approaches and policy-making that reflect diversity and inclusion and contribute positive changes in society.

Degree Requirements

Students must complete a minimum of 48 graduate credit hours plus an internship (not for credit). A core of required courses accounts for 24 of these credit hours. A capstone requirement accounts for three or six of the required 48 hours. The remaining 18 or 21 credit hours are electives. A minimum overall GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) is required for receipt of the M.U.R.P. degree. In addition, students must receive a minimum grade of B for all core and capstone courses.

Complete either a six-credit thesis ([URSP 764](#)) or prepare a three-credit professional plan project through the professional plan course ([URSP 762](#)). Program administrators request permission to utilize the grade of PR, in addition to normal letter grades (A, B, C, D or F) in [URSP 762](#). This will allow students the ability to work on their plans over a more extended period of time, if necessary.

Required Courses (9 courses, 27 or 30 credits)

URSP 610 - Introduction to Planning

URSP 622 - Community Socioeconomic Analysis using GIS

URSP 623 - Research Methods for Government and Public Affairs

URSP/GVPA 632 - Planning Theory and Processes

URSP 635 - Legal and Legislative Foundations of Planning

URSP 662 - Foundations for Development Planning

URSP 760 - Capstone Proposal Development

URSP 761 - Planning Studio

URSP 762 - Professional Plan (3 credits) or URSP 764 - Thesis (6 credits)

Electives (6 or 7 courses, 18 or 21 credits as appropriate)

Refer to the [Graduate Bulletin](#) for a list of approved courses. Other courses may also be selected with permission of the program chair.

M.U.R.P. Specializations

In selecting their elective courses, students may (1) opt for exposure to a wide array of planning-related subject matter (the generalist or comprehensive approach), (2) select one of the areas of specialization defined by the department's faculty (see the list that follows) or (3) develop an individualized program, focusing on one or more self-defined topics. Regardless of the approach selected, students are expected to meet regularly with their faculty advisers for discussion of their courses of study in relation to their career plans.

The following faculty-defined areas of specialization are offered by the department:

- Community revitalization
- Environmental planning
- Regional planning

Required MURP Internship (not for academic credit)

The internship is designed to give students practical experience in planning-related activities in an institutional context. Normally, the internship is taken during the summer between the first and second year or during the second year. Many opportunities for internship positions, as well as part- and full-time jobs in planning at all levels of government, exist within the Richmond area. Upon request, the internship requirement may be waived for students with substantial planning-related professional experience. Please contact the Office of Student Success to review internship requirements and to request internship documentation forms.

Thesis Guidelines

What is a thesis?

A master's thesis is a unique learning experience in graduate education. It should not be confused with a term paper or other project assignment that the student may have undertaken in a course or even as a practicing professional. The thesis is intended to demonstrate the ability of students to make independent use of their training, research skills and creative abilities. It is an individual project in which the student selects a topic that merits additional research, becomes well versed in the literature and research pertaining to that topic, devises and executes an appropriate research design to advance knowledge regarding that topic or problem, applies analytical skills to develop valid responses to the selected thesis questions, and interprets the implications of research findings for the field of urban and regional planning. The student is responsible for defining, organizing, conducting and presenting the research.

Students should consult with the program chair and/or their academic advisor for details on thesis requirements and planning.

The learning objectives to be served by the thesis are numerous. Among those that the MURP program believes to be particularly important are:

- To develop specific and specialized knowledge in a subject area that extends a student's field of concentration and educational exposure beyond prescribed coursework;
- To enhance the student's research capabilities; and
- To improve writing and presentation skills and to develop individual, creative, analytical and interpretive skills.

Types of theses

An *Exploratory Thesis* focuses on answering the "what" question. It is conducted to study a phenomenon defined by the research question that has not been studied or in which existing studies are lacking. An exploratory thesis offers the researcher the opportunity to uncover potential processes and/or factors associated with a phenomenon being studied and to make a contribution to advance our understanding of it.

A *Descriptive Thesis* also focuses on answering the "what" question, but in a different way than an exploratory thesis. It describes and summarizes the characteristics, viewpoints, arguments, theories, etc. related to a phenomenon defined by the research question.

A descriptive thesis provides a comprehensive and systematic way to synthesize and present factual findings related to the research question.

An *Explanatory Thesis* focuses on answering the "why" question. It requires empirical evidence to test and identify the relationships, causal or not, among variables related to a phenomenon defined by the research question. An explanatory thesis allows researchers to verify existing theories and/or develop new ones which will further our knowledge of the inner workings of a phenomenon so that improvements can be made in the future.

Professional Plan Guidelines

Policies and processes

Spring is the recommended semester for students to register for Professional Plan because we can provide a class structure and ample faculty resources. Students must complete all three credits during the spring semester.

Summer is not permitted for Professional Plan.

Fall is permitted but not encouraged for Professional Plan because we cannot provide a class structure and since we have fewer faculty resources to devote to Professional Plan at this time. In order to be permitted to complete a Fall Professional Plan, students must secure, by June 30, the approval via email of the MURP chair giving permission for the student to begin planning a Fall Professional Plan project (since it may not be feasible if the student has other courses to take). By August 16, the student must deliver to the Professional Plan Master a proposal that has been signed by the client and a faculty member who will also serve on the panel. If the Professional Plan Master agrees that the proposal meets all of the requirements of a Professional Plan proposal, s/he will then sign on to create a panel of three persons—the client and two faculty members. The initial meeting of the entire Professional Plan panel must be organized by the student and it must take place by August 23. Only then will the student be giving a course override form so that s/he may enroll in the Fall Professional Plan class. Students must complete all three credits during the fall semester.

Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) and Juris Doctor (J.D.) Dual-Degree

Overview

A cooperative arrangement with the University of Richmond (UR) School of Law makes it possible for students to receive a law degree (J.D.) and a graduate urban and regional planning degree (MURP) in four years of full-time coursework, rather than the five years ordinarily required.

The purpose of the program is to integrate the two professional curricula and to provide the expertise necessary to apply legal analytical skills and planning methods and analysis to urban and regional policy issues and problems. The dual-degree program is designed to equip graduates for a variety of professional positions, including the following: staff for legislative committees and government agencies and commissions; government legal staff; private consulting; neighborhood advocacy; directorships of planning and related agencies; and executive aides to elected officials.

Application Process

Interested students must apply separately for, and be admitted to, UR's School of Law and VCU's MURP program. Students will spend the entire first year in either the UR School of Law or VCU's L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. The second year will be spent in the program not selected the first year. Twelve credit hours of the planning program will be applied toward meeting the graduation requirements of the law school, and 12 credit hours in the law school will be applied toward meeting elective requirements of the MURP program.

Upon admission to the dual-degree program, the student will be assigned an adviser in each program who will assist in planning a course of study that will include all of the required courses in each program plus such elective courses that will best serve the interests of the individual student.

Students deciding not to complete the dual-degree program must meet all of the regular requirements of either the J.D. or MURP to receive the degree of their choice.

For more information visit the VCU Graduate School Bulletin:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/urban-regional-planning-murp-jd-university-richmond/> or contact:

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Phone: (804) 828-1254

Email: xchen2@vcu.edu

University of Richmond School of Law

28 Westhampton Way

University of Richmond, Virginia 23173

Phone: (804) 289-8189

Email: lawadmissions@richmond.edu

Website: law.richmond.edu/admissions

Graduate Certificates

Criminal Justice

Bulletin: bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/criminal-justice-certificate/

Program Goal

The Certificate in Criminal Justice is a post-baccalaureate graduate program designed to help facilitate career advancement in the criminal justice and/or criminology field. The program seeks to develop critical-thinking skills among the students through the use of current criminal justice and criminological topics, reports and research findings.

This certificate program offers specialization for individuals interested or involved in law enforcement, corrections, juvenile justice or the courts. It combines survey and theory courses with research, management and policy courses on the justice system. The courses in the certificate program are the same as the master's courses. With minimum grades of B and upon acceptance into the master's degree program, these courses are fully transferable to the Master of Science (M.S.) in Criminal Justice degree program.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will communicate effectively about criminal justice issues/policies using well-reasoned evidence from empirical studies to support their arguments and/or positions.

Students will demonstrate critical thinking and articulation of major issues related to the field in a diverse socio-cultural context while also understanding the diversity of lived experiences.

Required Courses (4 Courses, 12 Credits)

CRJS 501 - Principles of Criminal Justice

CRJS 550 - Professional Ethics and Liability

CRJS 617 - Law and Criminal Justice Policy

CRJS 623 - Research Methods for Government and Public Affairs

Electives (1 Course, 3 Credits)

One additional CRJS, GVPA, HSEP, URSP or PADM course may be used as an elective. Other course(s) may be selected with permission of the criminal justice program chair

Total: 15 Credits

Gender Violence Intervention

Bulletin: bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/gender-violence-intervention-certificate/

Social Work, Master of (M.S.W.)/Gender Violence Intervention, Certificate in (Post-baccalaureate graduate certificate) [dual degree]

Bulletin: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/social-work-msw-gender-violence-intervention-certificate/>

Program Mission

The Graduate Certificate in Gender Violence Intervention is designed to prepare individuals for positions related to understanding, studying, responding to, and preventing sexual and domestic violence in a variety of communities and settings. It provides specialized study in gender violence and can be earned on its own, or in conjunction with another graduate degree in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs or the School of Social Work.

Program Goals

- The program will guide students in the development of strong academic understanding related to gender violence intervention.
- The program will guide students in the development of skills in applying academic concepts to the practice of gender violence intervention.

Student Learning Outcomes

Academic understanding

- Students will have knowledge of common types of gender violence.
- Students will have knowledge of theoretical perspectives of gender violence.
- Students will have knowledge of gender violence policies.

Skills

- Students will have the ability to demonstrate methods of applying concepts to problems, practice and policy.
- Students will demonstrate professional behaviors and boundaries while working in Gender Violence Intervention settings and with diverse populations.

Required Courses (5 Courses, 15 Credits)

GVPA 623 - Research Methods for Government and Public Affairs

GVPA 635 - Theorizing Gender Violence

GVPA 693 - Internship

PADM 650 - Principles of Nonprofit Management

SLWK 761 - Interpersonal Violence in Clinical Social Work Practice

Total: 15 Credits

Geographic Information Systems

Bulletin: bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/geographic-information-systems-certificate/

Program Goal

The Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems emphasizes the core functions and applications of GIS. It provides specialized training in the operations and techniques related to the creation, analysis, modeling, visualization, interpretation and management of geographic information.

The certificate program is designed to meet the educational needs of both traditional and nontraditional students. The GIS program prepares traditional students to utilize GIS in their major areas of study. Nontraditional students can also take advantage of the certificate program to learn and/or upgrade GIS knowledge and skills that are applicable and important to their professions.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Understand the fundamental principles and concepts upon which GIS technology is based.
- Utilize various data structures for storing geographic information in GIS database creation and management.
- Apply appropriate GIS techniques in spatial analyses and problem solving.
- Design maps and other GIS outputs that communicate effectively.

Required Courses (2 Courses, 6 Credits)

URSP 521 or 621 - Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (offered in fall semester)

URSP 625 - Spatial Database Management and GIS Modeling (offered in spring semester)

Electives (2 Courses, 6 Credits)

Select two of the following

URSP 523 - GIS for Land Use and Transportation Planning

URSP 622 - Community Socioeconomic Analysis Using GIS

URSP 626 - Transportation Analytics and Modeling

URSP 627 - GIS Applications in Urban Design

Total: 12 Credits

Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

Website: bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/homeland-security-emergency-preparedness-certificate/

Program Goal

This certificate program complements a student's other fields of interest in public and government affairs. 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.

Online Instruction

Web-based course delivery in an asynchronous format is designed around each course's own Canvas site.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will achieve comprehension of the theory and practice of homeland security and emergency preparedness and be able to analyze policy and synthesize information.

Required Courses (5 Courses, 15 Credits)

HSEP 501 – Introduction to Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

HSEP 502 – Survey of Terrorism

HSEP 601 – Emergency Management: Response Planning and Incident Command

HSEP 602 – Government, Industry and Community Strategic Planning

HSEP 603 – Risk Assessment

Total: 15 Credits

Nonprofit Management

Website: bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/nonprofit-management-certificate

Program Goal

The program mission is to empower community leaders with the knowledge, theory, research and real-world applications needed to creatively solve public issues and shape public policy. The program equips current and future executives, boards, staff and volunteers to lead, govern and manage nonprofit organizations collaboratively, thoughtfully and ethically.

In the graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management program, students gain knowledge and skills in nonprofit governance, management, fundraising, and program development and evaluation that they will need to become leaders and change agents in this rapidly growing sector. The school welcomes degree applicants from any undergraduate major, as entry- and top-level employees in nonprofit organizations have a wide range of backgrounds, including the sciences and humanities, social sciences, and technology. Courses are scheduled in the evening and on weekends with the working professional in mind.

Student Learning Outcomes

- To understand the nonprofit sector's relationship to the for-profit and government sectors.
- To know how to build a fundraising and donor communication plan model.
- To understand how to budget and evaluate the financial management practices of nonprofit organizations.
- To have the skills to analyze and implement laws impacting nonprofit organizations and their governance.

Required Courses (4 Courses, 12 Credits)

PADM 650 - Principles of Nonprofit Management

PADM 656 - Fund Development for the Nonprofit Sector

PADM 659 - Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations

PADM 661 - Nonprofit Law, Governance and Ethics

Elective Courses (1 Course, 3 Credits)

Students may take any graduate PADM course as an elective for this program. Other courses may be selected with permission of the program chair.

Total: 15 Credits

Social Work, Master of (M.S.W.)/Nonprofit Management, Certificate in

Website:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/social-work-msw-nonprofit-management-certificate/>

The dual degree Master of Social Work and Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management is a cooperative arrangement between the School of Social Work and the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. Master of Social Work students pursuing a concentration in administration, planning and policy practice or clinical practice may simultaneously earn the graduate certificate in nonprofit management offered by the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. The certificate requires a total of 15 credit hours. The program is designed to bring together two fields that benefit from complementary knowledge and skills that may be used in the government and nonprofit sectors. This integration of education in social work and nonprofit management draws on the contributions that each area can make to a professional knowledge base for practice in both fields.

Application process

To earn the Certificate in Nonprofit Management simultaneously with the M.S.W., it is necessary to complete two graduate admissions applications and be admitted to both programs. Students may begin their studies in either program or apply to both programs simultaneously. Students who are already enrolled in good standing in the M.S.W. degree program are not required to submit any additional supporting documents when applying to the certificate program.

Certificate requirements for M.S.W. students

Social work students enrolled in the SWAPPP concentration are required to complete three nonprofit courses: [PADM 656](#), [PADM 659](#) and [PADM 661](#). Two social work SWAPPP courses are substituted for six credit hours of the certificate's 15 credit-hour requirement. One of these courses is [SLWK 712](#). The second course may be [SLWK 711](#) or [SLWK 713](#).

Social work students enrolled in the clinical practice concentration are required to complete four nonprofit courses ([PADM 650](#), [PADM 656](#), [PADM 659](#) and [PADM 661](#)) and one elective. Two social work courses, [SLWK 602](#) and [SLWK 606](#) (six credits) or [SLWK 608](#) (3 credit hours), may substitute for [PADM 650](#) (three credits).

Note: M.S.W. students pursuing the clinical practice concentration must complete the entire 15 credit hours required for the Certificate in Nonprofit Management. Any six of the PADM nonprofit credit hours will satisfy the M.S.W. elective requirement for either concentration.

Curriculum requirements - SWAPP Concentration

PADM 656 Fund Development for the Nonprofit Sector – 3 credits

PADM 659 Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations – 3 credits

PADM 661 Nonprofit Law, Governance and Ethics – 3 credits

SLWK 712 Social Work Planning and Administrative Practice I – 3 credits

SLWK 711 Strategies for Social Work Planning and Administrative Practice - 3 credits

Or SLWK 713 Social Work Planning and Administrative Practice II - 3 credits

Total Hours

15

Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) for the Certificate in Nonprofit Management for students in the M.S.W. program SWAPPP concentration 15 credits

Public Management

Website: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/public-management-certificate/>

Program Goal

The Graduate Certificate in Public Management is a program designed to enable practitioners in government and nonprofit organizations to acquire knowledge and skills in public administration without pursuing a full master's degree.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will participate in and contribute to the policy process.
- Students will lead and manage in public governance.
- Students will articulate and apply a public service perspective.

Required Courses (3 Courses, 9 Credits)

PADM 601 - Principles of Public Administration

PADM 607 - Public Human Resource Management

PADM 609 - Financial Management in Government

Electives (3 Courses, 9 Credits)

Students may take any graduate PADM course as an elective for this program. Other courses may be selected with permission of the program chair.

Total: 18 Credits

Sustainability Planning

Website:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/sustainability-planning-certificate/>

Program Mission

The mission of the Certificate in Sustainability Planning is to provide students with a better understanding of society's land use and natural resource systems, with a particular emphasis on the factors that contribute to or constrain their level of sustainability. The program aims to give students the knowledge and skills needed to identify and address barriers to sustainability and to formulate strategies to create more sustainable practices, systems and institutions. Using a holistic and integrated approach, the program emphasizes the interdependence of sociocultural, biophysical and political-economic dimensions of sustainability, especially as they relate to urban or other subnational regions.

An important theme of the program is that sustainability planning is primarily about influencing humans and their activities by modifying organizational structures, economic policies and legislative frameworks. Therefore, of paramount importance are topics normally associated with the social sciences, such as urban and regional planning, economics, political science and human geography. However, sustainability is an interdisciplinary science, and thus students must also examine topics typically linked to the biophysical sciences, such as ecology and geomorphology.

Students will acquire knowledge and skills that complement backgrounds in engineering, environmental and social sciences, business or other fields.

Program Goals

- Provide students with a better understanding of the sociocultural, biophysical and political-economic dimensions of the key problems faced by society with regard to natural resources and the environment — particularly in the context of urban and other subnational regions.
- Develop students' insights on the underlying causes of these problems and on the political-economic and sociocultural factors that constrain the ability to address them more effectively.
- Help students acquire the analytical and professional skills needed to identify and address barriers to sustainability and to formulate strategies to develop more sustainable lifestyles, systems and institutions.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will develop a well-rounded knowledge of sustainability, with particular emphasis on the following elements:
- Factors influencing sustainability at the individual, household, community, regional, national and international scale
- Balancing environmental, economic and social objectives in decision-making
- The relationship between the built and natural environments and their effects on human health and well-being
- Linkages among consumptions/lifestyle patterns, technology, regional carrying capacity and sustainability
- Political-economic influences on land/resource use, community design, transportation and other human systems
- Energy and natural resource efficiency and conservation
- Renewable resource use, environmental management and landscape/habitat protection
- Environmental remediation
- Students will be able to communicate clearly and effectively, using a variety of methods, to enhance the collaborative and public nature of their work.
- Students will acquire the analytical and research skills needed to investigate a sustainability-related problem and develop strategies for addressing it.
- Student will acquire organizational skills and knowledge of management practices frequently employed within planning and related fields.

Required Courses (3 Courses, 9 Credits)

URSP 637 – Sustainable Community Development
URSP 650 – Natural Resources and Environmental Planning
URSP 655 – Environmental Policy and Planning

Social Equity Elective (1 Course, 3 Credits) select one of the following:

URSP 622 - Community Socioeconomic Analysis Using GIS
URSP 641 - Citizen Participation and Negotiation
URSP 643 - Housing Policy

Sustainability Application Electives (2 Course, 6 Credits) select one of the following:

URSP 545 - Sustainable Energy Policy and Planning
URSP 621- Introduction to Geographic Information Systems
URSP 628 - Land Use Planning
URSP 672 - Food Systems, Rural Development and Landscape Conservation
URSP 681 - International Urban Policy and Planning

Total: 18 Credits

Urban Revitalization

Website: bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-government-public-affairs/urban-revitalization-certificate/

Program Goal

The Certificate in Urban Revitalization provides specialized training in the techniques and processes of city and neighborhood revitalization. Topics include adaptive reuse of buildings, historic preservation, real estate market analysis and the role of private-public partnerships in financing development projects. The certificate is useful for mid-career professionals who wish to learn new skills to expand their career options. It also is useful for recent college graduates who desire advanced training beyond the baccalaureate level and accelerated entry into the job market.

At any time, students in the certificate program may apply for admission into the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program and, if accepted, may transfer the certificate credits toward partial fulfillment of the master's degree requirements.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students should display evidence of having developed a multidisciplinary understanding of urban life.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of, and a willingness to act in accordance with, the ethics and values of the professional.

Required Courses (6 Courses, 18 Credits)

Select 6 of the following

FIRE 629 – Cases in Real Estate*

URSP 517 - Historic Preservation in Planning

URSP 610 - Introduction to Planning

URSP 611 - Principles of Urban Design

URSP 643 - Housing Policy

URSP 647 - Adaptive Reuse of Buildings*

URSP 664 - Urban Economic Development Policy

URSP 666 - Urban Commercial Revitalization

URSP 691 - Topics: Architectural Analysis and Historic Preservation

URSP 691 - Topics: Historic Preservation Applications

*Only one of FIRE 629 or URSP 647 may be applied toward the degree requirements

For students who wish to focus primarily on historic preservation, 12 of the 18 hours should include URSP 517, URSP 647, URSP 691 ("Topics: Architectural Analysis and Historical Preservation), and URSP 691 ("Topics: Historical Preservation Applications").

Total: 18 Credits

General Policies & Information

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and General Academic Policies and Regulations for All Graduate Students.

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/>) 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.

Taking Graduate Courses Before Being Admitted

VCU students who take graduate courses but aren't officially admitted to a degree program are classified as non-degree-seeking students.

Upon the approval of the course instructor, admissions committee (in some cases), program chair and the director of graduate studies, non-degree-seeking students may enroll on a space available basis for a maximum of six (6) credit hours. Subject to receiving a B or better in one or two of these courses, any credit earned may be counted toward degree requirements if the student applies and is admitted to a graduate program. Being allowed to enroll in these courses, however, does not guarantee a student's acceptance to the graduate program.

Provisional Admission

In rare cases, applicants who do not meet the requirements for full admission may be accepted provisionally upon recommendation of the program's admissions committee. The conditions for earning full admission are provided by the program and include an assessment of academic performance after a specific number of hours or courses are completed (e.g., a GPA of 3.0 or higher in two core courses during the first semester). Provisionally admitted students may not withdraw from any courses during the provisional period.

Provisional admission does not constitute a waiver of the requirement to submit a standardized test score if required by the program

If a provision is applied to a student based on a missing admissions document (e.g. a transcript or missing reference), upon receipt of the missing document the status of the student will be changed to "full admission" through a special action process administered by the GSSA Office.

It is important to understand that in many cases, a student admitted provisionally is ineligible for financial aid as a graduate student. If this creates an extreme hardship, students in this situation should make an appointment with their program chair to explore alternatives as soon as possible.

Transfer Credit

Subject to university guidelines, and after faculty review, a maximum of six credits (nine credits maximum under exceptional circumstance) may be transferred for credit from other graduate programs at VCU or from graduate work completed at other universities.

Courses taken and already submitted to fulfill requirements for other degrees cannot be used to satisfy requirements for the degree. To request transfer credit, a student must submit documentation of course content (syllabus) and an official academic transcript showing the course grade to the program chair for review and approval by the appropriate faculty member(s). Only courses with grades of "B" or better will be considered for transfer.

Requests for transfer of course work from another institution must include an official copy of the transcript from the college or university where the course work was taken. Contact the GSSA Office for additional information.

Grading System

Every student is assigned a letter grade for each course that is completed. This grade is recorded on the student's permanent transcript with the university. The grade on the student's university transcript is the official grade for the course. Course grades are assigned numerical equivalents, totaled, and divided by the number of credit hours completed to arrive at the student's grade point average (GPA). The GPA is important to the student for remaining in good standing in their program and in qualifying for their degree. It also plays an important role in recommendations by the faculty; in qualifying for honor societies and being considered for various scholarships and awards. It is also important to note that the Cum Laude honors designations do not apply at the graduate level.

Another factor impacting GPA at the graduate level is retaking courses for higher marks does not erase the earlier mark. For example, if a student must retake a course after receiving a "C" or below, and receives a "B" or above, both grades continue to factor into the GPA.

The grade of "A" indicates high competency understanding and applying learned concepts, theories, and being able to think critically. A grade of "B" indicates competence in understanding and applying course elements. For graduate student grading purposes, the grade of "C" indicates that the student did not achieve minimum competency in understanding and/or applying the course elements. Grades of "D" and "F" are failing grades, and may not be used toward graduation.

Upon completion of each course, the course instructor assigns a grade to each student. The instructor's process for grading should be explained in the course syllabus and discussed at the beginning of the semester. Students with questions about the instructor's grading should request an explanation from the instructor.

For more detailed information about grading visit <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/university/grading/>

The Grade Point Average (GPA)

The grade point average is important for maintaining good academic standing in all programs. All students must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 in all coursework to remain in good academic standing. The 3.0 GPA is the minimum required for graduation from these programs.

Grade symbol and meaning	Grade-point value per semester credit
A	4.0
B	3.0
C	2.0
D	1.0
F	0.0
P/F (Pass/Fail)	0.0
PR (Progress)	0.0
S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory)	0.0
W (Withdrawal)	0.0

The Grade of Incomplete ("I")

The instructor determines and assigns course grades, authorizes incomplete ("I") grades, and decides whether or not to change a grade. In order to obtain an incomplete, the following guidelines must be followed:

- A grade of incomplete ("I") may only be requested by the student.
- The grade of "I" is reserved for exceptional and rare cases. An incomplete is considered for students whose completed coursework has been qualitatively satisfactory but who have been unable to complete all course requirements because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control.
- Incomplete grades should only be given when there is minimal work to be completed for the course. Graduate students must complete all remaining course requirements prior to the last day of classes by the next academic semester (fall or spring).

All grades of an "I" automatically convert to an "F" at the end of the expiration period. It is the student's responsibility to be in contact with the instructor on a continual basis and submit the remaining material with enough time for a grade to be changed prior to the expiration date.

There are only two instances in which anyone other than the course instructor can issue or change a grade. The first is from a grade appeal by the student. In this situation, a final grade determination is made by a grade review committee. The Grade Review Procedure can be found here:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/university/grade-review/>

The second instance is when the instructor is unavailable for reviewing the course materials and assigning a grade. This can occur when a student receives an incomplete ("I") grade in a course and the instructor leaves the university temporarily or permanently. If the faculty member cannot be contacted, the program chair will assign responsibility for determine a grade to the faculty member most qualified to make that decision.

For additional information about Incomplete grades, please contact the GSSA Office.

Independent Study

Subjects for which a student is interested and academically prepared, but formal course offerings are not available, enrollment in an independent study course is recommended. Students may choose to conduct original research or select a substantive project. To pursue an independent study, the student must have the sponsorship of a faculty member in the Wilder School.

The student will propose a project or subject for investigation and, with advisement, will negotiate the appropriate number of credit hours. A directed research proposal will be filed with the program chair. This form will contain a short description of the research or subject of inquiry, the name of the supervising faculty member, the proposed date for completion, and the number of credit hours to be earned.

Time Allowed for Completion of the Degree

The VCU Graduate School allows six years, including leaves of absence, to complete a master's degree or a graduate certificate. Under exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to obtain an extension. Students must submit a written justification for an extension to the GSSA Office. The request must outline the reasons for the extension and the work that remains to be completed. Generally, the student must demonstrate clear progress towards the requirements for the degree. Any student who requests a waiver of the six-year requirement must obtain the approval of the program chair, director of graduate studies, and the associate dean of faculty and academic affairs. Final approval of the request must be approved by the dean of the graduate school.

When students are granted an extension beyond the six-year time limit to complete the degree, all coursework taken more than six years prior to the projected completion of the VCU degree will be reviewed to determine if the student has sufficient formal training in current concepts and tools of their field of study. In instances where coursework is determined to be outdated, students may be required to pursue additional training, which may include retaking relevant coursework.

Continuous Enrollment

To remain in good standing, students must be continuously enrolled at VCU until they have completed all requirements for the degree. This means that a student must register for at least one course per year (summer courses apply). Students who are working on a master's thesis must register for at least 1 credit per semester while completing their thesis. For more information on continuous enrollment visit:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/registration-policies/>

Leave of Absence

Students who are not using university resources and cannot be continuously enrolled during a regular academic term must request a leave of absence. Reasons for requesting a leave of absence must be documented in a written request to the student's academic advisor. If approved, the request will be forwarded to the director of graduate studies who will review and recommend approval for well-documented requests. The request is forwarded through the associate dean of faculty and academic affairs in the Wilder School to the dean of the graduate school for final approval. Note that a leave of absence does not "stop the clock" for the time limit to complete the requirements of the degree; a maximum of six years for a graduate degree still applies. A leave of absence is not required when a student plans to skip one semester of coursework, but will be resuming classes the following semester. In this situation, the student should still notify GSSA about their intentions.

Override Process

Overrides are at the discretion of the Program Chair. To request an override into a course, please complete the Wilder School's Override Request Form at the following webpage: [Wilder School Override Form](#)

On the Override Request Form, you will be asked to provide the following information:

Student name;

V number;

VCU email address;

Program of Study;

Semester and year;

Course number and/ section number;

Course reference number (CRN) a unique 5-digit number for the course;

Registration error received; and

Reason for the override.

You will receive an email response to your request within approximately two to three business days. If your request is approved, you will be directed to self-register. If your request is denied, you will be directed to the program chair for more information.

Exemption from Required Courses

A student may petition for an exemption (waiver) from a course requirement under the same conditions and in the same manner as requesting transfer credits. Previous extensive work in a subject area directly related to a required concentration course in this program can be considered. The decision will depend on concurrence from faculty. If the exemption is granted, the student must take another approved course to replace the exempted course. The replacement course must be approved by the program chair, pertinent program faculty and the director of graduate studies.

Class Attendance Policy

Faculty determine class attendance policies. Class attendance policy should be clearly stated in the course syllabus. If it is not, students should ask instructors about their policy regarding class attendance. Students must contact instructors and request permission to miss class or to deviate in some way from the established policy. In the event of an emergency, students must notify their instructor(s) that they will miss class as soon as it is possible to do so. Instructors can insist students withdraw from the course for deviating from the attendance policy.

Withdrawal from Classes

It is important for students to understand the difference between a withdrawal and a drop from a course for which they are registered. Dropping a class by the end of the Add/Drop period, normally at the end of the first full week of classes (summer term is the day after the first day of class), results in a total refund of tuition. Withdrawing from a class after the Add/Drop period may result in a prorated tuition refund.

The last day to withdraw from a class with the grade of a 'W' can be found on the university academic calendar (academiccalendars.vcu.edu). If the student does not withdraw from a course by that date, he/she will receive the grade earned at the end of the semester.

Degree Candidacy Requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, 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 chairs should refer to the degree candidacy policy as published in the Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions. Students should contact GSSA with any questions regarding discrepancies in degree candidacy.

Graduation Requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must submit a formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Candidates for degrees are eligible for graduation upon completion of all academic requirements in effect at the time of official matriculation into the program, provided the students are continuously enrolled and provided the requirements are met within the time limit specified by the school or program and the University Graduate Council. Students failing to satisfy the time requirement and who are readmitted to their programs shall satisfy requirements in effect at the time of readmission.

All degrees are conferred by the VCU Board of Visitors upon recommendation of the graduate faculty. Degrees are granted at the close of the semester in which students complete their work. Degrees will not be granted unless all financial obligations have been resolved with VCU's Office of Student Accounting. Students must be enrolled at the time that they apply for graduation (i.e., in the semester in which students intends to graduate).

In order to graduate, students must formally apply for graduation and should do so early in their final semester. To begin the graduation process, the student must apply to graduate online. Students should first log on to VCU e-Services, select "student," then "student records," then "apply to graduate." Once the student has completed the online checkout, their student record will be audited by the GSSA office.

Graduate students should also refer to the graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>).

There are two university commencement ceremonies—one at the end of spring (usually in May) and another at the end of fall (usually in December). Those graduating in summer may choose to take part in either the spring or fall commencement ceremony. Students graduating in fall, spring and summer may choose to personally pick up their diplomas or receive their diplomas in the mail following the commencement ceremonies.

Students who have up to six credits remaining after spring commencement may petition to participate in the

ceremony. Students must be registered to take the remaining classes in the summer semester in order to submit a petition.

Sharing Credits Between a Master's Degree and a Graduate Certificate

Students who are currently pursuing both a Master's degree and a Graduate Certificate, and sharing credits between these two programs, must submit a graduation application for the graduate certificate upon completion of the certificate requirements. If a student completes the Master's program and fails to submit a graduation application for a completed graduate certificate, the Wilder School will not confer the graduate certificate. This is not applicable if there are still outstanding classes for the graduate certificate. See the example below.

Example

A student is pursuing the Master's in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) and the GIS Certificate and sharing classes between the two programs. The student completes the GIS certificate requirements in fall 2017 and completes the MURP requirements in spring 2018. The student should have submitted a graduation application in fall 2017 for the GIS Certificate. However, the student must submit a graduation application for the GIS Certificate in spring 2018 (along with a graduation application for the MURP degree). If the student fails to submit the graduation application for the GIS certificate, and the MURP degree is already conferred, the Wilder School will not confer the GIS Certificate.

Additional information is available at: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info>

Dismissal for a Lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Termination from the program for a lack of academic progress may occur when the student seems unable to earn and maintain a GPA above the 3.0 level necessary for graduation.

If a student's GPA falls below a 3.0, the student will be required to work with an academic advisor to create an Academic Performance Agreement (APA), which details the steps required to regain good academic standing. APAs are normally for one semester but, in rare instances, may be for two semesters. The APA must be approved by the program chair and director of graduate studies. If the student's GPA remains below a 3.0 for a second semester, the student will be subject to dismissal from the program. Students following an APA may not withdraw from classes or receive an Incomplete or may be subject to dismissal from the program.

Grades of C or Below

Students who receive a grade of "C" or below in a course will be required to meet with their academic adviser or program chair to determine their future in the program. A grade of "C" in a core course for the MURP program must be repeated. If a course is repeated, both grades will remain on the student's transcript and will factor into the GPA.

A student receiving a grade lower than "C," or two or more "C" s or below, regardless of the course type, will be reviewed by the GSSA office for possible dismissal from the program. Earning failing grades also lowers the student's GPA, putting students in jeopardy for dismissal from the program.

Graduate School policy regarding grades can be found in the Graduate Bulletin (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/university/grading/>).

Program Dismissal

Program dismissal is initiated at the program level by academic advisors or program chair. Dismissal from a program is initiated via a special action form indicating the reason for dismissal with relevant documentation attached.

Reasons for dismissal may include but are not limited to:

- Lack of academic progress (“D” or “F” in a class, too many grades of “C” or “U”, as determined by the student’s academic program in conjunction with Graduate Council policy; GPA below 3.0; failure of comprehensive exams; lack of progress or unsuccessful defense of thesis/dissertation)
- Discontinuous enrollment
- Exceeding time limit for a graduate degree
- Honor policy violation
- Academic misconduct
- Professional misconduct

A request for dismissal is forwarded to the school dean/dean’s designee and then forwards it to the graduate dean. The graduate dean/dean’s designee reviews the action, notifies the Office of Records and Registration, and sends a dismissal letter to the student via VCU email.

This letter includes a statement of the student’s right to appeal and informs the student that appeal must be initiated at the program and/or school level within 10 business days after receipt of the letter.

Appeals

A student may appeal dismissal from a graduate program under the following procedures.

- The student has the burden of proof in all appeals.
- The student must initiate the appeal process at the program level within 10 business days after receipt of the graduate dean’s certified dismissal letter and according to the program/department and/or schools/colleges appeal processes. All program/ department and/or school/college appeal processes should be exhausted prior to initiating an appeal to the graduate dean.
- If all program/department and/or school/college appeal processes fail to resolve the issue, the student must provide the graduate dean with written notification of appeal, to include justification and all supporting documentation (correspondence and other paperwork leading up to the dismissal), within 10 business days of the school/college decision. All documentation must be provided at the time of written notification of appeal.
- The graduate dean provides the graduate program director and school/college dean with copies of the student’s appeal and asks the graduate program director/dean/ department chair to provide the Graduate School with their response, including copies of correspondence and any other supporting documentation that led to the dismissal. The graduate program director and school dean must respond to the graduate dean’s request for information within 10 business days.
- The graduate dean will review the materials and may refer the matter to the Admissions and Academic Standards (AAS) Committee of the University Graduate Council. The committee is composed of faculty members from various divisions of the university plus one ex-officio voting member from the Graduate School. AAS members who have direct knowledge of the student’s case will be recused. A minimum of four members must be present to constitute a quorum. The committee will convene to review the documentation and consider the positions of the parties. At its meeting, the committee will hear presentations from and ask questions of the student and representatives of the school/department/program. The student and the school/ department /program representative may each bring up to two persons who may provide support and advice but who may not speak for the parties.
- After considering the materials submitted and the presentations by the parties, the committee will convene in closed session and decide, by majority vote, whether to recommend that the graduate dean uphold or reverse the dismissal. In the event of a less than unanimous decision, both opinions will be communicated to the graduate dean. The graduate dean renders the final decision and notifies the student in writing within 10 business days by certified mail to the student’s official address on file with the university.
- The student may be allowed to register for courses during the pendency of the appeal, understanding that the student will be dropped retroactively if the dismissal is upheld.

More details regarding program dismissal and appeals can be found in the Graduate School Bulletin (bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate).

Readmission to Program

Students who withdraw from the program for any reason must reapply through the regular admission process. Students who are dismissed from the program typically cannot apply for admission for one year. After that period of time has passed, they must reapply through the regular admission process

VCU's Honor System

Virginia Commonwealth University recognizes that honesty, truth and integrity are values central to its mission as an institution of higher education. Therefore, it must act to maintain these values, even to the point of separating from the University those who violate them. The VCU Honor System describes the responsibilities of students, faculty and administration in upholding academic integrity, while at the same time respecting the rights of individuals to the due process offered by administrative hearings and appeals. Any persons enrolled in any course or program offered by VCU, and all persons supervising the learning of any student, are responsible for acting in accordance with the provisions of this policy. A complete text is included in the VCU Resource Guide.

An integral part of the VCU Honor System is the Honor Pledge:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment."

At the option of the instructor, work assigned for classes, internships and all other types of instruction offered at the University may be accomplished in either of two ways: (1) as "Pledged" work, for which the student will sign a pledge statement indicating that the work was completed independently, without giving or receiving assistance from another; or (2) as "Unpledged" work, which may be completed in collaboration with others as directed by the instructor and for which no pledge statement is required. All work is considered to be pledged unless the instructor specifies others.

The VCU Honor System gives definitions and illustrative examples of six acts that are violations of the policy: cheating, plagiarism, facilitating academic dishonesty, abuse of academic materials, stealing and lying. There are also six penalties that may be imposed upon students who are found guilty of violations: honor probation, assignment of grades, suspension, expulsion, revocation and other relevant sanctions.

Office of Student Success



Dear Wilder School Graduate Students:

Congratulations and welcome to VCU! You have, no doubt, worked diligently to get here and you should feel proud to be a member of a highly accomplished group of students. The Office of Student Success embraces the opportunity to support your journey of discovery for professional advancement. We want to connect you with your peers, faculty, the community, and to provide opportunities for you to engage in experiential learning and professional development experiences.

The Office of Student Success provides a variety of services and programs to support your success as an engaged learner, and we hope that you will visit our website— wilder.vcu.edu/students—to learn more about our office. We look forward to working with you! Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Best wishes,

Shajuana Isom-Payne, Assistant Dean of Student Services

Office Location: Raleigh Building, Room 1001

1001 W. Franklin Street

Email: wsinternship@vcu.edu and wilderfellows@vcu.edu

Phone: (804) 827-2791

Career Advisement and Job Searches

The Wilder School's Office of Student Success (OSS), in partnership with University Career Services, provides career information and advisement to students. OSS offers programming to promote and support students' professional development and to prepare students for careers in government and public affairs. The professional workshops include resume writing, interviewing strategies, building your professional brand, employer showcase presentations and many other career enhancement opportunities.

University Career Services provides a variety of career- and professional development-related resources for graduate and first-professional students. Whether you're interested in an academic or nonacademic track after graduation, a variety of resources to help reach your goals and enrich your career are available.

Services provided include:

- Resume/CV development
- Cover letters
- Interviews
- Career exploration
- Professional networking

Students are encouraged to use the tools available online and in the Career Services office to help determine the best career direction. Students may also schedule an appointment with their career adviser or attend one of the events offered by the Career Services office to seek out additional ways to enrich your VCU education.

For more information, please visit <http://www.careers.vcu.edu/graduates/>

Wilder School Internship Program

Application Process

The Wilder School's Office of Student Success encourages students to participate in structured and supervised internships with government, nonprofit and business organizations. The purpose of the internship is to provide students with experience in a professional setting outside the classroom and to enrich the learning process by supplementing theory with practice. Generally, the internship process includes the following steps:

Attend Internship Orientation

Orientation sessions are held monthly. For a schedule of internship orientations, please visit <https://wilder.vcu.edu/students/student-success/>.

Prepare and submit application

- Visit the Handshake at VCU online portal and other resources to construct areas of interest to note on the Government and Public Affairs (GVPA) Experience Application.
- Fill out the GVPA Experience Application and explore the job market for internships. Student are encouraged to complete this application either during the exploratory process, or once an internship has been confirmed. The form is linked on <https://wilder.vcu.edu/students/student-success/internships/>
- The Office of Student Success will send a confirmation email upon receipt of your completed online GVPA Experience Application.

*Once the student has completed the application, it is the student's responsibility to investigate internship opportunities, secure an internship and seek approval from OSS for academic credit.

Apply for Internships

- Visit the University Career Services center to assist in developing a strong resume, which will be used when applying for internships in most organizations, and for enhancing your interview skills.
- Using the contacts and opportunities identified on Handshake at VCU and/or other resources—submit resume and applications to organizations/agencies you have identified.

Contact the Office of Student Success

- After an agency has offered you an internship, and you have accepted, formally request enrollment into the GVPA/PADM internship course with the Office of Student Success.
- Complete the Internship Preliminary Report and submit to the Office of Student Success.
- Once your forms are received and approved, you will receive an email with instructions for an override to register for the internship course.

Graduate Program Specific Internship Guidelines

The internship must focus on program specific topics and is pending approval by the program chair, Graduate Student Services, and the Office of Student Success. All internship hours must be completed during the semester the student is registered for the GVPA/PADM internship course. Retroactive internship experiences and hours are not approved for academic credit.

Criminal Justice – Students may be eligible to earn 3 credit hours for internship experience. Students must work 150 hours and successfully complete the GVPA 693 course in order to earn the academic credits.

Homeland Security – Students may be eligible to earn 3 credit hours for internship experience. Students must work 150 hours and successfully complete the GVPA 693 course in order to earn the academic credits.

Public Administration – Students are required to complete 3 credit hours for internship experience, or seek a waiver from the program chair. Students must work 300 hours and successfully complete the PADM 693 course in order to earn the academic credits.

Public Policy and Administration – Students must receive program approval to earn academic credit for internship.

Urban and Regional Planning – Students are required to complete an internship for the graduate degree program or seek a waiver. Students are required to complete 120 hours and submit the online Government & Public Affairs Experience Application, Time log, Supervisor Evaluation, and Student Experience Response Essay. Students are not required to attend internship orientation or enroll in the GVPA 693 course. To request required documents, please email OSS at wsinternship@vcu.edu. MURP internships are non-credit bearing.

Certificate Programs – Students enrolled in the Gender Violence Intervention program are required to complete a 3-credit internship; all other certificate programs may be eligible to earn 3 credit hours for internship experience. Students must work 150 hours and successfully complete GVPA 693 course in order to earn the academic credits.

Questions?

Office of Student Success

Raleigh Building, Room 1002

1001 W. Franklin Street

Phone: (804) 827-2791

Email: wsinternship@vcu.edu

Website: <https://wilder.vcu.edu/students/student-success/internships/>

Frequently Asked Questions – Graduate Student Internship Application Process

Who is eligible for participation?

Graduate students. Program requirements may vary; program-specific approval is required.

How do I find an internship position?

Students are encouraged to attend an internship orientation session and visit the Wilder School Office of Student Success for many available resources for local, state and federal internships. You should identify opportunities of interest and contact the organization to begin the application process for the position. Information regarding new opportunities is shared with students via the program listserv and is posted on Handshake at VCU. Individuals may also find positions independently; however, the position must be approved by the Office of Student Success in order to receive approval for academic credit.

What application materials do I need to submit to the Wilder School?

You must complete the Office of Student Success Government and Public Affairs Experience Application. If you have been offered a position prior to completing the application, please include the job description and contact information from your employer.

When is the application deadline?

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Deadline for earned academic credit for internships will be reviewed and approved by Office of Student Success based on internship timeline and semester academic calendar.

Can I earn credit for an Internship done in the past?

No. Students are not eligible to earn retroactive credits for previously completed internship hours. The completion of internship hours and enrollment in the internship course must be concurrent in order to earn academic credit.

How do I receive academic credit for my internship?

After the application is approved and the Preliminary Report is received, you will receive an email with information about your electronic override and the details to enroll in the internship course.

How many credit hours will I receive?

Graduate students may take a 3-credit internship course (GVPA 693 or PADM 693). Master of Public Administration students must work 300 hours for the 3-credit course. Master of Urban and Regional Planning students do not receive academic credit for internships. All other graduate students must work 150 hours for 3 credits.

Funding Opportunities for Wilder School Graduate Students

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Program

A limited number of Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) positions are offered on a competitive basis to full-time students in our master's and doctoral programs. GTAs work 20 hours per week with one or more Wilder School faculty members. The school pays for the GTAs tuition (not fees) and the student receives a financial stipend. Students selected as GTAs must be enrolled on a full-time basis. Individuals who are interested in a GTA position should contact their program chair.

Wilder Graduate Scholars' Fellowship Program

The Wilder Graduate Scholars Fellowship program provides well-qualified, full-time master's students with professional work experience through a host employer (often a state agency or community organization). For application details, please visit <https://wilder.vcu.edu/students/student-success/graduate-fellowship/>.

Time Frame

Fellows are appointed for one academic year, beginning in August and ending in May. The Fellow is expected to work at the host agency for 20 hours per week during the year. Observance of academic break periods (e.g., spring break, winter break) is not guaranteed. This varies from employer to employer, and is based upon work cycles.

Wilder Fellows' Expectations

Selection as a Wilder Graduate Scholar Fellow is a prestigious appointment. Students are expected to embrace the agency-related responsibilities with the highest level of professionalism and perform excellent work at the host agency, while gaining a dynamic work experience that provides a professional development opportunity.

Agency Expectations

The host agency agrees to provide the student with a professional work experience and to provide general direction and supervision of the student's work. The agency provides financial support to the student including full-time in-state tuition and a stipend.

Wilder School Commitment

The Wilder School agrees to select well-qualified students for host agency consideration. Based upon agency preference, the Wilder School can match the student with the agency or forward to the agency a select group of students. The agency can then interview the group of students and make the final selection.

Scholarships for Wilder School Students

The Wilder School offers numerous scholarships for current students. Please visit <https://wilder.vcu.edu/students/student-success/scholarships/> for additional details.

Other Funding Sources

- VCU Department of Business Services Scholarships - www.bsv.vcu.edu/scholarships
- <https://careers.vcu.edu/>
- "Find Funding for Graduate Research" - guides.library.vcu.edu/c.php?g=47786
- Scholarships - <https://finaid.vcu.edu/types/scholarships/>

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I set up my VCU email account?

1. Find your VCU eID and set your eID password at <http://go.vcu.edu/eidfinder>
2. Visit <http://mymail.vcu.edu> and click on the link to login.
3. Login to the Central Authentication Service using your eID and eID password.
4. Choose if you would or would not like to receive VCU Alerts. Visit <http://alert.vcu.edu/> for more information about VCU Alerts.
5. You will be presented with a Google “Welcome to your new account” page. Read the disclaimer. Click “I accept” then continue to your account.

For more information, please visit <http://mymail.vcu.edu/new-students/>

Where do I go for advising?

The Graduate Student Services and Advising (GSSA) Office serves as the primary advising office for all Wilder School graduate students.

Raleigh Building, Room 1007 (1001 W. Franklin Street) Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday

Phone: (804) 828-6837

Email: wsgradvise@vcu.edu

All students enrolled in our graduate master’s degree or graduate certificate programs should consult with the GSSA Office or their program chair at the beginning of each semester (before registering for classes) to decide their course of study. Students should consult with the GSSA Office for:

- Admission questions
- Submission and status of overrides
- Submission and status of incomplete grade assignments
- Submission and status of concentrations
- Review and approval of graduation applications
- Issues concerning VCU policies
- Requests for a leave of absence
- Academic advising, including course planning and registration

How do I register for classes?

1. Visit www.vcu.edu and click on “MyVCU”
2. Enter your login information
3. Click on “eServices/VCU Self Service” under the “General Resources” column
4. Select the Student tab.
5. Select the Registration menu.
6. Click on Banner 9 Registration.
7. Click on Register for Classes.
8. Select the term for which you’d like to register and click continue.
9. Enter your search criteria. You may search by subject and any other search options of your choice. All the classes that match your criteria will be displayed.
10. Click Add for the class for which you would like to register. The class will be displayed in your schedule.
** Note that you are not yet registered for the class.**
11. Go to the Summary section on the bottom right. The class(es) will be listed as pending.
12. Click submit to attempt to register for the class(es).

If unsuccessful, the reasons why will be displayed in the notification center in the upper right of the screen. Click submit again and the message/unsuccessful class(es) will go away.

If successful, the class(es) will be listed as registered in the summary tab.

How do I substitute courses?

A student may petition for an exemption (waiver) from a course requirement, under the same conditions and in the same manner as requesting transfer credits. Previous extensive work in a subject area directly related to a required course may be considered. The decision will depend on concurrence from faculty. If the exemption is granted, the student must take another approved course to replace the exempted course. The replacement course must be approved by the program chair, pertinent program faculty, and the director of graduate studies.

Please consult the GSSA Office with any questions related to this matter.

How do I apply for graduation?

Students planning to graduate in the current semester should proceed as follows:

- Complete the “apply to graduate procedure” on eServices. The graduation application will be provided during this process. If a student is graduating from more than one program (e.g. a degree program and a certificate program), the student must complete the entire graduation checkout process through eServices for each program. The student’s department will be notified once all steps are completed.
- No degrees will be conferred unless students apply to graduate.
- Degrees will be awarded and diplomas issued in a current semester only. Students who do not complete the graduation checkout process in the semester in which they actually complete their programs will be awarded their degrees in the semester in which they apply to graduate. In such cases, a text notation will be added to the transcript to indicate the date that course work for the degree was completed.

Please consult the GSSA Office with any questions about the graduation application process.

Note that the graduation application starts the process to confer your degree. If you intend to participate in the VCU commencement ceremony and/or the Wilder School Diploma Ceremony, there is a separate process. For information regarding the VCU ceremony, see <https://commencement.vcu.edu/>. For information regarding the Wilder School ceremony, contact the GSSA office.

How do I find information on-campus about employment?

Please visit the HireVCURams website for employment opportunities both on-and-off campus:

<http://www.careers.vcu.edu/>

For information about service learning and for-credit internship opportunities, please visit

<http://www.wilder.vcu.edu/students/internships/>.

How can I find out more about becoming a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)?

A limited number of Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) positions are available on a competitive basis to full-time students in the Wilder School’s master’s and doctoral programs. GTAs work 20 hours per week with one or more Wilder School faculty members. The school pays for the GTAs tuition (not fees) and the student receives a financial stipend. Students selected as GTAs must be enrolled on a full-time basis and may not have any other paid employment.

GTA appointments are made for each academic year in late Spring or early Summer. Individuals who are interested in a GTA position should contact their program chair.

When do I declare a course concentration?

Students in the MURP program may choose to concentrate in a particular area of study as they complete their degree, or they may choose to complete a more general line of coursework. Students should consult with their program chair if they have questions about which concentration, if any, to choose. To declare a concentration, please consult the GSSA Office.

Where do I get information about conferences?

Information about conferences will be sent out periodically to your VCU email address. Students are also encouraged to reach out to faculty members with similar research interests for information about upcoming conferences and events.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the local context in which a project is implemented. This includes a thorough analysis of the social, economic, and cultural factors that may influence the success or failure of the intervention. It is essential to engage with local stakeholders from the outset to ensure that the project is relevant and sustainable.

The second part of the paper focuses on the design and implementation of the project. This involves developing a clear set of objectives and a detailed action plan. It is important to establish a strong monitoring and evaluation system to track progress and assess the impact of the intervention. Flexibility is key, as it may be necessary to adapt the project to changing circumstances.

The third part of the paper discusses the challenges and lessons learned from the project. It highlights the importance of maintaining open communication and transparency throughout the process. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for continued support and collaboration to ensure the long-term success of the project.