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Introduction

VCU School of Mass Communications

The School of Mass Communications, founded in 1971, is one of the largest units of the College of Humanities and Sciences. We offer a professional undergraduate education in an environment that values the strong foundation of liberal arts and sciences so necessary for professional communicators. Whether our students choose concentrations in journalism (with further specialization in print or broadcast), advertising (further specialization in creative and strategic) or public relations, they share a common core of course work in the liberal arts and sciences before they begin their major focus. The School offers Master of Science degree programs in Multimedia Journalism and Strategic Public Relations.

Our students graduate ready to go to work. They have completed internships and been involved in course-related activities in which they have produced materials for real audiences: our student-produced television show, VCU InSight; our student-staffed Capital News Service, and the campaigns our advertising and public relations students plan and often implement for real clients. Many also have worked with campus student media.

Our student population also is one of the most diverse in the country among mass communications programs: more than one-third of our students are ethnic and/or racial minorities and almost two-thirds are female.

One of the reasons our students are so prepared for the workplace is our faculty: 20 full-time faculty members and a roster of more than two dozen part-time faculty members — all of whom are either working professionals or have had experience within the disciplines they teach. These faculty bring a wealth of academic and professional preparation to the classroom and the lab. Many of our faculty also are recognized scholars in their fields. Because they maintain strong ties to the communication industries, our faculty ensure that our curricula reflect current “best practices.”

More than 5,000 alumni contribute every day to the communication professions and to the School’s reputation — as reporters, editors, directors, producers, account executives, creative directors and public relations managers. They form a strong support network for our students and new graduates, mentoring and easing their entry into the full-time workforce.
Graduate Programs

The School offers graduate programs in multimedia journalism and strategic public relations. Both programs lead to the Master of Science degree in Mass Communications. The School also is one of three academic units that support the interdisciplinary and innovative Ph.D in Media, Art and Text. The Department of English and the School of the Arts are the other academic units that support this doctoral program.

Program Administration

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The Mission Statement of the School of Mass Communications:

The Virginia Commonwealth University School of Mass Communications prepares effective and skilled communicators through quality instruction, advising and student services, based on real world applications. Through research, professional service and scholarship in applied communications, the School advances the knowledge and practice of a multi-disciplinary and
evolving media environment. The School values truth, ethics, creativity, innovation, collaboration, cultural diversity, shared governance and community engagement.

**M.S. in Multimedia Journalism**

**Mission Statement for the Master of Science in Mass Communications-Multimedia Journalism:**

The mission of the Master of Science in Mass Communications-Multimedia Journalism is to provide graduate, professional education for students who are in various stages of their careers in journalism and the broader communications industry and who seek to develop a stronger foundation and preparation in multimedia journalism.

**Student Learning Outcomes Multimedia Journalism:**
The specific learning outcomes of the multimedia program are that students graduating from this program will:

* Demonstrate higher level skills in concept building with a focus on critical thinking, and in the design of journalism news stories and packages with a multimedia focus
* Communicate clearly and effectively in written and multimedia platforms to serve news audiences
* Demonstrate the ability to conduct basic research that is applicable to journalism and multimedia
* Effectively apply tools and technologies to multimedia news stories and packages as appropriate for the news industry and other communication workplaces

The M.S. in Mass Communications with a concentration in multimedia journalism is designed to prepare students to work in a highly competitive and multiple-platform (print, broadcast, online/digital) news environment. The program is for recent graduates who have an undergraduate degree in journalism or a related field, or for more veteran journalists who want to upgrade their professional skills.

The degree requires 36 credit hours—30 hours of “core” requirements and two other courses. Students in this program learn the theory and practice of journalism in an immersion news environment and can specialize through graduate electives, projects and stories in any number of “beat” areas. For example, students can focus on coverage of health, science or the environment or concentrate on learning about international media coverage. Classes meet Fall-Spring-Fall-Spring over two years. Most “core” courses are in the evening, with some offerings online.

**M.S. in Strategic Public Relations**

**Mission Statement for the Master of Science in Mass Communications-Strategic Public Relations:**

The Master of Science in Mass Communications-Strategic Public Relations is a leading-edge professional education that prepares students at various stages in their public relations careers to function at the highest levels of management and apply sophisticated strategic thinking and
problem solving to accomplish organizational objectives. It prepares students for increased leadership responsibilities in developing, implementing and evaluating effective communication campaigns in an environment of dynamic change and globalization.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
The specific learning outcomes of the Strategic PR program are that students graduating from this program will:

* Demonstrate higher level skills of the public relations management function, including strategy development and critical thinking
* Communicate clearly and effectively in written and spoken forms appropriate for strategic public relations practice, audiences and purposes they serve
* Demonstrate ability to conduct research and evaluation to support strategic public relations decision-making
* Effectively apply tools and technologies appropriate to managing the process for strategic public relations

Graduates of the fast-track executive master's degree in strategic public relations are a new generation of communications professionals who are able to function at the highest levels of management and apply sophisticated strategic thinking to accomplish organizational objectives. The selective professional program is 30 credit hours. Courses are taught by School faculty and other experienced professionals. Students take weekend classes as a cohort, from July in the first year through July the following Summer. Continued full-time public relations employment is encouraged during the program.

**Admission Requirements**

**M.S. Multimedia Journalism Program**

Applicants must meet all requirements for admission to graduate programs in the VCU Graduate School and College of Humanities and Sciences. Applicants should have at least two years of professional experience in print, broadcast or online journalism or an undergraduate degree in journalism or a related field and have clearly demonstrated professional skills.

Applicants must present a GRE score that indicates ability to pursue graduate work. In addition, applicants must provide:

A detailed resume showing work experience in journalism or appropriate educational credentials
Transcripts of all previous college-level academic program(s)
Three recommendations from persons who are qualified to give information concerning the applicant’s ability for the specific program of study proposed
A letter detailing specific journalism career goals
A portfolio of work in journalism
For international applicants (without a university degree with English as the language), TOEFL (or comparable) scores
M.S. Strategic PR Program

In addition to the requirements for admission to graduate programs in the VCU Graduate School and College of Humanities and Sciences, applicants to the strategic public relations program must submit:

Three recommendations from persons who are qualified to give information concerning the applicant’s ability for the specific program of study proposed

Transcripts of all previous college work. Applicants must have an appropriate baccalaureate background in public relations or a related area

A detailed résumé showing work experience in public relations and other credentials appropriate to the program

A portfolio of work in public relations

A letter detailing strategic public relations career goals

Acceptable scores on the GRE General Test

TOEFL (or comparable) scores for international applicants without a degree from an English-language university.

Office 1114

Curriculum and Degree Requirements

Multimedia Journalism

The M.S. in Mass Communications with a concentration in multimedia journalism focuses on building multimedia skills. The degree requires 36 credit hours – 30 in the journalism discipline and six credit hours in a collateral area/s outside mass communications. (Students may also take with approval by the graduate director 692 Independent Study or 695 Internship/Fieldwork courses in mass communications as electives.) Students in this program learn the theory and practice of journalism in an immersion news environment and can further specialize through graduate electives, projects and stories in any number of “beat” areas. For example, students can focus on coverage of health or the environment or concentrate on learning about international media coverage.

Most classes will meet in the evening over two years (Fall-Spring-Fall-Spring) and some classes will be offered online. The two elective classes are taken as scheduled by the academic unit offering the course.

Curriculum (all classes are 3 credits):
*This schedule is subject to change

Fall One:
MASC 611 Research Methods
Monday evenings 6-8:40
MASC 642 Online Journalism I
Wednesday evenings 6-8:40
MASC 685 Business of Media (online)
Spring One:
(Evening schedule similar to Fall One)
MASC 643 Online Journalism II
MASC 645 Visual Journalism
MASC 646 Law and Ethics (online)

Fall Two:
(Similar evening schedule)
MASC 684 Multiplatform Storytelling
MASC 644 Computer-Assisted Reporting
(Selective MASC 695 Internship, MASC 692 Independent Study or outside elective)

Spring Two:
(Similar evening schedule)
MASC 688 Converged Media Applications
MASC 686 International Journalism
(Selective)
May Commencement

**Strategic Public Relations**

The concentration in strategic public relations requires a minimum of 30 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. The hours are divided as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core curriculum</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MASC 671 Strategic PR in a Digital Environment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 672 Strategic PR Research and Evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 675 Strategic PR Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 676 Public Relations Ethics and Law</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGMT 651 Organizational Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 682 Strategic Media Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 683 Strategic PR in the Global Environment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 694 Strategic PR Campaign Design and Implementation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six credits from approved graduate courses in the School of Business 6

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30

Course Schedule:
*This schedule is subject to change*
Summer
MASC 675 Strategic PR Management

Fall
MASC 672 Strategic PR Research & Evaluation
MASC 676 Public Relations Ethics and Law
MASC 682 Strategic Media Relations
Approved Graduate Elective

Spring
MASC 671 Strategic PR in a Digital Environment
MASC 694 Strategic PR Campaign Design & Implementation
Approved Graduate Elective

*Walk in May Graduation Ceremony

Summer
MASC 683 Strategic PR in the Global Environment

*August Commencement (Official Graduation)

School of Business Elective Courses for Strategic PR students

*Students must take one course from List A and one course from List B

Selection List A: Financial Courses

ACCT 507 Fundamentals of Accounting
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Theoretical and technical aspects for accumulating and reporting financial information for business. Emphasis on current financial accounting issues confronting businesses and interpretation of financial information reported by business. This is a graduate foundation course.

ECON 500 Concepts in Economics
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Essential economic concepts including the price system, price determination in imperfectly competitive markets, employment theory, and monetary theory. This is a foundation course. Not open to students who have completed undergraduate foundation sequence: ECON 203 with a minimum grade of B and ECON 211, or ECON 210 and 211.

FIRE 520 Financial Concepts of Management
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: ACCT 507. Pre- or corequisite: MGMT 524, STAT/BIOS 543, STAT 541, or MGMT 301 and MGMT 302. Not open to students who have completed FIRE 311 or the equivalent. A study of the essential concepts of financial
management in a global environment, including working capital management, capital budgeting, capital structure planning and dividend policy. This is a foundation course. (Available if student has completed ACCT 507)

MGMT 524 Statistical Elements of Quantitative Management  
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MGMT 500, MGMT 171, MGMT 212 or MATH 200. Develops an ability to interpret and analyze business data in a managerial decision-making context. Managerial applications are stressed in a coverage of descriptive statistics, probability, sampling, estimation, hypothesis testing, and simple regression and correlation analysis. This is a foundation course.

Selection List B: Theory and Application Courses

MGMT 530 Fundamentals of the Legal Environment of Business  
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The legal environment of business is examined in view of common law principles, statutory provisions and administrative regulations affecting various forms of business organizations and management obligations to the company, its owner and the public. Role of ethics and key commercial law areas are examined including Uniform Commercial Code Provisions. Formerly MKTG 530.

MGMT 540 Management Theory and Practice  
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A foundation course that presents theories, principles and fundamentals applicable to contemporary management thought and productive activities.

MGMT 641 Organizational Leadership and Project Team Management  
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: completion of all M.B.A. foundation courses or equivalent, or permission from the graduate studies in business office. M.B.A. students take in conjunction with ECON 610. An advanced course in management involving theories and models aimed at developing the managerial competencies needed to analyze, understand, predict and guide individual, group and organizational behavior. (Offered only in the summer sessions)

MGMT 655 Entrepreneurship  
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Individual and corporate entrepreneurship in high and low technology enterprises. Develops an understanding of the role of entrepreneurship in management theories and practices. Students will develop comprehensive venture analysis plans for presentation.

MGMT 656 Leadership  
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This seminar and experiential exercises course aims to raise your practical awareness of major leadership behavior patterns and strategies that promote effectiveness in organizations; to raise awareness, flexibility, and skill with your personal leadership styles; and to help you practice, discuss, and develop your ability to influence others over whom you may or may not exert positional authority.

MGMT 691 Topics: Negotiations
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Develop the negotiation skills needed to meet the challenges faced by executives. The course integrates the experiential and intellectual learning components of negotiation.

MKTG 570 Concepts and Issues in Marketing
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Designed for graduate students with little or no undergraduate education in marketing. A study of the philosophy, environment and practice of contemporary marketing. This is a foundation course. (Taught on-line)

MKTG 671 Marketing Management
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MKTG 570 or MKTG 301. Detailed study of concepts and procedural alternatives in the delineation of the market target, the development and implementation of the marketing mix, and the control and analysis of the total marketing effort.

MKTG 672 Concepts in Consumer Behavior
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MKTG 570 or MKTG 301. A study of the pertinent psychological, sociological and anthropological variables that influence consumer activity and motivation. (Taught on-line)

New Graduate Student Information

The Graduate School is here to assist you in any way possible to ensure that your graduate study at VCU is a meaningful experience. The following information highlights items of interest for new graduate students. Please feel free to contact the Graduate Dean, Dr. F. Douglas Boudinot; the Associate Dean, Dr. Sherry T. Sandkam; the Associate Dean of Admissions and Recruitment, Dr. Mark J. Schaefermeyer; or any of the staff if you have questions or need assistance.

Admission Status

Your offer of acceptance is for the semester indicated in your official letter of admission. In order to register for classes, students must officially respond to VCU’s offer of admission and indicate your acceptance of the offer. You must submit your response electronically to respondgrad@vcu.edu. Please include your Name, Student ID # (VXXXXXXXXX), Birth date, Address, Program, and Term of Entry in the email. If you are unable to enroll for the semester indicated, it is important that you contact your academic department as soon as possible to clarify your eligibility to enroll in future semesters. Your records will be kept in the Graduate School for one year, after which, you will need to reapply for admission. Regarding residency, please visit the following URL for VCU’s policy statement on determination of residency: http://www.enrollment.vcu.edu/rar/residency.html. Application Form for VA In-state Tuition is found at this link: http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/pdfs/vatuition.pdf.
Degree requirements

As a graduate student, it is important to be familiar with your bulletin of record (the bulletin in effect at the time of your official admission), as well as general academic regulations in individual school and department publications. It is especially important to familiarize yourself with policies relating to continuous enrollment, time limit for completion of degree, and enrollment requirements for the final semester before completion of your degree. For your convenience, the Graduate Bulletin may be accessed online at: http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/graduate/.

Graduate tuition and student fees

Graduate students registered for 9 to 15 credit hours are billed as full time. Graduate students registered for more than 15 hours during any semester are charged an overload fee on a per-credit-hour basis above the full-time tuition rate. Graduate students fully funded as graduate assistants or fellows must register for at least 9 graduate hours per semester (up to 6 hours during the summer if funded on a 12-month stipend). Coursework must be taken for credit. Departmental requirements may vary, so students should confirm enrollment requirements with their program directors. The Office of Student Accounting publishes a full schedule of tuition and fees and university charges, as well as billing policies and procedures. Complete information on all University charges may be obtained from the Office of Student Accounts - Monroe Park Campus: 804-828-2136, MCV Campus: 804-828-0749, or online at http://www.vcu.edu/enroll/sa/.

Financial support

A number of assistantships, fellowships, and scholarships are awarded each year to new and continuing graduate students on the basis of a variety of criteria. These awards vary by program. Selection is made at the department level; therefore, inquiry about such awards should be made directly to your program director. Departmental contact information is available on the Graduate Bulletin’s Web site at http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/prog_search/. If you have applied for need-based financial aid, contact the Financial Aid Office - Monroe Park Campus: 804-828-6669 or MCV Campus: 804-828-2702 – about the status of your application. Additional financial and funding information is available on the Graduate School’s Web site at http://wwwgraduate.vcu.edu/admission/newstudents/financial.html.

If you are a current undergraduate at VCU, please be advised that the type and amount of financial aid you receive will change significantly once your student status changes to graduate.

Change of address

Please maintain a current mailing address on file with the University so that you will receive official mailings, such as class schedules, billings, and grade reports. Changes of address should be submitted in writing to the Office of Records and Registration at http://www.vcu.edu/enroll/rar/ or to the Graduate School. Be sure to also keep current contact information on file with your advisor and program director.
**Disability services**

Students with disabilities are responsible for self-identification prior to requesting services and may do so at any time by presenting documentation to their campus coordinator. Contact information may be found at: http://www.students.vcu.edu/dss

**New graduate student orientation**

Each fall, the Graduate School and the Graduate Student Association (GSA) sponsors a university-wide orientation program for new graduate students. Information about the Graduate School’s orientation and various departmental orientations are on the Web at http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/newstudents/orientation/schedule.html. When contacted, please be sure to RSVP promptly!

**Checklist for New Graduate Students**

- Accept your offer of admission by sending an e-mail to respondgrad@vcu.edu.
- Download the Certificate of Immunization at http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/immunizations/. Complete and return the form to the Student Health Center as soon as possible. If you have any questions please contact Student Health for questions at (804) 828-8828.
- Obtain your VCU eID
  Your eID is your identifier that authenticates you to use many VCU electronic services and web applications. Currently, the eID is used to gain access to the VCU Portal, wireless network, the academic e-mail system, Blackboard Course Management System, Domino E-mail System, Domino Quickplaces, Library Applications, and some departmental applications. Your eID will grant you access to my VCU (found on the VCU home page) and your online E-services account. E-services is an online service that makes it possible for you to review your records online. You are encouraged to use E-services to register for classes, review and print bills and unofficial transcripts, review the status of financial aid applications and awards, and apply for graduation. All accepted students have been assigned an eID. To set up your eID you will need your Birth date and Student ID# found on your acceptance letter (VXXXXXXXX) to the right of your name. For more information and to set up your eID please visit http://www.ts.vcu.edu/faq/accounts/. If you do not know your eID please visit https://husky.vcu.edu/eid/finder/index.cgi to obtain your eID.
- Admissions/Tuition Deposits
  If your program requires a deposit, download the instructions located at http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/newstudents/admission.html and pay your deposit online by credit card.
  - Set up your e-mail account
    Once you have obtained your eID, it’s very simple to set up your e-mail account. Your e-mail address will be your eID@mymail.vcu.edu. It is essential that you set up your VCU e-mail account as soon as possible, since it is the official means of university communication with students. You may create your VCU e-mail account even before registering for classes. Information about your email account and how to set it up can be found at
Advising and registration
Your program director will contact you regarding advising, special program information, registration and department orientation activities. General registration information may be obtained online at http://www.vcu.edu/enroll/rar or in person at Student Services Center located in the Office of Records and Registration at 827 W. Franklin St., Founders Hall, Room 104, Phone: 804-828-1349 on the Monroe Park Campus, at 1101 E. Marshall St., Sanger Hall, Room 1-055, Phone: 804-828-9800 on the MCV Campus. Please be sure to note final add/drop and withdrawal policies and deadlines. You may register for classes online at http://www.eservices.vcu.edu/studenthelp.html. Once you have registered for classes, you will receive regular correspondence about a variety of registration services such as walk-in, phone and online registration. You are encouraged to take advantage of these services that allow you to register in advance but be billed at a later date.

Obtain your VCUCard (Student ID)
You can only obtain a VCUCard during the semester in which you are first enrolled for classes. You should bring copies of your student schedule to verify your enrollment and a picture ID with them when you come to campus. The VCUCard Office is located at 701 West Broad Street, Lobby Technology Administration Building, Phone: 804-827-CARD (2273) on the Monroe Park Campus and at Sanger Hall, 1001 E. Marshall St., Room B1-018, Phone: 804-628-CARD (2273) on the MCV Campus. VCUCard information can be found online at http://vcucard.vcu.edu/getcard.html.

Parking
Applications for parking subscriptions are available online at http://www.bsv.vcu.edu/vcupark/ or from either of the Parking and Transportation Office locations - 1111 West Broad Street, West Broad Street Deck Suite A, Phone: 804-828-8726 on the Monroe Park Campus or 1008 East Clay Street, Grant House Room B026, Phone: 804-828-0501 on the MCV Campus. To avoid a processing delay, the application should be filled out completely. In order to be eligible for university parking privileges, the applicant must meet the following conditions:
1. The applicant must have no outstanding university parking penalties or unpaid violations.
2. The applicant must be a current student with a valid VCUCard.

Obtain Housing
On-Campus Housing information may be obtained from the VCU Residential Life & Housing Office online at http://www.housing.vcu.edu/, 711 W. Main St., Room. 159, Phone: 804- 828-7666. Off-Campus Housing information may be obtained online at http://www.usca.vcu.edu/offcampus/.

Useful Links

Homepage of School of Mass Communications:

www.has.vcu.edu/mac
VCU Graduate School highly recommends that you explore the following links:

More than 140 graduate degree programs offered-
http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/prog_search/

VCU Graduate and Professional Programs Bulletin -
http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/graduate/

The Admissions Process –
http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/prospective/domestic/index.html

The Application Checklist -
http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/prospective/domestic/checklist.html

Testing Information –
http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/prospective/testing/index.html

Instructions for Submitting Application Materials -
http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/prospective/apply/instructions.html

Online Application for Graduate Study - https://ssb.vcu.edu/proddad/bwskalog.P_DispLoginNon

Financial Aid, Tuition & Fees, and Information About Assistantships & Fellowships -
http://www.vcu.edu/graduate/es/financing.html
http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/newstudents/financial.html

Office of International Admissions (for all non-US citizens & residents) –
http://www.global.vcu.edu/

Other important links include:

Current Course Timetable of Classes - http://www.vcu.edu/schedule
Housing Options - http://www.students.vcu.edu/housing/
Visiting VCU - http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/prospective/visit.html
Richmond, VA - http://www.visit.richmond.com/ &
http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/newstudents/richmond.html
All Other Helpful Campus Resources & Services -
http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/newstudents/orientation/resources.html

Appeal process, students terminated from a VCU graduate program
Termination process
Termination is initiated at the program/department level by advisers/graduate program directors/department chairs via a special action form indicating the reason with relevant documentation attached. Reasons for termination may include but are not limited to:
Academic (D or F in class, too many grades of C, 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 on/unsuccessful defense of thesis/dissertation),
Discontinuous enrollment
Exceeding time limit
Honor policy violation
Academic misconduct
Professional misconduct
Request for termination is forwarded to the school dean/dean’s designee, who reviews the action, signs the form and forwards it to the graduate dean.
The graduate dean/dean’s designee reviews the action, signs the form, notifies the Office of Records and Registration and sends a termination letter through certified mail to the student.
This letter must include a statement of the student’s right to appeal and inform the student that appeals must be initiated at the program/department and/or school level within 14 days after receipt of the letter.

**Appeals process**

Preamble
Virginia Commonwealth University, through its Graduate School, defines minimum standards for admission and sets general rules governing eligibility for continuation. However, the individual graduate programs, through their respective graduate faculty and graduate program procedures, exercise principal responsibility for evaluating graduate student work. It is assumed that most disputes over evidence of unsatisfactory progress will be reconciled through discussions between faculty and students at the school/department/program level.
It is important that each graduate student be fully informed, not only of the VCU Graduate School Policies and Procedures, but also of any additional departmental program requirements beyond those established by the Graduate School. A copy of each departmental graduate policy statement should be readily available to all graduate students. The department should inform graduate students of degree requirements and associated school/program/department procedures at the time of matriculation.

A student may appeal termination from a graduate program under the following procedures. The student has the burden of proof in all appeals.

The student should initiate the appeal process at the program level according to the program/department and/or schools/colleges appeals process. All program/department and/or school/college appeals 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 supporting documentation (correspondence and other paperwork leading up to the termination), within 14 business days of the school/college decision.
The graduate dean provides the graduate program director and school/college dean with copies of the students 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 termination. The graduate program director and school dean must respond to the graduate deans request for information within 14 business days. The graduate dean will review the materials and may refer the matter to the Admissions and Academic Standards 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 students 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 termination. 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 14 business days by certified mail to the students official address on file with the university.

The student may be allowed to register for courses during the pendency of the appeal, understanding that he/she will be dropped retroactively if the termination is upheld.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Q: When should I file my graduation application form?
A: If you follow the graduate curriculum requirements, strategic PR students will officially graduate in August, one year after you attend the program and satisfied all the requirements. You will file the graduation application form at the beginning of Summer semester. Students in the multimedia journalism graduate program will graduate in May of the second year of the program.

Q: What do I need to do to file the graduation application form?
A: You will need to submit your graduation application form to your academic advisor, together with your VCU transcript and any graduate credit transferring documents. Both you and your advisor will sign the form and submit all the documentation for the School of Mass Communications, College of Humanities and Sciences, and the VCU Graduate School for review and approval.

Q: Because there is no Summer Graduation Ceremony at VCU, can strategic PR students still attend the May Graduation Ceremony?
A: Yes, you can. Here is the procedure for you to follow:
DO NOT respond and file for May graduation
The University has a policy for students who will complete their graduation requirements during the summer session and have their degree conferred in August. Since neither the University (or any Departments) offer a August commencement, students can ask to participate in the May ceremony. These students should check with the program director.

Q: What should I do if a graduate class I plan to register for is closed?
A: First, check the VCU academic calendar and make sure you are still in the add/drop time period. Second, contact the course instructor or an administrator in the unit offering the graduate course to see whether you can get an override into the class.

Q: What should I do if I am not satisfied with a grade and would like to appeal it?
A: The first thing you need to do is to communicate with the course instructor, who has the authority for all the grades and evaluation of your class performance. If the grade issue cannot be resolved, you should contact your academic advisor and the director of graduate studies of the School of Mass Communication for additional information and check the VCU Graduate School policies and regulations regarding grade appeals.

Q: How should I understand the 3.0 GPA requirements?
A: You will not be able to graduate from the program, if by the time you file the graduation application form your graduate GPA is below 3.0. The director of graduate studies will ask to meet with any student who makes a “C” in any course.

Q: Can I take graduate electives from another institution?
A: Yes, you can, on the condition that the course is offered for graduate credit. Your academic advisor/program director and the VCU Graduate School must approve the transfer.

Q: Can I take online graduate elective(s)?
A: Yes, you can, on the condition that the course is offered for graduate credit and your academic advisor/program director approves the course subject. If it is offered not at VCU, the grade(s) and transcript will be sent to the director of graduate studies of the School of Mass Communications as soon as it is available, with the proper credit transfer paperwork filed.

Q: What is the graduate Audit Policy at VCU?
A: An Audit is a legitimate registration that carries the same charge as any other course. The intent of the Audit option is that the student is subject to all course requirements, the same as all other students in the class. The only intended difference is that no final grade (except for AU) is posted on the transcript and the student may not receive academic credit toward his/her degree.

Q: Can I take a Graduate Internship as my Graduate Elective?
A: Multimedia journalism graduate students may take an internship for graduate credit. Strategic PR students must take approved School of Business courses only as electives. Should you have questions, contact the director of graduate studies in the School of Mass Communications.

Q: Can I take Independent Study or Internship as my Graduate Elective?
A: Multimedia journalism students may take an Independent Study for graduate credit that counts toward the degree. This course may be taken on the condition that the proposed subject of
the independent study is not covered by the existing VCU graduate curriculum. You would submit an independent study proposal and a faculty member would have to agree to serve as the independent study supervisor. With these documents, you would then contact the director of graduate studies of the School of Mass Communications for the approval paperwork and override. Multimedia journalism students also may take an Internship/Fieldwork course with approval from the director of graduate studies.

Q: I’m an international student. Do all these policy apply to my study in the program? A: Yes, they all apply to you. For questions on visa and other immigration-related policies and procedures, please contact VCU Global Education Office.

VCU Honor System

For a complete copy of the VCU Honor System, see:
http://www.students.vcu.edu/judicialaffairs/parents/honor_system.html
In the graduate programs of the School, as is the case in the communications professions, misconduct is not tolerated. Students who violate the honor policy will be turned in to the appropriate University officials. Please read the VCU Honor Code thoroughly.

What to know and do to be prepared for emergencies at vcu:
1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (http://www.vcu.edu/alert/notify). Keep your information up-to-date.
2. Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms.
   Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
3. Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
4. Know where to go for additional emergency information (http://www.vcu.edu/alert).
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234).
   Report suspicious activities and objects.