This Faculty & Staff Handbook is provided to all employees of Virginia International University for informational purposes only and does not contain every policy that may affect employment. This is not an employment contract and it does not create contractual obligations of any kind. The policies and procedures outlined in this Handbook will be applied at the discretion of the University. The University reserves the right to change, update, modify, or eliminate any of the provisions in this Handbook in its sole discretion. Employees will be notified within a reasonable period of time when a change in policy or procedure has been made.
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Virginia International University’s (VIU) Department of Human Resources has prepared this Handbook to provide information about many of the personnel policies, benefits, and University procedures that apply to employees. While this compilation is not to be considered complete, it does include information on personnel matters frequently of interest to employees.

An employee having questions concerning personnel matters of a departmental nature should contact her/his immediate supervisor. Questions relating to University policies, employee benefits, and matters not contained in this Handbook should be referred to VIU’s Department of Human Resources.

1. SECTION I: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1. VIU’s Mission Statement

Virginia International University’s mission is to educate students from all over the world through a highly qualified, equally diverse faculty and staff while striving to provide academic programs that engender the intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity urgently needed in the global community.

Philosophy and Objectives

As a community of students, staff, and faculty drawn from diverse national, cultural, and social backgrounds, VIU aims to improve the environment in which freedom of thought and diverse interpretations of human experiences are cherished. It is our hope and expectation that each member of the university will develop a greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, fellow members as well as to those beyond our campus who are less privileged. In the fulfillment of this mission, the university shall seek an efficient use of all available resources to ensure the highest quality of service to its students, faculty and staff. The ultimate goal of VIU is no less than to graduate scholars of moral, intellectual, and professional excellence who will not only make a better life for themselves and their families, but who, more importantly, will lead the way to a better world for everyone.

In order to further the Mission and Philosophy of the university, VIU is committed to the following objectives:

- To recruit and retain outstanding and diverse faculty and staff and to support teaching, research, and the service mission of the university.
- To elevate the university’s learning environment to attract and retain excellent students from all over the world as well as from the USA.
- To offer learning experiences beyond the classroom that enhances traditional instruction and prepares students for the global workforce.
- To offer an up to date curriculum that is relevant which ensures each student has the following competencies: to think critically; to reason analytically; to solve problems realistically; and to communicate clearly.
- To endeavor to provide successful employment placement options for students.
At VIU, we believe that learning is not confined to the formal instruction of the traditional classroom. We offer a number of extracurricular clubs and activities where experts in a variety of subjects are brought in to discuss topics of interest to students.

**1.2. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)**

It is the policy of VIU to provide equal employment and educational opportunities for all people regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, disability, source of income, place of residence or business, and veteran status. An integral part of this policy is to administer recruiting, hiring, working conditions, benefits and privileges of employment, compensation, training, opportunity for advancement including upgrades and promotion, transfer, and termination of employment, including layoff and recall, for all employees in accordance with this policy.

**1.3. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibit discrimination against a person with a disability in the offer or conditions of employment, and in the participation or furnishing of services. VIU is obliged to provide reasonable accommodations to enable qualified individuals with documented disabilities to perform a job, participate in a class, or participate in other University functions. A qualified employee or applicant with a disability is an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a particular job or meet specific academic/program requirements for participation in a University-sponsored program, service or activity. A qualified employee or applicant with a disability is an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a particular job or meet specific academic/program requirements for participation in a University-sponsored program, service or activity. To be covered under ADA, the disability must be substantial and not temporary. The ADA does not alter VIU’s right to hire the best-qualified applicant, but does prohibit discrimination against a qualified applicant or employee because of her/his disability. For more information on ADA, contact the Department of Human Resources.

**1.4. Civil Rights and Sexual Harassment**

Virginia International University does not and will not tolerate sexual harassment of students, faculty, and/or staff. This policy is part of the University’s effort to maintain a learning, and working, environment free from sexual harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Violation of this policy will subject individuals to disciplinary actions, up to and including dismissal for employees and students. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that is illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for employees and under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 for students. In keeping with the guidelines provided by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on sexual harassment in employment, Virginia International University defines sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed at an individual, or action taken in retaliation for reporting such behavior, regardless of where such conduct may occur. Sexual harassment is deemed to have occurred when:

1. Submission to the conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic performance; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions, including, but not limited to, promotion, transfer, selection for training or performance evaluation, or used as the basis for academic evaluation; or
3. The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an affected employee’s work performance or an affected student’s academic performance or participation in educational pursuits; or
4. The conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or study environment.

Sexual harassment is a serious offense. As a consequence, any faculty or staff member who engages in such conduct or encourages such behavior by others shall be subject to disciplinary action that may include dismissal. The conduct includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome offensive behaviors referring to a person’s race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, political affiliation, or disability. Questions, assistance, or violations related to these policies should be directed to the Department of Human Resources.

1.5. Whistleblower Policy

It is the intent of VIU to remain in compliance with all laws and regulations that apply to our organization. In accordance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, Virginia International University will not retaliate against an employee who has raised a complaint against VIU, or of another individual or entity with whom VIU has a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that there is a violation of law. Employees that raise complaints about their immediate supervisor being in violation of the law or regulations will not be subject to termination or disciplinary action, if that complaint is reasonably found.

1.6. Workplace Safety

The University is committed to maintaining a safe, hazard-free workplace. It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain safe working habits on the job. Unsafe working conditions and work related accidents should be immediately reported to your supervisor. An accident should be reported by the supervisor to the Department of Human Resources.

1.7. Violence in the Workplace

VIU has a policy of zero tolerance for violence. If an employee engages in any violence in the workplace, or threatens violence in the workplace, his or her employment may be terminated immediately. No talk of violence or joking about violence will be tolerated. “Violence” includes: physically harming another, shoving, pushing, harassing, intimidating, coercing, brandishing weapons, and threatening or talking of engaging in those activities. It is the intent of this policy to ensure that everyone associated with VIU, including employees and students, never feels threatened by any employee’s actions or conduct.

If an employee believes that she/he has been the subject of such acts or that she/he has observed such acts, she/he must report these acts immediately to the Department of Human Resources. It is the policy of VIU that these acts should be reported regardless of the relationship between the person engaging in the act and the person to whom the act is directed. Employees are not required to make
such reports to the employee’s supervisor if the supervisor is perceived to be engaged in such acts. Supervisors and managers who become aware of such acts must immediately report the matter to the Department of Human Resources.

VIU officials will take seriously all reports of such acts. If an employee is found to have engaged in such conduct, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, and may be reported to law enforcement authorities. Furthermore, VIU will not tolerate retaliation against employees who report such acts or who participate in investigations of such conduct as witnesses or in other capacities.

1.8. Weapons

In the interest of safety and security, it is the University’s position that no employee or other person may possess, use, sell, or store, while conducting University business, on campus, or on property under the control of VIU, any dangerous weapon (operational or decorative), firearm, explosive, or any other potentially harmful device. Violation of this policy will result in serious disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1.9. Safe and Drug-Free School Policy

In compliance with the US Department of Education and the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989, PL 101-226 20 USC’s 1145g, Higher Education Act of 1965, Section 1213, VIU has adopted the following safe and drug-free school policy for the protection and welfare of all students and staff:

1. VIU will not tolerate the unlawful possession and use of alcohol or controlled substances (drugs) on its premises.
2. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of alcohol and controlled substances is prohibited in and on property owned by or under the control of VIU.
3. Students and employees who violate this policy may be subject to arrest and prosecution and will be subject to the disciplinary procedures provided by the various negotiated agreements or such other corrective action as the President or the President’s designee may deem appropriate. Other corrective action may include satisfactory participation in an approved alcohol or drug rehabilitation program.
4. Students and employees should be aware that the legal sanctions that may be imposed under current laws regarding the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, use, or sale of alcohol or controlled substances include fines and prison terms ranging from one year to life in prison upon conviction.
5. Students and employees should also be aware that the health risks associated with the abuse of alcohol and the unlawful use of controlled substances include, but are not limited to, memory loss, depression, seizures, falls, accidents, heart and lung diseases, frequent infection, and sudden death.
6. VIU will make a good-faith effort to maintain an alcohol-free and drug-free workplace.

The premises consist of any leased or owned property by VIU or any site where official duties are being performed by VIU employees. All employees of VIU are subject to random drug testing by a contracted third party organization. Any employee who commits any prohibited act under this policy
shall be subject to the full range of disciplinary actions, including discharge, and may be required to participate satisfactorily in an appropriate rehabilitation program.

1.10. No-Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted within facilities owned or leased by the University nor in university-owned vehicles. Smoking is not permitted within 50 feet of any university facility.
2. SECTION II: EMPLOYEE POLICIES

2.1. Employment at-will

In accordance with the laws of the state of Virginia, employment at the University may be terminated at the will of the employee or the University at any time without notice or cause. No representative of the University has the authority to enter into a contract agreement with an employee except for the President or Vice President of Business Affairs. Any such contract agreement must be in writing and signed by the President or Vice President of Business Affairs.

2.2. Employee Classifications

Each employee at VIU will be classified as non-exempt or exempt as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Classification of a position is determined based on a series of exemption criteria that evaluate the levels of responsibility within a position, as stated in a position’s job description. The Department of Human Resources will inform all employees of the classification of their position.

2.2.1. Non-Exempt Employees

Non-exempt Employees - Basic Work Schedule
The basic schedule of work for full-time, non-exempt employees is eight hours per day, five days per week. The employee’s supervisor will decide the regular hours of the position.

Non-exempt Employees - Overtime
Federal law requires all non-exempt employees to be paid one and one-half times their regular rate of pay for any hours worked over the standard 40 hour workweek. A non-exempt employee cannot work overtime without prior authorization given by their supervisor and the Department of Human Resources. An employee who may be required to work more than 40 hours in a workweek, that includes one or more days of PTO or paid holidays, is not entitled to overtime for that particular week if the actual number of hours worked did not exceed 40. A time sheet should be completed for overtime hours, approved by their supervisor, and submitted to the Department of Human Resources for payroll processing.

Non-exempt Employees - Attendance and Leave Records
All non-exempt employees are required to be present and ready to work at the beginning of their scheduled shift. Non-exempt employees who arrive late for work, and/or are absent from work (and who do not present an acceptable reason to their supervisor), may be subject to disciplinary action and may not be paid for the time during which they were absent.

Time records must reflect the actual hours worked and in most cases will coincide with the hours assigned. (In the rare circumstance when actual time worked does not coincide with hours assigned, the employee should obtain written authorization from his or her supervisor prior to working the different hours.) No changes, alterations, or notations may be made on any time records without the approval and signature of the employee’s supervisor and the Department of Human Resources.
An employee’s failure to record his or her time in a prompt, accurate and regular manner and/or an employee’s negligent or intentional falsification of time or leave records is a serious offense. An employee who engages in such conduct will be disciplined up to and including termination of employment.

2.2.2. Exempt Employees

Employees who are classified as exempt are paid a base salary and are not eligible for overtime. Sometimes, for instance, an exempt employee may need to work extra hours or days to complete a project or task to perform his or her work in a professional and acceptable manner. No additional compensation or paid time-off is provided to an exempt employee when such an employee works extra or additional hours or days.

One’s status as an exempt employee also means that the compensation will not be decreased or docked due to lateness or partial day absences that are less than 4 hours. However, unexcused absences and absences for which leave with pay is not available, and which last for a full day or more, will result in a decrease in compensation for each such full day of absence.

The University seeks to employ individuals who are dedicated to their work and who exercise sound judgment in the conduct of their work and work schedules. With one’s status as an exempt employee comes the expectation that the employee is capable of conducting their work schedule in a mature and wise manner. It is expected that exempt employees will maintain regular office hours as approved by their supervisors. Exempt employees are required to attend VIU’s annual graduation for our students, and are highly encouraged to participate in other VIU events.

2.3. Employment of Non-US Citizens

VIU employees Non-US Citizens (both Immigrants and Non-Immigrants) in accordance with the Immigration and Nationality Act and within the regulations of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Immigrants are defined as permanent residents that may permanently work in the US, but are Non-US Citizens; and Non-Immigrants are defined as individuals that are given temporary authorization to work in the US by the USCIS. Applicants seeking visa sponsorship by VIU must be permanent employees in a “permanent” position at the University. A “permanent” position is defined by the USCIS as a position in which there is no anticipated ending date on the part of both the employer and the employee. Future employment cannot be guaranteed to any employee, regardless of residency status. The University is given sole discretion in assuming any financial liabilities in the visa application process, and unless otherwise determined, any and all financial liabilities are to be held by the employee.

F-1 - Student Employment

Students attending VIU full-time and have begun attending classes at VIU may apply for part-time employment on-campus. In compliance with the USCIS regulation, student employees may work up to 20 hours a week while school is in session, and up to 40 hours a week when school is not in session. The number of hours a student employee is scheduled to work is determined by the requirements of the department, and any change in hours must be authorized with the written approval of the Department of Human Resources. Student employees are officially evaluated each semester by their immediate supervisor. Evaluations are directly submitted for review to the Department of Human Resources.
Resources and will determine the continuation of a student’s employment. (Please see VIU’s On-Campus Student Employment Policy for additional policies, which are available on the VIU Faculty & Staff webpage.)

**F-1 - OPT Employment**
Student employees wishing to obtain OPT (Optional Practical Training), upon graduation of their studies, may make an official request by submitting the Employee Application for OPT Form. The student employees’ direct supervisor must also submit a Supervisor Recommendation for OPT Form. In addition, a written recommendation from another staff member must also be submitted. All forms must be submitted directly to the Department of Human Resources at least two (2) months prior to the start of the student employees’ authorized OPT period.

**H-1B - Sponsored Employment**
OPT (Optional Practical Training) employees, may make an official request for H-1B sponsorship by submitting the Employee Application for H-1B Status Form. The OPT employees’ direct supervisor must submit a Supervisor Recommendation for H-1B Form. In addition, a written recommendation from another staff member must also be submitted. All forms must be submitted directly to the Department of Human Resources at least seven (7) months prior to the end of the employees’ authorized OPT period or expiration of current H-1B visa. Employees must possess a minimum of a US Master’s degree (or evaluated foreign equivalent) in the specific specialty or a related field to their position at the time of the request or renewal of H-1B sponsorship. VIU reserves the right to deny any visa sponsorship requests.

**Permanent Residence (Green card) Employment**
Employees wishing to obtain a green card must be employed by VIU full-time for at least two (2) years and possess a minimum of a US Master’s degree (or evaluated foreign equivalent) at the time of the request. The employee must be employed the entire time of the green card application process and until the green card has been issued. A request for green card sponsorship must be made in writing to the Department of Human Resources. A response to this request will be given within 30 days in writing. All requests must be made at least two (2) full years prior to the end of an H-1B visa holder’s expiration date. VIU reserves the right to deny any visa sponsorship requests.

**2.4. Recording Time/Attendance**

At the recommendation of the University’s independent auditors, a time-clock system has been established to verify and track employee work hours. All employees, including faculty, must punch in when they arrive at the University and punch out when they leave the University. This system will not be used to determine pay; rather, it will serve as proof that the staff or faculty member was present at the times required by his/her contract or work schedule.

**2.5. Holidays**

Virginia International University annually observes 11 days as holidays. On these 11 days, there will be no classes and administrative offices will be closed.

For the 2011 – 2012 Academic Calendar year, the University will observe the following 11 days as holidays:
• Labor Day: September 5, 2011
• Thanksgiving Day: November 24, 2011
• The day after Thanksgiving: November 25, 2011
• Martin Luther King Day: January 16, 2012
• Memorial Day: May 28, 2012
• Independence Day: July 4, 2012

*The Winter Break includes Christmas Day and New Year’s Day.

Note: VIU will not observe the following holidays and will be open for classes as usual on:
• Presidents Day (the third Monday in February)
• Columbus Day (the second Monday in October)
• Veterans Day (the second Tuesday in November)

Religious Holiday Policy
VIU seeks to extend hospitality to all persons regardless of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, economic or social background. Diversity is valued at VIU, and the University is committed to assuring that all persons who enter this community are welcomed and respected. VIU, a secular institution of higher education, stands at the same distance to all world religions and does not observe religious holidays. VIU does not observe religious holidays of any type other than what the state and federal governments observe officially in the US. Therefore, all scheduled educational activities and University sponsored events will take place as scheduled as publicized by our Academic Calendar.

2.6. Workers’ Compensation

In accordance with the Virginia Workers’ Compensation Act, VIU provides Workers’ Compensation insurance to all employees for work-related illnesses and injuries. If an employee experiences a work-related illness or injury, they must immediately report the situation to their supervisor and the Department of Human Resources. To be considered work-related, the illness or injury must take place during the course of employment, occur during activities required of the employee’s position, and while working on VIU’s premises.

2.7. Final Paycheck

The employee’s final paycheck shall be issued by the University only upon receipt of all pertinent materials from the employee; including office keys, office supplies and equipment, and anything that is considered property of the University. In the case of contracted faculty members, these materials include the course information sheet, the course syllabus, the attendance records, make-ups, grade report, and other required University forms. These materials should be submitted to the person designated as the employee’s supervisor.

2.8. Discipline

Employees are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures set forth in the Employee Handbook, policies on equal employment opportunity and sexual harassment, rules and regulations, which may be revised from time to time and the lawful directives of their supervisors. However, the
University recognizes that some employees will unfortunately engage in improper conduct and/or fail to perform their duties adequately. Employees who engage in misconduct are subject to discipline. Employees who fail to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of performance are subject to remedial action.

Discipline may include, but is not limited to, a verbal warning, a written warning, suspension, demotion or discharge. Virginia International University reserves sole discretion to determine what level of discipline is appropriate under the circumstances. Formal discipline will be made a permanent part of the employee’s personnel file.

Remedial action for poor performance may include the formulation of a corrective work plan, or reassignment, and/or additional training. VIU reserves the right in all situations to determine the acceptability of work and whether any individual should be retained as an employee.

2.9. Termination of Employment

Employment with the University is at-will. Employment with the University may be terminated in accordance with the following polices.

Voluntary Termination
Employees may terminate their employment at the University at any time, for any or no reason. Employees who voluntarily resign from their employment are requested to provide at least two weeks advance notice of their resignation in writing to their supervisor and to the Department of Human Resources. Employees who voluntarily resign will receive their final paycheck (minus any appropriate deductions to the extent permitted by law) on the next regular payday or within seven days of their resignation. There will be no compensation for unused PTO. It is the policy of the University that all employees leaving the University complete an exit interview with a staff member from the Department of Human Resources.

Involuntary Termination
The University may terminate the employment of any employee at any time, for any reason or for no reason. Employees who are involuntarily terminated will receive their final paycheck (minus any appropriate deductions to the extent permitted by law) upon termination. There will be no compensation for unused PTO. It is the policy of the University that all employees leaving the University complete an exit interview with a staff member from the Department of Human Resources.

2.10. Unemployment Insurance

In accordance with the Virginia Unemployment Compensation Act, VIU provides Unemployment Insurance benefits to eligible former employees. A claimant’s eligibility for Unemployment Insurance is determined solely by the state employment commission that is handling the unemployment benefit claim.
3. SECTION III: STAFF EMPLOYEE POLICIES AND BENEFITS

3.1. Staff Evaluations

The appraisal process offers an excellent opportunity to establish work objectives, to review results, and to provide a vehicle for effective two-way communication between the employee and the supervisor. Every employee should receive an annual written appraisal of his/her performance conducted by their supervisor. A copy of the completed appraisal will be provided to the employee when requested and an additional copy forwarded to the Department of Human Resources for placement in the employee’s personnel file.

The performance review period for all employees is an annual cycle. The non-probationary cycle runs each year from January 1st to December 31st. An employee's performance will be evaluated at the end of the review period by the criteria outlined on the performance evaluation form.

In addition to the annual evaluation, as deemed necessary, verbal and written performance appraisals may be conducted throughout the year. These appraisals may be performed through supervisor evaluation, management feedback, peer review, and other forms of appraisal.

3.2. Probationary Period

Upon hire as an employee with the University, employees will participate in a three (3) month probationary period during which time both the employee and their supervisor will have a chance to determine the employee’s suitability for the position. Probationary reviews include a written evaluation and are conducted regularly during this period. A probationary period may be extended up to six months if necessary. This policy applies to part-time and full-time staff members; it does not apply to adjunct faculty members. For the evaluation process of faculty members, please refer to Policy 6.5.

3.3. Job Descriptions

Full-time staff members receive a job description that outlines their responsibilities, employment classification, supervisor, department, and other details that relate to their position. This position description will be reviewed between the supervisor and the employee and should be signed by the employee. A signed copy will be kept in the employee's personnel file. An employee’s job description does not state or imply that these are the only duties to be performed by the employee within this position. The employee is expected to perform other duties necessary for the effective operation of the department and university.

3.4. Promotions and Transfers

The University encourages promotion from within whenever practical. Where appropriate, an employee may be promoted to a more responsible position in their current department, or other department, without the position being posted. Employee eligibility for promotion will be determined by the requirements of the position, as well as by the employee’s performance evaluations. In addition, to be considered employees must have held their current position for at least six (6) months, have a satisfactory performance record and have no disciplinary actions during the same period. Employees
interested in a promotion or transfer should make their interests known to the Department of Human Resources.

3.5. Compensation

The University determines compensation for each employee by factoring in the duties, responsibilities, and skills necessary for the position held by the employee; as well as the needs and financial condition of the University and the particular qualifications and abilities of the individual in that position. The University follows an established job evaluation manual and pay scale to determine the appropriate salary for each position and individual within that position. The University retains the sole discretion to determine and adjust compensation.

Hourly, non-exempt employees are paid for the number of exact hours that they worked for each pay period. Payments will be released following the service performed the previous pay period. All hourly, non-exempt employees must punch-in and out every day, and each employee’s supervisor must match the “Employee Timesheet” with their “Punch-Clock” record. After checking for discrepancies, the supervisor will submit the timesheet with her/his signature to the Department of Human Resources for final approval.

Salaried, exempt and non-exempt, employees are paid following the service performed the previous pay period. Non-exempt employees must not work over 40 hours within one workweek, unless authorization is given in advance. The Department of Human Resources will review punch clock records for exempt and non-exempt employees periodically. Exempt and non-exempt employees must punch-in and out every day.

3.6. Hours of Operation and Attendance

As important as it is to maintain a good attendance record at work, there will most likely be times when an employee cannot avoid being late or absent. If an employee knows in advance that they will be late or absent, it is their responsibility to tell their supervisor and inform the Department of Human Resources.

The employee may not always be able to plan in advance when they will be late or absent. In such instances, the employee should let their supervisor know prior to the beginning of their scheduled work time that they will be late or absent. Failure to report a late arrival or absence according to University requirements is considered an unexcused absence and may result in disciplinary action. The employee should determine in advance from their supervisor to whom they should report if their supervisor is unavailable. It is important that all employees report late arrivals or absences to the proper person to avoid being charged with failure to report to work.

During normal work hours, an employee should not leave their work area for personal matters (other than lunch or breaks) without permission from their supervisor or the individual responsible in the absence of their supervisor. All employees must notify the Front Desk when they leave the building during office hours.
3.7. Workweek

Full-time, exempt and non-exempt, employees normally work between 32 - 40 hours per week, 5 business days per week. The University’s normal work hours are 8:00am to 6:00pm, Monday through Friday. Employees in certain areas may work non-standard shifts or workweeks to provide adequate coverage and service to the University community. An employee’s work schedule should be pre-arranged with their supervisor and submitted to the Department of Human Resources. Any deviation from their work schedule should be approved by an employee’s supervisor. All full-time employees are expected to report to work no later than 9:00 am.

School Deans are required to work a minimum of 32 hours, over 4 business days, per workweek at the University. School Deans may telecommute on the 5th business day of the workweek, and this day should be flexible and may be modified to accommodate essential attendance at University events, meetings, or other. To appropriately satisfy the needs of the School, each Dean will have set office hours that they are available to their faculty and students and these hours should be posted each academic semester. School Deans’ schedules should be approved in advance of each academic semester by their supervisor and the Department of Human Resources. No employee may telecommute without prior permission from their supervisor and the Department of Human Resources.

3.8. Breaks/Lunch

An employee’s supervisor may grant a break from the regular work schedule, but is not required to do so. There may be no more than two of these breaks in a normal workday, and they may not exceed 15 minutes. The break periods shall not be used to extend lunch hours, offset late arrival to work or early departure from work, nor be used to create paid time-off (PTO) for other purposes.

Lunch should last one hour and be scheduled with the approval of the employee’s supervisor. Lunch periods may be staggered to provide departmental coverage. However, like breaks, lunch periods are not to be used to offset late arrivals to work, early departure or other absences. They must be taken and cannot be used to create paid time-off (PTO). All offices should have office hours posted at the door.

3.9. Alternative Work Schedules

Alternative works schedules may be necessary in some instances to provide effective services to the University community. When feasible, the University also tries to provide employees with a work schedule that is flexible enough to allow an opportunity to balance work and other responsibilities. Alternative work schedules must be approved by an employee’s supervisor and the Department of Human Resources.

3.10. Outside Employment

VIU employees that engage in outside employment must inform their immediate supervisor of their other employment. Employees may not engage in this employment during the hours they are scheduled to work at VIU. All employees who are considered part of the Senior Staff at VIU may not engage in outside employment that is considered direct competition and within the same industry as
Continuation of one’s employment at VIU is contingent on whether or not the outside employment affects the employee’s work performance at VIU.

Full-time employees that serve as an administrator, manager, or director in our academic programs at VIU may have limited outside teaching engagements. Full-time employees who are affected by this policy will be informed directly in writing, and are limited to teaching one online course at anytime at an outside academic institution.

3.11. Official Closings

Decisions to close all non-essential University operations will be made by the Business Manager in conjunction with the President. All employees are expected to report to work on time; however, when weather conditions create transportation difficulties that result in late arrival, supervisors may authorize up to two hours of such lost time as an authorized absence. Upon an authorized official closing, all full-time employees will receive their regular pay. When the school is not officially closed, and an employee determines they are still unable to commute to work, an employee will be required to use an equal amount of their accrued PTO or be unpaid. All full-time employees that have received pre-approved leave on the day of an authorized official closing will still be charged for leave that day.

For information regarding late openings or official closings, please listen to local television stations or visit the VIU website. If Essential Personnel (see Policy 3.12) are required to report to work, it will be specified in the official announcement.

3.12. Essential and Non-Essential Personnel

Essential Personnel are classified as those individuals or positions that are deemed vital to the continuation of the University’s operations. Essential Personnel may be required to report to work during an authorized official closing, weather permitting. Individuals will be specified by the head of the department in writing, and a list of these employees will be kept on file with the Department of Human Resources. The head of the department must inform Human Resources by September 15th of each year of who is considered Essential Personnel for the coming Academic year. Essential Personnel that report to work for a full day, if required during an authorized official closing, will receive one day of leave added to their PTO.

Non-Essential Personnel are classified as those individuals that are not required to report to work during authorized official closings.

3.13. Travel Expenses and Compensation

Certain expenses employees incur while traveling on University business will be reimbursed by the University. These normally include transportation, lodging, and meals. Employees are normally expected to utilize the most economical methods of air transportation and lodging available. Questions concerning acceptable, reimbursable expenses should be directed to the employee’s supervisor. All expenses must be submitted on an Expense Request Form and approved in advance by the Budget Administrator/Supervisor, Financial Accounting Officer, and the Vice President of Business Affairs. Failure to do this will result in non-approval of expenses.
**Gas Mileage:** If an employee’s private vehicle is used for a University activity or University sponsored events they will be reimbursed at the rate of $0.50 per mile. VIU is not responsible for the penalties and fines incurred due to irresponsible use of the vehicle. VIU only carries liability insurance on the vehicles it owns.

**Travel for Work and Leisure Policy**

Staff members that travel for leisure purposes may request to participate in VIU work-related activities simultaneously. Staff members that wish to participate in VIU work-related activities should submit their plan for approval by their supervisor and management at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date of travel. For approved plans, VIU may offer to cover the following expenses:

- Reimbursement of 50% of the air ticket cost when a staff member travels abroad for work and leisure simultaneously.
- Reimbursement of other work-related expenses (i.e., local transportation, fair or conference expenses) that are accrued for the VIU business activities.
- Full-time employees that receive paid-time off benefits will receive additional paid-time off equal to the hours they participated in VIU work-related activities.

**3.14. Employee Benefits**

The following policies (3.15 – 3.22) explain the benefits offered through employment at VIU. Certain benefits and their corresponding policies apply only to full-time employees. Employees will be informed in advance of any changes, additions or removal of benefits. For more information or questions concerning benefits, employees should contact the Human Resources Manager.

**3.15. Health Insurance**

VIU offers group healthcare plan coverage for all full-time employees that receive benefits. The University covers a percentage of the cost of the health care premium for the individual employee. Additional family coverage is available upon request; however, the individual employee is responsible for the health care premiums for his/her dependents added to the plan. Part-time employees may be eligible to join under the group plan; however, they are responsible for the cost of the health care premiums. For more information about the group plan offered and employee eligibility, please consult with the Department of Human Resources.

**3.16. COBRA**

If an employee leaves the University voluntarily or involuntarily, or if a qualifying event occurs, then an employee has the option to extend their health care coverage under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA) if they have been enrolled in VIU’s group health plan for at least three (3) months prior to their ending date of employment. If an employee enrolls in COBRA, they may elect to extend their health care coverage at their own expense. If a qualifying event occurs, the Department of Human Resources will notify the employee of their eligibility within 14 days in writing. The employee has 60 days after the date of receipt of the written notification to elect the extended coverage of their health insurance through COBRA.
3.17. Paid Time-Off

Paid Time-Off (PTO) is to be used for any purpose including vacation, sick leave, doctor appointments, and personal leave. Except for emergency situations, an employee wishing to use PTO shall complete the Paid Time-Off Request Form and submit it to their supervisor at least two (2) weeks in advance of the anticipated dates for which the employee will be absent. When scheduling leave, supervisors should endeavor to avoid conflicts between employee requests and workloads. Once leave is approved in writing, the Department of Human Resources should receive the form from the employee.

The University has the authority to determine when and to what extent annual leave requests will be granted, and may in some circumstances require that PTO be taken. **Employees are permitted to take no more than 15 consecutive business days of PTO at one time.** Employees are requested to be mindful of the Academic Calendar when scheduling their leave, and employees are expected to use discretion when scheduling leave two-weeks prior to the start of a semester and one-week following the start of a semester. **Employees may not request leave one week prior to or following the Labor Day and Winter Break paid holidays.**

Paid Time-Off (PTO) commences as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years at VIU</th>
<th>Number of Days PTO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unused PTO will be available for rollover each year, but not to exceed 30 days at any given time for all employees. PTO is not given all at once at the beginning of the recording cycle, but is accrued monthly (i.e. – for employees receiving 15 days of PTO; their leave is accrued at a rate of 10 hours a month). Borrowing of future leave is not permitted. For exempt employees, hours less than four (4) will not be deducted from their PTO; however, employees are expected to make-up missed hours for late arrivals and outside appointments. The PTO recording cycle will be January to December, with the first year of employment being prorated from the start date of employment. VIU will not pay for unused PTO at termination of employment.

**Paid Time-Off for Executive Level Employees**

Employees that are classified as Executive level employees are granted thirty (30) days of PTO each calendar year. The 30 days is not accrued monthly, but awarded in January at the beginning of each calendar year to be used by the Executive level employee during the next 12 months. Unused PTO at the end of the calendar year will not be rolled over into the next calendar year. To request PTO, Executive level employees must inform their supervisor in writing, as well as the Department of Human Resources, of the requested dates of leave for approval. Requests for leave should be made in advance if possible. The above policies referring to restrictions on dates of leave, taking no more than 15 consecutive business days of PTO at one time, and not receiving pay for unused PTO at termination of employment, all apply to Executive level employees.
3.18. General Leave Policy

Employees planning to take leave for three (3) or more consecutive days must do the following at least 1 week (5 business days) in advance to ensure their responsibilities are continued in their absence: Inform all staff of the time frame they are out of the office and provide them with an alternate employee’s contact information; update their outside contact information (auto reply e-mail and voicemail) with their out of office time frame and alternate contact information; and create a plan for the continuation of their work while they are absent, which must be submitted to their direct supervisor for advance approval.


In the event of the death of certain members of an employee’s family, and upon request, VIU will grant paid and unpaid leave. This policy applies only to full-time employees who receive full benefits.

In the event of the death of a parent or foster parent, sister, brother, spouse, domestic partner, child, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild, employees may be granted up to three (3) consecutive business days of paid leave. One (1) additional day of paid leave is permitted if the employee must travel more than 500 miles each way. These days do not count against the employee’s regular accrued PTO.

Employees may request approval for additional leave other than the granted days of bereavement leave, which will be charged against accrued PTO. If no accrued PTO is available, VIU may grant unpaid leave. VIU will consider requests for bereavement leave in the event of the death of a person not bearing one of the above-stated relationships to the employee on an individual basis.

VIU reserves the right to request verification of relationship, death, and distance traveled before approving leave of the employee under this policy. Whenever possible, employees should request bereavement leave before their absence. Additional leave must be approved in advance.

3.20. Tuition Assistance

Full-time employees, who have successfully completed their probationary period, may take one course per academic semester from the University. The tuition and student services fee associated with the course are both waived. Not more than four (4) courses may be taken in one calendar year with the tuition and student services fee waiver. Additional courses may be taken at the expense of the employee. Coursework cannot interfere with an employee’s regular work schedule.

On-Campus Student Employees, after one semester of employment, will receive tuition discounts per the requirements stated in the current On-Campus Student Employment Policy.

Staff and Board Members Family Discount Policy

The University will offer a 15% tuition discount per semester for immediate family members studying at VIU. Immediate Family members are identified as parents, children, brothers, sisters and spouses of staff and/or board members in determining eligibility for the discount.

The deadline to apply for this discount is the last day of add/drop in each semester. Applications after
this deadline will only be considered for the next semester. Please complete the Application for Staff and Board Members Family Discount and submit it to the Accounting Office for approval. The discount will be applied to Tuition only. Scholarships will be deducted first. The discount will be applied to the remaining amount. If a student qualifies for more than one discount, only one will be applied.

3.21. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

The *Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993* (FMLA) entitles eligible employees with the right to take unpaid, job-protected leave, or paid leave if accrued, for up to twelve (12) workweeks in a 12-month period for specified situations. This leave should be requested in writing and may be taken for the birth of a child; adoption or foster care; to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition; or due to the employee’s own serious health condition.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 amended FMLA to entitle eligible employees with the right to take unpaid, job-protected leave, or paid leave if accrued, for up to twenty-six (26) workweeks of leave to care for a member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness.

To be eligible for FMLA leave, employees must have been employed for at least 12 months (one year) preceding the leave, have been employed for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period of employment preceding the leave, and has been employed within 75 miles of the worksite. The request for leave should be forwarded to the Department of Human Resources and documentation of the reason for the requested leave may be required. The Department of Human Resources will give a response to this request, in writing, within 5 business days. FMLA leave will run concurrently with any accrued PTO by the employee in conjunction with the specified situations.

While an employee is taking consecutive FMLA leave, they are not permitted to telecommute or work at the University during the period of leave. If an employee returns to work, by granted permission to telecommute or if returning to work at the University, they are no longer considered to be on consecutive FMLA leave. The University may request the written permission of a doctor before the employee may return to work from FMLA leave.

Under extreme circumstances and when the leave is in the best interest of the employee and the University, an unpaid leave of absence, with the length of the leave to be determined by the University, may be granted. Requests for leave should be submitted in writing to the Department of Human Resources outlining the reason for and duration of the leave.

3.22. Parental Leave

Employees may be eligible for an unpaid, job protected, leave for up to 12 consecutive workweeks due to the birth and/or adoption of a child. This leave should be requested in writing and forwarded to the Department of Human Resources and documentation of the reason for the requested leave may be required. The Department of Human Resources will give a response to this request, in writing, within 5 business days. This leave will run concurrently with any PTO used by the employee in conjunction
with the specified situation. Full-time employees will be also be granted 10 business days of paid Parental Leave, which will be applied along with their regularly accrued paid leave.

While an employee is taking Parental leave, they are not permitted to telecommute or work at the University during the period of leave. If an employee returns to work, by granted permission to telecommute or if returning to work at the University, they are no longer considered to be on Parental leave. The University may request the written permission of a doctor before the employee may return to work from Parental Leave.
4. SECTION IV: FACULTY INSTRUCTIONAL POLICIES

Please Note: In this section, the terms adjunct faculty member, faculty, and instructor are all used interchangeably as per the origination of the individual policy. All terms refer to those employees that have been assigned to teach a course at the University.

4.1. Faculty Qualifications

The University shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence of faculty, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each individual. Faculty members shall be assigned in terms of their major and minor areas of academic preparation and related experience, and in accordance with the requirements of the Accrediting Council for Independent Schools and Colleges (ACICS) and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV).

The following criteria shall be considered in the appointment, reappointment, and promotion of faculty.

Teaching Effectiveness
Components of teaching effectiveness may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Performance in the classroom as observed in administrative evaluations and classroom observations;
- Continuous updating, improvement, and innovation in teaching materials, methods, and assignments as reflected in the Annual Faculty Development Plan; and
- Mid-term and End-of-Term Course evaluations completed by students each semester.

Education and Occupational Training
Components of education and occupational training may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- College degrees;
- Number of graduate credits in major teaching disciplines;
- Courses in related teaching fields will normally pertain directly to concepts or application of the principal discipline field for which the faculty member is hired. The faculty member must supply documentation of such direct pertinence to the School Dean, who will determine the appropriateness of the course content;
- Professional and occupational certificates or licenses (only when they are competitively earned);
- Apprenticeships;
- Training in the related field;
- Internships;
- Advanced studies; and
- Previous occupational experiences in business, government, industry, and the profession.

Professional Activities and Contributions
In addition to teaching effectiveness, faculty members are expected to engage in and contribute toward the good of the University and its community. This requires that faculty members maintain current competence in their disciplines or specializations, and that they share their expertise, time, and talents with the University community. Performance in this category will be measured not only by
membership or affiliation, but also by the quality of the contributions made by faculty members toward these endeavors. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Membership and activity in professional and civic organizations (general and/or specialized organizations at the local, state, and/or national level);
- The accomplishment of professional development activities that may or may not be part of an individual professional development plan;
- Attending and participating in professional conferences, workshops, and meetings;
- Keeping current regarding developments in education and industry;
- Participating in business or industrial activities related to professional field;
- Engaging in writing speeches and reports and in consulting; and
- Engaging in classroom-based research to improve training or in discipline-based research that may lead to publication.

4.2. Teaching Course Load

Faculty members shall be assigned a teaching course load in accordance with the policies of the Accrediting Council for Independent Schools and Colleges (ACICS) and the University.

Non-degree Programs

The following criteria, as developed by ACICS, apply to faculty members that are assigned courses in our non-degree programs.

Teaching Load: An instructor’s teaching load, including night school, shall not exceed 32 clock hours per week, except that an overload of not more than one subject per term for additional compensation is permitted. Teaching loads may differ when using alternative methods of instruction and must be commensurate with the type of delivery method utilized. For purposes of this calculation, assigned courses offered by nontraditional or distance learning modes of instruction are deemed to consist of one clock hour per week for each unit of academic credit awarded.

Field Preparation: Assignments requiring more than three preparations in different fields shall not be given to an instructor during one academic term.

Subject Preparation: Not more than five preparations in different subjects within the same field shall be assigned to an instructor during one academic term.

Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree Programs

The following criteria apply to faculty members that are assigned courses in our degree programs.

Teaching Load for On-ground courses: A faculty member’s teaching load shall not exceed 4 courses (12 credit hours) in the Fall and Spring academic semesters. A faculty member’s teaching load shall not exceed 2 courses (6 credit hours) in each of the Summer I & Summer II sessions.

Teaching Load for Online courses: A faculty member’s teaching load shall not exceed 3 courses (9 credit hours) during any given 8-week online session.

Teaching Load for On-ground and Online courses: This applies to any faculty member that is assigned both on-ground and online courses in any given academic semester or session. A faculty
member’s teaching load will be determined on a case by case basis and will be appropriate for the number of students enrolled in each course, the number of different fields of preparation, and how many courses will be instructed in each method of delivery (on-ground or online) simultaneously.

The following criteria, as developed by ACICS, apply to faculty members that are assigned courses in our degree programs.

**Field Preparation:** During any academic term, a faculty member shall not be assigned to teach in more than three fields of instruction and preferably in not more than two fields.

### 4.3. Contract Faculty Employment Agreement

All part-time Adjunct Faculty Members receive a Contract Faculty Employment Agreement (the Agreement) for each academic semester they are assigned a course. Listed below are the Terms and Conditions on the Agreement. These Terms and Conditions are subject to change, and Adjunct Faculty Members will be notified of these changes.

**Terms and Conditions**

The Adjunct Faculty Member (Faculty Member) named in the Agreement will be considered a part-time (W-2) employee of the University for the stated Academic Semester. The Agreement may be cancelled at anytime in writing by the Faculty Member or the University, in compliance with the University's Employment at-will Policy as stated in our Faculty & Staff Handbook. If the Agreement is cancelled, the compensation will be prorated from the date of the written cancellation as received by both parties. The continuation of employment from one Academic Semester to another is not guaranteed or implied. Agreements are renewed based upon several determining factors; including course evaluations, classroom observations, course demand, and student enrollment.

**Compensation*** will be subject to change based on the class size after the Course Add/Drop Period for Credit/Contact Hours assigned. Payment per credit hour assigned is compensated following a pre-determined payment schedule as stated in the Agreement. Payment per contact hour assigned is compensated following the service performed the previous pay period. A timesheet must be completed by the Faculty Member for contact hours assigned at the end of each month to reconcile the actual hours instructed.

1. **Compensation for Credit Hours assigned:**
   a) The compensation agreed upon in the Agreement reflects a class size of four (4) to twenty-five (25) students after the Course Add/Drop Period.
   b) If the class size is between one (1) to three (3) student(s) after the Course Add/Drop Period, the compensation will be changed to $1,500.00 or 60% of the regular pay rate, whichever is greater.
   c) If the final class size is twenty-six (26) or more students after the Course Add/Drop Period, the compensation will be increased by $83.33 per Credit Hour for the class that is above the regular class size.

2. **Compensation for Contact Hours assigned:**
   a) The compensation agreed upon in the Agreement reflects a class size of five (5) or more students after the Course Add/Drop Period.
   b) If the class size is less than five (5) students after the Course Add/Drop Period, the compensation will be changed to the following pay rates:
i. Faculty Member’s that are compensated at a rate of $30 per contact hour or less will receive a reduced pay rate of $20 per contact hour.

ii. Faculty Member’s that are compensated at a rate of more than $30 per contact hour will receive a reduced pay rate of 65% of their regular pay rate.

3. Compensation for cancelled classes (applies to both Credit Hours and Contact Hours assigned):

- There is a possibility that classes with zero or minimal enrollment will be cancelled; therefore when
  a) classes are cancelled and the Faculty Member is notified prior to the first class, no compensation will be paid.
  b) classes are cancelled due to low enrollment after the Course Add/Drop Period will receive a prorated amount for the Contact Hour(s) already taught, based on the Faculty Member’s regular class size pay rate.

*Amendments in compensation will be documented and signed as an addition to the Agreement at the time of change; a copy of these Amendments will be provided to the Faculty Member.

First Paycheck

The first paycheck for the Academic Semester shall be issued by the University as regularly scheduled only if the Agreement and ACICS Datasheet (Signed originals by the Faculty Member), as well as all other required pertinent materials, are received by the University on the required date (as stated in the Agreement). The first paycheck will be held until all pertinent materials are received. If these items are outstanding for more than 15 business days, the Agreement is subject to cancellation.

Final Paycheck

The final paycheck for the Academic Semester shall be issued by the University only upon receipt of all pertinent materials from the Faculty Member; including the Course Survey, Attendance Records, Grade Report, Annual Faculty Development Plan, and other required forms by the University. Once these materials are received; it may take up to 5 business days to process the final paycheck to the Faculty Member.

4.4. Faculty Late Arrivals

The University reserves the right to deduct a prorated amount of the day’s pay for any and each time the faculty member is late for the start of class without a legitimate excuse, except reporting on a sick leave, and/or emergency situations.

4.5. Class Cancellation and Make-up Policy

Faculty members must receive university permission prior to canceling a class or arranging a make-up class. Any hours not made up will be deducted from the faculty member’s paycheck. Any change in class hours shall require at least (5) days notice. Faculty members must notify the School Dean of any cancellation and make-up classes. The employer will pay for snow days; however, the faculty member will need to hold make-up classes for each class missed due to inclement weather.

It is the faculty member’s responsibility to arrange make-up classes which will best fit the schedule of the majority of students in his/her class. Faculty members are not allowed to schedule a make-up class
solely based on their own availability, without discussing and forming a consensus among the students. At least half of the class should agree and sign-up for the make-up class.

- Make-up classes must be scheduled at least 15 days in advance during the regular academic semester, so that timely notices and reminders can be posted on student bulletin boards, and timely e-mail reminders can be sent. At the minimum an e-mail reminder must be sent out to all students three (3) days before the make-up class.
- Faculty members may not schedule future make-up classes during a make-up class.
- Faculty members must take attendance.
- In occasions where substitution is necessary, advance approval must be obtained from the School Dean.
- If less than 30% of students happen to be attending the make-up class, the faculty member then should consult with the School Dean as to how to handle the case. The School Dean must keep a copy of the make-up documentation in the form of a case study, and file this information with supportive documentation.

4.6. Teaching Faculty Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of a faculty member at Virginia International University shall be to provide quality instruction to the students. The major emphasis shall be on the faculty member’s ability to instruct students in classrooms, laboratories, individual conferences, and related activities in order to help the students develop their interests and abilities to their fullest capacity. As part of this primary responsibility, the University expects each faculty member to:

- Teach assigned classes on time and on schedule according to lesson plans, and to submit records and reports as required;
- Teach the assigned courses using the established texts;
- Develop a syllabus for each course based on the approved curriculum;
- Help maintain the School’s retention rate;
- Conduct periodic assessment of student progress;
- Contribute to the development of the program of instruction; and
- Adhere to the statement on professional ethics; maintain current competence in the particular discipline or field of specialization.

4.7. Personal Use of Class Hours and Equipment

The University offers a faculty lounge, equipped with desk space and computers, that is located at the Pender Campus for use by its faculty members for class preparation and other activities related to their courses. Faculty members are not allowed to use class hours for personal matters such as working on other classroom assignments, personal e-mails, or spending time for any other third party matters. University equipment, including telephones, copiers, computers, and fax machines, are to be used to conduct the work of the University and any use that interferes with this purpose is prohibited.
4.8. E-mail Correspondence

All faculty members are issued a VIU campus e-mail account. Primary communication between VIU and its faculty members will occur via this VIU campus e-mail. This e-mail account should always be used to correspond with VIU students.

4.9. Textbook Policy

Students must acquire the required textbooks by the end of the course add/drop period. If students do not have proper materials, the faculty member has the right to ask such students to leave the classroom and mark them absent with the School Dean’s approval.

4.10. Course Syllabus Policy

The distribution of a course syllabus to students is required at VIU. The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the faculty member and students. The course syllabus must be distributed during the first week of classes. The following information should be provided in the course syllabus:

- Course Title
- Class Dates/hours and semester
- Class Location
- Faculty member contact information and e-mail
- Course Description
- Prerequisite
- Course Credit hours
- Grading percentages
- Instructional Materials and References
- Chapter Learning Objective
- Assessment Criteria and Methods of Evaluating Students
- Learning Objectives / Course Objectives
- Schedule of;
  - Assignment
  - Quizzes
  - Midterms
  - Final
- Required/Optional textbook
- Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Code of Conduct
- Weekly Course Outline
- Attendance Policy
- Americans with Disabilities Act Policy
- Inclement Weather Policy

- A statement is permissible indicating that the information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the faculty member. Changes to the syllabus shall also be given to the student in writing.
- Faculty members should possess a VIU issued e-mail address to communicate with the student. This VIU e-mail address should be listed in the course syllabus.
- Faculty members are required to use the VIU Syllabus Template received from the School Dean’s office to update for their use in classes.
- A soft copy of the course syllabus should be submitted to the School Dean’s office before the first week of the start of a semester.
- Each faculty member should follow the textbook that is mentioned in the course syllabus. Any changes that have been made to textbooks should be indicated in the course syllabus. All changes should be announced to students, as well as to the School Dean.
- Faculty members are encouraged to utilize instructional technology to deliver course material.
4.11. Student Attendance Policies

Good academic standing requires the presence of students at all class meetings. Therefore, course attendance at VIU is mandatory. There are only two acceptable reasons for absence from class or lab: 1) serious illness on the part of the student, or 2) a family emergency. In the former case, the student must submit a doctor’s note explaining the reason for the absence to the instructor(s) and the Registrar’s Office. In the latter case, the student must submit a note to their instructor explaining the reason for the absence. Explanations for excused absences must be received no later than one week after the last missed class. Exceptions can be made by the instructor for prolonged emergencies when a student does not have means or opportunity to inform the University in advance.

Students are required to contact the instructors for absences prior to the missed class. The student must contact each instructor and arrange to make-up work immediately upon returning to the University. All make-up work is assigned by the instructor. Instructors are not obligated to provide make-up work for unexcused absences.

Absence for unexcused reasons may negatively affect the student’s final course grade. More importantly, under faculty discretion, unexcused absences in excess of 25% of the total class and lab time may result in failure of the course.

All students are expected to arrive to on-ground classes on time. Late attendance is disruptive to both the instructor and students. If a student is tardy for an on-ground class more than the instructor deems advisable, the instructor will report the issue to the student’s School Dean for appropriate action.

Attendance in Online Classrooms

Attendance in an online classroom for a given week is based on the student’s engagement in an academically related activity that can be documented.

The following are academically related activities for the purposes of attendance in the online classroom:

- Meaningful participation in an online discussion.
- Quizzes, tests, assignment submissions, and other work that is graded by the instructor.
- Student initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question via email or chat room.

The following are examples of activities that are not acceptable for the purpose of documenting attendance in the online classroom:

- Student-tracking of course site login; or
- Student posting of bio in Discussion forum.

Attendance in the VIU online classroom is collected in weekly cycles. For administrative purposes, the date that attendance is recorded for is the Saturday of each week, regardless of the day of the week on which the semester starts. If a week spans over two months, the attendance for that week will be reported as a part of the later month. A weekly unit in VIU Online Education consist of activities that students are engaged in from a Monday to the following Saturday.
The last day of attendance of an online class is defined as the last day in which the student was engaged in an academically related activity that can be documented.

4.12. Final Examination Policies

Final examination dates and times are set by the University and may not under any circumstances be changed. Exam dates (including mid-term exams, if applicable) should be announced by the faculty member at the first class meeting, and printed in the syllabus handed out at the first meeting. Students failing to appear for a final exam (or mid-term) must demonstrate that the absence is excusable under the conditions outlined under “Attendance Policies” above. In such cases, the student must be prepared to take the exam at a time set by the faculty member. To ensure fairness, the exam questions may also be different from those on the original exam. If a student misses the final exam without a verifiable excuse, the faculty member may assign an “Incomplete, I” grade. The student may work with the faculty member during the following semester to convert it to a valid letter grade.

4.13. Academic Grade and Grade Submission Policies

In order to assess and evaluate VIU programs for ACICS and other reporting requirements, VIU maintains a standard grading scheme and reporting mechanism. This policy addresses our methods. In addition to the grade categories, we must be able to tie the grading rubric to the objectives for the course. The objectives for the course have to be related to the objectives of the School and then up to the mission of VIU. Some reporting requirements necessitate this form of analysis.

Grade Submission Policy
All faculty members are required to submit the following:
1. All grades and categories used to determine a student’s final grade;
2. All grades must be based on a numerical scheme (0-100);
3. The grading rubric used (should be the same as on the course syllabus);
4. Hard copies of grades from grade books or spreadsheets; and
5. The Registrar’s grade submission form with both numerical and letter final grades.

Grade categories include, but are not limited to; exams, quizzes, midterm exam, final exam, homework, project, research paper, discussions/participation, etc. Grade categories are required for all academic Schools to prepare reports with statistical analysis comparing different courses.

4.14. Grading System and Grade Point Average

Explanation of Grades
The grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, and S are passing grades. Grades of “F” and “U” are failing grades. The grade of “I” (Incomplete) is given to a student whose work has been of passing quality but who has, for compelling reasons, been unable to complete all of his or her required coursework by the end of the semester. Students should be advised that grades lower than “C” are not normally accepted for transfer. The quality of performance in any academic course is reported by a letter grade. These grades denote the character of work and are assigned grade points as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>CGPA</th>
<th>Academic Standing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-95</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Honors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-85</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-80</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Excellent-Satisfactory&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-75</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-70</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-65</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Satisfactory-Lowest passing&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-60</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59-55</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54-50</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-45</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>Lowest passing&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 ≤</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>S*</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Satisfactory (non-credit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>U*</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory (non-credit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Transfer Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>AU</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Audit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Satisfactory grade for graduate level programs.

<sup>b</sup> Lowest passing grade for graduate level programs.

<sup>c</sup> Lowest passing grade for undergraduate level programs.

* For non-credit courses, such as ESL.

**Symbols:** The following symbols may appear next to a grade or in the grade column:

- **R:** Repeat Course
- **W:** Withdrawn
- **IP:** In-Progress
- **TC:** Transfer-in Credits
- **AU:** Audited Course
- **(*)** Course not applicable to current degree

**Grade Point Average (GPA)** is the total grade earned divided by the total credits attempted at the end of each semester.

**Cumulative GPA (CGPA)** is the overall GPA attained so far in an ongoing education period.

The GPA is determined by dividing the total number of grade points earned in courses by the total number of credits attempted. The GPA is carried out to three digits past the decimal point (example 1.000). No rounding up or down shall be done to arrive at the GPA. When a course is repeated, only the highest grade earned is counted in the computation of the GPA and the CGPA for graduation.

**Course Codes and Levels:**

- **ESL 100-499:** English as a Second Language courses (ESL is a non-credit program)
- **GEC 100-199:** General Education courses
• **100-499**: Undergraduate level courses, with increasing levels of difficulty as the number increases.

• **500-699**: Graduate level courses, with increasing levels of difficulty as the number increases.

### 4.15. Incomplete Grade ("I")

The grade of “I” (Incomplete) is given to a student whose work has been of passing quality but who has, for compelling reasons, been unable to complete all of his or her required coursework by the end of the semester. Students receiving a grade of “I” will be evaluated at the end of the sixth week of the following semester according to the minimum standards for academic progress. At this time, all work from the previous semester must be completed and submitted to the instructor.

A grade of “I” is not included in the calculation of the CGPA, but will count as credit hours attempted for the purposes of calculating the successful course completion percentage. Courses that remain as an “I” at the end of the six-week period will automatically become an “F” and will be calculated in the CGPA.

“I” grades are also counted in the calculation of the successful course completion percentage if the student was charged for any portion of the course. Incomplete and Withdrawal grades may have an adverse effect on the successful course completion percentage of a student if he/she has been charged tuition for any part of the course. The “I” grade is issued for verifiable, unavoidable reasons. Since the “I” grade extends enrollment in the course, requirements for satisfactory completion will be established through student/faculty consultation and documented on the student’s transcript. The instructor may complete a Grade Change Form to change a grade and must submit the form to the Registrar’s Office by the deadline for submission as stated in the Academic Calendar.

### 4.16. Withdrawals ("W")

1. **Withdrawals after the Add/Drop Period**

   A student who wishes to change his/her schedule by dropping a course may do so only during the add/drop period by filing a Course Add/Drop/Withdrawal Form. From the third week to the end of the tenth week of classes for the 15-week courses, or from the second week to the end of the fifth week of classes for the 8-week courses, students may withdraw only after obtaining the School Dean or academic advisor’s signature on the Course Add/Drop/Withdrawal Form. A grade of “W”, indicating official withdrawal, will be recorded on the student’s transcript. After a grade of “W” is issued, the course may be repeated once. The grade of “W” will not be assigned to any student who has taken the final examination in the course. “W” grades are not calculated in the CGPA; however, they will be considered credits attempted if the student has incurred a financial obligation for the course. “W” grades affect the successful course completion percentage. A student who does not withdraw from a course before the deadline will receive a failing grade or a letter grade based upon his/her performance in the course. To withdraw from a course, the student must complete the relevant section of the Course Add/Drop/Withdrawal Form, obtain the School Dean’s signature, and submit the completed form to the Registrar’s Office.

2. **Withdrawals from the University**

   A student may withdraw from the University only when circumstances beyond the student’s control make it impossible for him or her to complete their coursework for the semester. A student wishing to
withdraw from the University must complete the relevant section of the Institutional Withdrawal Form, obtain the School Dean’s signature, and submit the completed form to the Registrar’s Office. The student will receive a grade of “W” if he or she withdraws between the third and tenth week of the semester for 15-week courses, or between the second and fifth week of the session for 8-week courses. A student who does not withdraw from the University before the deadline will receive a failing grade or a letter grade based upon his/her performance in the course. The institutional refund policy is applied to determine if the institution is required to provide a refund to the student. Students who fail to register by the end of add/drop period are automatically considered to be officially withdrawn from the University.

4.17. Course Add/Drop

After registration, a student may add a course at any time before the deadline specified in the Academic Calendar. Adding a course after the last day to add a course requires proof of extenuating circumstances and the written approval of the School Dean. Under no circumstances may a course be added after three (3) calendar days beyond the last day to add a course. Students wishing to drop a course must do so before the last day to drop a course. A course that is dropped before the specified date will not appear in the student’s academic record. To add or drop a course, the student must fill out a Course Add/Drop/Withdrawal Form (available from the Registrar’s Office and on our website at www.viu.edu), obtain the School Dean’s or the academic advisor’s signature, and submit the completed form to the Registrar’s Office.

4.18. Academic Standing of Students

The University will take the initiative to advise and assist students who are having academic difficulty. The student will be assisted in setting objectives, in planning improved study habits, and in dealing with other factors related to academic progress. There must be some point at which the student, having been offered assistance by the University and having been apprised of the situation, is best served by being prevented from further registration for a period of time if no academic improvement has been shown.

Academic Warnings

Any student who:

1. Fails to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 in an undergraduate degree program or an undergraduate certificate program, or a 3.0 in a graduate degree program or a graduate certificate program for any semester; or
2. Receives a grade of “F” or incomplete “I”; or
3. Engages in academic dishonesty as defined in the Academic Catalog below; will receive an academic warning at the end of that semester. The student will continue to receive warnings until the situation improves. The Registrar has the authority to place on academic probation any student who receives warning letters for three consecutive semesters.

Academic Probation

Students who fail to maintain the required CGPA and successful course completion percentage minimums at 25%, 50%, and 75% of the Maximum Time Frame (MTF) at the end of each academic year (for those programs equal to one year in length or longer) will be placed on academic probation as shown in the table below:
Students who do not maintain satisfactory academic progress will be placed on academic probation for one semester. The student on academic probation will be counseled and given assistance, if needed, in order to improve their CGPA. The statement “Placed on Academic Probation” will be entered into the student’s permanent record. The academic probationary period is normally one semester, except under mitigating circumstances. The student is considered to be maintaining satisfactory academic progress while on probation.

If a student fails to attain a minimum CGPA of 2.0 at the end of the academic probationary period, the student will be dismissed and the statement “Academic Dismissal” will be entered into the student’s permanent record.

**Academic Dismissal**

Students who do not maintain at least a CGPA of 2.0 at the end of the academic probationary period, and who cannot meet the minimum CGPA requirement at the evaluation points shown in the table below, will be dismissed from the University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Points (% of MTF attempted*)</th>
<th>Probation Period for Undergraduate Level Programs</th>
<th>CGPA Falling in Probation Period for Graduate Level Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At <strong>25%</strong> of MTF</td>
<td>CGPA &lt; 1.25</td>
<td>CGPA &lt; 2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At <strong>50%</strong> of MTF</td>
<td>1.25 &lt; CGPA &lt; 1.50</td>
<td>2.25 &lt; CGPA &lt; 2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At <strong>75%</strong> of MTF</td>
<td>1.50 &lt; CGPA &lt; 1.75</td>
<td>2.50 &lt; CGPA &lt; 2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At <strong>100%</strong> of MTF</td>
<td>No probation is allowed. Dismissal is required.</td>
<td>No probation is allowed. Dismissal is required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statement “Academic Dismissal” will be entered into the student’s permanent record. Academic Dismissal normally is permanent unless, with good cause, students reapply and are accepted under special consideration for readmission by the University. (See the “Reinstatement as a Regular Student” policy below.)
4.19. Grounds for Warning, Suspension, or Dismissal

Any of the following may be considered as cause for probation, suspension, or dismissal:
1. Academic dishonesty of any kind;
2. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress;
3. Violation of institutional rules and regulation; or
4. Failure to maintain financial obligations.

Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedures
Those students who engage in academic dishonesty are subject to possible disciplinary actions ranging from admonition to dismissal, along with any grade penalty the instructor might impose. Academic dishonesty, as a general rule, involves one of the following acts:

1. Cheating on an examination or quiz, including the giving, receiving, or soliciting of information and the unauthorized use of notes or other materials during the examination or quiz;
2. Buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting any material purported to be the unreleased contents of a forthcoming examination, or the use of such material;
3. Substituting for another person during an examination or allowing such substitution for oneself;
4. Plagiarizing: This is the act of appropriating passages from the work of another individual, either word for word or in substance, and representing them as one’s own work;
5. Colluding with another person in the preparation or editing of assignments submitted for credit, unless such collaboration has been approved in advance by the instructor; or
6. Other forms of academic dishonesty include selling or purchasing examinations, papers or other assignments and submitting or resubmitting the same paper for two different classes without explicit authorization.

When an instructor suspects cheating, plagiarism, and/or other forms of academic or non-academic dishonesty, the instructor exercises his/her academic judgment in light of the particular circumstances and the student’s academic history. Consultation with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and/or the School Dean throughout the process is encouraged.

There are two levels of academic and non-academic misconduct:
A) Unintentional, and B) Intentional Breach of the rules.

A. Unintentional Breach of Dishonesty: When an instructor determines that an instance of academic dishonesty/misconduct resulted from insufficient academic skills, the instructor (in consultation and close cooperation with the School Dean) uses his/her discretion to determine appropriate action. Examples of possible disciplinary actions are listed below:

1. The instructor may advise the student on the nature of the student’s breach of academic expectations.
2. The instructor may allow the student to redo the assignment.
3. The instructor may require that the student complete one or more additional assignments that meet the standards of academic honesty.
4. The instructor may lower the grade for the work in question.
5. The instructor may assign a failing grade for the work in question.
6. The instructor may give the student a failing grade for the course.

Once an action(s) is taken, the School Dean will inform the student in writing about the decision and instruct the student regarding the next steps and timeline of future tasks.

The student has the right to appeal the action taken at the departmental level. To do so, the student must appeal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs in writing within five (5) working days and provide substantial evidence for his/her appeal. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will then send the case back to the School Dean with his/her recommendation. The final decision will be reached by the School (instructor and the School Dean).

If the school decides to refer the student to the Discipline & Honor Committee, then the misconduct will be treated as an intentional breach (see below).

**B. Intentional Breach of Dishonesty:** Having provided guidance to the student, the instructor remains alert to the possibility of further breaches. If the instructor discovers instances of problematic behavior, he/she determines whether the breach is an intentional/knowing act or if it resulted from a need for further skills development. If the instructor concludes that these instances are intentional and/or knowing acts of dishonesty, he/she proceeds as follows:

1. The instructor will meet with the student to present and discuss evidence for the particular violation, giving the student an opportunity to refute or deny the charge(s).
2. The instructor informs the School Dean of the breach and may schedule an appointment with the student to discuss the matter further.
3. If the instructor and the School Dean both confirm that the breach is fully intentional, then the student is referred to the Discipline & Honor Committee (DHC).

The Discipline & Honor Committee (DHC) is composed of the following members: School Deans, a senior faculty member, a Student Government Association member, the Registrar, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs as the chair of the Committee.

At a written request of an academic school, the Vice President of Academic Affairs will call the DHC for a meeting within ten (10) working days. The committee will review all aspects of the case to ensure fair treatment. The hearing process should not last more than five (5) working days. During this time, the student may be called to present his/her case if the majority of the Committee members deem it necessary. The DHC, with a simple single majority vote, may choose to impose one or more of the following possible penalties at the end of the process:

1. **Reprimand:** A reprimand is a formal written notice from the Vice President of Academic Affairs to the student expressing disapproval of the behavior. It describes the nature of the breach of academic honesty standards, expectations for future behavior, and any specific educational requirements. The letter of reprimand is not included in the student’s official university record.

2. **Academic Warning:** An academic warning for academic dishonesty is a formal written notice from the Vice President of Academic Affairs to the student setting forth conditions for continued enrollment in the University. The academic warning for academic dishonesty is included in the student’s official university record. A breach of academic honesty expectations after an academic
warning for academic dishonesty normally leads to dismissal. An academic warning for academic dishonesty remains active on the student’s academic record until graduation. While the University retains information about the academic warning after graduation for internal purposes, the university clears the official record. If the student pursues additional study with the University, the information is available to university personnel who may consider it if the student breaches academic honesty expectations again.

3. Academic Dismissal: An academic dismissal for academic dishonesty is an indefinite separation from the University. The formal written notice describes the nature of the breach of academic honesty expectations. The academic dismissal for academic dishonesty is included in the student’s official university record (transcript).

The student will be notified in writing about the Committee’s decision within three days of the meeting. Copies of the notification letter will be placed in the student’s file and forwarded to the School Dean and to the Registrar. The DHC’s decision is final and may not be appealed unless compelling evidence is submitted to the Committee.

Non-Academic Dishonesty/Misconduct

By enrolling in the University, the student recognizes that the following types of behavior are prohibited and that being found guilty of engaging in them can serve as grounds for certain sanctions, including expulsion or involvement of the local police department.

1. Illegal activities: Violation of any federal, state, and local laws and any published or decreed university policies will be reported to the proper authorities.

2. Copyright infringement: Most printed materials, photographs, motions pictures, sound recordings, and computer software are protected by copyright. Copyrighted works may not be reproduced, distributed, performed, or adapted by students without the copyright owner’s permission. For more information please see the Copyright & Fair Use Policies for Software & Other Materials section in this Catalog.

3. Computer misuse: Some software products are protected by copyright laws. Students may not copy the institution’s software without permission of the copyright holder. Additionally, students may not place personal software on the institution’s computers or damage or destroy either software or computers. For more information please see the Copyright & Fair Use Policies for Software & Other Materials section in this Catalog.

4. Drug use: The manufacture, sale, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substances or illegal drug paraphernalia on university premises or at university sponsored events is considered an illegal activity and is prohibited on all university property.

5. Alcohol consumption: The use, possession, or sale of any alcoholic beverage, regardless of its potency or lack thereof, is prohibited on all university property.

6. Firearms possession: The use, possession, or sale of firearms or other weapons or any dangerous explosives or explosive elements or component parts on university property is strictly prohibited.

7. Physical and psychological abuse: Any form of physical and/or psychological abuse, threat, or harassment of another person or fighting on university property will result in sanctions. If the abuse is judged severe enough, the local police department may be consulted.

8. Property damage: Littering, defacing, destroying, stealing, or damaging university property (or attempting to do so), initiation of, or causing to be initiated, any false report, warning or threat of fire, explosion, or other emergency under the University’s jurisdiction, is prohibited.
9. Gambling: Gambling or holding a raffle or lottery at the university without proper approval is forbidden.

10. Obscene language or conduct: Use of profanity and disorderly obscene conduct is strictly prohibited.

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the University’s policies on the following activities: unauthorized entry or presence in any university building or facility; solicitation and sales; smoking; sexual harassment; physical or psychological assault/abuse of others; and unauthorized or disorderly assemblies that hamper the effective functioning of the university, its students, staff, and visitors, and its daily routine operations.

The University does not excuse any violation of its policies on the basis that the student was not aware of these policies and their subsequent penalties and sanctions.

The University reserves the right to expel any student for illegal activity and/or for any action outlined above.

**Disruptive Classroom Behavior**

In general, classroom management is the responsibility of the instructor. The learning environment of the entire class should not be jeopardized for the sake of a single student or group of students. Inappropriate classroom behavior may include, but is not limited to:

1. Disruption of the classroom atmosphere;
2. Engaging in non-class activities, for instance, talking to another student, talking on a cell phone, or working on an assignment for another class;
3. Use of profanity in classroom discussion; or
4. Use of abusive or disrespectful language toward the instructor or a student in the class, or about other individuals or groups.

Instructors have the right to dismiss a student temporarily from class when the student’s behavior distracts or disrupts the other students’ learning.
5. Section V: ONLINE FACULTY POLICIES

5.1. Responsibilities of Faculty Teaching Online Courses

Online Courses: The faculty teaching online courses use innovative technologies and teaching methodologies. The VIU online courses are taught completely online in a virtual classroom via the Internet, and use the Moodle learning management system as a delivery platform. When appropriate, other web-based technologies are used to supplement the functionalities of the learning management system. Unlike the residential, on-ground courses, the online courses do not meet in a classroom at scheduled times. All activities in the online classroom are asynchronous. Faculty will, however, engage in synchronous activities (e.g. virtual office hours) to enhance the student experience to the extent appropriate and needed by the students. The online courses are structured using innovative frameworks and pedagogic approaches proven successful in the online environment.

The online courses include learner-centered strategies which help the student be actively engaged in the course activities, and promote active learning and retention of knowledge. This includes problem-based and knowledge-based strategies which involve higher order thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation, instead of only recall and command applications.

Online Sessions: The online courses at VIU span over 8 weeks and are launched in the beginning or the second half of the Fall, Spring and the Summer semesters. The sessions in which they are offered are referred to as Fall I, Fall II, Spring I, Spring II, Summer I and Summer II. All online courses that VIU offers are 3-credit courses, and assume student involvement of 15-18 hours per week in activities related to the course that include, but are not limited to: textbook readings, article reviews, watching videos, performing library or research online, preparing discussion posts or reactions to peers’ posts, writing reports or other deliverables for the assignments. The student learning outcomes of the online courses are equivalent to those of the same courses taught in the face-to-face format in a classroom setting and will be assessed as such.

VIU OE Policies and Procedures: All VIU policies and procedures apply to the faculty teaching online courses as they are stated in this Handbook. Additional policies may be imposed by the appropriate Schools, or VIU OE (VIU OE), as communicated to the Faculty, as needed by the School, VIU Online Education, or required by the nature of the online course(s). Faculty teaching online courses must meet VIU’s requirements and complete appropriate VIU online training programs prior to teaching their first online course. They are encouraged to participate in the periodic refresher courses and trainings provided by VIU OE on topics relevant to the online teaching environments, methods and methodologies.

VIU OE carefully monitors the building of the online classrooms, and all activities within the course, and works with the faculty and the students on all aspects of the online courseware. It ensures that the online class meets the same objectives as its on-ground equivalent, and that the student engagement and time estimates fall within the required for 3-credit courses, and are adequate for the subject matter and the level of the students that are enrolled in them.

Faculty Resources: VIU OE maintains a rich repository of resources relevant to teaching and teaching online specifically. They are accessible under the “Faculty” tab on http://online.viu.edu. Extensive manuals on setting up and using the Moodle classrooms are available via http://it.viu.edu. The same site houses manuals relevant to the student use of the system. Faculty is encouraged to provide guidance to the students in using these resources in overcoming the technical difficulties in navigating the online classroom, typically in the appropriate sections of the syllabi.VIU OE can
provide any other assistance to the faculty in setting up the online classroom, executing learning
objects, consult and implement new technologies in the online classroom, and consult on strategies for
classroom management. It can provide assistance and on-boarding on a variety of topics relevant to
online course design, development and teaching, as outlined in the Faculty Section of the VIU OE
web site. Faculty is expected to use these resources as a self-service repository in their on-boarding
and developing as online facilitators.

5.2. Pre-Launch Activities

This section outlines the activities of the online faculty before the course launch.

Preparing for a Course Launch: Online courses require a significant amount of pre-launch work,
and constant collaboration with the team of VIU OE, in ensuring sound instructional design and
quality of the learning objects in the classrooms.

Syllabus: All VIU courses must use the standard VIU OE Syllabus Template. The course syllabus
must be submitted to the School prior to the start of the semester and made available to students on
the first day of class. The course syllabus should include information on technical support of the
online environment where applicable.

Course Shells: The online course should be taught as it was developed using the course syllabus, the
established unit objectives, assessment, and discussion. The faculty is responsible for populating the
general course area of the online classroom, and the contents of the eight (8) weekly units. When
faculty is given access to the online classroom, the shells of the minimum expected components of the
classroom will already be in the classroom. The faculty is expected to populate all of them with
contents and add additional components as necessary. Examples of additional components in the
course home would be the “Class Café” and the “Ask the Instructor” forums (discussion areas), or
wikis and chats in the weekly units.

Fixed Elements: There are two fixed discussions across all VIU OE courses: the “Autobiography”
discussion in week 1, and the reflective activity in Week 8 that asks the student to tie the learnings
from the course with the VIU Mission. In these two weeks the faculty can add additional discussions,
but cannot delete the fixed ones. These discussions come pre-populated in the course shell.

Recommendations: VIU OE recommends that there is at least one discussion and at least one
assignment in each weekly unit. VIU OE recommends that the initial post of the discussions is due on
Day 2 (Tuesday) each week, the assignment is due on Day 4 (Thursday), and the responses to the
peers’ comments in discussions is due on Day 6 (Saturday) each week. Faculty should insist on highest
standards in academic honesty, and when possible require students to take the Plagiarism learning
object in Moodle. When possible, assignments should be collected using the TurnItIn assignment
boxes in Moodle, which will enable discovering inappropriately credentialied work in the student
submissions.

Use of Copyrighted Materials: VIU OE expects that all work found in the online classroom is the
original work of the faculty building the course. They are held responsible for any omissions in
appropriate credentialing of other individual’s work. VIU OE performs random checks of verbiage in
online classrooms using the TurnItIn system.

Faculty should by default assume that all material that they have not written or produced themselves is
copyrighted, and that in the online environment, the Fair Act doctrine may not be applicable, or is not
applicable in the same fashion as it relates to the residential classroom. As such, it is their
responsibility to ensure that only materials that can be legally used in the online classrooms are used with the proper permissions.

VIU OE can assist the faculty in checking the copyright status of a particular body of work that a faculty may suggest to be used in the online classroom. VIU Online Education, in its periodic checks will remove materials that are posted in the online classrooms without the proper authorization, and will work with the faculty to either obtain the rights to use the work, or find alternatives. As an example, using Power Points that publishers provide to use with the textbooks may or may not be used in the online classroom. Different rules apply in the online classroom, as the online medium is also a medium that distributes the work. In this case, instead of loading the Power Point files in the online classrooms, faculty should be providing links to these files on the publisher’s’ web sites.

**Pre-Launch Expectations:** The expectations from the faculty teaching online courses in the pre-launch period in a chronological fashion are as follows:

Four weeks before the beginning of the online session, the online faculty must perform the following activities in collaboration with VIU OE and the appropriate VIU School:

- Check the status of the setup of the course shell,
- Customize and review the course syllabus, familiarize themselves with the role of the course within the context of the programs the course is a part of,
- Create and upload the instructional and assessment contents for the first four weeks of materials for the course. This includes all discussion questions, assignments and projects that the students are expected to complete, with clear submission and evaluation details,
- Update any supporting resources for that will be used in the course, including clear directions on how they can be accessed (library or web resources, graphical, media and multimedia elements that are outside the core instructional contents for the course),
- Create the structure for the grade book and implement it in the online classroom environment,
- Work with VIU OE in ensuring that the contents uploaded in the online classroom satisfies the minimum quality expectation from the online classes.

Two weeks before the semester begins; the online faculty must complete the following:

- Upload the remaining instructional and assessment contents for the course,
- Finalize the course syllabus and verify contact information and office hours, and report any changes to the appropriate School and VIU Online Education,
- Review course content, and upload any additional resources to the online classroom,
- Review the assessments (discussion, assignments, projects etc), and verify that the level and rigor of the course outline implementation is consistent to achieving the course goals stated in the course syllabus,
- If desired, set controls that will make some or all assessment elements viewable and accessible by the students.

One week before the semester begins; the online faculty must perform the following:

- Post a welcome announcement on the home page,
- Send a welcome e-mail to all students enrolled in the course, using the e-mail tool of the course delivery system,
• Send a second e-mail, inviting students to the new term, one day before the beginning of the class.

Note: By the beginning of the session, VIU OE will have communicated to all the enrolled students in the class how to access the class. Students in the online courses are able to access the online classroom on the first day of the session.

Virtual Office Hours: The faculty teaching online courses will post their virtual office hour in the course syllabus. They are expected to be available during those hours in a chat/conference room, on the phone, or accessible synchronously online as specified in the syllabus. All students taking the online course must be able to access these online forums and services, if they are offered outside the basic functionalities in the learning management system. VIU OE will work with the faculty in identifying services that would best fit the needs of a course for effective delivery of synchronous online office hours activities.

Collaboration with VIU Online Education: The faculty can design and develop their online course in templates that VIU OE can provide upon request, and will have access to sample courses that can serve as samples that can be used as models in the course building process. VIU OE can afterward assist the faculty with the upload of the materials in the classrooms. Developing the course using the templates follows a process that focuses on the quality of the instructional design and content delivery, by bypassing any barriers that the technology might introduce if contents were input directly into the course shells. Faculty is expected to share their work in the templates with VIU Online Education, whose team will provide feedback on any areas of concerns early in the process.

5.3. Activities in the Live Classroom

This section outlines the activities of the online faculty after the beginning of the session in which the online course is launched. The activities relate to the facilitation of the online classroom.

Scheduled Activities: Online faculty must participate in the activities of the online classroom at least four days each week, without missing three consecutive days. Online faculty must participate in threaded discussions every week, and elevate the level of the discussions by responding productively and substantially at least once to each student’s post, by

• Asking a probing question,
• Making a suggestion,
• Sharing insights from having read the students’ post.
• Offering and supporting an opinion,
• Validating an idea with their own experience.

Online faculty must respond to student e-mails and discussions, as well as queries within the online classroom (such as questions posted on forums in the online classroom) within 48 hours.

Note: Faculty is encouraged to conduct the communication with the student via the means of the learning management system, for documentation purposes. For example, if e-mailing outside the facilities of the system is deemed necessary, the faculty will use the VIU e-mail account, and respond to the student’s VIU e-mail account.

During the length of the course, the online faculty will:
• Post announcements on the course homepage regarding the course policies, as well as any events or changes that appear throughout the term.
• Communicate any changes to the course syllabus to the students by e-mail and via announcements in the online classroom.
• Answer questions posted by students within a maximum of 48 hours.
• Be present online during announced virtual office hours as specified in the syllabus. Faculty is encouraged to provide and use additional channels of communication with the students in addition to the chat tools in the online classroom, especially in cases when demonstrations are needed or are desirable in helping students meet course objectives.
• Perform quality assurance of the content and mechanics of the assessment tools (assignments, test, quizzes etc.) and tests within 48 hours from their initial appearance on site.
• Maintain efficient communication with the students by participating in discussions with the students and encouraging the discussions between the students in the online classroom via the available online classroom or other channels.
• Indicate places and mechanics to submit assignments, and do not accept e-mail as submission method for assignments. The faculty needs to ensure that the submission details are clear and present for each assignment that requires action from the student.
• Grade all students’ assignments within four days from the posted deadline.
• Provide detailed feedback to students, and give precise instructions regarding makeup work, and resubmission of assignments. The feedback can be given by providing the commented version of the submissions to the students or via a commentary in the grade book. The use of detailed grading rubrics available to the students before they submit their work is highly encouraged.
• Maintain an average presence online of 6-10 hours weekly, and
• Enforce the highest standards of academic honesty by example, by checking student’s work for plagiarism, and enforcing the VIU Academic Honesty Policy, as stated in the Academic catalog.

Administrative Activities Regarding Live Courses: This section overviews specific activities that faculty teaching the online courses are required to participate in, and relate to the administration of the courses, and activities involving the implementation of selected retention strategies.

Every week, the online faculty must perform the following activities:
• Correct assignments, provide personalized feedback and update the gradebook within four days of the assignment deadline.
• Initiate communication with those students that are not submitting their work, or are doing so late, as well as when their work does not meet quality standards and expectations.
• Take actions necessary to encourage students to participate in the class activities and give additional directions to enable the students to succeed.
• Seek and share with the students resources that would aid their progress in the classroom, and provide with references to individual students when individual knowledge gaps are identified.

During the third week of the online session, the online faculty must perform the following:
• Review student activity and report any student that has not participated in academically-relevant activities the School dean and the Registrar.
• Review the grade book activity and report those students that have not responded to any assessment items posted in the course to the appropriate VIU Academic School.
On the last day of each calendar month, and at the end of the session, faculty should send attendance sheets to the Registrar or the School office. The attendance sheets register weekly attendance and participation in the online classrooms as per the following parameters:

**Attendance** in an online classroom for a given week is based the student’s engagement in an academically related activity that can be documented. The following are academically related activities for the purposes of attendance:

- Meaningful participation in an online discussion;
- Quizzes, tests, assignment submissions; and other work that is graded by the instructor; or
- Student initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question via email or chat room.

The following are not acceptable for purposes of attendance:

- Student-tracking of course site login; or
- Student posting of bio in Discussion forum.

Attendance in the VIU online classroom is collected in weekly cycles. For administrative purposes, the date that attendance is recorded for is the Saturday of each week, regardless of the day of the week on which the semester starts. If a week spans over two months, the attendance for that week will be reported as a part of the later month. A weekly unit in VIU OE consist of activities that students are engaged in spanning from a Monday to the adjacent Saturday.

The last day of attendance of an online class is defined as the last day in which the student was engaged in an academically related activity that can be documented.

**Course Evaluations:** VIU OE administers the midterm and end of term class evaluation surveys during the 4th and 8th week of the online courses. Faculty is notified when these surveys are launched and are provided with the cumulative summaries of the same as soon as they are available (for the midterm evaluations), and after the submission of the final grades (for the end of term evaluation). Faculty is expected to assist VIU OE in encouraging students to participate in providing feedback.

**Faculty Feedback:** Typically, towards the end of the session, faculty is asked to provide input in the form of a faculty survey. Faculty is encouraged to provide any feedback to the School or VIU OE whenever necessary and desired. The Schools and VIU OE may act on this feedback as necessary.

**Final Grades:** At the end of the online session, the faculty is required to provide the Schools and the Registrar’s office with the final grades and the final grade break-ups as requested by the VIU Registrar’s office. At this time, all paperwork regarding the course is expected, that may include, but is not limited to the last attendance sheet, incomplete grade forms. The deadline for final grade submissions typically one to two days after the end of the session, so it is imperative that faculty plans their time in order to meet the deadline. The deadline is a part of the VIU Academic Calendar.

**Collaboration with VIU Online Education:** After the course launch, VIU OE independently monitors and evaluates the dynamics in the online classroom and provides support and counseling to instructors when necessary on issues including, but not related to the following topics: classroom
management, student motivation, managing discussions, providing clear instruction to the students regarding submission of their work etc.

VIU OE is committed to providing any assistance to the faculty needed to present the students in the online courses with a superb experience, while meeting the learning objectives via meaningful activities and discussions.
6. Section VI: OTHER POLICIES FOR FACULTY

6.1. Faculty Development Activities

Virginia International University encourages its faculty members to attend faculty development activities to help increase their knowledge, skills and expertise. All VIU Faculty Members must complete and submit an Annual Faculty Development Plan (FDP) Form to the School Dean.

The Annual FDP cycle starts January 1st and ends December 31st. **FDPs are due with the final grade submission date of the prior fall semester, and therefore shall be one of the conditions to release the final paycheck for that academic semester to the faculty member.** Notification reminders will be sent out to faculty members from the Schools as early as November 1st. Plans should be submitted prior to the start of the FDP cycle year. For new faculty members, the 1st FDP cycle would start from their employment start date until Dec 31st of that year. The 1st FDP is due within 15 days from the date of hire, or the semester start date, whichever comes last. Proof/supporting documents for the FDP are to be requested and compiled at the end of each academic semester by School administrators.

VIU supports and offers reimbursement for two types of faculty development activities: in-service training and professional development training.

In-service training is organized by the university. Attendees are generally given a $50 stipend for each event, regardless of time and duration of the event, unless otherwise stated.

The professional development activities are carried out by outside professional organizations. The university encourages its faculty members to attend professional development activities to increase faculty members’ knowledge, skills, and expertise. Faculty members can request reimbursement for up to $250 per year. The following procedure is required for the reimbursement to take place:

1. Prior to attending an event, faculty members need to submit a request for approval form to the School Dean.
2. The Dean reviews these planned activities to make sure that they fall within the area of specialization of the faculty member.
3. Once the activity has been approved (and the form signed) by the Dean, the faculty member would attend the event as an employee of VIU, representing only VIU.
4. Within 30 days after the event took place, the faculty member needs to file for reimbursement by submitting an Expenditure Request Form with supporting documentation (receipts, etc.) attached. The following expenses can be reimbursed by VIU: conference registration fees, transportation costs, and lodging. Membership fees for any professional organization are not reimbursable.
5. The $250 total is applicable to the period of time covered by the annual faculty development plan. The left-over money is not carried over to the next year’s plan. In the event that a faculty member does not remain with VIU for the duration of the time covered by the development plan, the qualified expenses must not exceed $100 for the spring and fall semesters each and $50 for the summer semester.
6.2. Scholarly Research Honoraria Policy

Virginia International University (VIU) encourages members of its faculty to engage in scholarly research in the area of their academic discipline or classroom subject and to share the findings of such research with the broader academic community at VIU. All requests for scholarly stipends will be approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs upon recommendation from the Scholarly Research & Publication Review Committee (hereafter referred to as the Review Committee). The Review Committee will be assembled by the applicant’s School Dean with no less than three Members.

Guidelines

1. The combined stipend payments per academic year for an applicant will not exceed $1,000.00.
2. The scholarly work and publication should be within the applicants’ academic discipline and classroom subject area at VIU.
3. A scholarly work published in multiple publications is eligible for only one VIU stipend. Multiple presentations of scholarly research findings are likewise eligible for only one VIU stipend. However, if the publication is in more than one category, the applicant may make submissions in each category. (Assuming the total amount of the stipend will not exceed the academic year limit for the applicant)
4. Each submission should include the application form, a copy of the manuscript and other supporting documents. The Review Committee may request additional documentation as deemed necessary to evaluate the request.
5. All applications for stipends must be submitted in the academic year in which the scholarly work has received its acceptance for publication.
6. The Review Committee will determine the “scholarly” nature of the publication.
7. The applicant’s affiliation with VIU must be identified as the primary place of employment in the author’s or presenter’s published biography.
8. The applicant for VIU’s Scholarly Research & Publication Stipend must be an active faculty member at VIU at the time of application for the stipend.
9. By accepting VIU’s Scholarly Research & Publication Stipend, recipients agree, if asked, to share their research findings with the VIU community at VIU colloquia and/or to be interviewed by VIU publications. They also agree to allow VIU to publicize their names, scholarly accomplishments, and stipend awards.
10. Monetary award of an approved stipend will be made available after the submission of the actual copy of the publication.
11. Authors of works published in Potential or VIU Today are not eligible for VIU’s Scholarly Research & Publication Stipend. Likewise, scholars who present their research findings at VIU-sponsored events are not eligible for VIU Scholarly Research & Publication Stipend.

6.3. Academic Freedom and Responsibility

To ensure instructional programs are marked by excellence, Virginia International University supports the concept of academic freedom. In the development of knowledge, research endeavors, and creative activities, university faculty members and students must be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism. Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects, but they should be careful not to introduce teaching matters that have no relation to their
field. Faculty members and students must be able to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence and to participate as responsible citizens in community affairs.

The University also recognizes that commitment to every freedom carries with it attendant responsibilities. Faculty members must fulfill their responsibility to society and to their profession by manifesting academic competence, professional discretion, and good citizenship. When Faculty members speak or write as a citizen, they are free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As professional educators, they must remember that the public may judge their profession and institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they are not an institutional spokesperson. At no time shall the principle of academic freedom prevent the institution from making proper efforts to assure the best possible instruction for all students in accordance with the objectives of the institution.

6.4. Professional Ethics

Faculty members, guided by a conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Faculty members’ primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end, faculty members devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence and feel the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. Faculty members practice intellectual honesty. Although they may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never harm or compromise their freedom on inquiry.

As teachers, faculty members encourage the free pursuit of learning in their subjects. Faculty members hold before them the best scholarly standards of their discipline. Faculty members demonstrate respect for the student as an individual, and they adhere to their proper role as intellectual guide and counselor. Faculty members make every effort to foster honest academic conduct and to assure that students’ evaluations reflect the students’ true merit. Faculty members respect the confidential nature of the relationship between faculty and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students.

6.5. Evaluation and Observation

Evaluation is a process whereby the performance and competence of a person holding a rank of Faculty is systematically examined and compared with established criteria.

Evaluation material and other appropriate professional information will be added to the faculty member’s personnel file after that evaluation period. Each faculty member may request a personal copy of any evaluation or observation material added to his or her personnel file; and if the faculty member elects to make a written response to this material, such written response shall be included in the personnel file.

NOTE: With or without prior notice, VIU management may observe classroom instruction.
7. SECTION VII: COPYRIGHT, FAIR USE, COMPUTER AND INTERNET USAGE POLICIES

7.1. Copyright and Fair Use Policies for Software and Other Materials

VIU, its students, faculty, and employees must comply with the provisions of the United States Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). Copyright is the right of the creator of a work of authorship to control the use of that work by others. Copyrighted work may not be reproduced, distributed, performed, or adapted by others without the copyright owner’s permission. Works protected by copyright include, but are not limited to: literary, musical, and pictorial works; sound recordings, motion pictures, and other audiovisual works; and computer software.

VIU employees shall use computer software only in accordance with the terms of the VIU Computer Software Policy and the licensing agreement for the software. The University does not condone or support the use of any unauthorized copies of software. All software used by University employees to perform their responsibilities shall be purchased through appropriate procedures.

Violation of copyright law may subject the guilty party to severe civil and criminal penalties. There are some exceptions in United States copyright law such as the fair use doctrine. The fair use doctrine allows limited use of copyrighted material without the permission of the copyright owner for several purposes, including teaching and scholarship. It is the responsibility of each student, faculty, and staff to inform oneself about what is and what is not permissible use of copyrighted material. Copyright and fair use guidelines for students, faculty, and staff can be found on the VIU Library website and are posted in the VIU Library as well as at all photocopy machines at VIU. For additional assistance with copyright and fair use issues, please consult the VIU Librarian.

Violations of VIU’s copyright and fair use policies will be dealt with in the same manner as violations of other University policies and may result in disciplinary review. In such a review, the full range of disciplinary sanctions is available, including the loss of computer use privileges, dismissal from the University, and legal action.

Student’s Records and Release of Information

In compliance with Public Law 93-380, “The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act”, which is Section 438 of the General Education Provision Act, VIU has adopted policies and procedures that permit the student the opportunity to view his or her educational records upon request. Educational records mean those records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student. The institution will not permit access to or release of confidential information from a student’s records to any individual or agency without the written consent of the student, except for the following situations:

1. Name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, program undertaken, dates of attendance, and certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded may be provided to third parties unless the request to omit such information is presented in writing.
2. Records are required by VIU officials in the proper performance of their duties.
3. Organizations are conducting studies for educational and governmental agencies.
4. US government agencies as listed in Public Law 93-380 request information for specific purposes
5. At the request of any Accrediting agencies.
7. Appropriate persons in connection with an emergency.
8. For the purposes of awarding financial aid.

7.2. Computer and Internet Policies

The purpose of the Computer and Internet Policies is to outline the accepted and unaccepted uses of Virginia International University's computers and network facilities, to provide guidelines for appropriate use by students, faculty and staff, and to educate users about their responsibilities.

It is not a comprehensive document covering all aspects of computer use. It offers principles to help guide members of the Virginia International University community, and specific policy statements that serve as reference points. It will be modified as new questions and situations arise.

While the proliferation of computers and information technologies does not alter basic codes of behavior in academic life, it does place some issues in new contexts. Using these technologies enables people to do varied things, both ethical and unethical, more easily. They are an enormously rich resource for innovation in the furtherance of Virginia International University’s academic mission. In spite of many positive aspects, they also increase the risks of actions, deliberate or not, that are harmful in various ways, including: (a) interference with the rights of others; (b) violation of the law; (c) interference with the mission of the University; and/or (d) endangering the integrity of the University’s information computer network.

While some of the guidelines therefore call for respectful and responsible use of the computer networks to protect the rights of individuals, others warn against actions that may violate the law: users must understand the perils of illegal use, exchange, or display of copyrighted, deceptive, defamatory, or obscene materials on a web page or through other electronic communication channels.

The guidelines seek to protect the integrity of the University information systems themselves: the computing or networking resources need to be accessible and secure for appropriate uses consistent with the mission of the University; the usurpation of these resources for personal gain, commercial gain or without authorization is unacceptable. Moreover, even the individual right to privacy may, when personal files may need to be accessed for troubleshooting purposes, be overridden by authorized personnel to protect the integrity of the University's computer systems.

Permitted Use of VIU’s Computer Network and Internet

The computer network is the property of VIU and is to be used for legitimate business purposes only. Users are provided access to the computer network to assist them in the performance of their jobs. All Users have a responsibility to use VIU’s computer resources and the Internet in a professional, lawful and ethical manner. Abuse of the computer network or the Internet, may result in disciplinary action, including possible termination, and civil and/or criminal liability.

1. The University does not monitor the content of web pages, electronic mail or other online communications and is not responsible for the views expressed by individual users. Users should lawfully access computer resources.
2. Users are responsible for all activity involving their user accounts. User accounts should be kept secure and private. Users should not use identifying data or common words as a
password; passwords should be difficult to crack or otherwise guess either by individuals or by sophisticated computer programs.

3. The University is the custodian of a wide array of personal and financial data concerning its students, staff, and faculty, as well as the University itself. User should respect the University obligations of confidentiality, as well as their own. Only users with authorization may access, communicate or use confidential information.

4. Material posted on web pages is generally accessible and thus deserves even greater thought and care than your private electronic mail. Absent restrictions, the user's web page is available to anyone, anywhere, and the user should act accordingly.

5. The University has a right to expect that computer users will properly identify themselves. Computer accounts are assigned and identified to individuals.

6. Today’s information technology is a shared resource. Users should respect the needs of others when using computer and network resources. Users should not tamper with facilities and avoid any actions that interfere with the normal operations of computers, networks, and facilities.

7. Users should avoid excessive use of computer resources. They are finite and others deserve their share. "Spamming" and similar inappropriate uses of University resources are not acceptable. Web pages that are accessed to an excessive degree can be a drain on computer resources and, except where significant to the University’s mission, may require the University to ask that they be moved to a private Internet provider.

8. Although a respect for privacy is fundamental to the University’s policies, almost any information is read or copied and some user information is maintained in system logs as a part of responsible computer system maintenance. The University must reserve the right to examine computer files, and that, in rare circumstances, the University may be compelled by law or policy to examine even personal and confidential information maintained on University computing facilities.

9. Requests from employees for software, hardware, or network privileges should be relative to their position at the University and should reflect the scope of their responsibilities. Before granting any privileges to employees, the IT Department may request approval from the employee’s supervisor and/or management.

10. Users are granted privileges and responsibilities with their account. While these vary between groups, the use of University resources for personal commercial gain or for partisan political purposes (not including the expression of personal political views, debate and the like) is inappropriate and possibly illegal. Individual University computer systems have varying resources and demands. Some have additional and sometimes more restrictive guidelines applicable to their own user.

**Prohibited Use of VIU’s Computer Network and Internet**

The following uses of VIU’s Computer Network and Internet are strictly prohibited.

1. The use of restricted-access University computer resources or electronic information without or beyond one's level of authorization.

2. The interception or attempted interception of communications by parties not explicitly intended to receive them without approval of an authorized University official.

3. Making University computing resources available to individuals not affiliated with the Virginia International University without approval of an authorized University official.

4. Making available any materials the possession or distribution of which is illegal.

5. The unauthorized copying or use of licensed computer software.
6. Unauthorized access, possession, or distribution, by electronic or any other means, of electronic information or data that is confidential under the University's policies regarding privacy or the confidentiality of student, administrative, personnel, archival, or other records.

7. Intentionally compromising the privacy or security of electronic information.

8. Intentionally infringing upon the intellectual property rights of others in computer programs or electronic information (including plagiarism and unauthorized use or reproduction).

9. Interference with or disruption of the computer or network accounts, services, or equipment of others; including, but not limited to, the propagation of computer "worms" and "viruses", the sending of electronic chain mail, and the inappropriate sending of "broadcast" messages to large numbers of individuals or hosts.

10. Failure to comply with requests from appropriate University officials to discontinue activities that threaten the operation or integrity of computers, systems or networks, or otherwise violate this policy.

11. Revealing passwords or otherwise permitting the use by others (by intent or negligence) of personal accounts for computer and network access.

12. Altering or attempting to alter files or systems without authorization.


14. Attempting to alter any University computing or networking components (including, but not limited to, bridges, routers, and hubs) without authorization or beyond one's level of authorization.

15. Unauthorized wiring, including attempts to create unauthorized network connections, or any unauthorized extension or re-transmission of any computer or network services.

16. Intentionally damaging or destroying the integrity of electronic information.

17. Intentionally disrupting the use of electronic networks or information systems.

18. Intentionally wasting human or electronic resources.

19. Negligence leading to the damage of University electronic information, computing/networking equipment and resources.

An individual's computer use privileges may be suspended immediately upon the discovery of a possible violation of these policies. Such suspected violations will be confidentially reported to the appropriate member of management at the University. The appropriate member of management will judge an offense as either major or minor. A first minor offense will normally be dealt with by the IT Department or management after consultation with the user or administrator requesting the account. Additional offenses will be regarded as major offenses and dealt with accordingly. Violations of the policies will be dealt with in the same manner as violations of other University policies and may result in disciplinary review. In such a review, the full range of disciplinary sanctions is available including the loss of computer use privileges, dismissal from the University, and/or legal action.

**Computer Software Copyright Policy**

Software piracy is the installation, use or distribution of unauthorized copies of software, which is protected property under intellectual property laws. Purchased commercial software packages include license agreements that indicate how the software should be used. Pirating software or failure to comply with restrictions in license agreements is illegal and may result in substantial fines for the University. The University has adopted the following computer software policies on the use of computer software.
Virginia International University, in purchasing computer software, commits to specific licensing agreements. Misuse or unauthorized uses, including duplication of licensed software for backup or archival purposes or duplication of related documentation may be a violation of United States Copyright laws.

Virginia International University employees shall use computer software only in accordance with the terms of the licensing agreement. Virginia International University does not condone or support the use of any unauthorized copies of software. All software used by Virginia International University employees to perform their University responsibilities shall be purchased through appropriate procedures.

Any employee, who makes, acquires, or uses illegally reproduced software can be subject to civil and criminal penalties, including fines and imprisonment. Further, employees who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions.

1. The IT Department will maintain a current inventory of all software installed on computers/networks in the University.
2. The IT Department staff will not install software on a network unless specifically allowed in the licensing agreement.
3. If a software package is licensed to be operated across a network, the IT Department staff will make sure that any usage limits (per seat or concurrent) are observed and copying is disabled unless explicitly allowed under the license.
4. The IT Department staff will ensure that software is not copied for use on more than one computer and that software user manuals are not copied.
5. The IT Department staff will ensure that backup copies of software are not used to run the software on additional computers.
6. When software upgrades are purchased, previous versions and associated user manuals should be destroyed, if no longer needed. (Some upgrades require that the previous version(s) be installed before the upgrade is installed, so the previous version(s) must be maintained.)
7. The IT Department staff will conduct a software inventory every year or periodically perform spot checks or ‘audits’ of University-owned computers to make sure that illegal software has not been inadvertently or deliberately installed.
8. VIU computing facilities are used by departments, offices, and faculty members for a number of classes. This creates a complex environment for providing a reliable, useful facility for all involved. Pieces of software added into the environment become part of an integrated system the IT Department must maintain. For this reason, there are a number of policies regarding software requests and installation.

All software packages may be available for use by any other group using the facility, regardless of the purchasing department.

**Requesting Updates**

1. Departments wanting updates to software they have purchased must make requests through the IT Department.
2. The IT Department must be provided with the proof of purchase of any non-free updates before the update will be installed.
3. Departments may request updates to IT Department purchased software, and such requests will be evaluated. Such requests must also be submitted in writing or e-mail to the
IT Department four weeks before the start of the semester.

**Maintenance**

1. The IT Department will maintain the original installation of the software for one academic year from its initial installation, or until the license expires, whichever occurs first.
2. Software packages must be retested after each semester as new software, hardware, or operating systems may be installed. The IT Department will notify the department of any new conflicts and make all efforts to resolve those conflicts. If unavoidable conflicts arise, the IT Department will work with the department to find the best solution.
3. The IT Department will not provide students, faculty, or staff with technical support for software not purchased by the IT Department. This means that instructors intending to use department-requested software are expected to be proficient in said software; the IT Department will not provide training, support, or documentation for software not purchased by the IT Department.

**Implementation**

1. All University codes of conduct apply to information technology as well as to other forms of communication and activity.
2. Systems managers or other individuals within an academic or administrative unit may be empowered to suspend some or all privileges associated with computer use in cases of misuse or threat to the integrity of all or part of the University's information management resources.
3. Before any permanent action is taken against a user, the user will be advised of the bases for the proposed action and given an opportunity to respond. Concerns about such actions may be raised through the usual administrative or academic channels associated with the dean, school, facility or resource in question.
4. Where a violation of University policies or applicable law appears to warrant action beyond a suspension or elimination of computer privileges, the matter may be referred to a supervisor, administrator or University disciplinary body with appropriate authority or to law enforcement authorities.
5. Complaints or concerns about another's use of University computer resources should be directed to the administrator responsible for the facility or resource in question.

**7.3. Personal Electronic Devices**

Employees are not permitted to bring personal computers or data storage devices (such as external hard drives, flash drives*, or other data storage media) to the workplace or connect them to the University’s electronic property or network unless expressly given written permission to do so by the University. All personal cellular devices are permitted in the workplace, but must be kept stored away from the working area/desk during office hours and should only be used in emergency situations.

*Flash Drive Use: Faculty members are permitted to use this device for instructional purposes in the classroom.
8. SECTION VIII: STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

8.1. Scope

The standards of conduct apply to the following members of Virginia International University:

- Board of Trustees
- Faculty and Staff
- Volunteers and other representatives when speaking or acting on behalf of the University

8.2. Proper Use of University Resources

University resources shall not be used for anything other than their intended purpose. Resources should not be used for personal reasons or offered to anyone outside of the University for their use. Resources cannot be used in violation of the law.

8.3. Relationship with Vendors

No member of the University community may approve, recommend or promote a business transaction in which that person has a direct personal interest, or otherwise cause the University to do business with a firm in which that person is an officer or senior management employee or in which that person owns equity interest unless such person discloses her/his relationship and the relevant circumstances or the contemplated activity, in writing, to the President and: It is determined that the proposed activity is fair to the University and will not result in the University foregoing revenues, or incurring costs in excess of the costs that would be incurred for goods, property, or service of like quality if acquired from another source.

8.4. Gratuities

No member of the University community shall receive or solicit anything of value in return for influencing or exercising her/his discretion in a particular way on a University matter. In addition, Trustees and Senior Administrative Personnel are prohibited from accepting or soliciting any gratuity or thing of value for or because of any official act performed or to be performed by the Trustee or senior employee in his or her official capacity with the University. This provision does not prohibit the acceptance of an item having a nominal value or ceremonial gifts received by Officers or Trustees of the University in their official capacity.

8.5. Confidentiality and Maintenance of Accurate Accounts

The accounts and records of the University are maintained in a manner that provide for an accurate and auditable record of all financial transactions in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles, established business practices, and all relevant provisions of controlling law. No false or deceptive entries may be made and all entries must contain an appropriate description of the underlying transaction. All University funds must be retained in the appropriate University accounts with appropriately designated financial institutions and no undisclosed or unrecorded fund or asset shall be established or maintained for any purpose. All reports, vouchers, bills, invoices, payroll information, personnel records, and other essential business records must be prepared with care and honesty.
Since the unauthorized use of the records and accounts described in the preceding paragraph can cause the University harm, access to such data will be closely controlled. Members of the University community who improperly convert these records and accounts for their own personal use or the personal use of another, or who wrongfully discloses such records or accounts will be subject to appropriate legal sanctions by the University. To further the enforcement of this standard of conduct, the President may direct that certain employees who occupy sensitive or confidential positions execute confidentiality agreements with the University as a condition for employment or continued employment.

8.6. Educational Benefits and Opportunities

No member of the University community shall deny a student fair access to all educational opportunities and benefits available at the University. Invidious harassment, discrimination, or intimidation of students that deny or impede their right of access to these benefits and opportunities will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.

No member of the University community shall deny any member of the faculty a fair opportunity to teach, conduct research, and to provide services to the University in a setting that provides the academic freedom necessary to cultivate a wide expanse of ideas and teaching methods. Unwarranted interruption of classes or other academic activities is an abridgement of the right of the faculty to teach and an abridgment of the rights of the affected students to learn.

8.7. Social Networking

In general, the University views social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace), personal websites and weblogs positively and respects the right of employees or University representatives to use them as a medium of self-expression. If an employee or representative of the University chooses to identify himself or herself as an employee or representative of VIU on such Internet venues, some readers of such Web Sites or blogs may view them as a spokesperson of the University. No member of the University community should express that their personal views represent that of Virginia International University. All members of the University community are expected to respect the confidentiality and proprietary information of VIU at all times, regardless of the medium.
9. SECTION IX: OTHER EMPLOYEE POLICIES

9.1. Employment Practices and Public Relations

No member of the University community shall engage in any employment practice that is a violation of federal law, or the law of the state of Virginia. No one in a supervisory position or in any position of higher authority in the University is to use his or her position to intimidate subordinate employees or to exact personal favors or things of value from employees of lesser rank within the University. It is expected that all employees will refrain from discussing their employment at or promoting other academic institutions while in the classroom or advising and/or assisting VIU students.

9.2. English Only-Specific Circumstances

Although it is the policy of VIU to encourage diversity and inclusiveness in all of its educational/business pursuits, there are some occasions when VIU will require that its employees converse or take direction and guidance in English. Thus, this English-only policy will provide specific circumstances where English-only rules must be observed:
1. English will be used when dealing with students/customers who express a preference or the expectation that our employees are proficient in English.
2. All task directions and work directives will be provided in English and, while employees are engaged in such work-related efforts or on project teams, they will be expected to communicate in English.
3. All departmental and team meetings that relate to business operations will be expected to be conducted in English.
4. All work related e-mailing is expected to be communicated in English unless customer requirements state a preference that another language be used.

9.3. Professional Etiquette

It is the expectation of the University that all employees will behave in a professional manner at all times while conducting University business. Every member of the University community is expected to treat each other and members of the public with courtesy, professionalism, and civility. Professionalism is conveyed through responsible and respectful communication and actions, which create a constructive learning and working environment. This includes professionalism in all forms of communication, whether in person or electronically, with other staff, faculty, students, and affiliated businesses; and conduct of professional behavior at all University functions and events. All employees are required to leave all personal electronic devices outside of University meetings. Personal electronic devices are only to be used in emergency situations at the workplace, or with prior approval. Employees who fail to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of professionalism are subject to remedial action.

9.4. Dress Code

The University is firmly committed to avoiding illegal discrimination on the basis of personal appearance. The University does require its employees to observe reasonable standards of neatness, good grooming and appropriate business attire at all times while working in the University community. Consideration should be given to the sensitivity of the many cultures represented here. Each
employee’s dress, while on duty at the University and working off-campus on behalf of the University must be appropriate to the employee’s job responsibilities. Offices in the Department of Student Affairs may wear casual dress, which consists of approved VIU apparel with jeans or khakis. All other offices may participate in casual dress on Fridays.

9.5. Grievance Procedure

Work related problems can arise in any place of employment. VIU’s management encourages employees to try to reconcile differences on an individual basis. If this is not possible, in order to resolve a problem quickly and fairly, VIU has developed a four level process for employee grievances.

**Procedure**

1. The employee attempts to resolve the complaint as close to the source as possible in an informal, verbal manner. *If the matter is not resolved;*
2. The employee notifies their supervisor in writing as to the nature of the grievance and the measures used to resolve it. Discussion should be held between the employee, the supervisor and any other relevant party. This level is usually informal, but either party may request written statements about the interaction from the supervisor. This level should not exceed 5 business days. *If the matter is not resolved;*
3. The employee must send a letter stating the nature of their grievance to the Department of Human Resources and inform her/his supervisor of this action. The supervisor will forward to the Department of Human Resources any additional information relevant to the grievance. The Department of Human Resources may elect to mediate the situation. The Department of Human Resources will provide a written response to the employee within 5 business days. *If the matter is not resolved;*
4. The employee will be advised of her/his rights to pursue the matter with external arbitrators if they wish.

9.6. Personnel Records

Virginia International University’s Department of Human Resources maintains one personnel file for each employee relating to their employment with VIU. To assist in keeping these records up to date, it is important for each employee to report any changes in the information contained in their files; such as address, telephone number, change in tax status, or change of legal status. In addition, employees should inform the Department of Human Resources when they have attended any conferences or participated in continuing education. Copies of certificates from workshops/conferences will be included in the file. Although personnel files are the property of VIU, current employees can request access to certain records in their files. All requests for such records should be made directly to the Department of Human Resources. Human Resources will locate these records and set up a mutually agreeable time for the employee to review these files with the employee. The employee may receive copies of specific materials in their personnel record; including transcripts, resumes, evaluations, and employment letters. However, the employee may not alter, remove, or copy (other than those previously specified) their records. If the employee disagrees with any of the information in the files, the employee may prepare a written rebuttal and the rebuttal will be included in the file.
FACULTY & STAFF HANDBOOK
2011 - 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

- I have received a copy of Virginia International University’s (VIU) Faculty & Staff Handbook (the Handbook). I understand that the Handbook is not a contract. I understand that I should contact the Department of Human Resources for additional information regarding the information in the Handbook.

- I understand that the Handbook does not contain every policy or employment practice of VIU. I further understand that the Handbook supersedes any and all prior communications, handbooks, memoranda, and notices that I may have received regarding the topics covered therein.

- I understand that VIU in its sole discretion may make changes to the Handbook at any time, and if changes are made, the University may require an additional acknowledgement from me to indicate that I have been informed of the changes.

- I understand that it is my responsibility to become familiar with and follow the University practices set forth in the Handbook.

- I understand that my violation of any policies and procedures contained in the Handbook is grounds for immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Please provide a signed copy of this page to the VIU Department of Human Resources.

____________________________
Employee’s Signature

____________________________
Employee’s Printed Name

_____/_____/_____
Date