

Program Prerequisite Policy

In the interest of providing an enriched academic classroom experience for all students, VIU has set forth the following regulations on the completion of the prerequisite component of certain graduate programs offered at VIU.

Program prerequisite courses are intended to fill in content-area knowledge that may be missing from an undergraduate experience, especially when that undergraduate degree is outside of the student's new intended degree area. In the interest of having enriched classroom discussions and laying the foundation for all other coursework as quickly as possible, VIU requires that all students complete all program prerequisites within the first 12 months of study. Most students are able to complete all program prerequisites within one or two semesters of full-time study. Advisors and students will ensure that all undergraduate prerequisites are completed before students can take other graduate-level coursework with the only exception being in cases in which students need to be enrolled full time and they have fewer than three prerequisites remaining (see below).

Since the nature of program prerequisites was determined by faculty in the creation of the program and/or in any subsequent program revisions, the additional program prerequisites were instituted specifically to provide equal foundational knowledge to all students in these programs. The exact number and nature of these program prerequisites differs from program-to-program. Some programs require as many as five program prerequisites, others require up to two, and some do not require prerequisites at all. This policy specifically lays out the procedures for reviewing/approving program prerequisites for programs that currently require them.

The exact number of required prerequisites depends upon the individual situation of the student, including his or her previous degree(s) and/or professional coursework or certifications that they might have. As such, a content-area expert is required to advise and develop an individualized plan centered around identifying and filling in any potential gaps that the student might have. Because prerequisites are introductory in nature and would be required for the student to be successful, they must complete all of their prerequisites before enrolling in their degree-area courses unless the number of courses that the student needs might put them under full-time enrollment. In such cases, students may be concurrently registered in courses that do not require prerequisites prior to enrollment (see below). Generally, this would require taking a full or nearly full load only with program prerequisites.

A full-time student load is defined by VIU as 3 graduate courses or 4 undergraduate courses; wherever possible, VIU attempts to ensure that all students who wish to/need to be full time can do so. Although VIU's full-time load policy is defined elsewhere in the catalog, students who are required to complete less than 3 program prerequisite courses, but need to be registered for full course load, are eligible to enroll for graduate level courses that do not require prerequisite. In this case, students must complete their program prerequisite courses during their first semester of study. Students who must complete program prerequisite will not be allowed to register for classes by themselves. The academic advisor must create a Program Prerequisite Completion Plan for the student and ensure classes are offered for the established period. The Program Prerequisite Completion Plan will be outlined upon acceptance, and it will be put into place after a meeting between student and advisor.

Consequences for Non-Fulfillment of Program Prerequisites

If, for any reason, a student has not fulfilled all required program prerequisites after 12 months of study, they will be required to work with their academic advisor prior to the start of the next semester and to update their Program Prerequisite Completion Plan. The plan outlines the steps that the student will be required to take to complete the program prerequisites in a clear and expeditious manner. Upon approval by the student and academic advisor, the plan must be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer for final approval. The Chief Academic Officer will then submit the finalized form to the registrar before the end of the add/drop period in the semester following the completion of the first full year of study. The plan will be monitored on a semester-basis until such time that the plan has been fulfilled and all program prerequisite requirements have been met. If the plan is put into place and not followed by the student, further disciplinary action may be taken, including an academic warning.

Prerequisite Requirement Waiver

VIU recognizes that there are myriad of ways that potential students learn this foundational knowledge. One such way would be to fulfill the program's foundational knowledge as part of an undergraduate degree/certificate. If a student's degree is directly aligned with the program, then the program prerequisites have been satisfied. Alternatively, if a student can demonstrate through professional coursework or certifications from progression organizations recognized as industry standards in the field, these program prerequisites may be deemed satisfied by a qualified program chair/department chair who is a content-expert in the area in question.

To demonstrate that program prerequisites have been satisfied, the applicant needs to provide proof of official examinations and/or certifications pertaining to the prerequisite's subject. If a waiver is requested by an applicant, a Prerequisite Evaluation Request Form with all supporting documents (i.e. examination and certifications) must be submitted to the chair of the applicant's elected program for review and consideration. Upon evaluation of the student's supporting documentation, the program chair will decide if it suffices the prerequisite(s) criteria and approve or deny the request.

Program Prerequisite Completion Plan Form

Instructions to Academic Advisor: The plan must outline the steps that the student is required to take to complete the program prerequisites in a clear and expeditious manner. Upon approval by the student and academic advisor, the plan must be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer for final approval.

Instructions to the Chief Academic Officer: Submit the finalized form to the registrar before the end of the add/drop period in the semester following the completion of the first full year of study.

Student's Name (printed): _____ **VIU ID:** _____

Program of Study: _____

First Semester/Year

12 Month Ended Semester/Year

Status: Check all that apply

US citizen/PR F-1 International student other than F1 FA VA

Program Prerequisite Courses	Status	If not completed, indicate the term that the course will be taken
	() Satisfied () Incomplete	
	() Satisfied () Incomplete	
	() Satisfied () Incomplete	
	() Satisfied () Incomplete	
	() Satisfied () Incomplete	

By signing below, I acknowledge that I read and understood the Program Prerequisite Completion Policy. I have met with my academic advisor and agreed to complete the program prerequisites according to the plan. I understand that students who must complete program prerequisite will not be allowed to register for classes by themselves. I also understand that by not meeting the plan, further disciplinary action may be taken, including an academic warning.

Student Signature

Date

Printed Academic Advisor Name & Signature

Date

Printed Chief Academic Officer Name & Signature

Date

Approved Denied

Date Received: _____
Registrar Signature: _____