

Virginia Wesleyan University
Criteria For Establishing New Graduate Programs

Graduate programs must meet these fundamental criteria:

1. Program Size

All graduate programs must require a minimum of 30 credit hours of instruction and associated learning experiences at the graduate level. Programs may require undergraduate prerequisite courses, but no undergraduate credit can be applied towards the graduate degree.

2. Admission Requirements

While individual programs have control over admission requirements, admitted students must have the following as a minimum:

- a. a bachelor's degree from institution accredited by a US Department of Education-recognized accreditor or an equivalent foreign institution;
- b. a minimum of 2.7 GPA at the institution awarding the bachelor's degree.

Students who apply before completion of undergraduate work may be admitted on the condition that the bachelor's degree is awarded before the beginning of actual graduate studies.

All program admission requirements must be defined and published where prospective students can view them, including on the program's web site and in the catalog.

Upon the recommendation of the applicant's program Admission Committee (which is composed of full-time, graduate faculty teaching in the program) to the Dean, applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements for a program, but who appear to be capable of performing well in graduate work, may be accepted provisionally.

The provisional acceptance will be lifted upon the student's successful completion of the specific provisional requirements cited in their provisional acceptance letter. Failure to meet the conditions and requirements of the provisional acceptance within the first year of graduate work will result in the student's academic dismissal.

3. Academic Rigor

Program proposals must demonstrate progressively more advanced curriculum content and requirements in comparison to undergraduate work. Program proposals will demonstrate this by providing course prospectuses that fully demonstrate how graduate courses contain more academic rigor.

4. Curriculum Structure

The program curriculum must (a) include knowledge of the program discipline's theory and literature, and (b) require substantial student engagement in research and/or discipline-appropriate practical experience.

5. Graduation Requirements

Programs must impose on students the following minimum standards for graduation:

- a. Students must complete all requirements and coursework stipulated by the program prior to the deadlines specified for graduation, hold no grades of Incomplete, and be in good standing with the College.
- b. Students must have a cumulative GPA in program courses of at least 3.0.
- c. Students must complete the program within 5 years from initial enrollment. If a student fails to complete the program within the 5-year requirement, a case-by-case determination will be made by the Program Director in consultation with the Director of Graduate Programs. If resolution cannot be reached, the Academic Affairs office will make a final ruling on an extension.
- d. Degree candidates must apply for graduation by September 15 of the final academic year of coursework. The candidate's application for graduation must be approved by the graduate program and the Registrar.

6. Transfer Credits

While graduate students may transfer up to 12 credits, the remaining academic coursework must be completed through Virginia Wesleyan. Acceptance of transfer graduate credits will be approved by the individual graduate degree programs and recorded on the student's transcript.

7. Full-Time Status

Full-time, degree-seeking, graduate students are defined as those taking nine (9) credit hours per semester. Prerequisite courses may be counted in the total for the calculation of full-time status. Students taking fewer than nine credit hours per semester are defined as part-time students.

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