



**VCU**

College of Health  
Professions  
Health Administration

# **MSHA Student Handbook**

**2022 - 2023**

# MSHA Program 2022-2023 Student Handbook

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# 1. Virginia Commonwealth University

## 1.1 VCU at a Glance

VCU is an urban, public institution enrolling over 31,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students, making it the fastest growing university in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Among VCU's many national rankings are a number of graduate programs in the top tier of the annual U.S. News and World Report review, including the MHA program which is currently ranked fifth.

VCU is composed of 15 schools and one college with more than 200 degree and certificate programs. The offerings include 62 bachelor's degree programs, 72 master's degree programs, 41 doctoral degree programs, three first-professional degree programs, and 47 post-baccalaureate and post-master's certificate programs.

VCU's programs are located on the Medical College of Virginia (MCV) Campus and the Monroe Park Campus. The MCV Campus, which includes the VCU Medical Center, is located in historic Court End, near the government and financial centers of Richmond. The Monroe Park Campus is situated 1.7 miles west in Richmond's Fan District, a large residential neighborhood of Victorian townhouses and many small shops and cafes.

The total workforce of the university and medical center - faculty, physicians, nurses and administrative and support staff - is more than 21,000. More than 2,200 faculty comprise the University's teaching force. VCU faculty attracts more than \$270 million in sponsored research funding, placing it among the top 100 research institutions in the country. Research strengths at VCU include the basic and health sciences, business, behavioral sciences, public affairs and the humanities. The biomedical research strengths of VCU have played a lead role in launching the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park, a public-private partnership of the university, surrounding localities, the state and the business community.

The governance system of the university is headed by the Board of Visitors, a 16-member body appointed by the governor of Virginia. This group has the legal authority and responsibility for Virginia Commonwealth University as established by legislation passed by the General Assembly of Virginia. The president is selected by and responsible to the Board of Visitors, which determines major policies for the university.

## 1.2 History

In 1833, the Medical College of Virginia was founded on what is now VCU's MCV Campus as the medical department of Hampden-Sydney College. In 1854, MCV became an independent medical school; in 1860, it became state-affiliated. In 1917, the Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health opened on what is now VCU's Monroe Park Campus. Before becoming an independent state institution in 1962, the Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health was the Richmond division of the College of William and Mary and the Richmond Professional Institute. MCV and RPI merged in 1968, forming Virginia Commonwealth University.

## 2. VCU College of Health Professions

### 2.1 Welcome Letter from the Dean

Welcome to VCU's College of Health Professions, an international leader in promoting excellence in healthcare services. As Dean of the College, I am thrilled you have chosen to pursue your education with us. We are all absolutely committed to providing you with an exceptional experience that will prepare you to become the clinician, scientist, and/or leader you desire to be.

You are joining a diverse establishment built upon a strong foundation and history dating back more than 50 years. Our surrounding community has felt our impact as have other parts of the world, in which our students, faculty and staff have touched. As your presence will become part of the College's history, I am excited that your influence will also help shape our future.

In 2019, the College opened its new state-of-the-art building, where 9 departments were brought together under the same roof for the first time in the College's history. Our new building enables faculty, staff, and students to collaborate in ways that were never previously possible, and is a reflection of VCU's commitment to preparing students to be the very best in their chosen fields.

In addition, with the COVID-19 pandemic, we experienced firsthand how our College's important contribution to Virginia and to the nation – training health care professionals – has never been more imperative. I am incredibly proud of how our entire community collaborated to continue our educational mission through the crisis. Needless to say, being able to see our students graduate has been more rewarding than ever.

I invite you to take advantage of the many opportunities around you, whether within the College or throughout the community. I hope the relationships you create with faculty, staff, and your fellow classmates will be the start of valuable connections you develop and sustain in years to come.

Please use this student handbook as an information resource. The College's leadership team is committed to your success. We stand ready to support you throughout your educational journey.

Susan Parish, PhD, MSW  
Dean and Professor  
VCU College of Health Professions

### 2.2 Quest 2028 Themes Related to Student Success

VCU's Strategic Plan - Quest 2028 Together We Transform

VCU's new strategic plan, Quest 2028: Together We Transform, charts VCU's course over the next six years for its rise as a pre-eminent urban, public research university committed to equitable access to social, economic and health success. The plan identifies five themes and the second of these is *student success*.

Quest 2028 – *Theme: Student Success* – “Ignite student success through curricular innovation, a holistic

culture of care and an engaged and empowered workforce.”

The three specific goals of this theme include to:

- Transform curriculum so that all students engage in inquiry, discovery, innovation, experiential learning, civic engagement and creative expression to prepare them for the future of work.
- Enhance the university culture of care and responsiveness that supports student engagement, success and sense of belonging.
- Retain and attract a diverse community of highly qualified faculty and staff that reflects a culture where everyone matters and belongs, and ensure the culture supports career satisfaction and growth.

The College of Health Professions takes seriously our role in helping VCU achieve Quest 2028. Our faculty, staff, and leadership work diligently to provide you with a world class education, and to ensure that you have the tools and support you need to succeed.

### 2.3 CHP Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement

The College of Health Professions (CHP) prioritizes the core value of individual dignity, and strives to promote a culture of diversity, inclusivity, and equity in a supportive learning and work environment. We are committed to creating a community that embraces and honors students’, staff and faculty members’ diverse backgrounds, identities and lived experiences including race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic class, religion, creed, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, and disability.

Every CHP student deserves an exceptional education that includes learning to effectively serve individuals and communities that reflect the rich diversity of the Commonwealth of Virginia. CHP Faculty and staff are responsible for creating an educational and research environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students. Faculty and staff use instructional approaches that foster intellectual contributions while encouraging critical thinking and freedom of expression. Our faculty have the expertise to lead efforts in ensuring patients, consumers, community members, families, and communities receive high-touch, respectful, and humanizing support within the context of evolving health care technology.

We commit to this statement because it is consistent with the values of our College and of Virginia Commonwealth University as represented in our strategic plan. A climate of inclusion and diversity aligns with an overwhelming body of evidence-based health care, decades of health and workplace research. Finally, a culture of inclusivity and diversity is imperative if we want to meet our College’s responsibility to train effective health care professionals.

### 2.4 Student Services and Resources

#### **University Student Health Services**

<https://health.students.vcu.edu/>

VMI Building, Room 305, 1000 E. Marshall St.; (804) 828-9220

University Student Health Services is a nationally accredited health care service committed to providing high-quality outpatient care to VCU students. They offer a wide range of primary care services, including

care in the following areas: allergy shots, blood and/or body fluid exposures, immunizations, mental health & ADHD, nutrition consults, sexual health & wellness, and travel health care.

### **University Counseling Services**

<https://counseling.vcu.edu/>

VMI Building, Room 412, 1000 E. Marshall St.; (804) 828-3964

UCS provides comprehensive evaluation and consultation for students on the best options for their mental health care. This can include any of the following: case management, referral services to a community provider, brief individual and couples therapy, group therapy, consultation, sexual and intimate partner violence advocacy services and resiliency workshops.

### **Division for Academic Success**

<https://das.vcu.edu/>

VMI Building, Suite 231, 1000 E. Marshall St.; (804) 828-9782

DAS offers disability and academic support services. Their mission is to assist VCU in creating a learning environment where all students have equal access to every aspect of the University's programs, services and activities. They can assist with academic accommodations, studying and exam strategies, and overall learning skills.

### **Career Services**

<https://careers.vcu.edu/>

Hunton Student Center, Suite 205, 1110 E. Broad St.; (804) 828-1645

Career Services assists students in defining and achieving their career and professional goals. They offer career advising appointments, professional development events, and tools to help students develop awareness of their interests and strengths.

### **CHP Student Success**

<https://chp.vcu.edu/student-success/>

CHP Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Suite 2023

The CHP Student Success team is available to assist students with challenges or difficulties they may be experiencing. Students can access the Student Grievance process or make suggestions about ways to improve the CHP student experience by visiting the Student Success webpage.

### **Recreation and Wellbeing**

<https://recwell.vcu.edu>

815 S. Cathedral Place; (804) 828-9355

Recreation and Wellbeing provides the campus community with judgment-free information, resources and support to be and stay well while at VCU by offering programs like the Resilience Lab and Rams in Recovery. Their goal is to grow a campus community that promotes wellness as the foundation for student success by: empowering students to practice safer and healthy behaviors, fostering inclusive and diverse environments and advocating for systemic change.

### **Equity and Access Services**



<https://equity.vcu.edu/>

1001 Grove Avenue; (804) 828-1347

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law intended to end sex discrimination in all areas of education. Conduct prohibited by Title IX includes sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination and sexual violence. Equity and Access Services is a resource for students who would like to report sexual misconduct or violence, other forms of discrimination or harassment, or to report accessibility concerns.

### **VCU Card**

<https://vcucard.vcu.edu/>

VMI Building 1000 East Marshall Street 3rd Floor, Richmond, VA 23298

Students may obtain a VCUCard beginning two weeks prior to the start of classes for their first semester. Students should bring a copy of their student schedule and a picture ID.

The VCUCard office charges a \$20 fee to replace any cards that are misplaced, lost, intentionally damaged, or stolen. Defective cards will be replaced at no cost.

VCU Cards are required for student access to the College of Health Professions between the hours of 7pm and 7am Monday – Friday and all hours on weekends.

### **Tompkins-McCaw Library for Health Sciences**

[www.library.vcu.edu/tml](http://www.library.vcu.edu/tml) | 804-828-0636 | TML Building—509 N. 12th Street  
Learning Center at Hunton—1110 E. Broad Street

#### **TML Building Regular Hours**

7:30am-12am, Monday – Thursday  
7:30am-8pm, Friday  
9am-6pm, Saturday  
9am-12pm, Sunday

#### **Hunton Regular Hours**

8am-10pm, Monday – Friday  
12pm-6pm, Saturday  
12pm-10pm, Sunday

#### **Other Libraries**

Cabell Library (VCU Monroe Park Campus)

[www.library.vcu.edu/jbc/](http://www.library.vcu.edu/jbc/)

Library of Virginia:

[www.lva.lib.va.us](http://www.lva.lib.va.us)

Richmond Public Library:

[www.richmondpubliclibrary.org](http://www.richmondpubliclibrary.org)

### **MCV Campus Parking**

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

8th Street Deck, 659 North 8th Street, Richmond, VA 23219

#### **Regular Hours**

8:30am-4:30pm, Monday – Friday

#### **Parking Options**

MCV Campus Parking Permits: A lot, I lot, D-Deck, C lot, Eighth Street Deck

MCV Campus parking subscribers can park at these locations: F lot, J lot, Q Lot between the hours of 5pm-2am, Monday-Friday. Remember to check signs in each location to determine if any parking

restrictions are in place.  
After 6pm, street parking is free in designated areas.

### **Campus Police and Safety**

[www.vcu.edu/police](http://www.vcu.edu/police) | 224 E. Broad Street PO Box 842024, Richmond VA, 23284

Main phone numbers:

Emergencies	828-1234 or 828-HELP
Non-emergencies	828-1196
Security Escort	828-7233

#### Safety tips

Whenever possible, walk with other people or use the Campus Security Service. If you must walk alone after dark, stay in well-traveled and well-lit parts of campus.

Avoid working alone in campus buildings at night. If situation cannot be avoided, phone VCU Police to inform of your location. Do not prop open doors that should be locked.

Keep your valuables in sight. Never leave belongings unattended or unsecured.

Report anyone who behaves suspiciously.

Carry your purse close to your body. Carry only the credit cards and cash you need.

Remember - safety is everyone's responsibility. Awareness is prevention.

## 3. Department of Health Administration

[ha.chp.vcu.edu](http://ha.chp.vcu.edu) | (804) 828-9466  
College of Health Administration  
900 E. Leigh Street, P.O. Box 980203, Richmond, Virginia 23298

### 3.1 Mission

Leaders reimagining healthcare.

The mission of the Department of Health Administration is to create the most innovative, compassionate, and business-savvy leaders to reimagine healthcare.

Building on our remarkable environment, our extraordinary networks, and our legacy of excellence, we provide the knowledge, skills, and connections for tomorrow's healthcare leaders through our innovative and business-focused approach.

### 3.2 History

Education in health administration at the university began in 1949 with the establishment of a graduate curriculum in hospital administration. Early graduates received a certificate; the master's degree was awarded beginning in 1955. These early efforts grew and developed into the Department of Health Administration, which was established in 1972 when the School of Hospital Administration was subsumed by the School of Allied Health Professions of Virginia Commonwealth University. The department now includes three major programs: (1) Master of Health Administration, (2) Doctor of Philosophy in Health Services Organization and Research, and (3) Professional Master of Science in Health Administration. The department cooperates with the University of Richmond School of Law, a program established in 1986; and the Washington and Lee School of Law, a program established in 2005, to offer the dual degree MHA/JD program. In 2001, the dual degree MHA/MD program was established with the VCU School of Medicine. In 2013, an MHA/MSIS program was established with the VCU School of Business. Both master's programs are fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME).

### 3.3 Faculty

Full Faculty Bios can be accessed from the Department Website at  
<https://ha.chp.vcu.edu/staff/>

**Adam Atherly, Ph.D.**, Professor  
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**Nate Carroll, Ph.D., M.H.A.**, Associate Professor  
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**Stephan Davis, DNP, MHSA, FACHE**, Assistant Professor and Executive Director, Inclusive Leadership Education in Health Administration; CHP Assistant Dean, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
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**Ann Shih, Ph.D., M.Sc., M.B.A.**, Assistant Professor  
shihs2@vcu.edu

**Paula H. Song, Ph.D., M.H.S.A., M.A.** Richard M. Bracken Chair and Professor  
songph@vcu.edu

### 3.4 Adjunct Faculty

**Rodney Adams, J.D., LL.M.**, HADM 611

**Jon Thompson, Ph.D.**, HADM 614

**Christie Hartwell, MHA**, HADM 648

**Kyle Russell, MBA**, HADM 691

### 3.5 Professional Staff

**Beth Ayers, M.S.**, Director of Outreach and External Affairs  
bwayers@vcu.edu

**Katie McCall, M.Ed**, Manager of Career and Administrative Services  
kmccall@vcu.edu

**Cameron Parkins, M.A.**, Graduate Student Services Administrator  
parkinsc@vcu.edu

## 3.6 Technology

### Requirements

Students in the MHA program must have access to technology that meets the VCU Student Computer initiative standards. In addition to meeting these minimum standards, students must have access to a computer or laptop with video camera and microphone. Information on the VCU Student Computer Initiative requirements can be found at [sci.vcu.edu](http://sci.vcu.edu). Course materials for all MHA courses will be presented via VCU's Canvas Learning Management Systems.  
<https://ts.vcu.edu/askit/teaching-and-learning/canvas/>

### Printing

A few printers for students are available in the College of Health Professions building. You may add funds to your VCU Pay4Print account here: <https://vcucard.vcu.edu/services/pay4print/>

### VCU WiFi

The CHP building is fully integrated with the University's wireless networks. There are two options for connecting to the wireless network: VCU Guest and VCU Safenet. If you will be using the wireless network regularly, the preferred method of connection is through VCUSafenet. This connection provides the VCU community with a safe, encrypted online experience that applies a higher level of security to wireless computing. After the initial setup, you are not required to log back in to the service every time you attach to the VCU SafeNet Wireless network. You will only be asked to sign back in to the service if your eID password has changed. To use VCUSafenet you will need to install a client on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. If you will only periodically be connecting to the wireless network, you can use the VCU Guest wireless. Once you are connected to VCU Guest, open your preferred browser where you will be asked for an email address to proceed. Enter any valid email address in the box provided. The guest wireless network requires you to follow this login process each time you attach to the network. It is also important to remember that this is an unsecured connection. This service should not be used to send or receive sensitive information.

## 4. MSHA Information

### 4.1.1 Mission

The mission of the MSHA program is to prepare practicing healthcare professionals for management and leadership positions within complex health care organizations.

### 4.2 Curriculum

MSHA Program courses are designed to meet the distinctive needs and preferred learning styles of the experienced health care professional. It is a competency-based curricula and each course's learning objectives are tied to our leadership competency model that follows.

These competencies, developed in and out of the classroom throughout the students' tenure in the program, cut across five domains:

**Communication and Relationship Management**

- Interpersonal Communication
- Presentation Skills
- Writing Skills

**Leadership**

- Leading and Managing Others
- Change Management
- Ability for Honest Self-assessment
- Systems Thinking
- Problem-solving and Decision-making

**Professionalism**

- Personal and Professional Ethics
- Professional & Community Contribution
- Working in Teams

**Knowledge of the Healthcare Environment**

- Health care Issues and Trends
- Healthcare Legal Principles
- Populations' health and status assessment
- Health Policy

**Business Knowledge and Skills**

- Economic Analysis and Application
- Organizational Dynamics and Governance
- Financial Management
- Strategic Planning
- Information Management/Understanding and Using Technology Skills
- Quantitative Skills
- Marketing
- Quality Improvement/ Performance Improvement
- Planning and Managing Project
- Human Resources

Course work prepares students to meet the challenges of the constantly changing health care marketplace while providing a solid foundation for life-long professional development. Faculty members have in-depth academic preparation in their disciplines and extensive professional experience. All courses are three credits unless otherwise noted.

### 4.3 Course Plans

See the following links for Full-Time and Part-Time course structures under Curriculum at:

<https://ha.chp.vcu.edu/programs/msha-program/>

#### 4.4 Synchronous Weekend Sessions

Students should note and plan to be available for the full duration of synchronous sessions. See section 6.5 for on-campus attendance requirements.

##### **Synchronous Weekend Dates**

Fall 2022:

August 18-20 (via Zoom)

October 13-15 (in-person)

December 15-17 (via Zoom)

Spring 2023:

January 19-21 (via Zoom)

March 16-18 (in-person)

May 10-12 (via Zoom)

Fall 2023:

August 17-19 (via Zoom)

Oct 19-21 (in-person)

Dec 14-16 (via Zoom)

Spring 2024:

January 18-20 (via Zoom)

March 21-23 (in-person)

May 2-4 (via Zoom)

##### **Introduction to Academic Policies and Procedures: Sections 5 – 7**

The following sections present departmental policies pertaining to students in the Professional Graduate Programs in Health Administration at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). They are intended to provide guidelines for student performance and achievement during enrollment. **Both faculty and students are responsible for becoming familiar with University documents that establish expectations and guidelines for graduate students at VCU.**

Each section is designed to be congruent with full University policies and regulations as set forth in the [VCU Graduate Bulletin](#). **In the case of a conflict between these policies and the VCU Graduate Bulletin, the VCU policies apply. See: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/>**

The MHA Program is designed primarily for full-time students and the MSHA Program admits both part- and full-time students. Although the language in Sections 7 through 11 of this document reflect that most students are enrolled full-time, except where noted, all of the general policies and regulations

apply equally to both MHA and MSHA full-time and part-time students.

## 5. Academic Policies

### 5.1 Admission Requirements

MSHA – To be considered for admission to the MSHA Program in full status, the applicant must meet the minimum requirements as specified in the graduate bulletin:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/>

### 5.2 Transfer Credit & Course Load

Detailed information on these topics can be found through the Graduate Student bulletin:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/transfer-credit/>

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

### 5.3 Plan of Study

Upon initial registration in the Department of Health Administration, each part-time MSHA student will be required to meet with the Program Director to devise a plan of study. This plan will reflect the coursework and timetable for completion of all requirements for the MSHA degree. A copy of the approved course plan will be placed in the student's file. If the student wishes to alter his/her plan of study, changes must be discussed and approved by the Program Director in advance of the changes taking effect.

The academic requirements that the student must fulfill are those that are in effect when the plan of study is approved by the Program Director. If curricular changes approved by the University occur, the student and Program Director will determine any needed changes in the plan of study.

The program must be completed within six (6) academic years from the student's matriculation into the program. <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/time-limit/>

### 5.4 Waiver of Courses

In general, those admitted to the MSHA Program are expected to complete all courses as listed in the formal curriculum at the time of admission. However, students may petition the Program Director to waive selected courses prior to beginning the program. No waivers will be considered once a student has commenced course work. The decision of the Program Director on such matters is final, although advice will be sought from the faculty member teaching the course for which the waiver is sought.

In the MSHA Program, petitions to waive course work will be considered (although not necessarily granted) in the following instances: (1) HADE 606 where the associate holds a graduate degree in accounting/finance, is a certified public accountant, or has significant experience as a chief financial officer of a health care delivery (or related) organization; (2) HADE 610 where the associate holds a graduate degree in operations research, systems engineering, industrial engineering, and has significant



professional experience in this area; (3) HADE 611 where that associate holds JD or LL.B degree and has significant experience in the area of health law; (4) HADE 614 where the associate holds a graduate degree in marketing and has significant professional experience in the area.

## 5.5 General Academic Requirements

Students in the MSHA Program must achieve an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (4.0 scale) for all coursework. Any student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.00 at the end of a given semester will be reviewed for possible academic probation or termination.

Any student who receives a grade of “C” or below in more than two courses will be reviewed for possible academic termination even if the students’ overall GPA is 3.0 or better.

Students in the MSHA Program who earn less than a “C” in any course of the curriculum will be placed on academic probation.

MSHA students must complete a minimum of 41 semester hours of coursework and meet the following requirement in order to qualify for the MSHA degree:

- Meet all grade point requirements noted above.

## 5.6 Academic Probation

1. Students in the MSHA Program must achieve an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (4.0 scale) for all coursework. The program will recommend any student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.00 at the end of a given semester for academic probation to the faculty.

2. Regardless of GPA, a student who receives a “C” in a required course will receive a warning letter.

3. Students in the MSHA Program who earn less than a “C” in any course of the curriculum will be placed on academic probation. Students cannot be on probation for more than one semester.

4. The academic standing of any graduate student who receives multiple grades of C or a grade of D or F will be reviewed for dismissal from their programs, even if the students’ overall GPA is 3.00 or better.

- a. Students in the MSHA Program must not have more than two required courses with a grade of C regardless of the student’s overall GPA.
- b. Students who receive a D or F in a required course and are not dismissed from the program must retake and pass the course with a C or better (unless the C would count as a third C earned in the program). Pending approval by the program director, options may include either the MHA or MSHA equivalent or take an equivalent course at VCU.

5. Students will be notified by the department that they are going to be reviewed for dismissal, and they will be given the opportunity to submit supporting documentation (10 business days) to faculty to be considered for appeal.

6. Students on academic probation are not eligible for department funded travel such as student case competitions.

Students placed on academic probation must arrange a meeting with their faculty advisor at approximately mid-semester to discuss academic progress during that period. The faculty advisor will keep the faculty informed of the student's progress.

In no case will students be granted academic probation for more than two semesters.

At the end of each semester, the faculty will review the performance of each student who has been on academic probation during that semester and select from the following courses of action:

- Remove the student from academic probation if the student's GPA during that semester and the overall GPA are both above 3.00 and if no other deficiencies exist.
- Permit the student to continue in the MSHA Program on academic probation and specify performance requirements that must be met.
- Recommend to the Graduate School Dean the termination of the student from the MSHA Program on the basis of academic deficiencies if the student failed to achieve a GPA of 3.00 or has other deficiencies justifying dismissal.

## 5.7 Grading Policies

The final grade in courses in the MSHA Program ordinarily will include consideration of the student's performance on at least two examinations or assignments.

Academic grades are to be based primarily upon individual performance and accomplishment although team assignments and projects may be used in computing the individual student's course grade.

The grading symbols used within the Department's MSHA Program and their definitions are as follows:

A = Superior. Indicates that the student has demonstrated outstanding performance in accomplishing the requirements of the course.

B = Very Good. Indicates that the student has accomplished course requirements at a fully acceptable graduate level of performance.

C = Acceptable, but sub-standard performance. Indicates that the student has not adequately accomplished course requirements.

D = Unacceptable. Indicates that the student has not accomplished course requirements at an acceptable level.

P = Pass. The student's work has met graduate school and department standards.

S = Satisfactory. Indicates the student completes all assignments on time, and they are approved by the course instructor and other applicable parties.

U = Unsatisfactory. Indicates the student has not adequately accomplished course requirements.

Although not included in computation of the overall GPA, a grade of “U” will be addressed like a “C”. (See Sections 8.7 and 8.8.)

F = Failure. Indicates that the student’s performance was far below the acceptable level. Credits with a grade of “F” cannot be applied toward fulfillment of degree requirements.

I = Incomplete. Indicates that the course requirements were not fulfilled within the specified time period due to circumstances beyond the control of the student and that the instructor has given the student some additional time to meet these requirements.

All requirements must be fulfilled no later than the last day of classes of the semester (or Summer semester) following the semester in which the “Incomplete” has occurred or the mark will automatically be changed to “Failure.” It is the student’s responsibility to complete the required paperwork for approval of the “I” grade. Forms may be obtained in Program offices.

Other grade symbols and meanings are listed in the VCU Graduate Bulletin.

Each instructor will explain the particular application of the grading policies and indicate the way that final course grades will be determined in the particular course.

## 5.8 Grade Appeals

The VCU and College of Health Professions grade appeals policies and procedures guide the Department’s grade appeal procedure. See website below  
<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/university/grade-review/>

## 5.9 Termination Process and Appeals

Termination is initiated by the Program Director after recommendation by a majority of the full-time faculty of the Department.

The Admissions and Academic Standards Committee has set forth procedures by which students may appeal termination from graduate programs at VCU. Current procedures can be found posted in the CHP Student Academic Appeal Policy and Procedures (<https://chp.vcu.edu/student-success/student-grievances-/>) and the VCU Graduate Bulletin (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/dismissal/>).

The policy addresses the departmental appeals process for any student (MHA, MSHA, PhD) who is withdrawn from his/her program of study because of violations of our academic policies.

1. Any student who is the subject of a special action to be withdrawn from his/her course of study may choose to appeal.
2. Within ten working days of the notice of the special action, the student must present to the department chair a letter outlining grounds for the appeal. The grounds for appeal, consistent with the appeals process of the CHP, must be one (or more) of the following:
  - a. That performance criteria and standards were not made known to the student
  - b. That academic policies were not made known to the student

- c. That an academic policy is discriminatory or unfair on its face or that the application of the policy was unfair or discriminatory
  - d. That the student was denied due process
  - e. That the faculty member or members acted in an unfair or capricious manner
  - f. That the faculty acted based upon errors of fact
  - g. That the faculty's judgment was in error based upon improper interpretation of policy.
3. Upon receipt of the letter of appeal, the Department Chair shall appoint an ad hoc committee of three faculty, including the student's advisor if applicable. This committee will review the letter of appeal and make a judgment based on the grounds listed above. The committee's recommendation to deny or approve the appeal shall be delivered to the department chair within ten working days of the chair's receipt of the letter of appeal.
  4. If the committee recommends that the appeal be approved, the special action for removal will be withdrawn and the student can continue with his/her program of study. If the committee recommends that the appeal be denied, the student can choose to accept this decision and withdraw or pursue the appeal at the next level (the CHP).

During the consideration of the appeal, the student may continue in his/her classes and other program activities.

## 6. Student Responsibility Policies

### 6.1 Professional Conduct

#### **Violation of University Policies**

Students charged with violating the University's policies for Student Conduct and/or Academic Integrity will be reviewed and sanctioned through the University's officials, channels, and processes. Students can generally expect for this process to include:

1. Faculty who have a reason to suspect that a student has violated the University policies has a duty to report that suspected violation. The faculty member will make a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity and provide documentation supporting the charge.
2. The reported student will be notified that a charge has been filed by the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity by either the reporting Faculty member or the Program Director.
3. The student is assumed to be not responsible for the violation until a thorough investigation is completed. This process may take several weeks. The student should expect to receive updates on the charges, investigation, findings, and sanctions directly from the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. Those same updates are also provided to the College of Health Profession Dean and his/her designees, who then forwards them to the Department Chair and Program Director.
4. If a student is found to be responsible for the charges reported, that student will have the right to appeal the sanctions and/or the decision.

It's important to know that investigations, findings of responsibility, sanctions, and appeals are managed by the University through the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity and their designees, not through the Department of Health Administration or MSHA Program.

Students who are found to be responsible for a first offense of violating these policies should expect to receive sanctions from the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Affairs, which may include a grade reduction or grade of zero on the assignment, a grade of “F” for the course, and/or probation (students will be on probation for some designated period of time during which if they are found responsible for additional charges of policy violations, the penalties may be more severe).

Students who are found to be responsible for a second offense of violating these policies should expect to receive sanctions from the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which may include a grade of “F” for the assignment or course, probation (see definition above), and suspension (not allowed to continue in the MSHA program for a designated period of time), dismissal (not allowed to continue in the MSHA program) or other sanctions as deemed appropriate by the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.

Students who receive a sanction from the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity that results in failure of a course will therefore be in violation of the MSHA program’s academic standing policy and may be dismissed from the program (removed from the program and not allowed to return), even if dismissal is not expressly recommended by the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.

### **Violations of University and/or Department Policies**

Students who are found to be responsible for violating the University’s policies for Student Conduct and/or Academic Integrity, on a first or subsequent charge, and/or students who violate the MSHA Program’s Technical Standards, can also expect to be reviewed by the faculty for program-specific disciplinary sanctions.

Based on its assessment of the situation, the faculty may assign the following sanctions.

- revoke the student's scholarship support or graduate assistantship tuition and stipend
- prohibit the student from representing the Program or Department at conferences, competitions, or other external events
- limit student access to the alumni network
- prohibit students from holding elected student positions
- prohibit or terminate students from employment as a graduate assistant, program assistant, or research assistant
- other prohibitions as approved by the faculty, up to dismissal from the program

Students may dress comfortably for classes in business casual; however, casual wear is not appropriate. Business dress is expected when making field visits to health care organizations, guest speakers are addressing class, making class presentations, and other occasions as advised by the Program Director or course instructors.

A VCU identification card provided to students as part of the registration process must be available at all times when on University property.

## **6.2 Honor Code**

All students are subject to the VCU student honor code. For more information see: <https://conduct.students.vcu.edu/student-code-of-conduct/>. The highest level of personal/professional

integrity is required for continued participation in the MSHA Program.

The honor code applies to all work assigned during MSHA off-campus sessions as well as on-campus sessions. In completing off-campus assignments, students are often encouraged to seek consultation from fellow students and colleagues in their organization because learning is facilitated by such interactions. However, in submitting assignments, students testify that the work is their own.

### 6.3 Students with an Identified Disability

Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to providing students with disabilities equal opportunities to benefit from all programs, services and activities offered. For more information see: <https://das.vcu.edu/students/disability-support/>

Students with an identified disability should inform the individual course instructor so that appropriate accommodations can be made. Students with disabilities are responsible for self-identification prior to requesting services and may do so at any time by presenting documentation to their campus coordinator.

### 6.4 Academic Support Services

The Office of Student Academic Support Services provides services including counseling for study skill enhancement, time management, or other issues related to academic performance. For more information see: <https://das.vcu.edu/>

### 6.5 Class Attendance

Graduate students in health services administration are expected to attend classes regularly and arrive on time. It is their responsibility to prepare for class and to abide by attendance requirements specified by each instructor.

When an absence can be anticipated in advance, the student is encouraged to inform the instructor as a matter of courtesy.

For the MSHA Program: Due to the condensed and rigorous nature of synchronous weekend sessions, absences for reasons other unplanned and exceptional circumstances will not be granted. Work demands are not appropriate grounds for missing any part of a synchronous weekend session. Students must petition the Program Director for an excused absence for any class sessions prior to the beginning of an on-campus session. Unexcused absences from an on-campus session are grounds for dismissal from the Program. All class and professional development activities are considered required during the on-campus sessions.

MSHA students are also expected to attend all off-campus, online sessions, including synchronous sessions, as determined by the faculty in each course. Students are expected to participate in online sessions lasting over a specified time period in a timely manner. They are expected to participate in a

manner that facilitates the goal of the Program that students learn from each other as well as from faculty. Waiting until the last hour to participate in online discussions is not consistent with this attendance policy. Students expecting to encounter difficulty satisfying this requirement during an online session must contact the instructor in advance.

## 6.6 Leave of Absence

A student who wishes to obtain University approval for an extended leave of absence (for a semester or longer) from the MSHA Program should submit a written request with explanation to the Program Director.

In considering a request for a leave of absence, the Program Director will examine the student's academic status and performance as well as any past or pending disciplinary action.

In submitting and acting upon a request for a leave of absence, both the student and the Program Director will consider and comply with all applicable University policies and procedures.

## 6.7 Withdrawal from the Graduate Program

A student who is considering withdrawal from the MSHA Program is encouraged to discuss this matter with both the faculty advisor and Program Director.

Students who wish to withdraw from the MSHA Program must complete the University's withdrawal form which can be obtained from the VCU Graduate School Office. Additional University policies and procedures regarding withdrawal are set forth in the VCU Bulletin and the Graduate Bulletin and can be found at: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/program-withdrawal/>

Voluntary withdrawals must be approved in writing by the Program Director, Department Chair, and Dean. Requests should be done in a timely manner abiding by University policy.

## 6.8 Student-Faculty Communication

It is a policy of this Department to establish and maintain effective, open communications among faculty members and students. Among the mechanisms which have been established to facilitate and encourage such communication are the following:

Elected officers, or any group of students the class designates, may serve as an advisory committee to the Program Director and meet whenever desired by the students or the Program Director.

The Program Director or Chair may invite students to serve as members of standing and/or ad hoc committees concerned with Departmental affairs.

Members of the student body may, individually, or as a group, submit items for discussion at regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Such items should be directed to the Department Chair who is responsible for preparing the agenda for faculty meetings.

Information of interest to students is regularly distributed by e-mail. Students are responsible to familiarize themselves with all materials disseminated. All faculty members are available to meet with

students during hours that are “posted” or included in the course outline or, if the faculty member prefers, by appointment.

## 7. Faculty Responsibility Policies

### 7.1 Shared Faculty-Student Responsibility

Each student is individually responsible for meeting the academic requirements and achieving the educational goals that are specified by the Department and the University. It is the faculty’s responsibility to set fair requirements and provide appropriate, effective instruction. Both the students and the faculty contribute toward establishing the teaching-learning environment. In this sense, graduate education is truly a shared responsibility of the faculty and the students.

### 7.2 Faculty Advisors

The MSHA Program Director and Graduate Student Services Administrator serve as primary academic advisor for MSHA students, and refers students for career planning to other faculty appropriate to their needs.

It is the responsibility of students to understand the nature of their academic status and the implications of their status with respect to their continuation in the MSHA Program. The faculty advisor will assist the student and be available to advise the student in developing his or her approach to dealing with academic deficiencies.

### 7.3 Faculty Responsibilities as Instructor

Faculty members have the responsibility to provide timely and constructive feedback regarding the academic performance of students on tests, papers, or other academic requirements.

Faculty members have the responsibility to clearly specify course requirements and expectations, including the basis upon which final course grades will be determined.

Faculty members are responsible for specifying the particular guidelines that apply to each examination, case study, or other test of student performance. These guidelines must be consistent with the provisions of the VCU Honor Code and clearly specify whether or not collaborative effort is permitted and whether or not course material may be used during an examination.



## 8. Departmental and Selected University Policies

### 8.1 Technical Standards for Admission and Graduation Requirements

#### **Recommendation for Graduation**

A student is scheduled for graduation after successful completion of all degree requirements and upon recommendation of the faculty for graduation. Normally, the faculty's recommendations occur at the end of the semester during which graduation occurs; for most students, this is the Spring semester.

#### **Technical Standards for Admission and Graduation**

Professional Graduate Programs in Health Administration (MSHA)

The VCU Department of Health Administration is responsible for providing education without regard to disability while assuring that academic and technical standards are met. Academic standards are met by successfully completing the curriculum for the Professional Graduate Programs in Health Administration. Technical standards represent the essential non-academic requirements that a student must demonstrate to participate successfully in the Professional Graduate Programs in Health Administration.

An applicant, student, and candidate for the Master of Science in Health Administration (MSHA) degree must have demonstrated aptitude, abilities and skills in the following categories: sensory, motor, intellectual, behavioral, communication, and social. The technical standards for each category identified below are consistent with the expectations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

#### **Sensory**

- Ability to communicate verbally in the English language to elicit information from and provide information to faculty and health care professionals.
- Ability to communicate in written English with faculty and health care professionals.
- Ability to comprehend written communications (i.e., read, understand and follow directions in the English language) to fulfill the usual tasks and duties of a health care manager in training.
- Ability to hear with or without assistive devices to elicit information from faculty and health care professionals.
- Ability to listen and send clear and convincing messages.

#### **Motor**

- Ability to coordinate gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and the functional use of the senses of touch and vision reasonably required to operate a computer keyboard and to read a computer screen or have the appropriate accommodation.
- Ability to maneuver in the health care organization (hospital, physician practice, outpatient clinic).
- Ability to operate an automobile or acquire transportation for on-campus classes, meetings outside of VCU, or for a residency site.

#### **Intellectual – Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities**

- Ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize to solve problems.
- Ability to use basic tools and methods of the management disciplines (i.e., economics,

accounting, finance, organizational behavior, marketing, decision support, operations, technology, et cetera) for the cognitive application of information.

- Ability to integrate didactic and experiential learning to solve problems with critical judgment and analysis.

### **Behavioral**

- Ability to tolerate and function effectively under stress.
- Ability to concentrate in the presence of distracting conditions.
- Ability to concentrate for prolonged periods.
- Ability to relate in a professional manner to faculty, patients, families and other health care professionals.
- Ability to accept criticism and to respond by appropriate modification of behavior.
- Ability to read and regulate emotions as well as to recognize their impact on work performance and relationships, especially in the face of angry or emotionally-charged people.
- Ability to adapt and be flexible when confronted with changing environments, uncertainty, and ambiguity.
- Ability to show compassion, empathy, integrity, concern and interest for others, interpersonal skills, and motivation.
- Ability to display values of honesty and integrity consistently.

### **Social**

- Ability to develop and sustain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with a web of faculty, colleagues, and other health care professionals.
- Ability to network with other health care professionals and to have the ability to engage in conversation with appropriate nonverbal (i.e., eye contact, cues, posture) and verbal communication.
- Ability to de-escalate disagreements and orchestrate resolutions.

Revised: 7/1/15

## **8.2 Computer and Technology Use Policy**

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU or University) provides and maintains computer and network resources to support the education, research, patient care, and work of its faculty, staff, and students. All individuals receiving a University computing account, or using University computer and network resources, are bound by the Computer and Network Resources Use Policy. All users of these resources are expected to act in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner. VCU computer and network resources are conducted in a public forum, and users must respect the rights and privacy of other users, share the resources equitably and follow VCU policies and local, state, and federal laws relating to copyrights, privacy, security, and other statutes regarding electronic media. The complete Computer and Network Resources Use Policy can be found at the following link; all students are expected to read and be familiar with the contents:

<http://www.ts.vcu.edu/askit/policies-and-publications/technology-policies-guidelines--standards/computer-and-network-resources-use-policy/>. All applicable University technology-related policies apply to technology use in the Grant House by faculty, staff, and students.

The MSHA Program and course web pages are restricted to authorized individuals and are to be used only to conduct Program related business. Accounts and passwords, when required, are assigned to

specific individuals and may not, unless properly authorized by the University, be shared with, or used by, other persons within or outside the University. Students are expected to abide by system rules and procedures in answering questions periodically posed on the class boards. The contents of discussions on the class boards are not to be shared with others. Although course assignments may require using examples from one's own organization, students are cautioned to avoid posting strategically or otherwise sensitive information. Students are encouraged to discuss any concerns they have with course instructors.

### 8.3 VCU Identity Guidelines

The VCU Identity Guidelines are to be followed for references to Virginia Commonwealth University in all internal and external communications. The complete Nomenclature Guidelines at: <http://www.identity.vcu.edu>.

### 8.4 Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Use Policies

Alcohol and Other Drugs

See policy: <http://policy.vcu.edu/sites/default/files/Alcohol%20and%20Other%20Drugs.pdf>

Smoke and Tobacco-Free Campus

See policy: <https://policy.vcu.edu/universitywide-policies/policies/smoke-and-tobacco-free-campus.html>

### 8.5 College of Health Professions Food and Drink Policy

#### **Purpose**

The College of Health Professions Building is designed specifically for academic learning, research and study. Great care must be taken with food and drink, which can cause direct damage to property and also result in pest infestation and mold. By complying with this regulation, users will maintain an inviting, comfortable and clean environment and ensure a pest-free building.

#### **First Floor**

No food and only closed top beverages that cannot spill. Food may be consumed in the multipurpose room and lobby **ONLY** during sponsored events.

#### **First Floor Auditorium**

No food and only water.

#### **Classrooms**

No food and only closed top beverages that cannot spill may be brought into any of the classrooms.

#### **Open Study Areas**

No food and only closed top beverages that cannot spill may be brought into any of the open study spaces.

#### **Team Rooms**

No food and only closed top beverages that cannot spill may be brought into any of the team rooms.

### **Conference Rooms**

Food is permissible in conference rooms that have a pantry attached and should be used in conjunction with business meetings by faculty and staff and not for random individual use. Closed top beverages that cannot spill are permissible in all other conference rooms. Conference rooms with pantries are located on the first floor, the second floor, and eighth floor. The second floor conference room is reserved for the Office of the Dean.

### **Designated Areas for Eating and Drinking**

There are non-carpeted break room spaces on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> floors at the SW corner of the building. There is also a non-carpeted area on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Students may also use the outdoor space, the Larrick Student Center located directly across from the CHP building and the MCV Campus Bookstore next to the N deck.

### **Catering**

Organized groups using designated meeting rooms may have food catered. The group requesting the catering is responsible for cleaning up and removing all remaining food, dishes and trash.

### **Refrigerators and Microwaves**

Refrigerators in all areas will be cleaned out every Friday. No uncovered food or drinks are allowed to be kept in the refrigerators at any time. This includes styrofoam take out containers. Any uncovered food or drinks or food in styrofoam take out containers left in refrigerators will be removed and discarded.

Food warmed in microwaves should be covered. Microwaves should be cleaned at the time of use.

All persons are responsible for cleaning up and removing all remaining food, dishes and trash. If you spill it you must clean it even if the food or drink does not belong to you. Place trash in the landfill or recycle bins located on every floor throughout the building. Any food or drink contaminated trash is to be placed into the landfill bins.

### **Facility Customer Service**

Call (804) 828-9444 for areas needing attention to spills or other housekeeping issues

Anyone not complying with this policy will be asked to remove his/her food and drink from the area. Food or drink openly unattended in public areas will be removed and discarded.

All faculty, staff and students are responsible for enforcing this policy.

The Office of the VP Health Sciences has jurisdiction over all spaces on the VCU Health Science campus. Please reference the link below.

<https://healthsciences.vcu.edu/academic-operations/reserve-instructional-space/>

**This concludes the MSHA Student Guidebook for the 2022 - 2023 Academic Year.**