

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 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: www.vcu.edu/bulletins**

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.

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1. Academic Policies

1.1 Admission Requirements

1. a. MHA - To be considered for admission to the graduate program in health administration in full status, the applicant must complete all prerequisite course requirements and meet the following minimum qualifications: (1) present evidence of personal achievement, scholarship, intellectual ability, and professional promise; (2) hold a baccalaureate or graduate degree from a college or university which is fully accredited by the Association of American Universities or by a regional accrediting agency; (3) have an overall grade-point average of 3.0 or higher on a four-point scale in undergraduate work or provide evidence of high achievement in a substantial amount of graduate-level course work; and, (4) attain a satisfactory score in both verbal and quantitative areas (preferably at least the 50th percentile) on the Graduate Record Examination Admission Test

or the Graduate Management Aptitude Test. In addition, the applicant should provide evidence of commitment to the field of health administration. Other factors considered include a personal interview and prior work experience.

- a. MSHA – To be considered for admission to the MSHA Program in full status, the applicant must meet the following minimum requirements: (1) hold a baccalaureate or graduate degree from a college or university which is fully accredited by the Association of American Universities or by a regional accrediting agency; (2) have an overall grade-point average of 2.75 or higher on a four-point scale in undergraduate work or provide evidence of high achievement in a substantial amount of graduate-level course work; (3) attain a satisfactory score in both verbal and quantitative areas on the Graduate Record Examination Admission Test or the Graduate Management Aptitude Test; and (4) have at least five years of professional experience in a health care or related organization. (Preference in application decisions is given to those with management experience.) A professional resume should be submitted along with the other applications materials. Each applicant will be interviewed.

Those holding relevant graduate or professional degrees at the doctoral level (for example, MD, DDS, PharmD, Ph.D.) **may** be eligible to have the GRE or GMAT requirement waived. Applicants who wish to waive the GRE or GMAT requirement must submit a written request to the Admissions Committee chair for consideration by the committee. The MSHA Admissions Committee forwards petitions to the Graduate Dean.

2. Applicants who meet all general admission requirements and who are selected for admission by the Admissions Committee are recommended to the Graduate School Dean for admission in full status to the MHA or MSHA degree programs.
3. Those individuals selected for admission will have the demonstrated capacity to: pursue a rigorous course of professional graduate study (based upon an evaluation of the applicant's past academic work and standardized test scores); and assume a position of leadership in the industry (based upon an evaluation of the applicant's professional resume, references, and interview). Every effort will be made to admit a class that is diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, age, career aspirations, educational backgrounds, and professional experiences.

1.2 Admission for VCU Honors Students

1. VCU Honors Students are eligible to apply for admission to the MHA Program during their junior or senior year of undergraduate study, and an interview will be scheduled with the applicant. The application process is the same as for other applicants with the following exceptions:
 - a. Requirement for GRE or GMAT waived
 - b. Application fee waived
 - c. Official transcript not needed (grades can be accessed in VCU system)
2. The recommendation for admission will be made by the MHA Admissions Committee, at which time a place will be reserved for the student, provided the student graduates with honors and completes the prerequisite requirements.

1.3 Admission for Active Duty Military

1. Applicants affiliated with Active Duty Military are eligible to apply to the MHA Program. The application process is the same as for other applicants.
2. Admitted students will graduate after 4 semesters of coursework and 2 summer internships, which replace the year-long residency. The summer internships are described below:
 - a. Students that are participating in the Air Force (AFIT) program are required to complete two internships (non-compensated). The two internships will be completed in the summer semesters between the 1st and 2nd year and at the end of the second academic year.
 - b. Students that are an Active Duty Navy Medical Service Corps (MSC)-Officer with at least five years as a commissioned health care administrator may follow the AFIT model described above.

1.4 Admission on Provisional Status

1. If an applicant presents qualifications that are only slightly below required admission standards, that applicant may, at the discretion of the Admissions Committee, be admitted to the Program on provisional status.
2. Students admitted on provisional status that complete all course work, achieve a 3.00 GPA and do not earn a grade of "C" during their first semester as a full-time student (or equivalent number of credit hours of part-time work) will be granted full status as a graduate student and will become a degree candidate.

3. The faculty will review a student admitted on provisional status if one or more of the following occurs during the first semester she or he is enrolled full-time:
 - a. The student does not achieve a 3.00 GPA
 - b. The student fails to complete required courses, or
 - c. The student earns a grade of “C” or lower in at least one course.

Based on its assessment, the faculty will select from the following courses of action:

- a. Terminate the student from the Program on the basis of academic inadequacies;
 - b. Place the student on academic probation, specify requirements, and permit the student to continue in the Program.
4. Students admitted on provisional status will be informed in writing of their change in status after completion of the first semester and faculty review of their performance.

1.5 Prerequisites for Admission

1. MHA

To be eligible for admission to the graduate program, completed coursework must include basic undergraduate preparation in economics, accounting and statistics. Applicants must also have a working knowledge of college-level algebra. The specific prerequisite course requirements may be met as follows:

- a. Complete a college-level course (3 semester hours) in financial accounting at any U.S.-accredited college or university with a grade of “C” or better.
- b. Complete a college-level course (3 semester hours) in microeconomics at any U.S.-accredited college or university with a grade of “C” or better.
- c. Complete an upper division (3 semester hours) course in statistics at any U.S.-accredited college or university with a grade of “C” or better.

If all prerequisites have not been satisfactorily completed before program matriculation, the Program Director may require a one-year deferral to satisfy the prerequisite requirements.

Dual degree MHA/MD students are required to complete two prerequisites, financial accounting and microeconomics. They will be given the option of taking the prerequisite courses as listed above (a. and b.) or completing the MSHA prerequisite modules. A letter attesting to the successful completion of prerequisite modules will be included in their file. A course plan must be

completed and approved by the MHA Program Director, with concurrence of the MSHA Program Director (due to prerequisites and courses in both programs).

2. MSHA

No specific previous course work is required for application or admission to the Program. However, prior to enrolling in first semester course work, all associates must possess foundational knowledge in three areas: microeconomics, financial accounting and statistics. Associates may demonstrate such knowledge by: (1) successfully completing a college-level course in the area with a grade of “C” or better, from an accredited institution of higher learning within the last five years; or (2) completing an independent study module in the area supplied at cost by the program.

1.6 Transfer Credit

1. MSHA and MHA applicants may petition to meet elective course requirements up to the maximum permitted with previously completed graduate-level courses and must submit a copy of each course syllabus to the Program Director for review and approval. The courses must have been completed in an accredited university, but do not need to be from a CAHME-accredited graduate program.
2. MSHA and MHA applicants seeking to petition to substitute previously completed health administration graduate coursework beyond the elective course requirements and up to the maximum permitted by the Graduate School must have completed those courses in a CAHME-accredited graduate program. The applicant must submit copies of the syllabi of all relevant courses to the Program Director for review and approval.
3. Petitions to transfer credit are to be prepared by the applicant and submitted to the Program Director prior to entering the Program. It is the applicant’s responsibility to establish:
 - a. The institution has at least regional accreditation.
 - b. The course was completed with a grade of “B” or better within the last five years and was not previously applied to a degree earned.
 - c. The course is equivalent to a required or elective course appropriate to the MHA or MSHA curriculum. (A course syllabus or detailed letter from the instructor, which describes the purpose, objectives, content and course readings ordinarily will be required.)
5. The Program Director ensures that the petition is sufficiently documented and refers it to the primary instructor of the related course or courses.

6. The primary course instructor reviews and notes a recommendation on the petition and forwards it to the Program Director who has final approval.
7. The Program Director advises the student and the VCU Graduate School of the decision regarding transfer credit.

1.7 Course Load

1. **Full-Time Enrollment**
Students classified as full-time candidates for the **MHA** must enroll for a minimum of 13 semester hours each Fall and Spring semester during the on-campus phase of their program unless this requirement is waived by the Program Director for extenuating circumstances. A student cannot enroll for more than 13 semester hours in any semester unless approval is received from the Program Director. An overload fee will be assessed to students enrolling in more than 13 semester hours.

Full-time enrollment in the **MSHA** is specified on the departmental website.

2. **Part-Time Enrollment**
 - a. The MHA Program is designed for full-time students.
 - b. Part-time candidates for the MSHA degree must enroll for at least two courses each semester and complete the coursework within three years unless there are extenuating circumstances. A plan of study must be completed with the Program Director.
 - c. Individuals accepted as part-time degree students must meet the same admission standards and requirements as full-time degree candidates.

1.8 Plan of Study

1. 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.
2. 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.

1.9 Waiver of Courses

1. In general, those admitted to the MHA/MSHA Programs 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.
2. 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.

1.10 General Academic Requirements

1. Students in the MHA/MSHA Program must achieve an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (4.0 scale) for all coursework. Any student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.00 at the end of a given semester, or in the case of part-time MSHA students, after completion of the equivalent semester hours, will be reviewed for possible academic probation or termination.
2. Students in the MHA/MSHA Program must not have more than six semester hours (or 20 percent of total semester hours attempted, whichever is greater) with a grade of “C” regardless of the student’s overall GPA. 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 3.00 or better.
3. Students in the MHA/MSHA Program who earn less than a “C” in any course of the curriculum will be reviewed for possible academic termination. If not terminated, the student must retake the course or an identified, comparable substitute, and earn a grade of “C” or better before credit will be granted for the course.

4. In no case will students be granted academic probation for more than two semesters.
5. MHA students on academic probation are not eligible to enter the administrative residency.
6. MHA Students who have not satisfactorily completed the required 52 semester hours of coursework on campus are not eligible to enter the administrative residency. This includes students with outstanding Incomplete (I) grades.
7. MHA Students must complete a minimum of 60 semester hours of coursework and meet the following requirements in order to qualify for the MHA degree.
 - a. Meet all grade point requirements noted above.
 - b. Satisfactorily complete all requirements of the administrative residency including both professional development objectives and required academic coursework.
 - c. Pass a comprehensive oral seminar administered near the end of the program of studies.

1.11 Academic Probation

1. Students who do not achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 in their coursework and have more than six semester hours (or 20 percent of total semester hours attempted, whichever is greater) with a grade of “C” regardless of the student’s overall GPA, will be reviewed by the faculty for possible academic 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 3.00 or better. Based on their assessment, the faculty will select from the following courses of action:
 - a. Recommend to the Graduate School Dean the termination of the student from the MHA/MSHA Program on the basis of academic deficiencies.
 - b. Place the student on academic probation, specify requirements, and permit the student to continue in the program.
2. 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.
3. At the end of each semester, or in the case of part-time MSHA students, after completion of the equivalent number of semester hours, 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:

- a. 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.
- b. Recommend to the Graduate School Dean the termination of the student from the MHA/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.
- c. Permit the student to continue in the MHA/MSHA Program on academic probation and specify performance requirements that must be met.

1.12 Auditing Courses

1. Within the limits of enrollment restrictions, students may, with permission of the course instructor, audit a course for which they meet entrance requirements. No academic credit is given for an audited course, but it is recorded as an audit on the student's permanent transcript.
2. In the Department of Health Administration, it is the prerogative of the course instructor to set requirements for students who audit a course (e.g., mandatory vs. optional attendance). Students who fail to meet these requirements may not continue the audit.

1.13 Grading Policies

1. The final grade in courses in the MHA/MSHA Program ordinarily will include consideration of the student's performance on at least two examinations or assignments.
2. 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.
3. The grading symbols used within the Department's MHA/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. (See Sections 8.7 and 8. 8.)
- 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.

4. 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. Practicum courses (HADM 693, 694 and 695) are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory/Fail. In all other courses of the MHA/MSHA Program, regular letter grades are to be assigned unless an exception is made by vote of the faculty.

1.14 Grade Appeals

1. The VCU and School of Allied Health Professions grade appeals policies and procedures guide the Department's grade appeal procedure. See www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/gradereview.htm (page 60)
2. A student who does not understand or questions the grade for an assignment or an entire course should discuss it first with the faculty member. If the student continues to question the grade, s/he should schedule an appointment with the Program Director. After that meeting, if the student continues to feel that the grade has not been assigned in accordance with the stated criteria, the student may submit a written appeal to the chair of the Department. Students appealing grades assume the burden of proof. The appeal shall state and support with all available evidence the reasons why the student believes the grade should be changed.

For grades awarded for the fall semester, the written appeal must be submitted no later than 14 calendar days after the beginning of the spring semester. For grades awarded for the spring semester or summer sessions, the written appeal must be submitted no later than 14 days after the first day of the fall semester.

Upon receipt of a written grade appeal, the Department Chair will appoint a committee comprised of three faculty members. The committee will meet within five working days. The Department Chair must notify the student and the Dean of the School in writing of the faculty committee's decision and rationale for the decision within two working days.

1.15 Termination Process and Appeals

1. Termination is initiated by the Program Director after recommendation by a majority of the full-time faculty of the Department. A special action form will be completed to indicate the reason for the termination and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. Reasons for termination may include but are not limited to:
 - a. academic (described in Section 8.9 and 8.10),
 - b. discontinuous enrollment,
 - c. exceeding time limit,
 - d. honor policy violation,
 - e. academic misconduct, or
 - f. professional misconduct.

2. The Special action form is forwarded to the Dean of the School of Allied Health Professions who reviews the actions, signs the form, and forwards it to the Graduate School Dean.
3. The Program Director sends a letter to the student by certified mail, return receipt requested, advising them of the recommended decision to terminate. The letter will indicate that a letter from the graduate dean advising the final decision is forthcoming. The letter will also indicate the appeals process is outlined in these Policies and Procedures.
4. The Graduate Dean reviews the action, signs the form, notifies the Office of Records and Registration, and sends a letter through certified mail to the student. This letter includes a statement of the student's right to appeal and informs the student that appeals must be initiated within 14 days after receipt of this letter.
5. Should the student wish to appeal the termination decision, a letter must be addressed to the Department Chair of the appeal and reasons within 10 working days of the receipt of the letter from the Program Director (working days are defined as days that VCU is officially open for business). The student assumes the burden of proof in this appeal.

If an appeal has been requested, the student may be allowed to register and attend courses, with the understanding that s/he will be dropped retroactively if the termination is upheld.

Upon receipt of a written termination appeal, the Department Chair will appoint a committee comprised of three faculty members. The committee will meet within five working days. The Department Chair must notify the student and the Dean of the School in writing of the faculty committee's decision and rationale for the decision within two working days.

After a decision has been made at the Department and School of Allied Health Professions levels, should the student wish to continue the appeal, a letter should be addressed to the graduate dean stating the reasons for the appeal. The student assumes the burden of proof in this appeal.

The graduate dean provides the graduate program director and school of allied health professions with copies of the student's request and asks the graduate program director or chair to provide the graduate school with their response, including copies of correspondence and any other supporting documentation

that led to the termination. The program director or chair and school dean must respond to the graduate dean's request for information within 14 days.

The graduate dean notifies the student in writing of the decision within 14 days of receiving the information from the program director or chair and the school dean.

1.16 Schedule Changes

As specified in the Graduate Bulletin and the VCU Bulletin, students may make changes in their schedule of elective courses within the university add/drop period. However, they must comply with departmental workload standards and curriculum requirements in order to remain in good academic standing within the program. In all cases, the Program Director must be consulted and must approve any change in the student's curriculum plan.

2. Student Responsibility Policies

2.1 Professional Conduct

1. Students at VCU are obligated to conform to the honor system and to conduct themselves with the appropriate learning behavior as set forth in the Constitution and Honor System (<http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/honor.html>(page 47)) as well as VCU Rules and Procedures. Students are individually responsible for becoming thoroughly familiar with these documents, students will sign a document indicating they have been informed and they agree to comply with all VCU and Department of Health Administration policies.
2. Students may dress comfortably for classes; however, casual wear is not appropriate. Business dress is expected when making field visits to health care organizations, guest speakers are addressing class, and making class presentations.
3. A VCU identification card provided to students as part of the registration process must be available at all times when on University property.
4. MHA students are expected to adhere the MHA Code of Ethics (see 4.2). Violations of the Code of Ethics are referred to the MHA Program Director and may be referred to the faculty or Honor Council for further action.

6. MHA and MSHA students are expected to adhere to the Technical Standards for Admission and Graduation.

2.2 Honor Code

1. All students are subject to the VCU student honor code. (For more information see <http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/honor.html>.) The highest level of personal/professional integrity is required for continued participation in the MHA and MSHA Programs.
2. The honor code applies to all work assigned during MSHA off-campus sessions as well as on-campus sessions. In completing off-campus assignments, associates are often encouraged to seek consultation from fellow associates and colleagues in their organization because learning is facilitated by such interactions. However, in submitting assignments, associates testify that the work is their own.

2.3 Students with an Identified Disability

1. Students with an identified disability should inform the individual course instructor so that appropriate accommodations can be made.
2. Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to providing students with disabilities equal opportunities to benefit from all programs, services and activities offered (www.students.vcu.edu/rg/rg/basics/disability.htm (page 13)). Federal and state laws define disabilities as physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working. Disabilities include, but are not limited to, multiple sclerosis, migraines, chronic fatigue, traumatic brain injuries, cancer, diabetes, lupus, epilepsy, deafness, blindness, attention deficit disorder, specific learning disabilities and psychological disorders.
3. The offices of Services for Students with Disabilities determine appropriate academic adjustments such as program and exam modifications, classroom accommodations and auxiliary aids.
4. 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. The MCV Campus coordinator is Cheryl Chesney-Walker (828-9782).

VCU Policy Statement for Persons with Disabilities

Virginia Commonwealth University does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the administration of its educational programs and activities, including admission and employment practices, access to or treatment in its programs and services.

The Assistant to the Provost and Director of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Services is responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements contained in section 35.107 of the Department of Justice regulations.

Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the rights provided there under, is available from the University ADA Coordinator.

2.4 Academic Support Services

The Office of Student Academic Support Services encompasses several areas of student support for all students at the VCU Medical Center. Their responsibilities include counseling for study skill enhancement, time management, or other issues related to academic performance. Contact this office to set up an appointment to discuss your needs, rights and responsibilities or access their website:

<http://www.vcuhealth.org/vp/sassdss>

2.5 Class Attendance

1. 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.
2. When an absence can be anticipated in advance, the student is encouraged to inform the instructor as a matter of courtesy.
3. MHA Students who must miss two or more consecutive class days due to illness or other extenuating circumstances should notify their advisor who will assume responsibility for notifying the student's instructors and the Program Director.
4. Cell phones and pagers should be turned off during class sessions. If the student needs to be contacted in an emergency such devices should be left on "vibrate" mode. Students should refrain from leaving class to respond to calls or pages unless there is a real emergency.
5. **For the MSHA Program:** Due to the condensed and rigorous nature of on-campus sessions, absences for reasons other than illness or dire personal

emergency will not be granted. Work demands are not appropriate grounds for missing any part of an on-campus 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.

MSHA students are also expected to attend all off-campus, online sessions. 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.

2.6 Leave of Absence

1. A student who wishes to obtain University approval for an extended leave of absence (a semester or longer) from the MHA/MSHA Program should submit a written request with explanation to the Program Director.
2. 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.
3. 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.

2.7 Withdrawal from the Graduate Program

1. A student who is considering withdrawal from the MHA/MSHA Program is encouraged to discuss this matter with both the faculty advisor and Program Director.
2. Students who wish to withdraw from the MHA/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.

4. Voluntary withdrawals must be approved in writing by the Program Director, Department Chair, and Dean.

2.8 Student-Faculty Communication

1. 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:
 - a. Faculty advisors are appointed for the MHA students by the Program Director prior to orientation. Each student should meet at least once a semester with their faculty advisor.
 - b. 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.
 - c. The Program Director or Chair may invite students to serve as members of standing and/or ad hoc committees concerned with Departmental affairs.
 - d. 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.
 - e. Information of interest to students is regularly posted on the Department's bulletin board or distributed by e-mail. Students are responsible to familiarize themselves with all materials posted on the bulletin board. A bulletin board exclusively for student use is located in the students' lounge.
 - f. 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.

3. Faculty Responsibility Policies

3.1 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.

3.2 Faculty Advisors

1. The MHA Program Director designates a faculty member to serve as advisor for each student. The basic role of the faculty advisor is to provide guidance and assistance to the student with respect to elective course selection, other academic matters, and career planning. The MSHA Program Director serves as primary faculty academic advisor for MSHA students, but refers students for career planning to other faculty appropriate to their needs.
2. MHA Students should seek a conference with their advisor prior to the beginning of each semester to review their performance to date and discuss course selections for the upcoming semester.
3. 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 MHA/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.
4. The MHA Program Director, with the assistance of the faculty as requested, is responsible for advising MHA students regarding the Administrative Residency and career planning and placement as follows:
 - a. Participating with the student and preceptor in development of the residency plan, and then approving it.
 - b. Contacting the Resident and Preceptor at the residency site.

- c. Advising in the planning and evaluating of the student's management study.
 - d. Monitoring each student's progress throughout the residency period through reviewing reports submitted periodically by the resident and preceptor.
5. If an MHA student wishes to have a faculty advisor other than the individual assigned, he or she should make a request for a change to the Program Director. The Program Director will consult with the student and the faculty advisor before making such a change.

3.3 Faculty Responsibilities as Instructor

1. Faculty members have the responsibility to provide timely and constructive feedback regarding the academic performance of students on tests, papers, or other academic requirements.
2. Faculty members have the responsibility to clearly specify course requirements and expectations, including the basis upon which final course grades will be determined.
3. 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.

4. Departmental and Selected University Policies

4.1 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 (MHA/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, including the completion of an MHA administrative residency.

An applicant, student, and candidate for the Master of Health Administration (MHA) or 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 verbal 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.

Approved: 7/13/05 HAD Faculty

4.2 Building Use Policy

The Department of Health Administration, Virginia Commonwealth University, designates the Grant House facilities for use by the faculty, students, and staff in support of the academic and administrative mission of the University. Grant House

facilities refer to both interior and exterior resources supporting the facility. Internal resources include but are not limited to administrative offices, classrooms, furniture, equipment, and supplies. External resources include fences, sidewalks, landscaping, and other property directly adjacent to the main building.

Part I. University Policies and Procedures

General Policies and Procedures

The Department of Health Administration, Virginia Commonwealth University designates the Grant House facilities for use by faculty, students and staff in support of the academic and administrative mission of the University. This document promulgates the policies and procedures applicable to all authorized users of the Grant House. The appropriate Academic Department will provide practical guidelines for the application of these policies.

Definition

Grant House facilities refer to both interior and exterior resources supporting the facility. Interior resources include but are not limited to administrative offices, classrooms, furniture, equipment, supplies, etc. Exterior resources include fences, sidewalks, landscaping, and other property directly adjacent to the main building (exterior resources are maintained by the University). Authorized users include faculty, staff and students supporting an authorized University program.

General Policies

The following shall govern the use of the Grant House facilities:

- a. Access to the Grant House facilities is restricted to those appropriately authorized individuals. Access will be controlled through the use of a combination cipher lock and University identification card. Faculty, staff and students are required to have their University ID with them at all times.
- b. Use of the Grant House must be University related. The authorized individual is responsible for ensuring any activities or materials introduced into the Grant House are University related.
- c. Persons authorized to use the Grant House facilities must exercise reasonable care to safeguard access codes or related security provisions against inappropriate use.
- d. Persons authorized access to the Grant House are required to refrain from activities or behavior that promotes an unsafe environment. Activities that place any faculty, staff, student, or visitor at risk are prohibited.
- e. Intentional abuse of Grant House facilities, intentional interference with official University business; failure to exercise reasonable care for equipment and furniture; and intentional breaches of security are prohibited.
- f. Attempts to circumvent authorized access to the Grant House or related resources are strictly prohibited.
- g. Smoking is prohibited in the interior of the Grant House.

Grant House Policies and Procedures

- a. Alcohol Use. Alcohol (beer or wine) use in the Grant House is prohibited except where pre-approved by University officials for a University sponsored event. The use of hard liquor will not be approved under any circumstances.
- b. Behavior. It is imperative that the Grant House maintains an environment that is conducive to its academic and professional missions. To that end, it is incumbent upon occupants to exercise a professional demeanor during all activities at the Grant House. Occupants are expected to interact, speak, and act in a fashion that will not bring discredit upon the University.
- c. Food and Drink. Preparation of food is limited to the kitchenette area. Under no circumstances will food be prepared in administrative or classroom areas. Students are encouraged to use the break room for food consumption. Come snack items and drink are permitted in the classroom at the discretion of individual faculty members. Food and drink are not permitted in conference or meeting rooms except where previously approved by faculty for University sponsored activities.
- d. Housekeeping. All individuals authorized access to the Grant House are responsible for leaving break rooms, classrooms, restrooms, conference rooms, and the kitchenette in a clean and orderly state after their use. This includes, but it not limited to, removing trash, papers, cans, cups, utensils, and other debris associated with their period of use. Individual Class Presidents are responsible for establishing and coordinating schedules for cleaning the student break room and kitchenette. The student break room and kitchenette should be scheduled for cleaning as needed, but not less than monthly. At a minimum the following items should be accomplished during the cleaning:
 - a. Remove debris from countertops, cupboards, floor, and tables.
 - b. Wipe clean microwave interior/exterior
 - c. Wipe clean countertops and table tops, walls, and chair surfaces as needed
 - d. Wash dishes, utensils, and glass ware
 - e. Put dishes, utensils, and glass ware in cupboards
 - f. Clean out refrigerator; discard old or unaccounted for food stuffs, containers, and beverages
 - g. Defrost refrigerator (Every other month)
- e. Facility Care. Occupants of the building should refrain from propping locked doors open (front door before 0730 or after 0815) and one way exit doors, window, and other pathways without prior approval from the staff or maintenance department. Furniture and equipment should remain in the room designated unless prior approval is received. In the case that furniture or equipment is moved to another location, it is the responsibility of the person who moved the subject item to return it to the original location.
- f. Meetings/Parties/Activities. As previously stated, use of the Grant House facilities is restricted to University related events. Those seeking to hold events

- at the Grant House must receive previous approval from the Chair of the Department of Health Administration.
- g. Furniture Moving. Any rearrangement of classroom furniture must be returned to its original placement at the end of class. Rearrangements must be consistent with codes which prohibits blocking the center exit isle of the room.
 - h. Safety. All authorized users of the Grant House are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that ensures safe conditions for themselves and others. Occupants of the Grant House will not engage in activities, games, or events that could lead to personal injury. This includes but is not limited to running in the hallways, blocking exits and entrances and horseplay. Firearms of any type are strictly forbidden. Individual Class Leaders and Program Directors are encouraged to perform periodic briefings on fire safety and other potential safety hazards.
 - i. Security. The Grant House controls access to the main building and specified student areas through use of a combination cipher lock. Students entrusted with the combination to this lock are required to take the appropriate measures to secure that information against unauthorized use. Students are prohibited from sharing the combination with unauthorized users. Furthermore, building occupants are required to ensure that all doors and windows are closed and locked after each use. This applies to both interior and exterior entrances and exits.
 - j. Personal Valuables. For safety as well as security, personal valuables should not be left unattended.
 - k. Decorations. For public areas (hallways, doors, classrooms, etc.), decorations are limited to departmental approval. No personal items are to be displayed in the public areas. Personal items (pictures, certificates, etc.) may be displayed in offices.

Part II. Enforcement Procedure of Policy Violations

Employees

Alleged violations for employees shall be referred to their supervisor or Chair of the employee's department and be dealt with in accordance with the Employee Standards of Conduct and Performance.

Student and/or Visitors

Alleged violations of this policy shall first be reported, reviewed and disposed of through Step One of the procedures outlined below. However, at any point during Step One, any of the parties may invoke Step Two. Reasons for invoking Step Two may include, but are not limited to, the following: The judgment that the matter should be handled by the judicial system; the view of the alleged violator that the matter be considered by the Building Policy Committee or Department Chair; or a judgment that the state has been violated.

- A. Step One
 - a. Violations of the policy should be reported immediately to the appropriate building representative. Charges of violations should be presented immediately upon discovery thereof.
 - b. The building representative will collect the facts of the case and attempt to identify the offender as quickly as possible. If the building representative believes disciplinary action is warranted, the charge and any information related to the charge will be presented to the head of the alleged violator's department.
 - c. The head of the alleged violator's department will identify the appropriate response and action to be taken, subject to the, agreement of all parties, including the accused. If any of the parties do not agree, Step Two is invoked. The actions may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - d. Partial or complete restriction of the alleged violator's access to the Grant House facilities and/or resources for a fixed period of time, generally no more than six months.
 - e. Restitution for any damage caused, material consumed, and the like on an actual-cost basis. Such restitution may include the costs associated with determining the facts of the case.

- B. Step Two
 - a. Written charges, which describe violation, must be provided to the building representative within 30 days of the date on which Step Two is invoked.
 - b. The building representative will refer the statement of written charges to the appropriate administrator in compliance with the provisions of the Rules and Procedures of Virginia Commonwealth University. The usual procedures and provisions of the Rules and Procedures shall be observed from this point forward.
 - c. Violations of state law will be reported to the Director of Campus Police or designee.

Revised: 11/5/2002

Approved: 4/18/2000

4.3 Computer and Technology Use Policy

Virginia Commonwealth University provides computing facilities to faculty, students, and staff for activities supporting the mission of the University. The policies indicate what is expected as responsible behavior by those given access to the facilities. The appropriate computing support division will provide practical guidelines for the application of the policies. The complete Technology Use Policy is provided below.

The MSHA Program and course web pages are to be used only by students to conduct Program related business. Students are not to give their access code and passwords to others. 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 also cautioned to avoid posting strategically or otherwise sensitive information. Students are encouraged to discuss any concerns they have with course instructors.**

Technology Use Policy

1. All applicable University technology-related policies apply to technology use in the Grant House. The following additional policies have been established.
2. **Food and Drink.** Food or drink is not allowed in the lab. This is strictly enforced.
3. **Software Installation.** Installation of individual software programs is not allowed on the lab and classroom computers. If a student or faculty member needs to have a software program installed for instructional purposes, he or she must contact the Network Manager for authorization and assistance.
4. **Hard Drive Space.** Users may store files on the local hard drive space made available for this purpose, but they should keep backup copies of all documents as the hard drives will periodically be cleaned and formatted. The Department is not responsible for any files stored on the hard drives of the laboratory computers. Users keep files on these computers at their own risk. Further, users should be aware that any files stored on these computers are not secure and can be accessed by anyone else using the machines.
5. **Licenses.** All of the lab computers are connected to the Department's Network Server. The use of any programs on the Department Server or the lab and classroom computers is subject to the applicable license agreements.
6. **LAN Accounts.** All students are required to have individual accounts on the Department Network. An Application for a LAN Account form must be completed by the student and submitted to the Network Manager. Individual accounts will include a unique logon ID and password and a network directory for the individual's personal use. The files in this directory will only be accessible to the individual user. Space on the Department Server for individual use is limited and may be restricted. Network directories are copied to tape regularly but users are still advised to keep an additional back up copy of all of their files.
7. **Server Space Requests.** Students and faculty may request space on the Department Server for special use for individual classes and projects. Requests should be made to the Network Manager. Each request will be considered on an individual basis and every attempt will be made to honor such requests within the limitations of the Server capacity.
8. **Printing.** Printing supplies are expensive and therefore printing should be limited to course-related work only. Printing for recreational purposes is not permitted.
9. **Reserving Space.** Requests to reserve the lab can only be made after attempting to secure space in other University facilities. No more than the six (6) workstations in

the back of the room can be reserved. Requests for reservations are to be made at least two weeks in advance to the Network Manager using the Room/Equipment Reservation Form.

10. **Broken Equipment.** Broken equipment should be reported to the Network Manager, including the location and name of the equipment (if labeled) and the exact nature of the problem (use the Computer Work Request form). Repair of broken equipment is only done by the Network Manager or an appropriate outside vendor. Individual attempts to repair equipment are not allowed and may void warranties.
11. **Multiple Logons.** Logging on to more than one computer at a time is prohibited.
12. **Classroom Technology.** Departments utilizing the classrooms are responsible for familiarizing their faculty with the classroom technology. Requests for installation of software on the classroom computers must be made by the respective Department to the Network Manager at least two weeks in advance of the anticipated need. The microphone for use in room 110 must be checked out from room 202 during regular business hours. Support for the classroom technology is not available after regular business hours.

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4.4 VCU Identity Guidelines

The VCU Identity Guidelines are to be followed for references to Virginia Commonwealth University in all internal and external communications. Examples include but are not limited to correspondence, documents, publications, announcements, biographical references, bookstore items, signage, equipment and vehicles, uniform and patches, and Web sites. See the complete Nomenclature Guidelines at: <http://www.identity.vcu.edu>.

4.5 Drug Free Schools and Workplace Policy

In accordance with the federal Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, the federal Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and the Commonwealth of Virginia's Policy on Alcohol and Other Drugs, it is the policy of Virginia Commonwealth University that the unlawful or unauthorized manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of alcohol and illicit drugs by employees and students on University property or as part of any University activity is prohibited. Any employee or student who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, expulsion from the University, referral for prosecution and/or referral for satisfactory participation in an appropriate evaluation or rehabilitation program.

The purpose of this policy is to protect the health, safety and welfare of members of the University community and the public being served by the University. Each faculty member and student is responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the provision of the VCU Alcohol and Drug Policy. See the policy at: www.vcu.edu/provost/pdf/alcohol_policy.pdf