ADMISSIONS GUIDEBOOK

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VCU School of Pharmacy was established in 1898 and has a long history of pioneering changes in the field. Pharmacy practice has changed dramatically from the art and science of compounding and dispensing medicine to a patient-focused practice. The school is committed to developing progressive models of pharmacy practice while maintaining the foundational pharmaceutical sciences. In the early 1950s, school leadership saw a need for advanced education to meet the challenges of change and established a graduate program. About 90 students currently are enrolled in the M.S., Ph.D. and combined degree programs in the Departments of Medicinal Chemistry, Pharmaceutics, and Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science. In 1971, VCU was one of the first pharmacy schools in the nation to require that all students spend their final year in a practice setting under the supervision of faculty preceptors.

About 70% of graduating Pharm.D. students go directly into pharmacy practice, while the remainder are accepted into residencies and graduate or fellowship programs. Many residency opportunities are available within the school and the VCU Health System, including residency positions in community pharmacy. In 2015, the school opened a new Center for Compounding Practice and Research. The traditional B.S. degree program gave way to the Pharm.D. (doctor of pharmacy) in the late 1970s, and the transition was completed in 1996. To accommodate the growing student population and provide more educational and experiential diversity, the school opened two satellite campuses for third- and fourth-year Pharm.D. students: the Inova Fairfax Campus in 2007 and the University of Virginia Division in 2012.
A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Our school is dedicated to graduating pharmacists who will work within interprofessional care teams, as well as producing scientists who will contribute to important discoveries that will improve human health. VCU School of Pharmacy is consistently recognized as a top tier program due to the varied resources and opportunities provided to our students. We are situated within an academic health science center with other health professions allowing for true interprofessional education, and we have extensive outreach into the community where our faculty practice and students train.

Our programs maintain an important balance between practice and research. Many of our faculty practice in pharmacy in the VCU Health System or with community partners; other faculty are intensely focused on research in the pharmaceutical sciences, contributing to the record-setting number of patents we file as a school each year.

Recently, our school was recognized by the broader university’s Office of Institutional Equity, Effectiveness and Success as the most inclusive academic unit at VCU. Our faculty regularly earn similarly prestigious recognitions, such as Dr. Kelly Goode being named one of the most influential women in pharmacy by the APhA Foundation and Dr. Ben Van Tassell winning VCU’s Distinguished Scholarship Award, both in 2022.

We have state-of-the-art research programs and centers, many of them funded by the National Institutes of Health, and the very first pharmaceutical-engineering program in the country. These research opportunities enhance learning for students in our graduate and Pharm.D. programs.

Our graduates have gone on to prominent positions within health care and the pharmaceutical industry. Our students have the opportunity to learn and train at hospitals outside of the Richmond area, including those at our satellite campuses across Virginia — Inova Hospital in Fairfax and the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

If you come to visit or enroll in a degree program here, you'll see that we're committed to being the best with a focus on students, patient care and scientific discovery.

Welcome to the future.

Kelechi C. Ogbonna, Pharm.D., MSHA
Professor and Interim Dean
VCU School of Pharmacy
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Kelechi C. Ogbonna, Pharm.D., MSHA
Interim Dean, VCU School of Pharmacy

Cynthia K. Kirkwood, Pharm.D.
Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Tori Keel, MSW, Ed.D.
Interim Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services

Aron Lichtman, Ph.D.
Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies

Rucha Bond, Pharm.D.
Associate Dean for Experiential Education

DaNika Neblett Robinson, Ed.D.
Associate Dean for Finance and Administration

Michael Clarke, Pharm.D.
Assistant Dean

Robert Guanci
Assistant Dean and Chief Pharmacy Officer

Dave Dixon, Pharm.D.
Chairman

Umesh Desai, Ph.D.
Chairman

Douglas H. Sweet, Pharm.D.
E. Claiborne Robins Professor Chairman

RESEARCH CENTERS & INSTITUTES

CENTER FOR BIOMARKER RESEARCH AND PRECISION MEDICINE

CENTER FOR COMPOUNDING PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

CENTER FOR PHARMACY PRACTICE INNOVATION

CENTER FOR PHARMACEUTICAL ENGINEERING AND SCIENCES

INSTITUTE FOR STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY, DRUG DISCOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT
VCU School of Pharmacy is located in Richmond, Virginia, and welcomes students from all backgrounds and experiences. As a holistic review school, we consider many factors including personal and extracurricular experiences, letters of recommendation, and academic record. In addition to our Pharm.D. program, we offer four combined degree programs: Pharm.D./Certificate in Aging Studies, Pharm.D./MBA, Pharm.D./M.P.H., and Pharm.D./Ph.D.

According to U.S. News & World Report, VCU is one of the top 20 Pharm.D. programs in the United States. We are also the oldest pharmacy school in Virginia, which allows our students to have access to an extensive alumni and preceptor network. As one of 18 health science centers in the United States, the school's location within the VCU Health System offers students tremendous opportunities for interprofessional education and collaboration.

At VCU, you can expect to learn from dynamic faculty in a welcoming and inclusive environment that will expose you to individuals of differing perspectives, life experiences and cultural backgrounds. Our curriculum offers students an exceptional balance of practice and community engagement alongside basic and applied pharmaceutical research. Recently, the school was recognized with the C. Peter Magrath Community Engagement Award and the AACP Lawrence C. Weaver Transformative Community Service Award.

More than 600 Pharm.D. and graduate students can be found in our program at any time. In 2020, 95% of our Pharm.D. students graduated on time and 95% of those students passed the NAPLEX exam on the first attempt. VCU School of Pharmacy has the highest NAPLEX pass rate in the commonwealth of Virginia and the second-highest NAPLEX pass rate when compared to the top 10 schools of pharmacy as reported by U.S. News & World Report.

Our program offers students an individualized and structured approach as we assist them in exploring the pharmacy profession. Within six months of graduation, 93% of our students in the Class of 2018 were employed. In addition to community pharmacy, our students can be found in a variety of settings including hospital practice, ambulatory care, industry, veterinary pharmacy, informatics, geriatrics, pediatrics, managed care and so much more! We invite you to learn more about VCU School of Pharmacy and chart your future.
DEPARTMENTS & PROGRAMS

Department of Pharmacotherapy & Outcomes Science
Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Pharmaceutical Sciences with a concentration in pharmacotherapy or in pharmacoeconomics and health outcomes

Medicinal Chemistry
Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Pharmaceutical Sciences with a concentration in medicinal chemistry

Pharmaceutics
Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Pharmaceutical Sciences with a concentration in pharmaceutics

THREE CAMPUSES

VCU Health Campus
Richmond, Virginia
Established in 1898

Inova Health System
Fairfax, Virginia
Established in 2007

University of Virginia Health System
Charlottesville, Virginia
Established in 2012
DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

The combined degree program takes advantage of efficiencies in both the professional and graduate programs while maintaining sufficient rigor, scope and depth. Currently, the following dual degrees are offered jointly with the VCU School of Medicine, VCU School of Business and VCU School of Allied Health.

The application process for combined degree programs begins during the P1 year.

PHARM.D./CERTIFICATE IN AGING STUDIES

Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) & Certificate of Aging Studies (postbaccalaureate graduate certificate)

This program combines the Pharm.D. with the graduate Certificate in Aging Studies in the Department of Gerontology. Graduates receive education in social, cultural, psychological, cognitive and biological aspects of aging in an interdisciplinary environment.

Completion Time: No additional time to the 4-year Pharm.D. degree (4 years total)

Career Opportunities: Prepares individuals to better care for an aging population in all health care settings. Diverse careers are available for those with a passion to serve the elder generation.

PHARM.D./MBA PROGRAM

Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) & Master of Business Administration (MBA)

This program combines the Pharm.D. with the Master of Business Administration program. Graduates receive training in finance, accounting, marketing, management and other fields of business. View the Pharm.D./MBA bulletin to see more up-to-date information.

Completion Time: 1 year in addition to the 4-year Pharm.D. degree (5 years total)

Career Opportunities: Director of pharmacy, health system management, corporate chain pharmacy management, entrepreneurial business opportunities, pharmaceutical industry management, governmental positions
The combined degree program takes advantage of efficiencies in both the professional and graduate programs while maintaining sufficient rigor, scope and depth. The application process for combined degree programs begins during the P1 year.

**PHARM.D./M.P.H. PROGRAM**

Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) & Master of Public Health (M.P.H.)

This program combines the Pharm.D. with the Master in Public Health program. Graduates attain additional skills in population health care and data analytics.

**Completion Time:** 1 year in addition to the 4-year Pharm.D. degree (5 years total)

**Career Opportunities:** Prepares individuals for pharmacy careers with a population health focus and for leadership roles at the local, state and national levels. Graduates gain expertise in conducting research in hospital- and community-based settings.

**PHARM.D./PH.D. PROGRAM**

Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) & Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Pharmaceutical Sciences

The program combines the highest degrees available in pharmacy and research education. Graduates attain strong research and analysis capabilities in addition to their clinical skills. Many of the highest level officials in government, academia, consulting and industry have Ph.D.s. The skills associated with this degree are highly sought after by employers.

**Completion Time:** 2-3 years in addition to the 4-year Pharm.D. degree (6-7 years total)

**Career Opportunities:** Prepares individuals for opportunities as scientists and clinicians.
2022-23

PHARM.D. APPLICATION TIMELINE

**JULY 14:** PharmCAS Application Cycle Opens

**JULY 18:** AACP Virtual Pharmacy School Fair

**AUG. 18:** AACP Virtual Pharmacy School Fair

**NOV. 1:** Priority Applicant Deadline

**SEPT. 22:** AACP Virtual Pharmacy School Fair

**OCT. 23:** Priority Notification Deadline

**MAY 2, 2023:** Regular Decision Deadline

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- PHARMCAS APPLICATION
- THREE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION
- PERSONAL STATEMENT
- PREREQUISITE COURSEWORK COMPLETED WITH A GRADE OF A C OR BETTER

- PCAT EXAM (optional): Completion of the PCAT is not required for the 2022-23 cycle and remains optional. Students are encouraged to take the exam under the following conditions:
  - Overall GPA below a 3.0
  - Prerequisites taken 5+ years ago
  - Less than 50 total credit hours taken at time of application
  - Downward trend in academic history

PHARM.D. INTERVIEW (INVITATION REQUIRED)
Pharm.D. interviews are invitation-only and occur on Saturdays. *Until further notice, all interviews will be held in a virtual setting.* More details are offered when the student has been invited.
PREREQUISITE COURSES

Applicants for the VCU School of Pharmacy must successfully complete ALL course prerequisites by the end of the summer term before fall classes begin in the year of their admission. Visit our website for a prerequisite checklist.

52 Total number of college semester hours that must be completed prior to starting our program

30 Total number of basic science college semester hours that must be completed prior to application consideration

45 Total number of college quarter hours that must be completed prior to starting the program

Due to the importance of a strong biomedical science foundation in the doctor of pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree program, some or all of these courses are highly recommended: genetics (3 SH), molecular biology (3 SH), immunology (3 SH) and cell biology (3 SH).

NOTE: AP (Advanced Placement tests of the College Board) or IB (International Baccalaureate) courses will not be accepted for science prerequisites other than physics, although higher-level courses in the same subject area may be substituted (e.g., physical chemistry for general chemistry). AP/IB credit in physics, calculus, statistics and English will be accepted with a minimum score of 3 (AP) or 4 (IB).

COURSEWORK

General Biology Lecture
General Biology Lab
Human Anatomy Lecture (in addition, 1 SH of lab is preferred)
Human Physiology
Microbiology Lecture (in addition, 1 SH of lab is preferred)
Biochemistry Lecture
Chemistry
General Chemistry/General Inorganic Chemistry Lecture
General Chemistry/General Inorganic Chemistry Lab
Organic Chemistry Lecture
Organic Chemistry Lab
Physics
Physics Lecture
Physics Lab
Calculus
Statistics
English
A YEAR-BY-YEAR LOOK AT PHARMACY SCHOOL

P1 YEAR

P1 year is all about settling in and exploring the profession. From day one, you will be assigned a faculty mentor dedicated to helping you identify career goals and opportunities to get involved. You will have classes that range from pharmacognosy to pharmacokinetics and practice-based experiences out in the community. Most importantly, we are with you every step of the way as you transition to life as a pharmacy student!

P2 YEAR

Rather than learning about medicinal chemistry, pharmaceutics, and therapeutics in isolation, we group all of these essential areas by body system, beginning with cardiology and ending with respiratory/immunology. We design our classes to replicate practice; much of your time will be spent picking apart patient cases, designing therapeutics regimens and working with simulation mannequins alongside other health professions students.

P3 YEAR

With the opportunity to take electives, complete service-learning hours and fulfill combined degree requirements, P3 year is all about choosing your journey. Our curriculum provides a variety of ways to further differentiate yourself and refine your skills. If you decide to complete your Pharm.D./Ph.D. or Pharm.D./MBA, our curriculum has built-in efficiencies to help you save time and money.

P4 YEAR

During the P4 year, students complete up to nine rotations all over the world. We have an extensive network of preceptor and rotation sites throughout Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina. Beyond our local region, many students take part in rotational experiences in Hawaii, Alaska, New Mexico and Italy — to name a few. Whether you would like to pursue a residency, fellowship, or community position, your P4 year is curated to reaffirm your interest areas and ensure you are an exceptional candidate upon graduation.
**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

There are a few things you should know before meeting with an admissions representative. Take a look at the following tips to ensure you get the most out of your meeting.

**Prepare your elevator speech.**
During your meeting, we’ll want to know who you are and why you’re interested in pharmacy. Consider forming a cohesive elevator speech that gives admissions representatives a good idea of who you are.

**Know your academic profile.**
It’s important to know your GPA and PCAT scores (if applicable). An admissions representative may ask you about your grades or scores to help determine your level of competitiveness.

**Become familiar with our website.**
Explore the pharmacy.vcu.edu site thoroughly. Our website has information on our application process, requirements and much more. Review the site before calling to ask any questions.

**Consider any questions you may have, write them down and bring them with you.**
Brainstorm a list of questions before your appointment. What are you interested in or curious about? Write it down so you get all of your questions answered!

**Bring what you need (If you don’t know, ask!).**
In addition to writing down questions, you may want to bring your unofficial transcripts, resume, or PCAT scores along with you. If you don’t know what to bring, call us and we’ll help.

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**KEYS TO SUCCESS**

At VCU School of Pharmacy, we are dedicated to helping every student succeed. We offer these tips to our students each semester and believe that when coupled with their hard work, this leads to success. Interested in applying some of these to your life? Take a look below!

- Be courageous and ask for help as soon as you need it.
- Identify two people on campus you know you can go to for support and encouragement.
- Avail yourself of campus resources.
- Take care of your physical health by sleeping, eating and exercising regularly.
- Engage in some form of self-care every day.
- Create and implement a study schedule.
- Identify and practice an effective note-taking strategy.
- Resist the urge to compare yourself to your peers; strive to do YOUR best.
- Be proactive and reach out to faculty and staff as soon as you realize you might be struggling academically or otherwise.
CONNECT WITH US

We enjoy getting to know our prospective students. Applying for pharmacy school can be an exciting yet daunting feat. We’re here to help. Below you will find different ways to connect.

ON-CAMPUS VISITS

An on-campus visit features a 30-minute information session, lunch with current Pharm.D. students, a campus tour and a mock admissions session. On-campus visits are exclusive to groups of college-level individuals that are interested in the Pharm.D. program at VCU. Currently, all on-campus visits are being offered virtually.

INFO SESSIONS

Information sessions are designed with you in mind. Our admissions team will travel to your school, class or organization meeting to provide insights about the pharmacy profession and VCU School of Pharmacy. Each session is led by a representative from the Office of Admissions and Student Services and includes a Q&A or mock admissions discussion. Currently, all info sessions are being offered virtually.

OPEN HOUSE

Open houses are open to anyone interested in the Pharm.D. program at VCU School of Pharmacy. Attending an open house gives you the opportunity to learn more about our Pharm.D. program, ask questions about the admissions process, tour the MCV campus and get a sense of student life from current Pharm.D. students. Currently, all open house sessions are held virtually.

PIPELINE PROGRAMS

The VCU Health Sciences Pipeline features programs and initiatives to support students in their journey toward a health care career. VCU School of Pharmacy has several programs at the middle school, high school and college levels for students interested in learning about pharmacy.

- Compromiso, Valores, Servicio
- Preview Day
- Pharmacy Explorers
- Pharmacy Summer Scholars
- Summer Academic Enrichment Program

To learn more and find a program for you, visit dhsd.vcu.edu.
WELCOME to the FUTURE