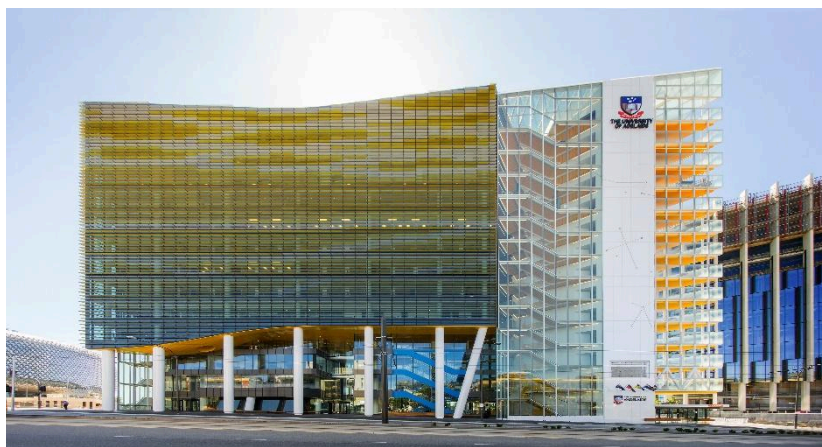


# PROGRAMME GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

## MASTER OF SCIENCE AND GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMMES IN ADDICTION STUDIES

**Year 2023/2024**





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**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ADDICTION STUDIES  
PROGRAMME GUIDELINES AND POLICIES**

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# INTRODUCTION

## **PROGRAMME OVERVIEW FOR STUDENTS BEGINNING IPAS, AUGUST 2023**

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This is an information handbook for students beginning the Master of Science (MS) in Addiction Studies and Certificate Programmes in Addiction Studies through the International Programme in Addiction Studies (IPAS) in August 2023. You will find important information about assessments and policies in the third part of this handbook. **Students who enrolled in the programme in 2022 or before should refer to the Programme Manual that was provided to you in your first year of entry.** This Programme is only available in external, distance education mode.

## **PROGRAMME DURATION AND SCHEDULE: ONE-YEAR FULL-TIME STUDENTS (Master of Science and Certificate Programmes)**

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Modules within the IPAS Programme are offered on a modified semester schedule, with courses staggered to allow periods of focused learning in specific modules. Students in the full-time (FT) MS programme will complete 4 modules in each semester. Students in the FT Advanced Certificate will complete three modules in the first semester. Students in the FT Intermediate Certificate will complete 2 modules in the first semester and one in the second term.

### **First Semester (“Fall 2023” in VCU terms)**

Public Health Issues and Approaches to Addiction\*  
 Biological Basis of Addiction\*

Aug 14, 2023	First day of class
Sept 25-Sept 29, 2023	Mid-semester reading week: no classes
Nov 6-10, 2023	Last class week
Nov 13-17, 2023	End of term reading week
Nov 20-26, 2023	Exam (to be scheduled within this period)

Treatment of Addictions: Critical Issues\*\*  
 Research Methods in Addictions\*\*\*

Sept 4, 2023	First day of class
Oct 16-20, 2023	Mid-semester reading week: no classes
Nov 29-Dec 1, 2023	Last class week
Dec 4-8, 2023	End of term reading week
Dec 11-18, 2023	Exam (to be scheduled within this period)

## **CRITICAL DATES, SEMESTER 1 Courses FALL 2023**

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Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees, courses beginning Aug 14	August 28, 2023 by 11:59 PM Richmond, VA time
Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees, courses beginning Sept 4	Sept 5
Last day to withdraw without failure (WNF)	October 27, 2023

\*Modules in MS, FT Intermediate and Advanced Certificate Programmes

\*\*Modules in MS and Advanced Certificate Programmes



\*\*\*Module in MS Programme only

**Second Semester (“Spring 2024” in VCU terms)**

Treatment of Addictions: Psychosocial Interventions\*

Jan 15, 2024	First day of class
Feb 26-Mar 1, 2024	Mid-semester reading week
April 8-April 12, 2024	Last class week
April 15-April 19, 2024	End of term reading week
April 22-April 26, 2024	Exam (to be scheduled in this period)

Research Project in Addictions\*\*\*

Note there is no reading week during this course because there is no stringent or regular class schedule beyond the first several weeks. Project is carried out individually with project supervisor.

Jan 15, 2024	First day of class
July 27, 2024	Last day of class

Addiction Policy\*\*

Treatment of Addictions: Pharmacotherapies\*\*

Feb 5, 2024	First day of class
Mar 18-Mar 22, 2024	Mid-semester reading week
April 29-Apr 26, 2024	Last class week
May 6-10 2024	End of term Reading week
May 13-19, 32024	Exam to be scheduled in this period

**CRITICAL DATES, SEMESTER 2 Courses (SPRING 2024)**

Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees for course beginning Jan 15	January 22, 2024 by 11:59 PM Richmond, VA time
Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees for courses beginning Feb 5	February 6, 2024 by 11:59 PM Richmond, VA time
Last day to withdraw without failure (WNF)	March 29, 2024

\*Modules in MS, FT Intermediate and Advanced Certificate Programmes

\*\*Modules in MS and Advanced Certificate Programmes

\*\*\*Module in MS Programme only

NB: Within the VCU system, the official names for semesters 1 and 2 are “Fall term” and “Spring term” respectively. This may be confusing to many in the Southern hemisphere, but you will sometimes hear these terms.

**PROGRAMME DURATION AND SCHEDULE: PART-TIME STUDENTS**

The MS in Addiction Studies Programme and Advanced Graduate Certificate Programme part-time options will be completed over 24 months.

Modules within the IPAS Programme are offered on a modified semester schedule, with courses staggered to allow periods of focused learning in specific modules. Students in the part-time MS programme will complete two modules in each semester of their enrolment. Students in the part-time Advanced Certificate will complete two modules per semester in the first year and one module per semester in the second year. Students in the FT Intermediate Certificate will complete 1 module per semester across three semesters.

**YEAR 1 First Semester (“Fall 2023” in VCU terms)**

Public Health Issues and Approaches to Addiction\*

Aug 14, 2023	First day of class
Sept 25-Sept 29, 2023	Mid-semester reading week: no classes
Nov 6-10, 2023	Last class week
Nov 13-17, 2023	End of term reading week
Nov 20-26, 2023	Exam (to be scheduled within this period)

Treatment of Addictions: Critical Issues\*\*

Sept 4, 2023	First day of class
Oct 16-20, 2023	Mid-semester reading week: no classes
Nov 29-Dec 1, 2023	Last class week
Dec 4-8, 2023	End of term reading week
Dec 11-18, 2023	Exam (to be scheduled within this period)

**CRITICAL DATES, SEMESTER 1 Courses FALL 2023**

Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees, courses beginning Aug 14	August 28, 2023 by 11:59 PM Richmond, VA time
Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees, courses beginning Sept 4	Sept 5
Last day to withdraw without failure (WNF)	October 27, 2023

**Second Semester (“Spring 2024” in VCU terms)**

Treatment of Addictions: Psychosocial Interventions\*

Jan 15, 2024	First day of class
Feb 26-Mar 1, 2024	Mid-semester reading week
April 8-April 12, 2024	Last class week
April 15-April 19, 2024	End of term reading week
April 22-April 26, 2024	Exam (to be scheduled in this period)

Addiction Policy

Feb 5, 2024	First day of class
Mar 18-Mar 22, 2024	Mid-semester reading week
April 29-Apr 26 , 2024	Last class week
May 6-10 2024	End of term Reading week
May 13-19, 32024	Exam to be scheduled in this period

**CRITICAL DATES, SEMESTER 2 Courses (SPRING 2024)**

Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees for course beginning Jan 16	January 22, 2024 by 11:59 PM Richmond, VA time
Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees for courses beginning Feb 6	February 6, 2024 by 11:59 PM Richmond, VA time
Last day to withdraw without failure (WNF)	March 29, 2024

**YEAR 2 First Semester (“Fall 2024” in VCU terms)**

Biological Basis of Addiction\*

Aug 12, 2024	First day of class
Sept 23-Sept 27, 2024	Mid-semester reading week: no classes
Nov 4-9, 2024	Last class week
Nov 11-15, 2024	End of term reading week
Nov 18-22, 2024	Exam (to be scheduled within this period)

Research Methods in Addictions\*\*\*

Sept 2, 2024	First day of class
Oct 14-18, 2024	Mid-semester reading week: no classes
Nov 25-29, 2024	Last class week
Dec 2-6 2024	End of term reading week
Dec 9-13, 2024	Exam (to be scheduled within this period)

**CRITICAL DATES, SEMESTER 1 Courses FALL 2024**

Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees, courses beginning Aug 14	August 26, 2024
Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees, courses beginning Sept 5	Sept 3, 2024
Last day to withdraw without failure (WNF)	Oct 25, 2024

**YEAR 2 Second Semester (“Spring 2024” in VCU terms)**

Research Project in Addictions\*\*\*

Note there is no reading week during this course because there is no stringent or regular class schedule beyond the first several weeks. Project is carried out individually with project supervisor.

Jan 13, 2024	First day of class
July 30, 2024	Last day of class

Treatment of Addictions: Pharmacotherapies\*\*

Feb 3, 2024	First day of class
Mar 16-20, 2024	Mid-semester reading week
Apr 21-Apr 25, 2024	Last class week
April 28-May 1, 2024	End of term Reading week
May 4-12 2024	Exam to be scheduled in this period

**CRITICAL DATES, SEMESTER 2 (SPRING 2024)**

Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees for courses beginning Jan 17	Jan 19, 2025
Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees for courses beginning Feb 5	Feb 4, 2025
Last day to withdraw without failure (WNF)	March 28, 2025

\*Modules in MS, FT Intermediate and Advanced Certificate Programmes

\*\*Modules in MS and Advanced Certificate Programmes

\*\*\*Module in MS Programme only

**GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES**

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Graduates of the MS in Addiction Studies Programme will have an understanding of the pharmacology of alcohol and other drugs of dependence and the mechanisms underlying the development of dependence, and will be able to:

- Become specialists in addiction by integrating programme material of current knowledge on drug and alcohol problems into their profession/practice
- Demonstrate detailed knowledge of drugs and comparative addiction treatment
- Identify and prioritize public health issues related to addiction
- Translate research into more effective policies at the local, state, national, and/or international level to address public health issues
- Translate research on addiction into more effective treatment practices
- Demonstrate detailed knowledge of comparative addictions policies
- Critically evaluate research and research methodology on drug and alcohol problems

**PROGRAMME MISSION and STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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The mission of the IPAS leading to a MS in Addiction Studies degree is “to offer students cross-cultural exposure to the critical prevention, treatment, research and policy issues facing the field. Through a collaboration arrangement including Virginia Commonwealth University, King’s College London, and the University of Australia, students complete a program of study using distance-learning technologies to obtain the degree. The program is designed to prepare students for local, national and international policy positions, prevention/treatment program management and other leadership positions in the addictions field. This program will speed the dissemination of the latest international addictions-related knowledge, especially to remote locations around the world, and help students compare international perspectives and translate this knowledge into more effective prevention and treatment practices and evidence-based policies within their own countries.”

**Specific Student Learning Objectives:**

**Integrated knowledge of addiction science:** The student will demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of the current elements of addiction science as related to disciplinary specialization, and a more detailed understanding of the individual area of scholarship, including an appropriate familiarity with the research literature and the ability to evaluate and critique publications.

**Problem solving skills:** Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of skill in the identification and selection of meaningful problems to be addressed in addiction research and practice, including the ability to defend said identifications and to design and develop appropriate methods to solve said problems as measured by rubric.

**Research design:** Students will demonstrate the achievement of an appropriate level of competence in the ability to appraise, develop and implement research studies.

**Written communication skills:** The candidate will use effective written communication skills to present information related to addiction causes, interventions, treatments, and policies using appropriate vocabulary, figures, tables, and citations.

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**PROGRAMME CONTENT**

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The multi-factorial nature (biological, psychological and social) of substance use problems and the resultant multidisciplinary nature of their treatment and management are reflected in the programme content. The international nature of the programme will bring a focus to cross-national and cross-cultural variations in attitudes, approaches, interventions and policies related to addiction.

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**Semester 1 (“Fall Semester”)**

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**PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES AND APPROACHES TO ADDICTION (IPAS 602)**

This course/module provides an introduction to basic concepts and research methods in Public Health and Epidemiology as they relate to the study of addictions, as well as an in-depth consideration of the personal, social, economic, and cultural burdens/costs associated with drug and alcohol abuse and dependence. Individual and community-based risk and protective factors related to addictions and primary and secondary prevention efforts aimed at reducing the addictions-related public health burden are also a focus. An online lecture format featuring presentations by leading researchers and policymakers in the field of addictions will be used, along with readings, online discussions, and writing assignments, to (1) gain a greater understanding of the enormous costs of addictions at every level of society, and (2) introduce students to some of the current thinking and programs related to the primary and secondary prevention of addictions.

**TREATMENT OF ADDICTIONS: CRITICAL ISSUES (IPAS 605)**

This course/module is designed to enable students to gain advanced understanding of the critical issues involved in the identification, assessment, diagnosis and classification of individuals who misuse substances. Attitudes towards addiction will also be critically discussed. Students will explore and critically examine the impact of drugs through the course of life (the effects of drugs during development, adolescence and older age). Students will also have the opportunity to important emerging issues in the addictions field. This will include a variety of current topics, namely: problem gambling, e-cigarettes, new psychoactive substances, take-home naloxone and dual diagnosis.

**BIOLOGICAL BASIS OF ADDICTION (IPAS 600)**

This course/module is designed to provide an overview of the neuropharmacology of drugs of abuse and dependence, including basic principles of drug action as well as comprehensive coverage of the major classes of drugs (opioids, stimulants, nicotine, alcohol, sedatives, cannabis, hallucinogens). Students will study mechanisms of action, effects, and pharmacokinetics as well as tolerance and dependence for each of these drugs/drug classes. The reasons for addiction, including biological, genetic, cultural and other determinants will be discussed. Students will learn about laboratory-based methods used in addiction research.

**RESEARCH METHODS IN ADDICTIONS (IPAS 606)**

This course/module is designed to enable students to develop knowledge and understanding of the different methodological processes underpinning research in the addictions. The research principles involved in hypothesis testing and estimation procedures will be covered as well as the generic skills necessary to undertake a small research project, analyse data and interpret statistical findings.

Students will have an opportunity to discuss the ethical issues that arise from working with and collecting data from vulnerable individuals such as those who use psychoactive substances.

During this module and with the help of faculty, students will choose a research project for secondary analysis from a list of topics provided in December of the academic year in which the project is to be completed. Alternatively, a topic for an appropriately structured systematic review and/or meta-analysis can be proposed by the student. This will allow students to begin independent readings in their topic of choice and to gain a better sense of the plausibility of their project.

## **SEMESTER 2 (“Spring Semester”)**

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### **TREATMENT OF ADDICTIONS: PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTIONS (IPAS 601)**

This course/module is designed to explore the scientific basis and treatment of substance misuse from a psychological perspective germane to the management of drug, alcohol and nicotine dependence. Students will have the opportunity to evaluate the principles of different theoretical approaches underlying psychological assessment and evidence-based practice.

During this course/module, students will develop a critical awareness of the current literature related to psychological theories of addiction. Students will examine the use and comparative efficacy of different psychological therapies in clinical practice including brief interventions, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Motivational Interviewing/MET. Other interventions (group work, self-help) will also be examined alongside the evidence base for Relapse Prevention, Contingency Management and Therapeutic Communities.

### **ADDICTION POLICY (IPAS 603)**

This course/module is designed to provide students of differing backgrounds with an understanding of the process by which international addiction health policy is formed and reformed around the use and misuse of both licit and illicit drugs. The course will look at the epidemiology of addiction around the world and the relationship between the burden of addiction and the corresponding effects of national and international drug policies.

### **TREATMENT OF ADDICTIONS: PHARMACOTHERAPIES (IPAS 604)**

This course/module is designed to provide an overview of the pharmacological management of alcohol and drug addiction. It will cover the management of withdrawal from alcohol, sedatives, opioids, cannabis and stimulants, as well as long-term management of dependence on opioids, tobacco and alcohol. It will also describe some of the limitations of long term management of cannabis and stimulants. Additional topics include international perspectives on management of dependence, management of dependence during pregnancy, and the process of medication development.

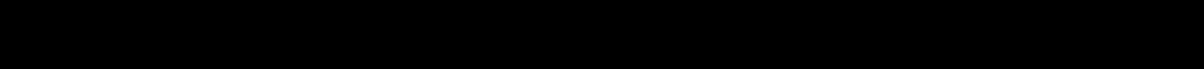
### **RESEARCH PROJECT IN ADDICTIONS (IPAS 692)**

The final research project is a core requirement for the MS Programme and is the key element distinguishing the MS from a professional certificate or a postgraduate diploma programme. It provides the opportunity to demonstrate specialized understanding of the issue of collecting data from vulnerable groups, and the exercise of independent critical judgment. It also builds other skills, notably independence and creativity. The purpose of the research project is to have students demonstrate competence in the integration and analysis of data related to addictions to further the

translation of this knowledge into more effective policies and practices, in keeping with the stated aims of the programme.

Due to the nature of this distance learning programme, original data collection for the research project will not be possible in all but exceptional circumstances. This is due to the difficulty of obtaining ethical approval from three universities simultaneously, as well as challenges in supervising data collection from afar. As a result, research projects will be based on analysis of either publically available anonymized data sets (such as the National Survey on Drug Use and Health collected yearly in the US), or of de-identified data made available by research supervisors for the programme. Alternatively, students can work on a systematic literature review/meta-analysis after it has been approved by the course coordinator. The necessary defining feature is that the research project should demonstrate an appropriate level of academic rigor and understanding of implications of the findings of the projects.

A designated project supervisor will help to guide the student through project completion. Students will be required to meet online, via teleconferencing with, or phone their supervisor in order to ensure adequate progress on the project once the course/module begins. Draft research projects will be due 4 weeks before the end of the module to allow time for formative feedback and, where necessary, revision before final submission.



Because VCU is the host university for IPAS and all courses are taught through the VCU online interface, you must set up a VCU eID, password and email **BEFORE** you start the MS in Addiction Studies Programme.

After classes have begun, you will receive information about how to set up your KCL and UoA identifications and email accounts.

**This will give you access to the online services of each of the universities.**

**Please be aware that you will be enrolled each semester by administrative staff at VCU for the courses that are required for either part-time or full-time students, depending on your status. If you wish to withdraw from courses, please have Dr Loos request the withdrawal and she will notify the other Programme Directors of your decision. You are responsible for being aware of the drop and withdrawal dates for the courses within the programme, and are responsible for payments if your request to drop courses after the associated deadlines.**



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## STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESSES

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Although this programme is offered by distance education, students are encouraged to contact us at any time, particularly those having difficulty with the programme content and in meeting assignment deadlines. Once enrolled you will be automatically given a student identification number and email address at each participating university. Having an ID and account for each system will allow you to access online resources at all three Universities.

However, for the purposes of contacting faculty, for submission of programme materials, and other official business related to the programme, **we ask that you use the student email that you receive from VCU**, which is the administrative host for the programme. We will also contact you on this email address for any urgent issues and expect you to check it regularly. Failure to check this email account regularly can lead to missed important payment and academic deadlines, which can negatively impact student progress and lead to late fees.

Your student email user name is your e-ID followed by @vcu.edu. So, for example, if my e-ID is meloos, my email address is meloos@vcu.edu. The password you set at the time you received your e-ID will also serve as your email password. Please use email as a preferred means of communication. Once you are enrolled and settled, we will normally contact you via your VCU student email address. You may forward your email to another email account, but please note that staff on this programme will only contact you on the VCU email. Also, you can forward your KCL and UA email to the same account.

You can log in to your student email through the **VCU** web page:

<http://www.vcu.edu> or <https://my.vcu.edu/group/myvcu/home>

You can also send your email to instructors and members of your courses from Canvas, the online learning interface at VCU (see information below).

**You will be required to promptly respond to any written, electronic, fax or telephone communication from any of the Programme Directors, Course/Module Coordinators, or Programme Administrators. Failure to respond in a timely fashion may jeopardize the successful completion of a course/module or assignment**

If you are ever in Adelaide, London or Richmond, please come and see us. Please call or email ahead of time if you would like to stop in.

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## ENROLMENT STATUS, FEES AND GRADUATION ENQUIRIES, CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PERSONAL DETAILS

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You will be able to change your address, obtain registration details, obtain graduation details, withdraw from courses or view your fee status and request unofficial academic transcript online at:

<https://my.vcu.edu/group/myvcu/home>

Invoices for outstanding fees **will be sent to your email and can be viewed in VCU e-services**. The IPAS team does not have insight in any issues around fees. **Please contact VCU Student Financial Services** (<https://sfs.vcu.edu/>) with any questions.

A very informative page that can help you with many questions is:

<https://www.vcu.edu/current-students/>

Here you can also access ample information about payment of fees. We will not be involved with the collection of fees, and for privacy reasons we do not have any insight in these matters.

If you still need help, please contact:

VCU's Division of Student Affairs

Phone +1 804 828 1244  
Facsimile +1 804 828 2180  
Email [dsa@vcu.edu](mailto:dsa@vcu.edu)

## **GENERAL PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATION ENQUIRIES**

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For general information about the administration of the IPAS Programme at VCU, please contact

**VCU Programme Director**  
**E-mail address**

Dr Mary Loos  
[meloos@vcu.edu](mailto:meloos@vcu.edu) (preferred)

## **POSTAL ADDRESS**

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Mary Loos, PhD  
International Programme in Addiction Studies  
Department of Psychology  
806 West Franklin Street  
Box 842023  
Richmond, VA 23284-2023  
United States

**PROGRAMME CONTENT AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS ENQUIRIES (ALL COURSES)**

If you have questions related to specific courses offered by the faculty of KCL, UoA or VCU, please contact the appropriate Programme Directors via email initially and, if necessary, via telephone:

**At the University of Adelaide**

Dr Andrea Gordon	<b>E-mail :</b> <a href="mailto:andrea.gordon@adelaide.edu.au">andrea.gordon@adelaide.edu.au</a> <b>Phone:</b> + 61 8 8313 5989
Dr Abdallah Salem	<b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:abdallah.salem@adelaide.edu.au">abdallah.salem@adelaide.edu.au</a> <b>Phone:</b> + 61 8 8313 4327

**At King's College London:**

Dr Anna Williams	<b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:anna.v.williams@kcl.ac.uk">anna.v.williams@kcl.ac.uk</a>
Dr Leonie Brose	<b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:leonie.brose@kcl.ac.uk">leonie.brose@kcl.ac.uk</a>
Dr Rashed Tusar Programme Administrator	<b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ipas@kcl.ac.uk">ipas@kcl.ac.uk</a> <b>Phone:</b> +44 207 848 0682

**At Virginia Commonwealth University**

Dr Mary Loos <b>Programme Director</b>	<b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:meloos@vcu.edu">meloos@vcu.edu</a>
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**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Please inform all Programme Directors (Dr Mary Loos, Dr Andrea Gordon, and Dr Anna Williams) IN WRITING (email, fax or mail) about:

- **Change of address or personal details**  
Please note that it is the responsibility of the student to notify the programme organizers of any change in their circumstances. Inability to contact the student may result in the student missing important deadlines. Lack of knowledge about assignment deadlines due to communication problems will not be accepted as a viable explanation for late submission
- **Intention to change the type of enrolment**  
Please note that failure to notify Dr Mary Loos in a timely fashion about changes in the type of enrolment (PT or FT) may lead you to incur costs for courses not completed.
- **Intention to withdraw from a course or programme**  
Please note that failure to withdraw from a module/course by the specific cut off dates set by VCU and listed in the "Critical dates" section of this manual will incur financial costs.

**DEPARTMENTAL WEBSITES**

We encourage you to look at the websites of the academic departments/institutes that you are now a part of as a postgraduate student on this programme. To learn more about the people in our departments and what they do, visit our web sites:

- VCU <https://pharmtox.vcu.edu/>; [http://ipas.vcu.edu/](http://ipas.vcu.edu;);
- KCL [www.kcl.ac.uk/ioppn/depts/addictions/index.aspx](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/ioppn/depts/addictions/index.aspx)
- UoA <https://health.adelaide.edu.au/biomedicine/disciplines/pharmacology>

**CRITICAL DATES FOR ENROLMENT, PAYMENT, AND WITHDRAWAL**

For each course you take deadlines apply to enrol, withdraw and pay fees. These deadlines are referred to as critical dates. The dates for the first semester are listed below. If you are not enrolled in a course, you will not be given access to the teaching material provided on Canvas.

**CRITICAL DATES, SEMESTER 1 Courses (FALL 2023)**

Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees, for courses beginning Aug 14	August 28, 2023 by 11:59 PM Richmond, VA time
Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees, courses beginning Sept 5	Sept 5 by 11:59 PM Richmond, VA time
Last day to withdraw without failure (WNF)	October 27, 2023

**CRITICAL DATES, SEMESTER 2 Courses (SPRING 2024)**

Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees for course beginning Jan 15	January 22, 2024 by 11:59 PM Richmond, VA time
Last day to add a course or drop a course without incurring fees for courses beginning Feb 5	February 6, 2024 by 11:59 PM Richmond, VA time
Last day to withdraw without failure (WNF)	March 29, 2024

Below are helpful web links to pages with important information regarding tuition/fee schedules, as well as an optional instalment payment plan:

<https://accounting.vcu.edu/tuition/>

and

<https://accounting.vcu.edu/plan/index.html>

Canvas is the online education service provided to VCU's students and staff. From Canvas you will be able to access information on all courses/modules you are enrolled in this year; review course study material; check your grades (confidential); check average class grades for each test assignment or exam; receive messages placed on the Announcements notice board; participate in Discussion Boards; and access the University's online resources (e.g., electronic journals), personal tools, etc. You will need to go through Canvas to access all course-related material.

**Your username and password for Canvas are your e-ID and password.**

You can easily access Canvas from the VCU home page:

<http://www.vcu.edu>

or at

<http://canvas.vcu.edu>

Once logged on to Canvas, you will find that information is customised to present only details relevant to you and the online content for courses/modules that you are undertaking this year. You can use Canvas to manage your workload through its features and tools. You will be required to participate in Discussion Forums regularly (see below).

If you have difficulties navigating the Canvas platform or would like to know more about its features, click on the Help button at the top of the Canvas webpage. Please refer to the paragraph on getting help with Canvas about troubleshooting.

If you are not logged into Canvas, go to:

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

You will be able to access the **VCU Libraries** through Canvas (click on "VCU Libraries" tab) or directly (using the same username and password).

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

However, we strongly suggest that you use the IPAS International Library portal designed specifically for students in our programme by our excellent team of librarians. From this portal you will be able to quickly access not only VCU libraries, but once you have your KCL and UoA ids, you will also be able to access their libraries as well.

<http://guides.library.vcu.edu/ipas>

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## ENQUIRIES OR PROBLEMS RELATED TO CANVAS

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You may experience some difficulties with Canvas along the way, either due to local settings on your computer, your internet connection or problems and outages from Canvas. You can either call or email the IT Support Center at VCU (help desk) to assist you with these issues.

Please read your emails from VCU and check your “myVCU” page for notifications about scheduled maintenance and downtime.

The IT Support Center can be contacted by phone:

Phone: +1 804 828 2227

The IT Support Center provides 24/7 phone support. During regular business hours they provide full service phone support. Limited phone support is available during overnight hours and on holidays. For some forms of essential technical assistance, Zoom meetings are scheduled.

You can also email [itsc@vcu.edu](mailto:itsc@vcu.edu) to communicate with the IT Support Center

Because of the time differences, you will often use email. Please indicate in the subject line that you are studying by distance education. This should reduce the processing time of your question. Please complete the following email template to ensure that they have every chance to be able to respond to your enquiry without needing to contact you for further information before they can get started. **NB: THEY CANNOT HELP YOU WITHOUT SUFFICIENT INFORMATION.**

- VCU e-id (i.e., first part of your VCU email address)
- V number (also known as Banner ID)
- Full name:
- Operating system on the computer you are experiencing the problem: e.g., Windows 10
- Internet browser that is being used when experiencing the problem: e.g., Google Chrome, Safari
- Location and time: e.g., Botswana 10 am local time
- Type of internet connection: e.g., dial-up from home
- Course/module name in Canvas: e.g., ADDICTION POLICY (IDAS 603)
- Describe what you were trying to do: e.g., access Canvas or do a quiz or view a lecture
- Describe the problem that was encountered:
- Describe any error messages that were presented:
- Have you previously been able to complete this same task on the computer that is now causing problems?:
- If yes, has anything changed on this computer recently?:

The MS in Addiction Studies Programme curriculum has been designed to be self-contained. You will be provided with the following study aids for each course/module:

- **Lectures:** Lectures are provided online. Lecture duration varies between 30 and 90 minutes. The lectures outline and exemplify core concepts necessary to grasp the topic. Your readings will expand on material presented in these lectures. Lecture handouts are provided online in PowerPoint pdf files that can be viewed, downloaded or printed out.
- **Course Handbook/Syllabus:** A course handbook/syllabus is available online for each course. These contain specific information about the course/module including course learning objectives, assessments and course timetable.
- **Topic Outlines:** Topic outlines are provided online for each study topic and include learning objectives, title of the concept lecture, list of readings and revision questions for each topic. The revision questions are provided at the end of each topic outline and are intended to help you revise the content of the topic. You do not need to provide your answers to us.
- **Readings:** A series of suggested readings are listed in the Topic Outline. Some of these are essential (i.e., their content may be assessed) and others are optional. Readings may be provided in the VCU library course reserve or online (in the form of pdf files or as links to relevant websites). Additional or further readings are not a compulsory component but are a useful addition to the core content and may provide a different perspective to help you learn. The online readings include both journal articles and book chapters chosen from a variety of sources, which may also represent a wide range of disciplines necessary for the examination of drug-related issues.
- **Discussion Board:** Discussion boards are a useful tool for exchanging information and ideas, and is an important part of your summative assessment (pp 27-29). You will be expected to discuss study topics with other students, but you can also discuss problems you may encounter while studying. A set number of contributions is compulsory. Given the international nature of IPAS, student often report these discussion boards to be an invaluable learning experience to observe differences in the way that addiction is managed internationally.
- **Online quizzes/exercises:** Online quizzes are self-assessments designed to help you determine your progress. The quizzes are provided for many but not all topics, and their completion may be compulsory in some courses/modules. However, the mark for the tests usually does not contribute to the overall mark for the course/module. You may be required to attempt each test at least once in order to be eligible to sit for the examination, but you are encouraged to take the tests as many times as you wish until you are satisfied with the result. In addition to the correct answers, brief individual feedback is provided for some of the tests. Please note that these tests are not included in the topic outline.
- **Canvas – Online Education Service:** Canvas provides online access to course study material (handbook, topic outlines, lectures, lecture notes, readings and assignments/tests), Programme Guidelines and Policies (that you are currently reading) and related forms, announcements, grades (your own and class average), Discussion Board, student email and other online tools.

**You are required to become familiar with copyright information prior to accessing online study material. Copyright law differs across countries, and U.S. copyright laws will primarily govern the**

programme. There will be information about copyrights and appropriate use in your orientation materials.



VCU Libraries comprise one of Virginia's most outstanding and comprehensive library systems. There are two main library collections: one housed in the James Branch Cabell Library on the Monroe Park Campus, and the other housed at the Tompkins McCaw Library on the Medical College of Virginia (MCV) Campus. Both libraries have significant electronic holdings, which are available to registered students in possession of a valid e-ID and password.

When you enrol at VCU, you will be given instructions with regard to how to access your VCU electronic ID (e-ID) and set your password. Please keep your VCU e-ID and password in a place where they can be easily located in the event that you need to use them. IPAS programme staff will not be able to readily assist you with changes to your accounts. For help with electronic account problems, please contact: [itsc@vcu.edu](mailto:itsc@vcu.edu) or call the numbers listed in the "Canvas and Online Learning Environment" section above.

A special electronic study guide and library interface known as the IPAS International Library has been prepared specifically for our programme by librarians at VCU, KCL, and UoA. We envision that this will be your primary entry point into VCU's electronic library holdings. Access to this guide can be found at:

<http://guides.library.vcu.edu/ipas>

However, electronic holdings at VCU Libraries can always be accessed through the main Library page at:

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

Any materials that your instructor describes as being held on electronic reserve for specific courses can be accessed at:

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

In addition to giving you access to library resources at VCU, your e-id will also allow you to utilize VCU email systems, which will be the primary means of communication for the programme.



## Online Libraries and IT Services

The online programme at KCL is located at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN) in London.

IPAS students will be asked to enrol as a student at the IoPPN, KCL. The online enrolment process will activate your KCL IT account and create your KCL online profile through the student record portal. You will receive an email from KCL, which will contain your username, temporary password and instructions on how to enrol online. It is important you complete the enrolment task upon receipt of the enrolment email.

**IMPORTANT: Please make sure you keep a note of your KCL username and password as you will need these details to access KCL online resources.**

If you have any questions about the KCL enrolment process please contact the KCL IPAS administrator, Dr. Rashed Tusar, at: [rasheduzzaman.tusar@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:rasheduzzaman.tusar@kcl.ac.uk)

**Email** Your username for the email service is your KCL username plus @kcl.ac.uk as in the example: [k1123456@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:k1123456@kcl.ac.uk).

Log in to Outlook Web App at <http://outlook.com/kcl.ac.uk>

More information about your email account can be found on the <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/it/new-to-kings>

### What does this give me access to?

You'll be able to log onto [Student Records](#). For modules led by KCL, this is where you can submit applications for deadline extensions and complete other administrative tasks.

The KCL username gives you access to [KEATS](#). KEATS (KCL E-learning and Teaching Service) is the centrally supported Moodle Virtual Learning Environment within KCL. Although KCL-led modules will be taught on CANVAS, you will be able to access other optional KCL resources available on KEATS (e.g. training courses).

Your KCL username also gives you access to the [library](#). The IoPPN Library is one of the largest psychiatric libraries in Western Europe, with access to several thousand electronic journals and over 42,000 books/multimedia items.

**KCL Library Search:** [https://librarysearch.kcl.ac.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do](https://librarysearch.kcl.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do)

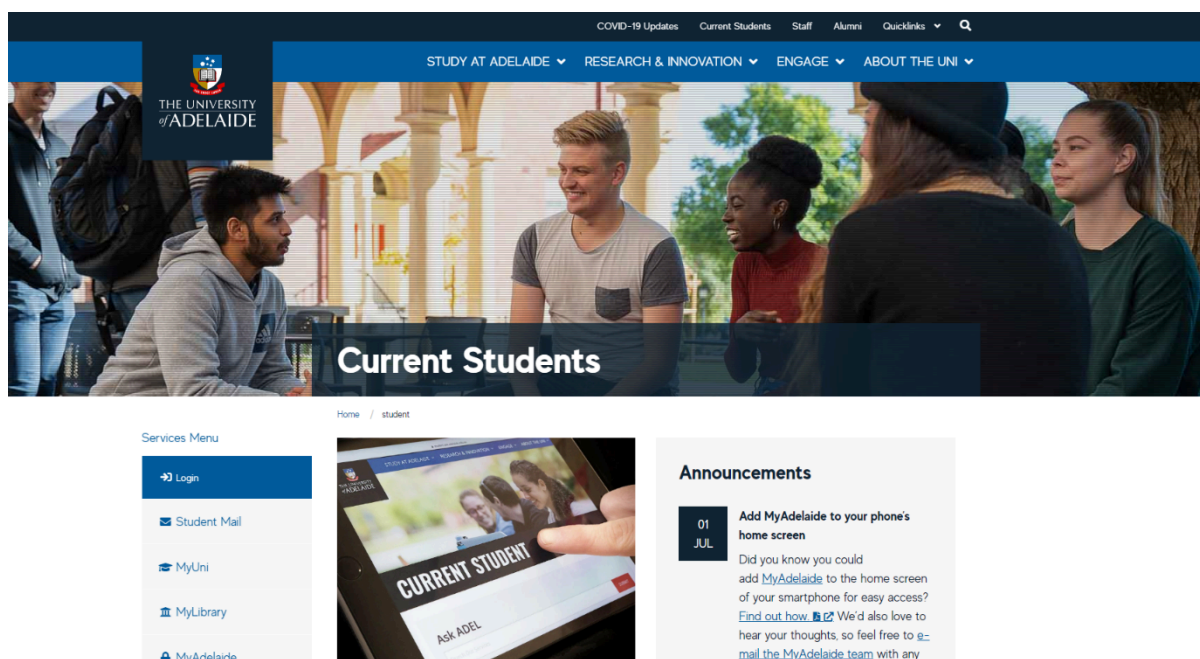
Library Search is a single search interface enabling you to simultaneously search the library catalogue, the KCL research portal and archives and millions of journal and newspaper articles. [More information can be found here.](#)

**Library Guide: Psychology:** <http://libguides.kcl.ac.uk/psychology/>

**Library Guide: Psychiatry:** <http://libguides.kcl.ac.uk/psychiatry/>

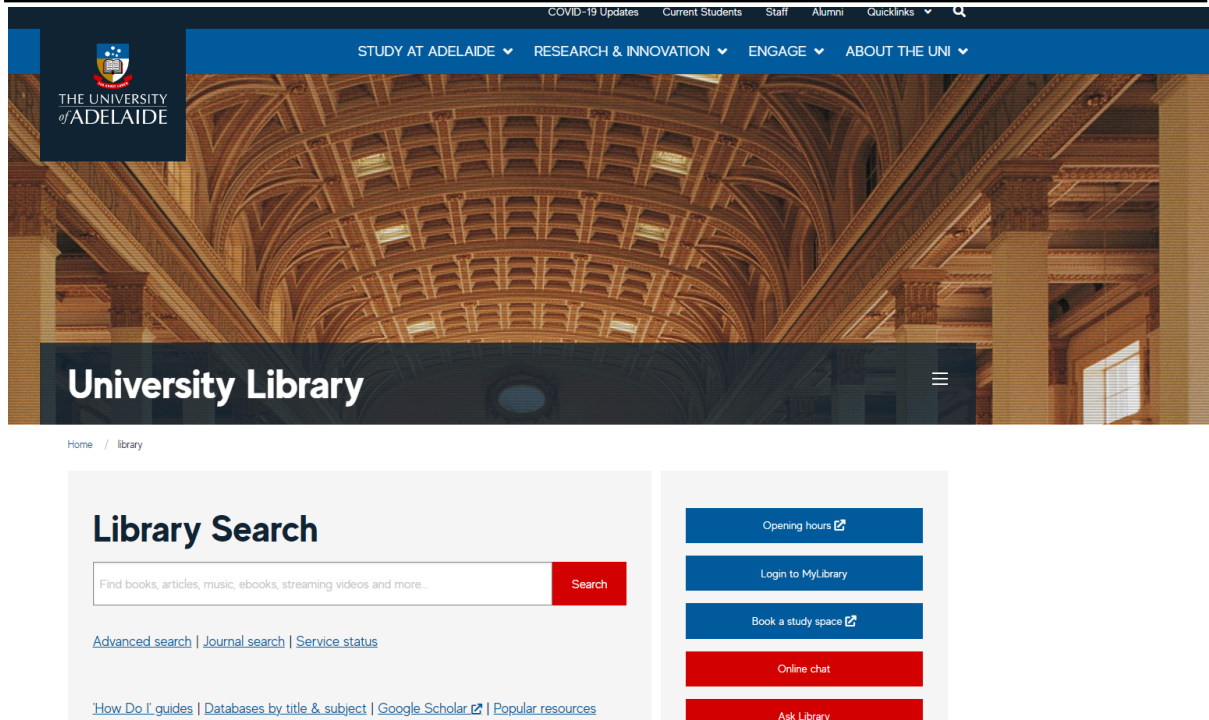
A good point of access to resources at the UoA is the page for current students, <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/student/>

With your registration at the UoA, you will get a student ID and a UoA email address. IPAS will use your VCU email for most communication, but the UoA will send information (such as tips for graduations and offers) to your UoA email. The screenshot below of the page for current students shows the link to student email, as well as Access Adelaide and the library. These are the links that will be most useful to you.



Your UoA username and password is your means of access to all resources. You will receive information on activating your username, and UoA requirements, once you have been admitted to the program.

The library can also be accessed directly at <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/library/>. This will take you to the library home page where there are several useful links, as shown in the next screenshot. The links that are likely to be most useful to you are the library search function, and below that the “How Do I” guides and databases, you will be prompted to log in with your UoA user name and password as required to access specific resources.



Clicking on the “How Do I” guides will take you to a page with more links. Under “Develop essential skills” you will find lots of information on using the library resources. Clicking on “Subject portals” will give you a list of the main subjects. Click on “Medicine” and you will get links to more information, such as searching health databases and referencing, both things that are likely to be useful to you.

Another useful resource is the Writing Centre (<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/>) – some of the library resources will also take you to this page. The writing resource, avoiding plagiarism, and referencing guides are all excellent resources to help your study.

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## STUDY WEEKS

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Each of the courses/modules (with the exception of the Research Project in the Addictions) will consist of ten topics offered over 15 weeks. As you undertake this distance programme, it is imperative that you keep up with the study schedule and inform the course/module leader at the earliest opportunity if you are facing any difficulty in meeting deadlines. A timetable for each course/module is provided within each course handbook, and should be reviewed carefully at the beginning of term. Students studying on the full-time programme will be expected to **dedicate 30-35 hours per week to the programme** to cover lectures, readings, topic research, and revision for tests. Students on the part-time programme **should allow for 15-20 hours of study time per week**.

**Students studying on the full-time programme may not use work commitments as a reason for not fulfilling programme obligations and would not be expected to be in full-time employment.**

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## STUDYING AT HOME

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### ORGANISING YOUR STUDY

For those students who are finding the idea of going back to study daunting, the following guide to successful study skills may be helpful.

Hay I, Bochner D and Dungey C, (2012). *Making the Grade: A Guide to Successful Communication and Study*, Oxford University Press, Fourth Edition.

Some general tips:

- Check for VCU email communication and Canvas Announcements regularly (we require checking a minimum of three times per week and suggest at least once per day).
- Organise your time and space to avoid interruptions.
- Inform your family and/or work about your study hours and explain that during that time you are in class.

Essential practice includes:

- Maintaining reliable internet access.
- Backing up all electronic submissions on memory stick/computer/google drive.

Although technical glitches may occur and things may go wrong from time to time when studying (and teaching) online, please understand that you are responsible for ensuring that you have the capacity to take part in the programme and submit work on time.

We will try to provide as much support as we can – contact Mary Loos ([meloos@vcu.edu](mailto:meloos@vcu.edu)) if you feel that you need help.

Responsibilities of the student:

- It is important for students to take responsibility in ensuring their own reliable access to the internet.
- The programme CANNOT assist you in any way with obtaining or maintaining internet access on your end.
- Please plan ahead carefully and start assignments early, as inability to access the internet is generally NOT an acceptable reason for failure to submit course material contributing to your final mark.
- If the problem is with the Canvas system itself, then extensions will be arranged.

**Please consider alternative internet access routes in case your computer fails.**

**Independent communication between students and faculty via WhatsApp and other alternative methods.**

In the past students have utilised apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook to keep in touch with one another for support and further learning. While we encourage such communication outside of our official discussions, for privacy reasons we are not able to share your information with other students. If you would like to be connected to fellow students in this way, please notify your Program/Course coordinator and provide permission to facilitate exchange of contact details with other students.

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process. On this programme we will use a variety of assessment types to help guide your learning and maintain motivation.

In most of the courses/modules, the following types of assessment will be used:

- 1) Formative
- 2) Summative

### **FORMATIVE (ASSESSMENTS USED TO SELF-ASSESS COMPREHENSION OF MATERIAL)**

On many topics, formative assessment tasks may be provided in the form of online quizzes to help you learn and improve your level of understanding of the course material. “Formative” means that the result of the assessment is not included in the calculation of the final mark for the course. Formative assessments will be provided in most courses and can be undertaken multiple times. Feedback will be provided in the form of correct answers and test scores. Brief individual feedback may be provided where questions are answered in the form of a short essay. The test results **will not contribute to your final grade for the course**, although their completion may be compulsory. In some courses/modules you will be required to complete all formative assessment tasks in order to receive permission to undertake a written examination for the course/module. Specific details can be found in each individual course handbook.

### **SUMMATIVE (ASSESSMENTS CONTRIBUTING TO FINAL MARKS)**

This is a common assessment type that is designed to grade and judge students’ level of understanding and skill development for progression or certification.

In most of the courses/modules on this programme, summative assessment consists of the following components:

- 1) Discussion Board Participation (asynchronous and live)
- 2) Written Assignment(s)
- 3) Written Examination

Specific details for the assessment components and their relative weighting can be found in course/module handbooks.

Assessment of programme material will vary across courses/modules, and specific details can be found in handbooks. **This booklet only outlines general requirements and instructions.**

Please follow the guidelines below when participating in online discussion, preparing your assignments and/or organising your examination throughout the academic year.

If you fail an assessed element of a module, there is a chance that you will fail the module. **In such an instance you will be offered a re-sit for that element. The mark for any re-sit of an assessed element will be capped at the minimum pass mark if the attempt is deserving of a passing grade.** If upon re-taking the assignment you fail for the second time, you will receive the higher of the two failing marks received. Passing the module may still be possible if other marks are high enough to raise the overall mark to a passing level.

## WRITTEN DISCUSSION BOARD PARTICIPATION

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Discussion Boards are a useful tools for exchanging information and ideas, and the place where you will interact most creatively with your peers. You will be expected to discuss a variety of study topics with other students. You will practice using the technology used for the written Discussion Board in the programme's orientation module.

The basic component of the Discussion Board is a message (also called a **post**). A message is "posted" by a student or a member of the teaching staff, meaning that they entered the message and submitted it to the Discussion Board. Messages may include an attached file.

The Written Discussion Board is an asynchronous activity; that is, other users do not have to be online at the time of posting to read the message – they can read it and join the discussion at any time.

Each course/module of the MS (with the exception of the Research Project) consists of nine or ten topics, one for each scheduled week. The discussions (**Forums**) are generally initiated **on a weekly basis** (one topic each week), although there are scheduled weeks in each course when no discussion board is assigned, or where live synchronous discussions (described below) are held. Messages (**postings**) are organised into **Threads**. A Thread is a subtopic of a conversation in a Forum and includes the original message and all the responses to that message. The responses are usually indented and indicated by a "Re:" (for "regarding").

In the IPAS Programme, there will be a minimum of seven and a maximum of 10 required discussions during the course of each module with the exception of the Research Project module. Although students will be responsible for reading and responding to discussion topics each week, the level of participation expected will vary for each student by week. **In some courses, one or more written discussions may be replaced by live synchronous discussions, debates or journal clubs.**

In the first week of the course, **all students** will be required to post an initial extended original response to the question(s) posed by the instructor. In addition to an original response, all students will also be responsible for providing at least two responses/follow-up questions to the posts of other students. Failure to provide additional posts will reduce marks for the week's discussion. Having all students participate in the first week's discussion will allow students to become engaged with the course material immediately, and also will allow instructors to provide feedback to all students early in the course to shape their ongoing work.

Except in the Research Methods and Research Project modules, following the first week, students will be divided into three groups (A, B, and C). In the weeks that follow, in most classes, students in each group will take turns leading the discussion. For example, in week 2, students assigned to group A will provide extended responses to the weekly question, while students in groups B and C will be responsible for reading the extended posting of their peers and responding to or commenting on, at minimum, the posts of two **different** classmates. In week 3, group B will take the lead and groups A and C will comment, while in week 4, group C will take the lead. Students in the lead group for a particular week will need to provide two additional responses in addition to their initial response, and attempt to address any questions posted to them. Students may provide more than two additional responses, but this is the minimum expected.

Thus, each student is responsible for formally and fully responding to the week's discussion question during three weeks: Week 1 (all students) and two additional weeks.

There will be at least two weeks without an assigned discussion, usually corresponding to weeks that major assignments or examinations are being completed to allow for revision.

The Discussion Board is an assessed component of all courses with the exception of the Research Projects in Addiction course. The administrative and teaching staff will monitor the Forum and moderate the discussion if necessary. The discussion board mark will contribute 10% and 35% of the overall grade depending on the course. Marks for discussion weeks in which students are serving lead roles are weighted more heavily in the final discussion grades than weeks in which students are responding to the posts of others..

For the weeks you serve as a primary respondent, you will be graded on:

- Evidence of reading the essential reading material
- Level of understanding of the topic
- Ability to initiate a thread of discussion
- Critical thinking and debate
- Appropriate citation and referencing

For the weeks when students are primarily responding to the posts of others, students will be assessed in terms of the number of responses posted (a minimum of two) and will receive credit for thoughtful responses that ask questions or provide information that furthers the discussion. Responses that merely note agreement or disagreement without adding additional to the conversation will not be counted toward the minimum two responses.

Should you experience any difficulties, please contact the IT Support Center at [itsc@vcu.edu](mailto:itsc@vcu.edu).

\* The manner in which Discussion Boards are managed may be subject to revision depending upon enrolment.

### **DISCUSSION BOARD GUIDELINES AND TIPS**

The following guidelines will help you meet the requirements for this component:

1. Your postings should reflect an understanding of or question about the course material. Focus on the questions posted (don't let the discussion stray), but also bring in related thoughts and materials, other readings, or questions that occur to you from the ongoing discussion.
2. You are expected to actively contribute to discussion boards on a regular basis, as this is an assessed part of each course/module.



3. Initial postings should be a minimum of two short paragraphs and a maximum of approximately one page. We want you to be thorough but succinct.
4. Use proper etiquette (proper language, spelling, typing, etc.).
5. Your postings should advance the group's negotiation of ideas and meanings about the material; that is, your contributions should go beyond a 'ditto.' Avoid postings that are limited to "I agree" or "great idea" etc. If you agree (or disagree) with a posting, then say **why** you agree by supporting your statement with concepts from the readings or by bringing in related examples or experience. Some ways you can further the discussion (and apply higher levels of thinking skills) include:
  - a. Posing a substantive question aimed at furthering the group's understanding.
  - b. Expressing opinions or observations. These should be offered in depth and supported by more than personal views. Try to interpret the information into your own words and paraphrase, but if you need to use quotes from the articles that support your postings, include page numbers in your in-text citations when you do this.
  - c. Making a connection between the current discussion and previous discussions, a personal experience, or concepts from the readings.
  - d. Commenting on or asking for clarification of another student's statement.
  - e. Synthesizing other students' responses.
6. Use the Discussion Board to discuss study materials and share information that is related to the course. Posting irrelevant or inappropriate messages may result in the loss of Discussion Board privileges and impact your participation grade.
7. Remember that while we will be assessing your participation and your ability to synthesize, analyse and clarify information learned in the topic, do not be afraid of making mistakes, indicating that you are having difficulties with understanding the study material, or raising controversial or unorthodox issues (as long as they are relevant to the topic discussed).

## LIVE DISCUSSIONS

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In most courses, there will be two opportunities to talk directly about course material with your peers and instructor via Zoom. Live discussions may take the form of a debate about a "hot topic" in the addiction field, a "journal club", where people present and critically evaluate results from current research, or a summary discussion of topics covered in previous weeks. Your instructor will reach out to find a time that can work for the majority of class members. If participation is not possible for everyone, alternative options (i.e., a recorded set of questions or responses shared in the discussion) will generally be offered.

## WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

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Written assignments may include case studies, essays, literature reviews, project reports, the analysis and interpretation of public health information as examples.

It is important to aspire to high standards when writing your assignments. This includes striving to achieve high standards in both the content of your written work and its presentation. Remember that one important learning outcome is the ability to locate, analyse, synthesize and present

information in a planned and organised manner. These are also important transferable skills that will be useful in other areas of your professional and personal activities.

Assignments that do not conform to the format requirements will be marked down or returned for correction prior to marking at the discretion of the Program Coordinator.

You should attach a formal cover sheet to the front of all assignments with a description of the assignment submitted and with details of the module and your student number.

#### FORMAT REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

**Please note a failure to adhere to the format below may result in lost marks for summative assignments.**

**Font:** Arial or Times New Roman  
**Font size:** 12  
**Word Limit:** The ability to write in a concise and informative style is one of the very important skills you will be expected to master during this program. You are strongly advised to adhere to the word limit suggested for each written assignment (excluding reference list).

**Deviations within 10% on either side are acceptable; however, a deviation of more than 10% may be penalised at the discretion of the course director. Word length only includes the body of text - not the references list, title page or cover sheet.**

**Layout:** Clearly separate sections.  
Use headings and subheadings.  
Highlight them in **Bold** or *Italics* depending on the hierarchy and be consistent throughout the text.  
Insert page numbers.

**Writing Style:** Specific guidelines for each assignment are included in the course handbooks (e.g., essay style).

**Essay writing:** **You must attempt to answer the question as it is asked.** Changing the question in any way is not permitted and will result in assignment failure.

**Reference Style:** It is important to make it clear to the reader what is your personal opinion and what is an account of someone else's opinion or findings. It is also important to be able to use quotations and references appropriately. Plagiarism (which is presenting someone else's words as your own, or failing to acknowledge the source of information presented) is a serious offence, and it is important to learn how to avoid it (see more on plagiarism later in this booklet).

Your referencing style should be consistent throughout the text and in the references list. There are a number of reference styles that are used by an academic community.

It is strongly recommended that **you use the APA system**, although some courses may also accept other options, such as the Harvard system.

A good resource for accessing information related to APA style can be found here:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/index.html)

Some examples are provided below. Briefly:

**In the text of your assignment** (case study, essay, etc.):

- Cite references by the author's name and date:  
For example:

At the beginning or mid-sentence: "As described by Simpson (1999) ....."

At the end of a sentence: "...has been described (Simpson, 1999)."

- If there is more than one reference to support a statement, cite them chronologically.
- Use "and" to link the names of two co-authors (Simpson and Collin, 2000).
- Use "et al" if there are more than two co-authors (Simpson *et al.*, 2001).

**In the references list of your assignment:**

- List references at the end of the paper in alphabetical order.
- Make sure that all references in the text are listed at the end of the paper and *vice versa*.

A reference for a **journal article** should include (in this order):

1. The names and initials of all authors
2. Year of publication
3. Full title of article
4. Journal (in its abbreviated form)
5. Volume number
6. First and last page of the article

Example:

Lago J A and Kosten T, (1994). "Stimulant Withdrawal". *Addiction* 89: 1477-1481.

A reference for a **book** should include (in this order):

1. The names and initials of all authors
2. Year of publication
3. Title of book
4. Names and initials of editors
5. Number of the edition if there is more than one
6. First and last page of the chapter being referenced
7. Name of publisher
8. Town of publication

Example:

Gold S, Miller N S and Jonas J M, (1997). "Cocaine (and Crack): Neurobiology" In: *Substance Abuse: A Comprehensive Textbook*, Lowinson J H, Ruiz P, Millman R B and Langford J L (Eds) (3rd Edition) (pp 166-181), Williams and Wilkins: Maryland.

A reference for a **document on WWW** should include (in this order):

1. The names and initials of all authors if available (or full title of article if names are not available)
2. Year of publication (if available)
3. Full title of article
4. Retrieved Date
5. URL

Example:

Dawson, J, Smith, L, Deubert, K & Grey-Smith, S (2002) '*S' Trek referencing, not plagiarism*. Retrieved October 31, 2002, from <http://studytrekk.lis.curtin.edu.au/>

**Referencing academic work is a very important skill that we will expect you to acquire during the programme.**

### WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS SUBMISSIONS

You will receive and submit your written assignments electronically via the Assignment section in Canvas or via email if you are instructed to do so.

In each course where written assignments are required, you will receive specific instructions as to the manner in which you will be expected to make assignment submissions. Please refer to your course handbook for instructions.

In most IPAS courses, assignments, when submitted, will be reviewed using a software known as "TurnItIn". This software compares the text of your paper to previously submitted papers and online and published materials to help us assess whether your text is original and appropriately paraphrased or referenced. If there is substantial unreferenced overlap, or ideas are not appropriately referenced, depending on the nature and extent of the issue, you will receive feedback, warning, and/or penalty. You may be offered the opportunity to pre-submit your paper to review the feedback from TurnItIn prior to final submission, and to use it as a learning tool. Please see information related to **Plagiarism or Other Forms of Cheating**, below, as well as the VCU Honor Policy (<https://policy.vcu.edu/sites/default/files/Honor%20System.pdf>) for expectations and potential penalties related to honor code violations.

### LATE SUBMISSIONS

**Please consider the following information carefully:**

1. It is important that you learn how to effectively manage your time, organise your study efficiently and prepare assignments on time.
2. If you expect to have difficulty in submitting an assignment on time you must discuss this with the course/module coordinator ahead of time and before the submission date.
3. **You will need to formally seek permission from the course/module organiser for late submission before the deadline has passed. Please use the IPAS form for extensions and provide additional documents, like a doctor's certificate detailing the lost study time. The extent of the extension will largely be based on the information provided in the doctor's certificate. More detailed information about the processes and forms involved in seeking extensions on papers/examinations can be found in Appendices 1-3 at the end of this document.**

4. **Extensions to the assignment deadline are not given automatically, and poor time management will not be accepted as a reasonable explanation for lateness.**
5. Work commitments are not usually acceptable as a reason for late submission, especially for students that have decided to do the Programme in full-time.
6. Other reasons that are not usually acceptable:
  - “I lost my work on my computer”
  - “My computer broke down and I had not saved a copy”
  - “My dog ate my essay”

Although personal circumstances will be taken into consideration, a **penalty of 5% per day** will be subtracted unless a formal extension is granted. Students who do not submit work on time and who do not inform their course/module coordinator ahead of time will have their grades capped at the minimum pass mark if their assignment is deserving of a passing grade.

#### **What to do if you need an extension:**

If you are faced with circumstances that make it impossible to complete your work in a timely fashion, you must submit an **extension request form (See Appendix A)**. This should be submitted to your course/module instructor, and you must await response from him or her as to acceptance of the request for extension.

Completing an extension request form will not automatically lead to withdrawal from the course/module. If you feel that you will not be able to complete the course/module in a timely fashion, YOU MUST INFORM THE VCU Programme Director, Mary Loos, at [meloos@vcu.edu](mailto:meloos@vcu.edu). She will then inform the other Programme Directors. Please note that if you have passed the “drop” or “withdrawal” dates listed in the “Critical Dates” section of this manual, you will still be responsible for payment.

Extension request forms will be posted within each course/module in Canvas.

Please be advised that this is an intensive programme. Family holidays and similar events are not considered reasons for an inability to complete assignments. If you need to travel, it is essential that you be aware that it is your responsibility to assure reliable internet access. If you have any doubt of your ability to maintain contact with the programme, you must let us know ahead of time, and you can choose not to enrol in a course.

## **EXAMINATION**

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At present, all exams within the IPAS programme are unsupervised open-resource exams in which you are given a prescribed number of hours to complete and submit the exam. Because students in the programme live in a variety of time zones, students will generally be given a 48-72 hour period in which they can access the exam, but once opened, it must be completed in a specified period of time (e.g., a 4 or 12 hour period) depending on instructor preferences and the nature of the exam.

IPAS faculty reserve the right to require supervised closed-book written exams. If a supervised exam is required, the following instructions will apply.

### **SUPERVISOR AND VENUE**

Where there is an unseen written examination, the student will be responsible for organising both venue (with computer) and examination supervisor. Your course/module handbook will indicate the date by which you will have to provide the course/module coordinator with the details of your

nominated examiner. This mode of examination offers many advantages to the student, such as flexibility in time and location of the exam. If you feel disadvantaged by sitting the exam on a computer (e.g. due to disability), you may request alternative arrangements based on the normal VCU exam regulations in a timely fashion.

The nominated person should be university level academic personnel. If you have difficulty finding an independent academic, please contact your course/module coordinator.

***The supervisor CAN NOT be a member of your immediate family or a work colleague.***

The Exam Supervisor Details form will be made available on Canvas. If an unseen closed book written exam is required. The completed form should be returned to the course coordinator by the due date indicated on Canvas. A statutory declaration form will be signed by the supervisor and the student at the time of the exam. The examination parcel will be emailed to the nominated supervisor along with the Exam Supervisor Instruction Sheet. Note that we cannot accept responsibility for your supervisor not receiving the examination paper if the form is not received by the due date. The examination supervisor will be responsible for conducting the examination according to the instructions and sending the documents back to us. Exam work from closed-book exams submitted by students will not be marked.

A venue must provide the student with privacy and quiet for the duration of the examination. A suitable venue, for example, might be a classroom at the local high school, or side room in a library. Most examinations may require a **computer** (without internet access).

## EXAMINATION MATERIALS

All written examinations may be “open-book” or “closed book”.

Materials permitted in examination venue for a closed book exam:

- Loose pens and pencils
- Eraser
- Other items as specified by the course/module director
- Dictionaries may be used if allowed by the course/module director, but must be held by the invigilator/exam proctor while not immediately in use.

The examiner is responsible for ensuring that the student does not take any material into the examination that would contravene the regulations of the Programme. Students may take a small bag into the examination venue. They should remove any materials permitted in the examination venue on their arrival, then place the bag under their desk until they leave. Mobile phones need to be handed to the examiner.

Students are not allowed to take notes or exam papers out of the exam venue.

## PERMISSION TO ATTEND EXAMINATION

Students are eligible to attend examination if the prescribed work has been completed to the satisfaction of the teaching staff concerned, and if students have complied with the general IPAS requirements to sit an exam (e.g. payment of fees). Satisfactory discussion board participation is a prerequisite for taking the exam.

Students who are refused permission to sit for examination shall be deemed to have failed the examination.

**SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION**

Supplementary examinations may be granted on medical, compassionate or academic grounds. This will need to be ratified by the Program Coordinator.

## MARKS AND GRADES

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The tripartite nature of the IPAS programme can make marks and grades somewhat confusing, so please read the following section carefully and review the special video which is part of your introduction material.

**The US, UK, and Australia all use somewhat different marking schemes.** When you are given a mark for a specific assignment in a course/module, that mark will be given **IN THE MARKING SCHEME OF THE UNIVERSITY THAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RUNNING THE COURSE/MODULE.** (See **Appendix 3** for a Grade Translation Table).

This is important, as a “50,” for example, means very different things in the US and the UK. In the US this is a low failing grade; in the UK and Australia it is a minimally passing grade. Students from the US often panic when receiving a 65, when in the other grading schemes this is a strong mark. Similarly, an 85 in the US system, which would be a passing mark, does not reflect the same performance as an 85 in the UK or Australian system, where this would be an exceptionally high mark. A grade translation document is included in the appendix of this handbook for your reference.

Your final course/module mark will be converted into the marking schemes of all three countries so that marks can be finalized in all three University systems.

Please note:

- If you fail an element of the course/module, there is a risk you may fail the whole course/module. At the discretion of the instructor, you may be offered the possibility of repeating and resubmitting the failed element. If offered a re-sit, your score will be capped at the minimum passing grade for the element. If you are offered a re-sit and you do not submit it within 2 weeks, your original failing grade will be used in the calculation of your final mark for the course. If you fail the course, you will be required to repeat the whole course/module the next time it is available (courses/modules are usually run once per year).
- Students who fail their final examination will be allowed to “re-sit” the examination once; however, a successful re-sit achieving a pass or over will be capped at the minimum Pass mark in the three grading schemes. This re-sit must be completed within 2 weeks of initial failure notification unless otherwise allowed by the course director. Failure to comply within this time limit will result in course/module failure.
- Students who do not gain enough marks to be awarded a pass will receive a grade of ‘Incomplete Fail’ (or “F” in the U.S. grading scheme) for the particular course/module.
- Students who have failed a course/module twice may not re-enrol in that course except by special permission of the faculty. Specific conditions may apply to the re-enrolment.
- Students who withdraw from the course/module (subject) after the census date\* will receive a Withdraw No Fail (WNF) or Withdraw Fail (WF) grade (depending on the date the course/module was dropped).



- Please see Critical Dates Section for specific WNF dates for each teaching period in 2023/2024.

It is essential you familiarize yourself with the VCU regulations for graduate study as these regulations (including provisions for continuous enrolment, and time limits on degree completion) will apply to you. Please use the following link to access the General Academic Regulations for Graduate Students. You should note that many processes, such as registration and withdrawal from courses, will be handled for you while VCU is the programme host. However, you will need to contact the VCU Programme Director to inform her of any changes in status so that graduate school dates and deadlines can be followed to the extent possible.

Note that students are required to maintain continuous enrolment in the programme to maintain their standing, and must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher in order to graduate from the Certificate or MS programmes. Any break in study must be approved and an official leave of absence requested.

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

You can also find a wide range of forms and specific information about processes relevant to graduate students at the following site:

<https://medschool.vcu.edu/education/graduate/current-students/>

If you wish to report a concern, information about how to do so can be found here:

<https://medschool.vcu.edu/education/graduate/current-students/#d.en.588306>

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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The VCU administration advises that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require Virginia Commonwealth University to provide an 'academic adjustment' and/or a 'reasonable accommodation' to any qualified individual with a physical or mental disability who self-identifies as having such.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you need special help.

The Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (SAEO) Office website provides more information:

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

**Response to COVID 19.** The university recognizes that some students who previously did not need Section 504 Academic Accommodations, and who have a qualifying condition or disability, may need support or assistance due to circumstances created by COVID 19. A modified approach for the temporary and more permanent need for accommodation has been developed and implemented to provide students with full access to programs and activities related to their academic majors. Because every case is different, student requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Please share your need for an accommodation with the Student Accessibility and Education Office, or for MCV

Campus students, the Division for Academic Success, after you have worked directly with your faculty member.

## STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

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VCU's policies regarding grade disputes or other complaints can be found at:

<https://policy.vcu.edu/policies/education-student-life>

Please contact us in the first instance if you have any issues or problems.

## ACADEMIC PROGRESS

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In the case of students who are not maintaining an average of B or better in the US system, the IPAS programme committee may ask the student to show cause as to why they should be permitted to continue their studies. Students who cannot adequately explain poor academic performance may have their enrolment cancelled or restricted, and/or be precluded from undertaking further studies toward their programme.

Students whose student accounts are in deficit from a prior grading period at the time of the start of a new grading period will not be allowed to progress to the next set of courses until such time as their account is cleared, or they have formal permission from the Office of Student Accounting to do so. **All financial appeals must be initiated by the student.** Students in arrears at the time of graduation will also not be allowed to matriculate until all accounts are cleared.

## VCU NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

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VCU, as host university is committed to providing a safe, equitable and inclusive environment for all its employees, patients and students. KCL and UA, as programme partners, support and ascribe to VCU policies designed to assure the safety and inclusivity of courses taught within the programme.

Discrimination or discriminatory harassment is not only unlawful, it is harmful to the well-being of our university community. Our university's core values, specifically those related to diversity and inclusion, have withstood many difficult situations and trying times, and they will not falter now.

Reports of discrimination, bullying, harassment and/or stereotyping of persons of color or those impacted by COVID-19 or otherwise, will not be tolerated. Be assured that VCU will make every effort to address and prevent the occurrence of unlawful discrimination and, if necessary, take prompt and appropriate action to remedy and prevent its reoccurrence. Every member of our community is asked to:

- Become familiar with the university's policies on Preventing and Responding to Discrimination and Duty to Report and Protection from Retaliation in the VCU Policy Library.
- Consult with or VCU Human Resources for additional guidance on how to file a report of discrimination.
- Encourage individuals who may need an ADA accommodation for a known or newly acquired disability, to contact the ADA/504 Coordinator in ADA Services.
- Bookmark and share information on university or community agencies that offer support or services, such as VCU's Counseling Services or Ombudsperson.
- Explore training and educational opportunities on diversity and inclusion.
- Offer nonjudgmental support and empathy to those affected by current events and this health crisis.



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## VCU HONOR SYSTEM

Any persons enrolled in any course offered by VCU are responsible for acting in accordance with the provisions of VCU Honor Code. An integral part of the VCU HONOR SYSTEM is the Honor Pledge:

**"On my honor, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment."** All work is considered to be pledged unless the instructor specifies otherwise. This includes online activities.

Six acts are violations of the policy: Cheating, Plagiarism, Facilitating Academic Dishonesty, Abuse of Academic Materials, Stealing, and Lying. There are also six penalties, which may be imposed upon students who are found guilty of violations: Honor Probation, Assignment of Grades, Suspension, Expulsion, Revocation, and Other Relevant Sanctions. All members of the University community are responsible for bringing charges against a student believed to be in violation of the VCU HONOR SYSTEM. Charges may be informal (anonymous and verbal) or formal (written). Under the informal route, the Coordinator meets with the accused to obtain an explanation. Under the formal route, written charges are filed with the Coordinator, who investigates by consulting with all parties involved. The Coordinator may refer the matter to the Academic Campus Honor Council for a hearing in instances where the Coordinator feels the accused student may be subject to suspension or expulsion from the University.

**The current Honor System in its entirety can be reviewed on the Web at**

<https://policy.vcu.edu/sites/default/files/Honor%20System.pdf>

**The Honor System must be upheld and enforced by each member of the Virginia Commonwealth University community. The fundamental attributes of our community are honor and integrity. We are privileged to operate with this Honor System.**

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## PLAGIARISM AND RELATED FORMS OF CHEATING

Plagiarism is the taking of another person's thoughts, words, results, judgements, ideas, images etc., and presenting them as your own.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and a serious academic offence. All allegations of plagiarism will be investigated and may result in action being taken under the VCU Honor Code. A substantiated charge of plagiarism will result in a penalty being ordered ranging from a mark of zero for the assessed work to expulsion from the Programme.

Collusion is another form of cheating as is the unacknowledged use of material prepared by several persons working together.

Students are reminded that all work they submit as part of the requirements for any examination or assessment in the Programme must be expressed in their own words and incorporate their own ideas and judgements. Direct quotations from the published or unpublished work of others, including that of other students, must always be identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks with a full reference to the source provided in the proper form. Paraphrasing - using other words to express another person's ideas or judgements - must also be acknowledged (in a footnote or bracket following the paraphrasing) and referenced. In the same way, the authors of images and audio-visual presentations must be acknowledged.

Students should take particular care to avoid plagiarism and collusion in coursework, essays and

reports, especially when using electronic sources or when working in a group.

Students should also take care in the use of their own work. Credit can only be given once for a particular piece of assessed work. Submitting the same piece of work (or a significant part thereof) twice for assessment will be regarded as cheating.

Unacknowledged collaboration may result in a charge of plagiarism or in a charge of collusion. Students should be aware that academic staff have considerable expertise in identifying plagiarism and have access to electronic detection services to assist them. Students may be required or encouraged to review their work using online plagiarism detection tools prior to submission.

### **If you are not sure about the originality of your work, please consult your module/course leader.**

It is important to be aware that there can be large cultural differences in student experiences with appropriate referencing and citation. You must be sure to make yourself aware of the expectations for this programme. An interesting article related to cultural differences in use of sources can be found on pages 33-35 of this document:

<https://writing.vcu.edu/media/strategic-enrollment-management/writing/docs/SAFEASSIGN%20.pdf>

**Please be aware that your written work may be passed through the web-based service such as 'Turnitin' in order to check if your essay is original and adequately referenced.** Your essay will always be analysed carefully for plagiarism in case the Turnitin Index is over 35%, although lower indices may also lead to review. If plagiarism is confirmed, at the first offence, and depending on the severity of the case, 10%, 50% or 100% of the essay grade will be deducted. A re-submission will normally be necessary and this submission will be capped at 50%. If a second offence happens, a failed grade will be attributed and there will not be an opportunity for re-submission.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF PLAGIARISM AND COLLUSION**

The penalties associated with plagiarism and collusion are designed to impose sanctions on offenders that reflect the seriousness of VCU's commitment to academic integrity.

#### **Penalties may include:**

- the requirement to revise and resubmit assessment work
- receiving a result of zero for the assessment work
- failing the course, expulsion
- notice on academic transcripts indicating [honor code](#) violation

### **EXAMINATIONS**

Any form of cheating in examinations is expressly forbidden by the VCU Honor Policy whether it is using unauthorized resources or prior knowledge of exam information as examples.

### **USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PROGRAMS (AI)**

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Each course in IPAS should have policies related to the use of artificial intelligence programs such as Chat GPT. These policies may vary, so be sure to read them carefully. Use of Artificial Intelligence

(AI) to produce or help content without proper attribution or authorization, or when an assignment does not explicitly call or allow for it, is plagiarism.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

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**Leave of absence (LOA).** When experiencing unexpected extended delays or personal setbacks, graduate students should request leaves of absence from their programs through written appeals to their Programme Director. It is important to note that students need to separately withdraw from courses or abstain from enrolling in courses if they do not wish to incur fees. The Programme Directors will forward the requests to the appropriate school dean/dean designee who, following departmental governance procedures, will forward their recommendations and any supporting documentation to the dean of the Graduate School, who will respond for the university. Students who are out of compliance with continuous enrolment policies ([see policy on Continuous enrolment for degree-seeking graduate students](#)) and who have not been granted approved leaves of absence by the graduate dean must reapply for admission to VCU and to their graduate degree programs. **Graduate students with approved leaves of absence are exempted from continuous enrolment requirements for the LOA period.** Students should note that while leaves of absence temporarily suspend continuous enrolment requirements, they do not extend time limits for completion of degrees. (See [policy on Exceptions](#).)

See policy at:

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



## GRADUATION CEREMONY

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Students who have completed all requirements for graduation must apply for graduation at the host university to receive the joined degree. They may also wish to request graduation at the two other universities. Students may attend a graduation ceremony at the university of their choice (UoA, VCU or KCL) or request to receive the testamur (diploma) in absentia. If students want to receive the degree without visiting a ceremony, they will not need to complete any additional documentation other than the checkout procedures at VCU, which is the administrative host for the programme. They can also request a transcript listing all of their grades at any of the universities.

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## GRADUATION AT VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

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In order to graduate from VCU and be included in a graduation ceremony, students must submit a graduation application in the early part of the term in which they intend to graduate (early June for IPAS students who will be completing their degree on time). Because of the unique nature of this programme, usually the Programme Director will initiate the graduation application for the student, and then get permission from the student to submit it on their behalf. When the student has successfully completed all the requirements for graduation, a revised copy of this form is submitted to the University for appropriate signatures.

Graduation ceremonies are only held two times per year at VCU: in mid-December and in early May. Students graduating in August are welcome to attend the December graduation ceremony. If you wish to attend, please contact the VCU Programme Director. You will be required to wear appropriate academic dress, which can be obtained through the VCU bookstore.

**Because most IPAS students do not choose to come to a graduation ceremony, your diploma/certificate will be mailed to you at the address you identify on your graduation application UNLESS YOU LET US KNOW AHEAD OF TIME that you wish to participate in a graduation ceremony. If you decide to do so, please inform the VCU Programme Director where you intend to participate in the ceremony, and the testamur will be delivered to the appropriate department. Information about how to obtain copies of VCU transcripts can be obtained at: [rar.vcu.edu/transcripts/](http://rar.vcu.edu/transcripts/)**

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## GRADUATION AT UoA

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To finalize your degree, you will always need to request graduation at the UoA. This does not mean that you need to attend the graduation locally, although you can choose to do so.

The graduation process will guide you through a few steps and will ask whether you wish to attend the graduation in Adelaide (only) or receive an Adelaide academic transcript by mail.

Applications are managed online, this does mean that you will need to keep your login details for your Adelaide student ID and keep renewing it once a year. You will be reminded of this repeatedly in your Adelaide email.

So please always submit your request for graduation at the UoA using Access Adelaide or the link provided on the website. <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/student/graduations/> This will ensure that completion of your degree is recorded; this will be recorded on your academic transcript.

Graduation applications are an online process via Access Adelaide. The Graduations website will provide you with detailed information about the graduation process, including deadlines for each Graduation ceremony. The UoA holds graduation ceremonies in Adelaide and offshore in Singapore in April each year.

To apply, proceed through the Steps for Graduation. Please complete these even if you do not choose to attend a graduation ceremony. Note that late applications are not accepted.

### Important Deadlines for Graduations at UoA

The Graduations website also has a page that sets out important deadlines for the graduation process.



On the Graduations home page ('Information about Graduations') click on 'Important Deadlines' on the left-hand side. The 'Important Deadlines' page provides, *inter alia*, the last day for submitting your application to graduate via Access Adelaide, the date from which you can view your ceremony allocation, the last day to surrender a parchment (if required), the date you can view your Eligibility (to Graduate) letter on Access Adelaide, the last day to resolve any issues preventing you from graduating, change of any name details, award details, and more. This page also provides a handy downloadable [Important Dates Checklist](#) for you to use.

When completing the Application online (at Step 1), you can choose whether you wish to either:

- [Attend the ceremony 'In Person'](#), in which case you will receive your joined parchment at the ceremony (and not at KCL or VCU)

or

- [Graduate 'In Absentia'](#), which means you will not attend the ceremony in person.

### **Attending a Graduation Ceremony (Academic Dress)**

If you are graduating at a ceremony at the UoA, you are required to wear full academic dress. This usually consists of a gown, a hood or stole, and a mortar board or bonnet. Each degree has a different coloured hood or stole, and the gowns vary depending on the degree. The staff that hire out the academic dress know what colour your hood should be and which gown to wear. There is more information about where you can hire or purchase academic dress on the Graduations website at:

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/student/graduations/students/howtograduate/>

Although the actual diploma (parchment) that you receive upon graduation from IPAS will be produced by and sent to you from VCU, you can choose to visit a graduation ceremony at any of the three Universities administering this programme.

### **GRADUATION CEREMONY AT KCL**

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In order to graduate from KCL, you should contact the following office to book your graduation:

[graduation@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:graduation@kcl.ac.uk)

Booking opens each year in mid/late October for the winter graduation ceremonies and in mid/late April for the summer graduation ceremonies. Places for ceremonies are allocated as bookings are made, so in order to avoid any disappointment we would advise booking your place as soon as possible. On occasion, ceremonies become full prior to the closing date; if this is the case, an alternative ceremony date will be offered to you.

Students and their guests are strongly advised to book their place prior to committing to travel and/or accommodation plans. The Graduation Office cannot be held liable for any travel or accommodation booked.

If you find that you are unable to attend the first ceremony you are invited to, you are welcome to come to the following session of ceremonies. You are only permitted to defer once, after which point, in fairness to future graduates, it will not be possible to include you in a ceremony. You can defer your ceremony place through your MyPage Student Record.

If you do not defer your invitation to book and should you later decide that you wish to attend the next session of ceremonies, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of the deadline and to book your place. You will not be sent an invitation to book your place, as invitations are only sent to students who have previously selected to defer their place or are being invited for the first time.

For more information please go to:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/campuslife/services/grad/index.aspx>

**Transcripts**

The Student Registration Office is responsible for the production of official College transcripts for students who have completed their degree. In order to request a KCL transcript of your degree please go to: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/campuslife/acservices/Boards-and-Awards/Transcripts.aspx>

KCL invites all students once a year on taught postgraduate programmes to take part in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) which is a survey voluntarily undertaken by British Universities seeking information from students about their study experience.

The survey is an online questionnaire and consists of multiple choice questions about different aspects of life on a graduate programmes at KCL. Respondents to PTES provide important benchmarks for individual programmes against anonymous, aggregated results in comparator institutions, while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.

Why should I take part?

This survey gives you an unprecedented opportunity to have your say about studying at KCL and the IPAS programme more generally: to note areas of strength and good practice as well as identify areas where improvements can be made. The information you provide will be taken very seriously and considered at the highest level in the College. Your input will make a valuable contribution to both the local and the collegiate picture of the postgraduate provision at KCL. PTES enables your views to be given in a safe, secure manner. Your survey results will not be tracked back to identify you in any way and all survey results will be presented in an aggregated and anonymised form. The results of PTES are not made public but are available for departments and Schools to consider within the College.

What do I need to do?

Around early April, you will receive an email (from your KCL account) inviting you to complete this survey. A unique user name and password will be included in the email, along with a direct link to the online questionnaire. You will be asked to provide feedback on five key areas: 'Teaching and Learning'; 'Career and Professional Development'; 'Learning Resources'; 'Organisation and Management' and; 'Assessment and Feedback'. Completing the survey will take about 30 minutes.

What happens to the results?

Survey results will be disseminated to all areas of the College during the summer. We take these results seriously. Positive feedback about your experience will help future cohorts enrolling onto your programme of study and will provide useful material for internal comparative analysis across the discipline and programmes. Collective responses about the need for improvement will also help the College and the IoPPN to work strategically and practically to make things better. For further information about what the IoPPN has done in action to previous surveys please visit the following webpage:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/ioppn/study/Postgraduate-study/ptes/yousaidwedid.aspx>

## Appendix 1 – IPAS; Guidance Notes on Mitigating Circumstances

It is a Programme requirement that all students take or submit their assessments at times prescribed by faculty of the Programme. However, it is acknowledged that exceptionally, through illness or other good cause a student may be unable to meet these requirements. In such instances Programme regulations allow students to submit details of their mitigating circumstances for consideration by boards of examiners. The boards will use the information submitted to determine whether the mitigating circumstances provided by the student are an acceptable reason for missing an assessment for example. This document provides information on the Programme's mitigating circumstances procedures.

They are unforeseen circumstances, outside a student's control, that have a significant detrimental effect on his/her performance.

There are two situations in which a board of examiners within the Programme can take mitigating circumstances into account;

- 1) Where the mitigating circumstances mean that a student is unable to meet a published deadline for submission of assessed work
- 2) Where the mitigating circumstances mean that a student is unable to take an examination at the prescribed time

Each of these situations requires a student to submit a different form in order to notify the boards of examiners of their mitigating circumstances (see below).

In this situation you are required to submit an **Extension Request Form (ERF)** (please see **Appendix 2**)

You should use this form to request an extension to a deadline as soon as you become aware that you will be unable to meet the original published deadline. You can submit the form, along with appropriate documentary evidence, any time before the deadline.

If at all possible you should continue to work towards the original published deadline until the outcome of your request is known. Whilst the Programme Director will reach a decision on your request as soon as is reasonably possible, you should be aware that it can take up to 14 calendar days. Consequently, when you make a request close to the original published deadline your submission may not be considered until after the deadline has passed. In that situation you should submit your work as soon as is reasonably possible after the deadline, even if you have not been notified of the outcome of your extension request.

Please note that work submitted late will only receive a mark if the mitigating circumstances are considered acceptable. If your mitigating circumstances are considered unacceptable your coursework will be deemed late and will receive a mark of zero as per College policy.

If you need help in deciding whether your mitigating circumstances might constitute an acceptable reason for late submission of work then you are advised to seek advice from a member of academic staff (for example your personal tutor, senior tutor or the relevant module leader) or the KCLSU Advice Centre. The final decision rests with the Chair of the Programme/Part Board of Examiners responsible for your degree programme.

The form can be submitted at any time before an examination but no later than 7 calendar days after the date of a missed examination. The completed form must normally be supported by appropriate documentary evidence, but you should not delay submitting the form if you do not yet have the appropriate documentary evidence.

When submitting the form before an examination it is important that you continue to work towards your examination if at all possible until the outcome of your submission is known (normally within 14 calendar days from the from the date of submission).

If you need help in deciding whether your mitigating circumstances might constitute an acceptable reason for missing an examination then you are advised to seek advice from a member of academic staff (for example your personal tutor, senior tutor or the relevant module leader) or the KCLSU Advice Centre. The final decision rests with the Chair of the Programme/Part Board of Examiners responsible for your degree programme.

You should be aware that the Programme operates a strict **“fit to sit”** policy; if you present yourself for an examination then you are declaring yourself as fit to be assessed and cannot subsequently decide that taking the examination was a mistake because you did not perform as well as you had hoped because of your illness for example. The only exceptions to this are;

- Where you are taken ill *during* an examination and so are unable to complete it. In that instance you should report your illness to an invigilator in the examination circumstance (i.e. email your module leader) You should make an appointment with a doctor to obtain a medical certificate as soon as is reasonably possible and submit the medical certificate along with a completed Notification of Examination Absence form.
- Where you have evidence that illness or other circumstances rendered you unable to make a rational decision as to your fitness. In this instance you should submit the Notification of Examination Absence form along with supporting documentation that explains why you were unfit and why you were unable to make a rational decision as to your fitness.

If your mitigating circumstances are deemed a valid reason for missing an assessment then one of the following will be applied to the missed assessment;

- You will be awarded a replacement assessment at a later date
- You will be awarded an alternative form of assessment at a later date
- The assessment will be declared void and your module mark rescaled such that the module mark is based only on those elements of assessment you completed.

If your mitigating circumstances are not deemed a valid reason for missing an assessment then you will be marked as absent from the assessment and awarded a mark of zero.

No. College regulations do not permit marks for individual elements of assessment to be adjusted to compensate for mitigating circumstances.

It is not possible to provide a complete list and each claim made by a student is considered on its merit. However, listed below are some examples of mitigating circumstances that when supported by appropriate documentary evidence would normally be deemed acceptable:

- Bereavement – loss of close relative/significant other;
- Serious short term illness affecting the student;
- Serious illness affecting a close family member;
- Deterioration of a long term physical health and / or mental health condition
- Significant adverse personal/family circumstances;
- Other serious unforeseen factors, which have a significant impact on your ability to complete your assessments;

It is not possible to provide a complete list but claims made on the basis of the following mitigating circumstance would not normally be deemed acceptable:

- Minor ailments such as cough, cold, headache etc.
- Personal disruptions or events that could have been anticipated such as holidays, moving house;
- Poor time management;
- Computer/printer/photocopier problems;
- Feeling unprepared for an examination;

Supporting documentary evidence must be provided by an independent third party and is required in all cases to support a student's claim of mitigating circumstances. In all cases the evidence provided must be signed, dated and presented on official headed paper. It must be written in English with the source of translation provided if the document has been translated.

It is not possible to provide a complete list of acceptable evidence but examples include:

- Doctor's note;
- Letter from a hospital consultant;
- Hospital appointment form showing clearly the students name and date of birth;
- Letter from a counsellor;
- Letter from a solicitor;
- Police report;
- Death certificate;

You should seek advice from your personal tutor if you are unsure of what evidence you might be able to provide in support of your claim.

This will depend on your programme of study. Details will be found in your programme handbook

All claims of mitigation are considered by the Programme Director responsible for your degree programme. In reaching a decision the following will take into consideration;

- Whether the mitigating circumstances are significant including the period covered;
- The number of assessments affected; within a given module there is a limit to the number of assessments you can miss whilst still being able to demonstrate that you have achieved the learning outcomes of the module;
- The authenticity of the evidence provided;

If submitted in a KCL course you will normally be notified of the Chair's decision within 14 calendar days from the date you submit the form, but bear in mind that it may take longer during periods when the College is closed, notably the Christmas and New Year period. You will be contacted via your KCL email address and normally the response will summarise the outcome of your submission. You can however request a full copy of the Chair's decision letter.

You can appeal against a decision of the Board of Examiners but submitting an EDR2 form. Please read the guidance notes associated with the EDR2 form carefully before lodging an appeal.

## Appendix 2 – IPAS; Extension Request Form

**To students:** Please read the guidance notes on mitigating circumstances carefully before completing and submitting this form. You can also seek guidance from your Course/Module Director.

Use this form to request an extension to the original published submission deadline for a piece of assessed work. DO NOT use this form if you miss an examination through illness or other good cause; in that situation you should complete a *Notification of Examination Absence* form.

IPAS faculty will use the information contained within this form, along with any supporting documentation, to determine whether your reasons for being unable to meet the original published submission deadline are, or are not, acceptable. If you need help in deciding whether your mitigating circumstances might constitute an acceptable reason for late submission of work then you are advised to seek advice from a member of academic staff (for example, the relevant module leader). The final decision rests with the Director responsible for your degree programme.

You should use this form to request an extension to a deadline as soon as you become aware that you will be unable to meet the original published deadline.

If at all possible you should continue to work towards the original published deadline until the outcome of your request is known. Whilst the Program Director will reach a decision on your request as soon as is reasonably possible, you should be aware that it can take up to 14 calendar days. Consequently, when you make a request close to the original published deadline your submission may not be considered until after the deadline has passed. In that situation you should submit your work as soon as is reasonably possible after the deadline, even if you have not been notified of the outcome of your extension request. You should be aware that in such instances, if your reasons for requesting an extension are deemed unacceptable, your work will receive a mark of zero.

Personal Details	
Full name:	Student number:
Programme of study:	Candidate number:
Year of study:	VCU email address (you will be notified of the outcome via this email address):

Deadline(s) that will be missed					
Module Code	Module Name	Assessment description e.g. essay 1	Original published deadline	Requested deadline extension (please state date)	For Exam Board use only

**Details of mitigating circumstances**

Please provide details – including dates - of the mitigating circumstances that will lead you to be unable to meet the original published deadline (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

**Supporting documentation (please see guidance notes for examples of acceptable documentation)**

1. Are copies of documentation in support of your claim attached (please ✓)       Yes  No (go to Q2)

2. If NO, please state when you will be able to supply documentation in support your claim (normally this will be within 14 calendar days of the date of your submission), or explain (here) why you are not able to do so:

***Please note that a final decision cannot be made until you supply the documentation and that unsupported claims will be normally be rejected.***

**Student declaration**

I confirm that all the information contained in this statement is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and I understand that the College regards the submission of false mitigation as a very serious offence and will be subject to disciplinary action. I consent to the information being used by the relevant Boards of Examiners to come to a decision, and understand that the information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Signature of student:.....Date:.....

**Once completed please submit TWO copies of this form, along with copies of your documentary evidence, to the receiving office relevant to your programme of study (details will be found in your programme handbook).**



**Appendix 3– IPAS; Grade translation table**

VCU Letter Grade	VCU % Grade	UA % Grade	UA	KCL % Grade	KCL
A	100.0	100.0	High Distinction	100.0	Distinction
A	99.0	97.5	High Distinction	97.0	Distinction
A	98.0	95.0	High Distinction	94.0	Distinction
A	97.0	92.5	High Distinction	91.0	Distinction
A	96.0	90.0	High Distinction	88.0	Distinction
A	95.0	87.5	High Distinction	85.0	Distinction
A	94.0	85.0	High Distinction	82.0	Distinction
A	93.0	82.5	Distinction	79.0	Distinction
A	92.0	80.0	Distinction	76.0	Distinction
A	91.0	77.5	Distinction	73.0	Distinction
A	90.0	75.0	Distinction	70.0	Distinction
B	89.0	73.6	Credit	68.6	Merit
B	88.0	72.2	Credit	67.2	Merit
B	87.0	70.7	Credit	65.7	Merit
B	86.0	69.3	Credit	64.3	Merit
B	85.0	67.9	Credit	62.9	Merit
B	84.0	66.4	Credit	61.4	Merit
B	83.0	65.0	Credit	60.0	Merit
B	82.0	63.2	Pass	58.8	Pass
B	81.0	61.3	Pass	57.5	Pass
B	80.0	59.4	Pass	56.3	Pass
B	79.0	57.5	Pass	55.0	Pass
B	78.0	55.6	Pass	53.8	Pass
B	77.0	53.8	Pass	52.5	Pass
B	76.0	51.9	Pass	51.3	Pass
B	75.0	50.0	Pass	50.0	Pass
F	74.0	49.3	Fail	49.3	Fail
F	73.0	48.6	Fail	48.6	Fail
F	72.0	47.9	Fail	47.9	Fail
F	71.0	47.2	Fail	47.2	Fail
F	70.0	46.5	Fail	46.5	Fail
F	69.0	45.8	Fail	45.8	Fail
F	68.0	45.1	Fail	45.1	Fail
F	67.0	44.4	Fail	44.4	Fail
F	66.0	43.7	Fail	43.7	Fail
F	65.0	43.0	Fail	43.0	Fail
F	64.0	42.3	Fail	42.3	Fail
F	63.0	41.6	Fail	41.6	Fail
F	62.0	40.9	Fail	40.9	Fail
F	61.0	40.2	Fail	40.2	Fail
F	60.0	39.5	Fail	39.5	Fail
F	59.0	38.8	Fail	38.8	Fail
F	58.0	38.1	Fail	38.1	Fail

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F	57.0	37.4	Fail	37.4	Fail
F	56.0	36.7	Fail	36.7	Fail
VCU Letter Grade	VCU % Grade	UA % Grade	UA	KCL % Grade	KCL
F	54.0	35.3	Fail	35.3	Fail
F	53.0	34.6	Fail	34.6	Fail
F	52.0	33.9	Fail	33.9	Fail
F	51.0	33.2	Fail	33.2	Fail
F	50.0	32.5	Fail	32.5	Fail