



## **THE GRADUATE SCHOOL**

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Graduate programs at Valdosta State University are administered by the Graduate School. Graduate coursework is taught by faculty members serving on the Graduate Faculty. The primary purpose is to provide opportunities for dedicated students, who have completed a baccalaureate degree, to pursue the mastery of an area of learning and to develop the qualities of scholarship and academic discipline necessary to provide creative contributions to their chosen field of work or interest.

After having successfully completed a university program on the undergraduate level, as evidenced by the receipt of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, a person may apply to a program in the Graduate School at Valdosta State University. Application packets for admission to the Graduate School may be secured from the graduate office or online at [www.valdosta.edu/gradschool/](http://www.valdosta.edu/gradschool/). Prospective students are urged to submit completed application packets as early as possible and by the following dates:

Fall Semester	July 15
Spring Semester	November 15
Summer Session	May 1

The M.S.W., the M.Ed. in Communication Disorders and the Ed.D. programs have different deadlines. Applicants should contact the Graduate School for the specific deadlines for these programs.

### **APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

Each applicant must include one copy of an official transcript from each institution of higher education previously attended as part of their application. Degree-seeking applicants are also required to provide an official copy of scores on one of the following appropriate examinations:

1. The Graduate Record Examination - required for all programs except those in the College of Business. May be used for the Master of Public Administration program.

2. The Graduate Management Admission Test - required for all programs in the College of Business. May be used for the Master of Public Administration program.

The GRE or GMAT scores are considered official when they are sent directly to the Graduate School from the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Student copies are not considered official.

Students whose first language is other than English must also present evidence of English language proficiency. Evidence may be presented in either of the following ways:

1. Submit proof of satisfactory completion of ELS Language Centers' Level 109 course;
2. Submit official test scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) of 500 or more (173 for the computer-based test). Some programs may require a minimum score of 550 or 600 (213 or 250 on the computer-based test).

Application forms and other information related to the examinations may be obtained from the Graduate School. Applicants who wish to take graduate courses for other than degree-seeking purposes, such as add-on or renewal certification or for personal growth, must supply, in addition to the application forms, one of the following:

1. A copy of a baccalaureate diploma from an accredited or approved institution.
2. A copy of a transcript from an accredited or approved institution indicating that a baccalaureate degree has been completed.
3. A copy of a teaching certificate of a type which requires a baccalaureate degree for its issuance.

Students who are currently admitted as graduate students in good standing at another accredited college or university may be accepted on a transient basis. Transient students must furnish a letter of good standing from their institution in addition to the application.

All applicants must pay a \$20.00 application fee. The fee is not credited toward the matriculation fee when the student is accepted, nor is it refunded in the event that the application is denied or if the applicant does not enroll as a student.

All documents and materials submitted to fulfill the application requirements for entry to a program in the Graduate School at VSU become the property of the University and will not be returned. These materials are kept for one year. Applicants accepted to a program who do not begin taking courses the semester for which they are admitted must submit a new application.

Admission to the Graduate School does not necessarily imply admission to one of the degree-granting programs at the University. Some programs have program-specific requirements which are not listed in the admissions criteria presented here. In general, no student should apply for admission to the Graduate School without first contacting

the head of the department in which the student intends to do the major portion of his or her work.

Students who are denied admission into their chosen program may be eligible for other areas and should contact the Graduate School to determine additional options.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSION**

Valdosta State welcomes applications from international students. At Valdosta State University, international students are defined as citizens of countries other than the United States who require a visa in order to study in the U.S. To be considered for admission, international students must submit the following materials to the Graduate School, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA 31698-0005:

1. A completed Application for Admission to the Graduate School, along with a \$20.00 check or money order in U.S. currency. Application packets are available from the Graduate School Office or online at [www.valdosta.edu/gradschool/](http://www.valdosta.edu/gradschool/).
2. Official original language and English (translated) copies of college and university transcripts, as records of past academic work, along with copies of academic degrees and certificates that the applicant has received. To be considered official, these transcripts must be submitted directly from the educational institutions to the Graduate School.
3. If the applicant's first language is other than English, proof of satisfactory completion of ELS Level 109 or official results from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). A minimum score of 500 on the TOEFL (173 on the new computer based test) is required for admission. Some academic departments require a score of 550 (Accountancy; 213) or six00 (English; 250 for the new computer- based test).
4. Official results from the Graduate Record Examination or the Graduate Management Admissions Test. See admission requirements for specific programs to determine which test is needed. Information on the administration of these tests is available from U.S. Embassies and from American Cultural Centers.
5. A completed Certificate of Finances statement guaranteeing that the student will have \$24,007 (for 12 months) or \$16,380 (for nine months). The Certificate of Finances form is available from the Graduate School.

Once these materials are received, the Graduate School will evaluate the international applicant's credentials and make an admissions decision. The applicant will be notified of the University's decision and, if admitted, will be issued an I-20 immigration form. This form must be taken to the nearest U.S. Embassy or consular office, which will issue a visa for entry to the United States.

Additional information on international student admissions to the Graduate School at Valdosta State University is available from the Office of International Programs, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA 31698.

## ADMISSION AND READMISSION

Official acceptance or denial is verified by a letter from the Graduate School. Students who are admitted but do not enroll for the semester in which they were admitted must submit another application if they want to attend Graduate School at a later date. Students who were previously enrolled but have not been in attendance within the last three semesters must apply to the Graduate School for readmission.

## GRADUATE STUDENT CLASSIFICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Valdosta State University offers several admission classifications to graduate students. Students who have met all requirements will be admitted as “regular”. Criteria and limitations for this and all other categories are shown below. **Applicants for Education Specialist and Doctor of Education programs will be admitted only as “regular” based on standards presented in the College of Education section of this Bulletin.** Some colleges and departments have criteria that exceed the minimums shown below. Please refer to individual college and department listings to determine specific standards.

### Master’s Degree Programs

**Regular Admission** - To be considered for admission as a “regular” graduate student the applicant must have received a bachelor’s degree from an accredited or approved college or university with an undergraduate major in, or prerequisites for, the planned graduate field of study, where applicable. The applicant must have a cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, calculated on all work attempted in which letter grades were awarded. Verification in the form of an official transcript is required. **All** master’s degree programs require an acceptable GRE or GMAT score. In addition, some programs have additional admission criteria; please refer to the departmental listings for all these specific requirements.

**Irregular** - Applicants who have not submitted all application documents may sometimes be admitted as “irregular.” Students in this category will not be admitted to a degree program until they have met all admission requirements. Students may not enroll in more than 9 hours of coursework while in irregular status. Students admitted as irregular are not eligible for financial aid.

**Probationary Admission** — A person failing to meet one or more of the requirements for admission as a regular student may be considered for probationary admission under conditions specified at the time of admission by the appropriate department and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. In any event, the undergraduate grade-point average must be 2.2 or higher on a 4.0 scale. For programs requiring the GRE, applicants must achieve a minimum score of 750: not less than 350 on the verbal portion in combination with either the analytical or the quantitative portions. For programs requiring the GMAT, a minimum score of 350 is needed. Students admitted as probationary are eligible for financial aid.

Students admitted on a probationary basis remain in this category for 9 semester hours of work. The grade-point average for these 9 semester hours must be 3.0 or higher, unless different conditions were specified at the time of admission. After completion of the probationary period, students may be reclassified as “regular” students, with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School and the department concerned.

**Transient** - Graduate students currently enrolled in good standing at another college or university may register at Valdosta State University for no more than six semester hours.

**Non-Degree** - The student who holds an undergraduate degree and wishes to take graduate or undergraduate courses for add-on certification or personal enrichment **without pursuing an advanced degree** may be admitted as “not-degree.” Students who maintain a cumulative average of B or better in graduate courses taken may later be granted entry to a degree program upon proper application to the Graduate School. A **maximum** of 9 semester hours **may** be considered by the appropriate department involved for transfer into a degree-granting program. Students admitted as non-degree are not eligible for financial aid.

## **ENROLLMENT BY UNDERGRADUATES**

A student with senior standing at Valdosta State University, with an overall academic grade-point average of 3.0 or better, may register for graduate courses during the final two semesters of undergraduate work under the following conditions:

1. No more than a total of 9 semester hours may be taken for graduate credit, and not more than six semester hours of graduate work may be taken in a given semester.
2. A student registering for one or more graduate courses is limited to the normal graduate academic course load of 12 semester hours per semester.
3. Permission for a student to take graduate courses under this provision is granted only by the Dean of the Graduate School upon recommendation of the student’s advisor.
4. Permission must be obtained for each semester in which the student desires to take graduate courses.

## **ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS**

### **Grading System**

The semester hour is the basic unit of work, in which each course offered has credit value in terms of a certain number of semester hours normally conforming to the number of contact class hours per week. For example, courses meeting three hours a week carry three hours credit. A typical exception occurs in laboratory work, in which two or three hours of class contact time would have a one-credit-hour value.

Grades and quality points represent the instructor’s final estimate of the student’s performance in a course. All grades assigned remain on the student’s permanent record and transcript. The following letters denote grades that are included in the computation of the grade-point average.

A = Excellent: 4 quality points per hour      D = Passing: 1 quality point per hour  
B = Good: 3 quality points per hour          F = Failure: 0 quality points  
C = Satisfactory: 2 quality points per hour      WF= Withdrew failing: 0 quality points

Students may calculate their graduate grade-point average by dividing the number of graduate semester credit hours taken into the total number of quality points earned.

The following letters denote cases in which the grade is not included in the computation of the grade point average:

I = Incomplete  
IP = In progress (course scheduled for more than one semester)  
K = Credit by examination  
NR = Not reported by instructor or course ending date is  
after the scheduled end of the semester  
S = Satisfactory  
U = Unsatisfactory  
V = Audit  
W = Withdrew without penalty

For graduation, the cumulative graduate grade-point average must be 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale. Throughout their program, students' performance must be acceptable on a continuing basis. Students must at all times maintain an overall grade-point average of not less than 2.5. No grade below **C** will be credited toward a graduate degree. Any student acquiring any combination of two grades **D**, **F**, **WF**, or **U** will be dismissed from the Graduate School.

All grades received for graduate courses taken at Valdosta State University, after admission to the Graduate School, will be used to calculate the graduate cumulative grade-point average. Courses may be re-taken, if desired or required, but all graduate grades received will affect this average.

Cumulative grade-point averages are calculated at the close of every semester in which course work is taken. This calculation appears on the permanent record of each student. It also appears on each grade slip sent to the student. A student may review this grade record and grade-point average by requesting an unofficial transcript from the Registrar's Office. Matters requiring interpretation of a graduate record should normally be referred to the student's advisor or the Graduate School. Undergraduate grades will not be calculated as part of the graduate student's semester or cumulative average.

A grade of **I** indicates that a student was doing satisfactory work, but for non-academic reasons beyond his or her control, was unable to meet requirements of the course. If an **I** is not changed to a letter grade within one calendar year, it will be changed to the grade **F**.

A grade of **IP** indicates that credit has not been given in courses that require a continuation of work beyond the semester for which the students signed up for the course. The use of the symbol is approved for dissertation and thesis hours and project

courses. It cannot be substituted for an **I**.

Students dropping a course within the time limit noted in the University Calendar, while performing satisfactorily, will receive a grade of **W** (withdrawal from a course, having completed work to that point satisfactorily); otherwise they will be given a grade of **WF** (withdrawal, having not done satisfactory work). The computation of the overall grade-point average treats **WF** and **F** grades identically; grades of **W** do not affect the computation.

Graduate students who wish to appeal a grade must first discuss the issue with their professor. Further appeals are then directed, in order, to their professor's Department Head, College Dean, Dean of the Graduate School, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and President of the University.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSES POLICY**

Students may withdraw from courses following the drop/add period until mid-term by obtaining the instructor's signature on the withdrawal form available from the Office of the Registrar. The instructor may assign a **W** at the time of withdrawal. A withdrawal is not official until received and processed by the Office of the Registrar.

Before midterm, faculty may disenroll students not attending class by assigning a **W**.

Board of Regents policy does not allow students to withdraw after the midterm date published in the school calendar. Students may petition for an exception to the withdrawal deadline for cases of hardship. Petition forms are available in the Office of the Registrar. The petition will become a permanent part of the student's file. Any student who discontinues class attendance after mid-term and does not officially withdraw may be assigned a grade of **F**.

No fee adjustment will be made for withdrawals except as outlined in this bulletin. The Business and Finance Office will receive a copy of the withdrawal form for refunding if applicable.

## **AUDITING CLASSES**

Students may be permitted to audit selected courses, provided regular enrollment in the course concerned permits, and provided such arrangement is agreeable to the instructor concerned. Fees for auditing are the same as for regular registration. Students are not permitted to change from audit to credit or from credit to audit after the last day for course changes as specified in the official calendar.

## **GRADUATE COURSE NUMBERING**

At Valdosta State University, courses numbered 1000-4999 are for undergraduate students only. Some courses numbered 3000-3999 are open to graduate students; such courses carry dual numbers, with the graduate version of the course numbered between 5000 and 5999. Similarly, courses numbered 4000-4999 carry graduate credit when dual numbered 6000-6999. Courses numbered 7000-8999 are open to graduate students only. Courses numbered 9000-9999 are open to doctoral students only.

Graduate students should be sure that they are registered for graduate courses.

This information appears on the official class roll and on the student's schedule. While a graduate student may be permitted to take an undergraduate course, this course will not fulfill graduate degree requirements. Only courses numbered 5000 or above are graduate level courses.

## **MAXIMUM COURSE LOADS AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS**

The normal full load for a graduate student who is not on an assistantship is 9-15 hours of graduate-level work per semester. The normal full load for a student on an assistantship is 9 semester hours at the graduate level; however, in special circumstances, with the approval of the major professor and the department head, a graduate assistant may be permitted to take 12 hours. Graduate assistants must register for a minimum of six hours per semester. The maximum course load for a student employed full-time is 9 semester hours per semester. Course loads in excess of these limits may be allowed by permission of the major professor or the department head and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate students may earn no more than six hours credit in Directed Study and/or Independent Study courses to meet the requirements of a degree-granting program. Undergraduate courses will not be calculated when determining a graduate student's full or part-time status. However, these hours will be included in determining a student's maximum load, as stated above.

## **CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COURSES**

Certain courses, because of their scope and focus, are identified by different designations, that is, cross-listed, such as MFTH 5700 / SOCI 5700. Students may decide which designation they wish to register for, depending on their needs, but such a dual-listed or cross-listed course can count only once and cannot be taken a second time for credit under a different designation. Cross-disciplinary courses are clearly identified in the "Courses of Instruction" section as "[Also offered as ...]."

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE DEGREES**

Specific requirements for each graduate program offered by the University are presented in the departmental listings of this Bulletin. Students should refer to these listings to determine the requirements for degree completion and graduation.

Courses taken more than seven years prior to the semester of degree completion cannot be used to meet graduate degree requirements. Under extenuating circumstances, however, students, with the approval of their advisor, may appeal in writing for a one-time extension of this limitation. A committee, approved by the dean of the appropriate college, will consider the appeal and may recommend to the Dean of the Graduate School that the student be granted an extension of the seven-year limitation. The maximum extension for completion of the program cannot exceed one additional calendar year.

At least fifty percent of the student's course work must be completed in residence at Valdosta State University. No more than six semester hours of graduate course work may be accepted by transfer from another institution to Valdosta State University. Credit



to a degree program for transferred course work may be obtained by application to the Dean of the Graduate School, with approval by the major professor.

All graduate programs require a Comprehensive Examination, or an acceptable substitute. Successful completion of this exam indicates that students have nearly completed their work toward the degree. The Comprehensive Examination may not be taken until all required course work has been completed, or is in the process of being completed, and the language requirements fulfilled. The Dean of the Graduate School shall be notified upon the student's successful completion of this requirement.

In programs with thesis requirements, a minimum of 30 semester hours of academic course work is required. Of these 30 semester hours, at least 9 semester hours must be in courses numbered 7000 or above with a minimum of six hours of thesis. In programs without thesis requirements, a minimum of 30 semester hours of academic course work is required. Of these 30 semester hours, at least 15 semester hours must be in courses numbered 7000 or above. The remainder must be completed in courses numbered 5000 or above.

When a thesis is required, the approved defended thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School not less than 14 days before the scheduled date of graduation. The Supervisory Committee shall certify to the Dean of the Graduate School that the student has successfully defended the thesis at an announced open meeting. Three copies of the thesis (plus others, if required by the department), signed by the major professor, members of the Supervisory Committee, and the Dean of the Graduate School, shall be submitted to the library not less than 5 days before the scheduled date of graduation.

All students must register for thesis credit each semester in which they are actively working on their thesis. The total number of thesis credit hours required for the degree will be determined by the individual departments. Students must be enrolled in the thesis course in the semester in which they graduate. All thesis courses will be graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.

General thesis regulations are furnished by the Graduate School. Signature on the thesis by the Dean of the Graduate School indicates final acceptance of the student's thesis and marks the completion of requirements for the master's degree. The Graduate Dean will send a copy of the signature page to the Office of the Registrar to authorize the student's graduation.

Students enrolled in a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) program must complete a dissertation. All students must register for dissertation credit each semester in which they are actively working on this project. A minimum of 9 semester-hours of dissertation credit is required for the degree. Students must be enrolled in the dissertation course in the semester in which they graduate. All dissertation courses must be graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.

The approved defended dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate School no fewer than 14 days before the scheduled date of graduation. The Dissertation Committee shall certify to the Dean of the Graduate School that the student has successfully defended the dissertation at an announced open meeting. Three copies of the dissertation (plus others, if required by the department), signed by *the Dissertation Chair* and members of the Dissertation Committee, the Dean of the College of Education, and the Dean of the Graduate School, shall be submitted to the library no

fewer than 5 days before the scheduled date of graduation.

General dissertation requirements are furnished by the Graduate School. Signature on the dissertation by the Dean of the Graduate School indicates final acceptance of the student's dissertation and marks the completion of requirements for the Ed.D. degree. The Graduate Dean will send a copy of the signature page to the Office of the Registrar to authorize the student's graduation.

## **SECOND MASTER'S DEGREE**

Students seeking a second master's degree must meet the course requirements established by the head of the department, subject to the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School.

## **COMMUNITY UNIVERSITY PROGRAM FOR GEORGIANS 62 AND OLDER**

Georgians 62 years of age and older are eligible to enroll as graduate students on a "space available" basis without paying most of the normal fees or tuition. For complete eligibility requirements and application information, contact the Admissions Office or the Graduate School.

## **APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION**

Students must apply for graduation one semester in advance. Students planning to attend graduation should make arrangements with the VSU Bookstore for purchase of cap, gown, and hood. The Registrar's Office should be consulted early in the program (at least one semester before graduation) for procedures and deadlines. There is a \$25 fee to be paid at the time of application. A 3.0 cumulative GPA on all graduate courses completed at VSU after acceptance to the Graduate School is required for graduation.