**VCU Chemistry Graduate Programs - Frequently Asked Questions**

*Please find below for a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding:*

1. *Chemistry Master’s and Ph. D. program*
2. *Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Ph. D. program and*
3. *Chemical Biology Ph. D. program*

**Financial Aid**

1. **Does the department offer financial aid?**

*Yes, in the form of teaching assistantships (TA) and research assistantships (RA). Tuition is also taken care of when a student is a full time TA or RA in the Department of Chemistry. Students typically pay University fees.* ***Because of the COIVD-19 pandemic and its financial impact, the department is providing financial aid only for students enrolled in the PhD programs.*** *Chemistry program accepts self-supported Master’s students or those with outside financial aids.*

**2. What is the stipend for an assistantship position?**

*Teaching assistantships are available in the Chemistry Department. Research assistantships are also possible (usually in subsequent years and during the summer semesters) depending on the choice of a research advisor and the availability of external funds. Annual stipends vary in between* ***$24,500 – $25,000*** *for spring/fall 2021 admission.*

**GPA, GRE, and TOEFL**

**1. Is the GRE required and what is the minimum GRE score?**

*The general GRE is required. The GRE subject test is optional. Individual exceptions to this requirement may be considered for students with previous graduate degrees from US colleges/universities. The Department of Chemistry currently does not have a minimum score, but considering the competitive nature of our program, it is advisable to prepare for this exam and obtain the best score possible. For international students, the combined score (verbal and quantitative reasoning) should be 300 or higher with a minimum writing score of 3.0 or above to be competitive for admission.* Please note that GRE is not required for fall/spring 2022 admission.

**2. What is the minimum GPA?**

*For admission to graduate study at VCU, we prefer a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0. In cases where the undergraduate GPA is below 3.0, additional factors that include performance in the last 60 hours of course work, GRE scores, and letters of reference, may be weighted more heavily in the admissions assessment. For students with earned graduate degrees from accredited institutions, the graduate GPA may be the primary basis for consideration.*

**3. What is the minimum TOEFL score?**

*We recommend**a TOEFL score of 92 or higher. Scores must be current (within 2-years).*

**4. Can the IELTS substitute for the TOEFL? What is an acceptable score for the IELTS?**

*Satisfactory scores on the IELTS can be used as evidence of English proficiency. The university minimum IELTS requirement is 6.5, but Chemistry prefers a score of 7.0 or higher.*

**5. I come from an English speaking country/my education was in English; am I exempt from taking the TOEFL?**

*Students with American, English-speaking Canadian and U.K. baccalaureate degrees may be exempted with the approval of the department. All others* ***must*** *take the TOEFL.*

**6. Can I still be accepted even though I haven’t taken my GRE/TOEFL exams yet?**

*No. All students receiving assistantship positions, in particular, must take the GRE and TOEFL (international students) prior to admission. Individual exceptions to the GRE requirement may be considered for students with previous graduate degrees from US colleges/universities and who have previously taken the GRE within the past 2-3 years.*

**7. Can I submit unofficial copies of GRE, TOEFL or IELTS score reports?**

*Yes. We accept unofficial copies of GRE, TOEFL, or IELTS score reports.* ***Please upload those at the designated tab in the online application.*** *Official copies of GRE, TOEFL or IELTS scores are not required to make admission decisions. However, official copies are required at the time of acceptance and admission.*

**8. What are the VCU codes for the TOEFL and GRE exams?**

*GRE= 5570; TOEFL=5570*

**Transcripts**

**1. Do I need transcripts/certificates from secondary school (high school)?**

***No.***

**2. Can I submit unofficial copies of my transcripts?**

***Yes, the online graduate application allows you to do this. Please also add GRE and TOEFL copies. However, official final copies are required at the time of acceptance and admission.***

**3. Can I submit unofficial copies of academic transcripts?**

*Yes, the online graduate application allows you to do this. Please scan and upload them to online application at the designated tab(s). In addition, please send an official copy of your transcript to following address. Official transcripts are required to make admission decisions.*

*Prof.* [*Indika U. Arachchige*](https://chemistry.vcu.edu/bios/indika-u-arachchige/) *Department of Chemistry, Virginia Commonwealth University*

*P. O. Box 842006, 1001, West Main Street  
Richmond, VA 23284, United States*

**Application Process**

**1. What is the Spring/Fall application deadlines for domestic and international students?**

*Application deadlines are particularly important for international students because of the amount of time required to process applications and the time needed to obtain visas. Students should apply well in advance of the international application deadlines. We suggest an application deadline of March 15 for Fall admission and October 15 for Spring admission. For domestic students, the deadlines are less critical. However, because we receive more applications than we have positions, early applications are encouraged.*

**2. Can I email my letters of recommendation?**

*The* ***preferred*** *route to sending letters of recommendation is electronically by listing the names and email addresses of those who will provide you with a letter directly on the online graduate school application. If this is not possible, those writing a reference letter can email the letter to* [*gradchem@vcu.edu*](mailto:gradchem@vcu.edu)

**3. Do I have to have research experience to be considered?**

*No. Although research experience is desirable and all undergraduate students are encouraged to take advantage of undergraduate research opportunities at their current college/university.*

**4. Do I have to include my resume/CV with my application?**

*No, but we do prefer you send us one. You can upload your CV to online application.*

**5. Do I have to know who I want to be my advisor when I arrive?**

*No. During orientation, incoming students will have a chance to meet the faculty and listen to 10-minute research presentations. In October, the Department hosts a poster session where all graduate students will present a poster of their research. First year graduate students are required to attend the poster session, which gives them an opportunity to learn more about the diversity of different projects in the Department. Research advisors are chosen in the time period that begins after the poster session and before winter break.*

**6. How can I pay the $70 application fee?**

*Applicants can pay online when they submit their application. Some fee waivers are available for domestic and international students. If interested, domestic students should contact Prof. Indika Arachchige at* [*iuarachchige@vcu.edu*](mailto:iuarachchige@vcu.edu) *with scanned copies of GRE (general) and academic transcript(s) to request fee waivers. International students should contact Prof. Indika Arachchige at* [*iuarachchige@vcu.edu*](mailto:iuarachchige@vcu.edu) *with scanned copies of**GRE (general), TOEFL or IELTS reports, and academic transcript(s) to request fee waivers.* ***Please note that GRE is not required for fall/spring 2022 admission.***

**7. Is an external credential evaluation for international students is required?**

*Yes, but the Department will take care of this requirement internally upon acceptance. It is not required for submission, only after acceptance.* ***There is no cost for you!***

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