Academics

What can I study at U.Va.?

The University offers undergraduate degrees from seven schools: the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Architecture, the School of Engineering, the School of Nursing, the School of Commerce, the School of Education, and now, the School of Leadership and Public Policy. A number of majors are offered in each of the schools, as well as the option to study, and even major, in more than one school. We offer more than 65 degree programs, and students also may design their own major. At the center of our educational philosophy is a focus on the study of the liberal arts. All students, even those enrolled in pre-professional schools, are encouraged to take classes in many disciplines.

Does U.Va. offer an honors program?

Both the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering and Applied Science offer school-wide honors programs. In the College, the Echols Scholars Program enrolls students who have excelled academically and exhibited unusual intellectual curiosity. Echols Scholars enjoy some priority registration within their year, exemption from all area requirements and an opportunity to be housed with other Echols, Rodman and College Science Scholars. In the School of Engineering, the Rodman Scholars enjoy special seminars and design projects in the first year, specially designated courses throughout their undergraduate program, and possibly some financial compensation. No special application is necessary for either the Echols or the Rodman program; everyone who applies for admission to the College or the School of Engineering is considered automatically.

Science and math faculty oversee our College Science Scholars program which gives a small group of students in math and the sciences access to high level research and coursework. These scholars are chosen by the Admission Office using the regular application for admission.

Many departments in the College participate in the departmental Distinguished Majors Programs. U.Va. students may apply to these programs, which require the preparation of a fourth-year thesis. It is through these programs that U.Va. students can graduate with honors.

Please be sure to emphasize, however, that with the exception of Rodman seminars and a few select courses all classes at U.Va. are open to all students who are appropriately prepared. All of our honors programs live in the midst of a place very democratic.

What is the average class size?

Classes range from small seminars of 12 to larger lectures of a few hundred. Once or twice a week, students in the lecture courses will meet for a discussion or lab of 15 to 20 people. 84% of our classes have 50 or fewer students and 54% have 20 or fewer. To provide new students with extensive peer and faculty interaction, special University Seminars are available to first-year students. Remember that students learn differently in a
lecture course than they do in a small discussion, but in either circumstance they have access to some of the finest professors in the country.

**How many classes are taught by teaching assistants?**

Ninety to ninety-two percent of the classes at U.Va. are taught by faculty members. The other instructors are teaching assistants who are usually Ph.D. candidates. Teaching assistants lead weekly discussion groups and teach introductory-level English composition and foreign language. The University’s Teaching Resource Center sponsors a number of workshops to enhance teaching techniques for all University instructors. And, from what we continue to hear, teaching assistants are engaging and talented instructors.

**Will I have an advisor?**

Students at U.Va. receive advice from a number of sources. In the College of Arts and Sciences, for example, a dean, along with a group of specially chosen faculty members, is assigned to each first-year living unit to help students plan their academic programs. Students meet with an advisor during summer orientation, and will meet with their first- and second-year advisor when they return in the fall. Once students declare a major, they choose an advisor from that particular department. More informally, faculty members also hold office hours and encourage students to come in and talk about their academic goals and plans.

**Are there opportunities to study abroad?**

38% to 40% of University students study abroad each year in more than 350 programs. The University's International Studies Office coordinates study abroad for the year, semester or summer. Our programs are in China, Jordan, Peru, Italy, Spain, Russia, India, and the United Kingdom, and we can make arrangements for students to study in other countries as well.

**Living Environment**

**Which first-year houses are better: Alderman or McCormick?**

There are advantages to each area. The houses on Alderman Road are mostly brand new. The houses on McCormick Road, also known as the Old Dorms, are more architecturally appealing, have outdoor quads and are closer to most classes. In either situation, students enjoy a close bond with others in their first-year house and have the support of an upper-class student on each hallway. First year students may also choose to live in one of the three residential colleges - Brown, Hereford, or the International Residential College. Virtual tours of the housing areas available at www.virginia.edu/dorms/.

**What if my roommate and I have a fight?**

The University encourages students to handle situations between themselves in an adult manner. However, if a dispute cannot be resolved, the upper-class resident assistant will intervene and ensure that each student's rights are recognized and upheld.

**Will I be able to live on Grounds all four years?**

Students wishing to live on Grounds after the first year will enter a housing lottery and most of these students will be successful at securing housing space. At present, U.Va. can accommodate approximately fifty percent of its students on Grounds, and each year there are still housing facilities with empty beds once the academic year begins.
Because students living off Grounds are usually within walking distance and are not isolated from the
University community, many upper-class students choose to live in the charming neighborhoods that surround
the University. Living off Grounds need not be more expensive than living on Grounds.

Other Student Life Issues

How many students are enrolled at U.Va.?

14,641 undergraduates. Our size means we can offer over 1500 classes every semester and over 700 student
organizations to our students from all over the world.

Are out-of-state students overwhelmed by Virginians?

Although 67% of students are from Virginia, 33% are from out of state, coming from most of the fifty states
and over 100 nations across the world. Students at the University have the opportunity to interact with people
from many different backgrounds and geographic regions—from Maine to Virginia to Colorado to Peru.

Is crime a problem at U.Va.?

While our crime rate is extremely low, there is some crime at the University of Virginia just as there is crime at
any other university. However, University students are proactive rather than reactive in their approach to
crime. Emergency telephones, the University Police Department, the Student Escort Service, and the Honor
System all make life here safer. More importantly, students are encouraged to look out for each other and to
take their own safety and the safety of others seriously.

Does social life revolve around the Greek system?

Approximately one third of students are members of the Greek system. Many Greek functions are open to all
students and thus are integrated into the whole of the University. The sorority and fraternity system is strong,
but only part of the social life here. Hundreds of other student organizations and social outlets are available,
from spelunking to soccer, theatre to debate. There also are many restaurants, shops, coffeehouses, theatres,
and concert venues within walking distance. Each week, students receive Connections, an extensive e-mail listing
of events and activities taking place on and around Grounds.

What does your sports program include?

As a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference, the University sponsors twelve Division IA sports for men
and thirteen for women. Men's sports include basketball, baseball, football, soccer, cross-country, diving, track,
tennis, swimming, lacrosse, golf and wrestling. Women's sports include basketball, field hockey, lacrosse,
swimming, diving, crew, cross-country, track, tennis, softball, soccer, and volleyball. Additionally, we offer 50
club sports that compete regionally against other schools and more than 64 intramural sports, including inner
tube water polo.

Do you have ROTC?

All military branches have programs here. Students dress on Tuesdays and take some military science classes,
but find that the ROTC program is comprehensive without being too time consuming.

What support services exist?

A wealth of support services are provided by the Office of the Dean of Students, the Office of African
American Affairs, University Career Services, the Counseling Center, Peer Advising and many others. All these
offices advertise their services to students in the first-year houses in the hopes that students will feel free to ask for help when they need it.

What if I have more questions?

For more answers to questions about student life, refer to “Hoo’s Got A Question?” on the Admission Office website, [www.virginia.edu](http://www.virginia.edu). Or have students call the Admission Office at 434-982-3200.

The Bottom Line—Why Should I Come to U.Va.?

*Academics* - The University is considered one of the premiere academic institutions in the United States. Over the years, fifty Rhodes Scholars have graduated from Virginia. Only five other American institutions have produced more. For six of the past seven years, *U.S. News and World Report* ranked the University of Virginia as the top public university in the country. In this atmosphere there is a great love of the liberal arts and an emphasis placed upon active intellectual inquiry and dialogue. University of Virginia professors are women and men who are highly respected in their fields. They are a distinguished group, including Guggenheim fellows, Fulbright Scholars, winners of the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award, and a two-time poet laureate of the United States. And the faculty is committed to teaching. Also, we are a research institution where typically 66% of undergraduates participate in compelling research across disciplines. So, superb teaching from faculty in addition to research opportunities makes for an ideal combination.

*Student Self-Governance* - The emphasis on student self-governance has produced one of the most actively involved student bodies in the country. Students have a hand in the day-to-day running of the University, and leave U.Va. with valuable leadership and management experience as a result. Opportunities for involvement range from the oldest student-run Honor System in the nation, to the University Judiciary Committee, Student Council, *The Cavalier Daily*, the Chinese Student Association, University Democrats and over 700 other student-run organizations.

*Technology* - U.Va. has led the way in integrating technology into the learning experience through special initiatives such as the Electronic Text Center, the Digital Media Center and the Geospatial and Statistical Data Center. Most buildings and all undergraduate dormitories are wired for direct network access. All students have access to 24-hour computer facilities, and most classes at U.Va. have a website associated with them. Students and faculty exchange more than three-quarters of a million e-mail messages each day.

*Diversity* - The University is composed of a diverse student body. U.Va. students come from throughout the United States as well as from over 100 foreign countries. They are of various socioeconomic, ethnic and racial backgrounds. By living and learning in this environment, students develop an enhanced understanding of distinct cultures and broaden their knowledge of human behavior.

*Study Abroad and Service* - As outlined above 38-40% of our students study abroad in over 350 programs and we are known as a university exceptionally committed to service, both on-Grounds and around the globe.

*Happiness* - U.Va. students are happy. 97% of first-year students return for their second year. The wealth of intellectual, cultural and social opportunities makes this a place students, faculty and alumni love.

*Thomas Jefferson* - Our founder, Mr. Jefferson, said of his University, “Our aim from the beginning has been to make this establishment the most eminent in the United States, in order to draw to it the youth of every state.” The University still bears the imprint of his far-ranging intellect: his love of every species of learning, scientific and artistic, beautiful and useful.