

Majoring in

Applied Health Science

Description of the Applied Health Science Program

What is applied health science?

The applied health science program prepares students to serve as programming specialists and administrative leaders in the health, fitness and conditioning industry. Students prepared as applied health science professionals facilitate health promotion in corporate, government, commercial, and university settings.

What do applied health science students study?

Students who choose this program explore the scientific basis of human performance, specifically as it relates to exercise and fitness. Theoretical, laboratory and applied experiences are integrated into a curriculum that prepares students for careers that enhance the personal health and productivity of their clientele.

What skills are important for applied health science?

Applied health science students should:

- Appreciate the biological sciences;
- Be flexible;
- Have the ability to work well with others;
- Maintain personal health and fitness;
- Want to stay current in trends related to health, exercise and fitness; and
- Possess good communication skills.

Entrance Requirements

Incoming freshmen students may declare this program upon acceptance to the university. A 2.0 GPA is required for students who want to change their major to the applied health science program.

Course Requirements

General education: Approximately 37 credit hours of general education courses are required. These courses provide a broad range of knowledge in biology, math, writing, arts, history, literature, and human behavior.

Allied professional core: This core includes 12 credit hours. Courses include human anatomy, human physiology and chemistry & society.

Applied health science selectives: Students choose 13 credit hours from courses such as:

- Medical terminology
- Physiological psychology
- Cardiopulmonary pathophysiology
- Medical sociology
- Trends in modern diseases

Professional core: Students complete 48 credit hours in courses such as:

- Introduction to health professions
- Trends in modern diseases
- Chronic disease and exercise management
- Personal health and behavior change
- Assessment and exercise intervention in health and disease
- School and community health resources
- Community health education theory and practice
- Nutrition
- Ethics in health care

Clinical experiences: Students complete 15 credit hours of clinical experiences. This translates to 700 hours of hands-on field work directly related to the program.

Careers in Applied Health Science

The applied health science program provides a good background for entry to any number of occupations. Some of these careers include:

- Corporate wellness director
- Strength and conditioning specialist
- Fitness director
- Personal trainer
- Pharmaceutical representative

With this program, it is not unusual for graduates to start their own business in a field related to personal training, fitness, strength and conditioning, or personal wellness.

Post Graduate Study with a Degree in Applied Health Science

Students often pursue graduate study in areas like exercise science, exercise physiology, sport and exercise psychology, and sports medicine. With minor additional prerequisite coursework, students can choose to pursue graduate education in physical therapy, occupational therapy, and medicine.

Next Steps

If you are interested in learning more about the applied health science program at VCU, consider doing each of the following things. Check them off as you complete each step.

- Check out the VCU School of Education webpage for information related to programs in the Department of Health and Human Performance.
- Read about the applied health science program in the *Undergraduate Bulletin*.
- Review the applied health science graduation worksheet with an applied health science academic advisor.
- Talk to one or more upper-level applied health science students about their major.

- Go to the Career Center to read about careers in exercise science.
- Go to the VCU bookstore and browse in the exercise science textbook section.
- Shadow exercise science professionals who work in fitness and wellness centers in the public and private sectors.
- Check out the American College of Sports Medicine website at www.ascm.org for information on topics related to the scope of exercise science.

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