

Viridis Graduate Institute

Ecopsychology and Environmental Humanities

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Viridis Graduate Institute is committed to building a vibrant, diverse and inclusive educational environment that promotes learning and the free exchange of ideas. Our academic and learning communities are based on the expectation that their members uphold the shared goal of academic excellence through honesty, integrity, and pride in one's own academic efforts and respectful treatment of the academic efforts of others.

Like all other communities, the Institute can function properly only if its members adhere to clearly established goals and values. Essential to the fundamental purpose of the Institute is the commitment to the principles of truth and academic honesty. Accordingly, the Student Honor Code is designed to ensure that the principle of academic honesty is upheld. While all members of the Institute share this responsibility, the Honor Code is designed so that special responsibility for upholding the principle of academic honesty lies with each student. All students are expected to comply with Viridis Graduate Institute honor code, institutional policies, and academic policies.

Honor Code

As a student of Viridis Graduate Institute, I recognize that in the pursuit of my educational goals and aspirations I have certain responsibilities toward my fellow distance learners, my Institute, and myself. To fulfill these responsibilities, I pledge adherence to this Code of Conduct.

I will observe fully the standards, rules, policies, and guidelines established by VGI, the Distance Education Accrediting Commission, the State Education Agency, and other appropriate organizations serving an oversight role for my Institute.

I will adhere to high ethical standards in the pursuit of my education, and to the best of my ability will:

- *Conduct myself with professionalism, courtesy, and respect for others in all of my dealings with the university tutors, mentors, portfolio evaluators, administration, and other students.*
- *Present my qualifications and background truthfully and accurately for admission to the university.*
- *Observe the university policies and rules on submitting work, completing oral and written examinations, participating in discussions, and conducting research.*
- *Never turn in work that is not my own or present another person's ideas or scholarship as my own.*

- *Never ask for, receive, or give unauthorized help on graded assignments or oral and written examinations.*
- *Never use outside books or papers that are unauthorized by the university's curriculum and instruction.*
- *Never divulge the content of assignments or oral and written examinations to fellow students.*
- *Never improperly use, destroy, forge, or alter my university's documents, transcripts, or other records.*
- *(When applicable) Never divulge my online username or password.*
- *Always observe the recommended study schedule for my program of studies.*
- *Always report any violations of this Code of Conduct to the appropriate institution official, and report any evidence of cheating, plagiarism (in all forms), or improper conduct on the part of any student of the university when I have direct knowledge of these activities.*

Academic Freedom

The responsible academic community must welcome the conflict of ideas likely to ensue from diverse ideas and backgrounds. Academic responsibility provides an opportunity for expression of diverse points of view that in turn generates academic freedom.

This same policy provides for faculty freedom to research, publish, lecture, and conduct demonstrations in their field of expertise while urging faculty responsibility for the accuracy, sound judgment, and respect for the rights of others to express opinions.

Student's Rights are also identified in our policy:

- Instruction by unfettered teachers
- Access to all information pertinent to the subject of study
- Freedom to select their internships and associates
- Intellectual disagreement with instructors and associates without fear of reprisal

Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure that was adopted by the American Association of Institute Professors and the Association of American Colleges. Policy V530.2 provides further protection of students' freedom of expression:

- The professor should encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression. Student performance is to be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.
- Students are free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.
- Students are protected through academic grievance procedures from capricious grading or other retaliatory action.

Academic Honesty

VGI requires students to act with integrity and maintain a code of honor in all academic and institutional matters. If, however, it is deemed that a student has violated this code of honor, the following acts shall constitute academic dishonesty:

1. Cheating of any kind: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
2. Fabrication: Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
 - Falsification of any oral or written examination, record, assignment, or report.
 - Representing oneself as another student for the purpose of taking an examination or allowing oneself to be represented by another for the same reason.
 - Furnishing false or misleading information to school officials or on official records.
 - Forging, altering or misusing the school name, the name of school employees, documents, records, or identification.
3. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of the Honor Code:
 - Collaborating with another student during an oral or written examination without permission.
 - Collusion by obtaining or giving another student unauthorized assistance with coursework.
 - Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting contents of an oral or written examination, record, assignment, or report.
 - Representing oneself as another student for the purpose of taking an examination or allowing oneself to be represented by another for the same reason.
 - Using any technology to infringe upon the rights of others.
 - Using technology (or verbally threatening to do so) to take any action that endangers or impairs the safety, health, life, or freedom of any person affiliated with Viridis Graduate Institute.
 - If it is determined by a student's Instructor, VGI Faculty, or any other staff member, that plagiarism has occurred, the student will receive a grade of XF (failure due to academic dishonesty).
4. Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.
 - Plagiarism (in any form).
 - Using material not authorized by the Institute's curriculum to complete an assignment or oral and written examination without permission.
 - Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting contents of an oral or written examination, record, assignment, or report.
 - If plagiarism re-occurs, the student's enrollment at VGI may be suspended.

Copyright/Educational Fair Use

Faculty members of VGI are responsible for observing the laws concerning the use of copyrighted material. Section 107 of the Federal Copyright Law Revision of 1978 provides that fair use of a copyrighted work for purposes such as teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research, is not an infringement of copyright.

Copyright laws and statutes are complicated. The four statutory criteria used to determine whether the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use are as follows:

1. The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational uses;
2. The nature of the copyrighted work;
3. How substantial a portion is used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
4. The effect of the use upon the potential market.

Student – Faculty Relations

The relationship between student and faculty is a unique and special one. VGI encourages faculty to give encouragement, appropriate feedback, and support to each student in order to inspire them in their studies. However, students must respect the ethical boundaries between professor and student and conduct themselves professionally at all times. It is necessary for students to exercise common-sense behavior that avoids any kind of personal relationship outside of the need for additional information, mentoring or support. Emails, telephone calls, and personal contact is limited to the focus of the pedagogical relationship. Students should also not engage in a relationship with faculty via social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. VGI requires that *both* the student and faculty member be responsible for enforcing these boundaries.

It is important for faculty to contact the Academic Dean in order to further clarify if a questionable situation should arise. If a breach of these boundaries occurs for any reason, even if it is initiated by a student, faculty must contact the Academic Dean immediately. The situation will be reviewed by committee. If a personal relationship develops between faculty and student that is desired by both parties, VGI requires that the relationship is put “on hold” until the student graduates and is no longer part of the faculty-student dynamic. Additionally, that faculty member is not allowed to teach the course in which the student is currently enrolled.

Confidentiality

Faculty and staff are responsible for safeguarding confidential information obtained in connection with their employment. In the course of teaching, students may have access to confidential information regarding VGI; it is their responsibility not to reveal or divulge any such information. Anyone violating this policy may be disciplined by VGI.

Open Door Policy

VGI is, in essence, an ecosystem, operating with many of the same principles as all ecosystems. We believe that there must be communication and exchange between all those involved with the school (Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, students and operations) at all levels in order to be successful. For that reason, an open door policy exists that allows all individuals to

discuss with leadership any conflicts and concerns that may arise relative to Viridis Graduate Institute.

Academic Policy Violations

Any violations, complaints, grievances, or questionable behavior in regard to Viridis Graduate Institute's academic policies will be referred to the Grievance Committee for review and recommendation for action. The appeal of the committee's recommendation is referred to the President who has the final decision