



Student and Family Handbook 2024-2025



Published annually by Villanova University, College of Professional Studies, Villanova, PA
19085

Copyright (c) 2023 by Villanova University.
All rights reserved.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Mission Statement.....	4
History & Goals	4
Program Pillars.....	5
VUnited Scholars Program Staff Directory	6
Villanova University Policies	7
Behavioral Expectations for the VUnited Scholars Program	7
Satisfactory Academic Progress Reviews.....	9
Code of Student Conduct Violations	10
VUnited Scholars Community Expectations	10
Academic Knowledge.....	13
Curriculum & Academic Coursework	13
VUnited Scholar Seminars.....	13
Inclusive Academic Experiences	15
Auditing Courses and/or Taking Academic Courses for Credit.....	15
Credit Courses Additional Guidance	16
Office of Disability Services.....	16
Office of Learning Support Services	17
Academic Integrity.....	17
Accountability.....	18
Absences & Attendance	18
Class Tardiness	19
Phone Use & Social Media Policy.....	19
Villanova Tutoring Center	19
Mentorship Support	20
Career Mentors.....	20
Academic Mentors	20
Complaints about Grades and/or Faculty.....	20
Social and Psychological Development.....	21
Student Health Center.....	21
Counseling Center.....	22
Uwill	22
Alcohol Policy	22

Mentorship Program	23
Social Mentors	23
Movement Mentors	23
Meal Mentors	23
VUnited Scholars Parent/Guardian Policy.....	23
Role of the Parent/Guardian.....	23
Family Expectations.....	24
Family Contact Protocol	24
Non-Emergency Situations	24
Emergency Situations	25
Family Engagement Opportunities	25
Person-Centered Planning Meeting	25
Parent/Guardian Virtual Meetings	26
In-Person Events	26
VUnited Scholars Newsletter.....	26
Family/Guardian Information and Student Privacy	26
The Family Educational Rights Act (FERPA).....	26
Independent Living Skills	27
Office of Residence Life	27
Independent Living Advisors.....	27
Roommates	28
Move In/Move Out	28
Residential Conduct Expectations	28
Disruptive Residential Conduct	29
Sexual Misconduct Policy.....	29
For more community residential policies, please visit the Villanova Student Handbook: https://studenthandbook.villanova.edu/	30
Family Dinners.....	30
Career and Vocational Skills	30
Past Internship Placement Locations	31
Benefits of Inclusive Employment.....	32
Appendix A: VUnited Scholars Program Expectations and Policy Signature Form.....	33
Appendix B: Family Expectations Form	35
Appendix C: Learning Contract.....	36
Appendix D: Financial Support	37

Subject to Change

The Student Handbook of the VUnited Scholars Program is designed to provide each student with information which will serve as a guide through their completion of the academic program at Villanova University. VUnited Scholars must also adhere to the Villanova University Student Handbook and the Code of Student Conduct. This program handbook is meant to serve as a supplement to the University Student Handbook and the Code of Student Conduct, and in no way replaces or amends any of the policies or procedures that are documented there.

In addition to information concerning the curriculum, student activities, facilities, and resources available, this handbook contains critical information about student responsibilities. Students are expected to read it thoroughly and to use it as a reference throughout the program.

This handbook may be amended during the course of the academic year, as deemed necessary by the University. The most current version is always available on our website: <https://www1.villanova.edu/university/professional-studies/academics/professional-education/vunited-scholars.html>

Last Amended: July 30, 2024

Introduction

Mission Statement

The VUnited Scholars Program is a two-year residential certificate program offered through Villanova's College of Professional Studies. This program merges the following four elements: academic knowledge, social and psychological development, independent living skills, and career and vocational skills.

History & Goals

In 2016, Martha Murray and Joe Adamec approached Villanova University about starting a residential academic certificate program for students with intellectual disabilities. They had a vision of a program rooted at a major Catholic university that would provide opportunities for a population of students with special needs that were not currently served at the time and had connections to Villanova students whom they knew would be enthusiastic partners.

In 2019, College of Professional Studies' leadership met with Martha and Joe about making their vision a reality at Villanova. With generous financial assistance from the Terri and Tom Murphy Foundation - Pathways to Independence, the VUnited Scholars program was officially announced on September 22, 2020, as part of [1842 Day](#). The program welcomed its first cohort of students in August 2021.

The Program has continued to receive generous financial support from other enthusiastic supporters interested in opening pathways for students with intellectual disabilities at Villanova. Anyone interested in making a gift to the program can do so through [University Advancement](#).

Villanova University's College of Professional Studies is proud and honored to be one of the first Catholic universities to offer a residential experience to students in order to provide an inclusive college life where they can...

- Develop a variety of skills essential for independent adulthood through practical courses and field placements.
- Learn adaptive life skills through a full on-campus experience, living and learning in a traditional college environment.
- Have significant field experience in off-campus internship
- Learn to structure their independent leisure activities and free time under the safety net of the VUnited Scholars Program.

- Have a full Catholic college experience and have access to campus ministry worship and service opportunities.
- Participate in campus activities, clubs, and special events.
- Learn fitness and healthy living choices through structured, supervised activities.
- Eat in campus dining halls and improve social skills through peer-to-peer interactions with the greater student body.
- Learn and practice the rules of good judgment and safety in every day living.

Program Pillars

Four pillars drive the VUnited Scholars student experience on campus. They are:

1. Academic Knowledge
2. Social and Psychological Development
3. Independent Living Skills
4. Career and Vocational Skills

These four pillars direct all that the program seeks to accomplish, resulting in students earning a *Certificate in Community and Professional Development*. This credential is a professional education certificate awarded by the College of Professional Studies in alignment with national inclusive postsecondary certificate programs. Overall, students will spend approximately 20 hours per week engaged in program activities as they work towards their certificate.

The specific requirements over two academic years (4 semesters) for the Certificate are:

- 1) Academic Coursework (~9 hours/week)
- 2) Career Development (~8 hours/week)
- 3) Campus and Community Engagement (~3 hours/week)

VUnited Scholars Program Staff Directory

VUnited Scholars General Email Account

vunitedscholars@villanova.edu

Use this email for questions about student accounts, general program questions, and administrative needs.

VUnited Scholars Duty Phone Number

(484) 434-9402

Use this number in case of emergencies regarding students in evening and weekend hours.

Molly Shawhan, M.Ed.

Program Director

College of Professional Studies

(610) 519-8065

molly.shawhan@villanova.edu

Deborah Harris, MA, OTR/L

Assistant Director, Student and Career Supports

College of Professional Studies

(610) 519-8035

deborah.harris@villanova.edu

Kimberly Mariani

Program Coordinator

College of Professional Studies

(610) 519-4341

kimberly.mariani@villanova.edu

Amanda Myers

Independent Living Advisor

College of Professional Studies

(484) 531-6978

a.myers@villanova.edu

Philip Murray
Independent Living Advisor
College of Professional Studies
(610) 684-5847
philip.murray@villanova.edu

James Conte
Independent Living Advisor, Graduate Assistant
College of Professional Studies
jconte4@villanova.edu

College of Professional Studies Deans' Offices
Vasey Hall, Room 103
610-519-4300

Program Requirements

VUnited Scholars students are expected to:

- 1) Demonstrate behaviors aligned with the following program requirements:
 - a. Be able to live in student housing with limited support.
 - b. Have basic safety skills in unsupervised settings.
 - c. Be able to independently navigate the Villanova University campus.
 - d. Manage unsupervised time independently.
 - e. Navigate moderate social or executive functioning challenges independently.
 - f. Recognize appropriate social and physical boundaries.
 - g. Manage basic health, medicine and hygiene needs independently.
- 2) Make [satisfactory academic progress](#) as defined by the Academic Standing Policy of the College of Professional Studies.
- 3) Comply with all University student policies as outlined in the [Villanova University Student Handbook](#), including the Code of Student Conduct.

Behavioral Expectations for the VUnited Scholars Program

The VUnited Scholars Program is a unique experience on Villanova's campus which welcomes a new population of students to campus. The specific program requirements regarding students' ability to function independently are noted above.

These criteria are rigorously evaluated during the admissions process; however, once students arrive on campus and assimilate into a fully residential setting, other students, staff and/or faculty may note behaviors in conflict with these requirements. Behaviors that potentially violate the Code of Student Conduct or other University policies will be referred for review under the applicable policy and its procedures. For other behaviors that do not align with program expectations, the following process will typically be followed (absent any emergent threat to health or safety that makes these steps impracticable):

PROCESS

1. The student will be notified of the concern.
2. A discussion will take place with the student about behaviors of concern, and strategies, solutions, and support.
3. In certain circumstances and when appropriate depending on the nature of the concern, parent/guardian(s), and program and/or College staff member, may be included in a discussion about what is expected, and what will happen if the student continues to behave in a manner that does not meet expectations.

OUTCOMES

1. A formal documentation of the discussion with the student will be retained in the student's file.
2. Implementation of an action plan.

For the following potential outcomes, the student and a parent/guardian will be informed that the outcome is being considered, and the student will have an opportunity to be heard by the College Dean and provide any relevant information for review prior to the decision. There is no requirement that the outcomes must be used in the order listed before more serious action is taken; rather, the outcome(s) imposed will be based on the nature and seriousness of each case.

1. Written warning to the student. A written warning is an official notice to a student that their behavior conflicts with the requirements of the program and future issues will likely result in additional action, such as those listed below.
2. The student is placed on formal probation by the College Assistant Dean. Probation is a set amount of time (minimum of 2 weeks but could be longer) in which a student must demonstrate consistent behaviors aligned with the program requirements. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.
3. The student is sent home for a break from the community for a period of time to be determined by the Dean or designee.

4. Dismissal from the program by the College Dean, which means the student can no longer be a member of the VUnited Scholars program or be at Villanova.

Appeals

Only dismissal decisions are eligible to be considered for appeal, all other outcomes of the process described above are not eligible for appeal.

The appeal process for dismissal decisions related to program-specific behavioral requirements will be reviewed by the Senior Vice Provost (or designee). Decisions made by the Senior Vice Provost (or designee) on appeal are final, including whether an appeal is procedurally permitted. Appeals are limited to the following: (1) material procedural error; (2) material new evidence that was not previously available for review; or (3) disproportionate sanction.

During the appeal process, students may be subject to certain restrictions impacting such things as: class attendance; participation in internship experiences; on-campus housing; participation and/or membership in organizations, athletic events/teams/clubs, and/or extracurricular activities; attendance at university events/functions; and access to university buildings. The Senior Vice Provost (or designee) may consult with other University officials as they deem appropriate.

Appeals must be submitted in writing by the student within two (2) business days of notification of a dismissal decision. The student may also request to meet with the Senior Vice Provost (or designee) to discuss the appeal after it has been submitted. Parents or guardians are permitted to participate in this meeting. The Senior Vice Provost (or designee) will advise the student filing the appeal of their final decision in writing.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Reviews

VUnited Scholars are evaluated at the conclusion of each semester for [satisfactory academic progress](#) towards completion of all certificate program requirements (academic coursework, internships, and community engagement). Should concerns be raised at that time about any of the program requirements, a determination will be made regarding any conditions on the student's continuation in the program and/or whether an academic dismissal is appropriate under the Academic Standing Policy.

Code of Student Conduct Violations

If a VUnited Scholar is accused of behavior that violates the Code of Student Conduct, the matter will be referred for review under the Code of Student Conduct. Students may request reasonable accommodations for documented disabilities in order to fully and meaningfully participate in a process by contacting the Dean of Students Office. Students should submit accommodation requests in advance to allow adequate time to review, identify and implement any reasonable accommodations. The full Code of Student Conduct is available here: <https://studenthandbook.villanova.edu/code-of-student-conduct>

VUnited Scholars Community Expectations

The expectations below are used as a teaching tool for VUnited Scholars. They are applicable to all aspects of the VUnited Scholars community life. Depending on their nature, any issues in conflict with these expectations will be addressed under the appropriate University policy, which may include those listed above.

Villanova University is a Catholic and Augustinian community. This means that Villanova is a place where people learn together, inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and St. Augustine. There are expectations for members of this community.

These expectations are all about **CARE** for yourself and for others.

VUnited Scholars are expected to be:
Compassionate | Active | Respectful | Engaged

Expectations are **important** because:

- 1) They help you make good decisions.
- 2) They help you learn and grow.
- 3) They help you get ready for life after Villanova.
- 4) They help our community be a happy, healthy, and safe place.

All community members must follow these Program Expectations.

1. Treat others with compassion, respect, and dignity. **This means:**
 - a. We will listen to our program staff, professors, and others who work at Villanova.

- b. We will use kind words when we talk to others, when we text, and when we use social media.
 - c. We will tell the truth and be honest.
 - d. We will ask for help if we feel scared, worried, angry, confused, or overwhelmed.
 - e. We will have a positive attitude towards ourselves and others.
2. Be an active and responsible student. **This means:**
- a. We will arrive on time for all class and program sessions.
 - b. We will complete assignments on time and to the best of our ability.
 - c. We will participate in class activities and discussions to the best of our ability.
 - d. We will communicate with professors about late work and when we need help.
 - e. We will let the program staff and our professors know if we must leave campus for any reason unrelated to the program.
3. Create a safe environment where people and property are respected. **This means:**
- a. We will use kind words and interact safely with others.
 - b. We will respect the privacy of other students.
 - c. We will ask before touching other people's things or entering their room.
 - d. If people ask us to give them space, we will listen and respect their personal boundaries.
 - e. We will follow the rules about quiet hours in the residence hall. Quiet hours are 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., Sunday through Thursday and 11 p.m. to 8 a.m. on weekends.
 - f. We will follow the rules about alcohol use.
4. Be an engaged and committed employee when we are at our internships. **This means:**
- a. We will be prepared, appropriately dressed, and on time for internships.
 - b. We will be respectful to coworkers, customers, and others within the workplace.
 - c. We will communicate with program personnel and work leadership about concerns, questions, and requests for time off.

What happens if we do not meet the Program Expectations?

Not meeting these Program Expectations may impact your opportunity to successfully complete the program, and harm the overall experience for all VUnited Scholars students.

Academic Knowledge

Curriculum & Academic Coursework

The VUnited Scholars program consists of classes specific to students within the program called “VUnited Scholar Seminars” (6 hrs./wk.) Students also pursue academic experiences that are inclusive with traditional students (minimum of 3 hrs./wk.).

VUnited Scholar Seminars

VUnited Scholars students participate in the following program-specific courses throughout their four semesters at Villanova. The courses listed below are representative of the VUnited Scholars curriculum and offerings can change from year to year.

Fall Semester 1

VUSC 0001 Internship Preparation Bootcamp
VUSC 0002 Employment Readiness Skills Workshop, Part 1
VUSC 0003 Internship Reflection, Part 1
VUSC 0008 Fitness and Health
VUSC 0009 Introduction to Nutrition and Wellness, Part 1
VUSC 0100 Adjusting to College Life and Personal Strengths
VUSC 0101 Theology Part 1, Relating to God
VUSC 0104 Computers and Computer Safety
VUSC 0105 Healthy Relationships
VUSC 0107 Voice, Public Speaking, and Performance
VUSC 0102 Foundations of Literacy and Writing, Part 1

Spring Semester 2

VUSC 0003 Employment Readiness Skills Workshop, Part 2
VUSC 0007 Internship Reflection, Part 2
VUSC 0008 Fitness and Health
VUSC 0014 Introduction to Nutrition and Wellness, Part 2
VUSC 0201 Theology Part 2, Discerning the Good and Forming Conscience
VUSC 0205 Emotional and Social Engagement
VUSC 0102 Foundations of Literacy and Writing, Part 2
VUSC 0300 Introduction to Leadership

Fall Semester 3

VUSC 0001 Internship Preparation Bootcamp

VUSC 0008 Fitness and Health
VUSC 0010 Cooking and Nutrition, Part 1
VUSC 0011 Independent Living Skills, Part 1
VUSC 0012 Entrepreneurship Workshop, Part I
VUSC 0013 Internship Reflection, Part 3
VUSC 0103 Personal Finance
VUSC 0200 Self-Leadership
VUSC 0024 Career Prep
VUSC 0301 Theology Part 3, Connecting Faith and Life in a World of Diversity and Change
VUSC 0302 Integrated Literacy and Writing, Part 1

Spring Semester 4

VUSC 0001 Internship Preparation Bootcamp
VUSC 0008 Fitness and Health
VUSC 0015 Internship Reflection, Part 4
VUSC 0020 Cooking and Nutrition, Part 2
VUSC 0021 Independent Living Skills, Part 2
VUSC 0302 Integrated Literacy and Writing, Part 2
VUSC 0304 Principles of Art and Drawing, Part 3
VUSC 0400 Advanced Leadership
VUSC 0401 Theology Part 4, Christian Sacramental Experience
VUSC 0402 Integrated Literacy and Writing, Part 2
VUSC 0403 Personal Finance, Part 2
VUSC 0406 Nursing and First Aid

Electives

VUSC 0109 Video Production
VUSC 0208 Introduction to Theater, Part 1
VUSC 0210 Introduction to Theater, Part 2
VUSC 0108 Principles of Art and Drawing, Part 1
VUSC 0209 Principles of Art and Drawing, Part 2
VUSC 0203 Scientific Thinking: Biological, Physical, and Earth Analytical Sciences
VUSC 0303 American History
VUSC 0207 The Art of Listening
VUSC 0405 Art of Listening, Part 2: The History of Jazz and Pop Music
VUSC 0404 Early Childhood Education
VUSC 0407 Introduction to Sports Management

Inclusive Academic Experiences

Academic Experiences with Traditional Students (minimum of 3 hrs./wk.):

- Students are required to participate in an academic experience with traditional students for **a minimum of three hours per week.**
- These can include:
 - An audited and/or credit-bearing Villanova undergraduate course from the Academic Catalog.
 - Professional Education courses and workshops offered through the College of Professional Studies.
 - Non-credit-bearing leadership training or other courses at the University.
 - Other academic experiences are determined through academic advising process.

Auditing Courses and/or Taking Academic Courses for Credit

Following a process with each student's Academic Advisor through the College of Professional Studies and the VUnited Scholars Program Director, students may enroll in a Villanova undergraduate course from the Academic Catalog for an audit and/or for academic credit. The general guidelines for traditional three-credit course participation are below:

- Students interested in traditional three-credit courses are required to first audit a traditional course successfully before being approved to enroll in a course for credit.
- Successful completion of an audit class is defined as meeting all the expectations outlined in the learning contract (See Appendix) between the student and the faculty member.
- Students may only audit and/or enroll in one traditional UG course per semester.
- **Students who are interested in enrolling either for audit or credit in more than one class per semester should be advised that is beyond the scope and permissions of the program, and no exceptions will be made.**

The general process is outlined below:

At the quarterly student planning team meeting, the team discusses student career goals and considers whether enrollment in traditional undergraduate courses (for

audit or credit) aligns with student’s career goals. *Note that program requirements for “academic experiences with traditional undergraduates” can be fulfilled in other ways as well and are suggested, although not required.*

If it is determined by the student planning team that enrollment in traditional undergraduate courses aligns with the student’s career goals, student planning team members brainstorm together on courses and/or disciplines of interest at the meeting. The Program Director reviews the list with the student and determines final approval of courses. The Program Director also determines and approves whether students will audit or take a course for credit. This information is conveyed to the Director, Academic Advising and Student Support prior to course registration. Student enrollment in courses is subject to availability, and enrollment in the student’s first choice of courses is not guaranteed.

Students who are auditing a course will meet with their professor and complete the Learning Contract (see Appendix) with the faculty member to outline the work they will complete in the course. The student then shares the Learning Contract with the CPS Academic Advisor, where it will be kept on file.

Credit Courses Additional Guidance

To take a class for credit, students must demonstrate the ability to meet the same academic course requirements as any student taking the course, with or without reasonable accommodations (which accommodations are obtained through the University’s Office of Disability Services and/or Learning Support Services, depending on the nature of the accommodation). Courses may not be modified in a manner that lowers academic standards or otherwise fundamentally alters an essential requirement or course objective.

Office of Disability Services

Located on the second floor of Connelly Center, Villanova’s Office of Disability Services (ODS) ensures that qualified students with disabilities have equal access to educational opportunities by eliminating physical and educational barriers. ODS provides support services and accommodations to students with disabilities, so they can participate freely and actively in all facets of university life.

ODS provides accommodations to students with physical disabilities, neurologically based disorders that trigger a physical response, sensory disabilities, chronic health conditions that rise to a level of a disability, or a temporary injury that requires accommodations.

Students with disabilities may request support services in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). **Students must self-identify by providing notice of their disability and the required documentation to ODS in order to be approved for reasonable accommodations.**

For more information about ODS, please visit their website [here](#).

Office of Learning Support Services

Located on the second floor of Falvey Library, Villanova's Office of Learning Support Services (LSS) offers students a variety of academic support services that are designed to help all Villanova students maximize their academic success.

Students with documented disabilities who need academic accommodation should register with LSS by completing the online intake form through Clockwork. Clockwork is a comprehensive management system that provides Disability Services Departments with a secure, multi-purpose, scheduling & tracking solution to serve the needs of students with disabilities. It can be accessed here:

<https://vuclockwrk.villanova.edu/clockwork/custom/misc/home.aspx>

LSS offers academic coaching to students of all abilities who need support with time management, organization, study and test taking strategies, test anxiety, and more.

For more information on Learning Support Services please visit [their website](#).

Academic Integrity

Villanova University's Code of Academic Integrity and detailed procedures for appeals are found [here](#) on the University's website. This Code applies to all VUnited Scholars.

Academic integrity, n.: the process of maintaining honesty about ideas and their sources, and avoiding behaviors such as cheating on tests, plagiarizing papers, falsifying data.

Academic integrity is a primary value for any institution of higher education. Cheating on tests, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty and

misconduct are completely unacceptable, especially at Villanova which prides itself on its commitment to the Augustinian values of truth, unity, and love.

Villanova University maintains an Academic Integrity Gateway to provide students with an understanding of the Code of Academic Integrity, procedures and the penalties associated with academic integrity violations. The Academic Integrity Gateway is found [here](#) on the Falvey Memorial Library's website.

Accountability

Accountability is the obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions. With a student-centered approach, students are accountable for their work and effort within classes. Professors are easily accessible via email for help with assignments.

Absences & Attendance

Attending class on time is an important part of the learning goals associated with the academic component of the program in alignment with career and vocational goals.

There are two types of absences, excused or unexcused absences. Examples of each are below with final discretion in the hands of the Program Director in consultation with the faculty member. When feasible, absence requests must be sent to the Program Director for approval two weeks in advance. If an absence is not deemed excused and a student proceeds to miss class, it could result in a letter grade deduction in alignment with University policy. Professors have the authority, however, to deduct points from the course grade for absences and tardiness at their discretion. Expectations for student attendance and tardiness are included in the syllabus for each course.

Excused Absence	Unexcused Absence
Personal Illness	Interview for a new job
Family Illness that requires student intervention/care	Employment
Family Death	Vacation
Attendance (with approval) at conference or leadership event representing Villanova University	Flights arranged prior to or after an academic break
University or College approved activities	Preparation for or completion of an examination
	Personal commitments
	Fail to submit all compliance documents

Class Tardiness

Attending class on time is an important part of the learning process. It helps students develop skills related to independence, accountability, and professionalism. Expectations of attendance and tardiness for students are included in the syllabus of each course. Professors record attendance and institute reminders of the importance of arriving to class on time. Professors, at their discretion, may deduct points from the course grade for absences and tardiness.

Phone Use & Social Media Policy

Technology used in the classroom is at the discretion of each instructor outlined in the course syllabus. Failure to adhere to classroom policy regarding use of technology will result in a meeting with the Program Director and will follow the guidelines for addressing issues with Program Expectations.

Villanova Tutoring Center

Students seek tutoring for a wide array of reasons. Some come for support with a challenging course; others come to reach new levels of achievement in subject areas in which they already excel. All peer tutoring is done in a spirit of mutual collaboration—both tutor and student learn through the tutoring process. Available to Villanova students, tutoring services are free of charge. General information on the Tutoring Center is available [on their website](#).

VUnited Scholars have specific Academic Mentors through the Tutoring Center as well as access to the Tutoring Center supports through the Writing Center, Learners’ Studio, Center for Speaking and Presentation, and Math Center.

Mentorship Support

VUnited Scholars students have access to Career and Academic mentors to support their academic growth and development outside of the classroom.

Career Mentors

Career Mentors are volunteers who have retired from successful careers and offer their time supporting students in Study Halls. Career Mentors offer the following supports for students:

- Assignment Preparation
- Mock Interviews
- Resume Creation
- Cover Letters
- Leadership and Confidence Skills
- Public Speaking

Academic Mentors

Academic mentors are traditional Villanova undergraduate students who provide support to students in relation to their studies. Each VUnited Scholar is assigned a one-on-one Academic Mentor who assists students weekly with:

- Review of material presented in class.
- Assistance with assignments.
- Scribe or facilitate student classroom accommodations.
- Preparation for tests and quizzes.
- Identification and implementation of study methods based on learning styles.
- Support with executive functioning in relation to class materials.

Complaints about Grades and/or Faculty

Villanova University has a set of procedures for resolving student complaints about faculty performance or about grades.

The procedure for complaints about courses offered as part of the VUnited Scholars Program Certificate is found here: [Grade and Faculty Performance Complaints & other Concerns | Villanova University College of Professional Studies](#)

The procedure for complaints about courses that are credit-bearing – whether a student is enrolled as an audit or to earn credit, is found here: [Grade Appeals & Complaints Against Faculty](#)

For all cases of grade complaints or faculty performance complaints which may involve allegations of sexual misconduct or discrimination in violation of University policies, please refer to the University's [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#), or [Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment Policy](#).

For all complaints regarding requested accommodations due to a disability, whether for a certificate or credit-bearing course, please refer to the [University's Section 504 Disability Grievance Procedure](#).

Social and Psychological Development

Students can utilize support across campus to assist with their social and psychological development. Additionally, the Program also sponsors a variety of social events, extracurricular activities, and off-campus trips for students and their peer mentors. As part of the requirements to earn their Certificate, students must complete at least 150 hours of campus and community engagement activities, including things such as service projects, campus ministry retreats, student life clubs, among others.

Student Health Center

The [Villanova Student Health Center](#) takes pride in providing excellent health care to Villanova undergraduate and graduate students. Students can expect individualized attention and timely service, whether they are suffering from a cold, the flu, allergies, or something more serious.

If a student needs on-campus medical assistance, they can go to the Student Health Center at any point in time, 24/7. If they do not feel comfortable going alone, they can call the Public Safety non-emergency line, 610-519-5800, for assistance. *If a student has a medical emergency, they can call 911 or the Public Safety emergency line, 610-519-4444.*

Students may ask to be accompanied by a VUnited program staff member and can advocate having the program staff member present with nurses to help with communication at the Health Center.

Counseling Center

The [Counseling Center](#) is available to help VUnited Scholars students with personal and emotional concerns. With a variety of services and resources, the Counseling Center helps students function optimally regarding emotional, academic, social, and psychological issues.

Students can schedule an appointment in three ways:

- Call 610-519-4050 weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- Stop by the Counseling Center's physical location on the Villanova University campus (206 Health Services Building).
- Submit Appointment Request Form to receive a call from the Counseling Center to schedule your appointment.

VUnited Scholars staff are available to help facilitate in scheduling an appointment should a student request assistance. Students will be offered an appointment time that works with their class schedule. Appointments are generally available within a week of the request.

Uwill

Uwill is a leading mental health and wellness solution that allows students the ability to connect quickly with licensed mental health counselors based on their unique needs and preferences.

Uwill provides:

- 24/7 telehealth counseling.
- Availability of appointments 24/7.
- Counseling services at **no cost for students**.
- A secure and convenient path to clinical services beyond the usual University Counseling Center hours, including evenings and weekends.

Alcohol Policy

Students in the VUnited Scholars program must comply with the [University Alcohol Policy](#). VUnited Scholars of legal age are permitted to moderately and responsibly consume alcohol when under the full supervision of their parents and/or guardians as well as at limited pre-approved university events that include the presence of a VUnited Scholars staff member. Students enrolled in the VUnited Scholars program, regardless of age, are not permitted to be in possession of alcohol in their university dorm room, or common areas. Staff and faculty are not

permitted to provide alcohol to students in the VUnited Program. There will be no alcohol permitted at VUnited Scholars sponsored events.

Mentorship Program

In addition to the Academic and Career Mentors described above, each VUnited Scholar is assigned several other student mentors who are undergraduate or graduate Villanova students and are categorized as an Academic, Social, Movement, or Meal Mentor.

Social Mentors

Social Mentors engage one-on-one with students socially on campus. They may experience a CAT event, game, or extracurricular activity on campus together. This mentorship could also be as simple as getting a meal or going on a walk.

Movement Mentors

Movement Mentors facilitate physical activity with students. They engage in weekly movement by means of a walk, a workout at a Villanova Fitness Center, or another activity that both the Scholar and mentor enjoy.

Meal Mentors

Meal Mentors sign-up to meet for weekday lunches and dinners Monday through Friday. Meals take place on campus at 12:00 PM and 5:45 PM respectively, and the location is coordinated between the mentors and Scholars.

VUnited Scholars Parent/Guardian Policy

The VUnited Scholars program is a person-centered educational opportunity for students to learn and grow in a supportive environment. One of the integral goals of the program is growth in independence. To facilitate that growth, the role of the parent and their relationship to the institution as well as their student changes when the child enters college. The student becomes more engaged in his/her/their educational process with the intention of developing greater skills towards independence.

Role of the Parent/Guardian

The overall aim of the VUnited Scholars program is to promote self-determination, self-advocacy, and independence. We believe students benefit in learning on their own, becoming self-advocates, learning from mistakes, and continuing to make better choices. This often means the parent must step back from some prior engagements they have had in their child's life. **To support the students in**

making this shift, we suggest families step into a role that empowers, advises, and supports. Instead of advocating *for* their child, they are advocating *with* them. When parents hear a fear or complaint from their student, it is helpful to guide them towards solving the problem on their own, encouraging them to ask staff and other trusted individuals for help so that the students can begin to self-advocate.

Family Expectations

Our mission is to be person-centered, supporting self-advocacy and independence skills. Assuming the student has signed a FERPA waiver permitting us to share information with the student's family, families will be notified of various concerns and may or may not be asked to provide direct support depending on the challenge or issue. (In emergencies or situations where the University determines that there is an articulable and significant threat to the student or other individuals, parents/legal guardians will be notified regardless of whether the student has signed a FERPA waiver).

We will hold one Person-Centered Planning Meeting each semester which the family is requested to attend. Attendance is requested so that the student's family support can directly witness the student's progress and review the areas where they can best support the student.

Families and guardians are also asked to sign the "Family Expectations Form" during Orientation. This form provides tips and expectations that will facilitate understanding the families' new role as well as the program's role.

Family Contact Protocol

The VUnited Scholars program staff view our role with families as a team in support of each Scholar in which the "person-centered approach" is our captain. Family members may contact their student at any point in time. That said, we ask families to support their children in a professional manner when it entails contacting program staff. For most of these conversations, we ask that a person-centered approach be utilized in including students in the conversation such as to empower students towards independence. Professional communication between families and program staff should adhere to the following guidelines:

Non-Emergency Situations

Email or Work Phone: Staff email or the work phone numbers provided should be the first form of communication with staff for non-emergency situations. This is

the best means to set up meetings, ask academic questions, and address administrative issues. Each program staff member has a work phone number that can be used for phone calls. Program staff email and work phone information can be found on the Staff Directory page of the Handbook.

Duty Phone: Outside of normal University business hours (Monday through Friday, 9am – 5pm) and on weekends, the Duty Phone number can be used to reach the staff member who is on duty with more immediate, but non-emergency concerns for example: student not answering phone, meal concerns, family issue, notification of new medical appointment within the next day, or other upcoming need to leave campus, etc.

The Duty Phone number is (484) 434-9402.

Emergency Situations

In the event of an emergency, please contact Villanova Public Safety directly. They are available 24/7/365 at **(610) 519-4444**.

The Villanova Public Safety non-emergency number is **(610) 519-5800**.

Family Engagement Opportunities

There are multiple means by which families can engage with their students, program staff, and other families within the program.

Person-Centered Planning Meeting

Each semester, families are invited to join one Person-Centered Planning Meeting with their student and program staff. Person-Centered Planning is recognized and widely adopted framework by inclusive higher education programs because it “ensures that students have a voice in outlining their personal goals, time spent on campus, and support needs.”¹

In this meeting, a framework will be used to discuss the strengths and areas for improvement as well as goals for each Scholar in relation to the four program pillars: academic knowledge, social and psychological development, independent living skills, career, and vocational skills.

¹ [How To Think College Community Life Engagement – On the College Campus.](#)

Parent/Guardian Virtual Meetings

There will be opportunities throughout the year for a Parent/Guardian Virtual meeting led by a former VUnited Scholars Program parent. The Parent Liaison will lead conversations on the following topics and more:

- Parenting a College Student
- Person-Centered Student Approach
- Advocating With instead of For
- Parenting towards Independence
- Post-Graduation Preparation

In-Person Events

Families will be invited to in-person family events such as Parents Weekend, Homecoming Weekend, Family Service Outings, Campus-Wide events, and more. We love it when families join us for these various events!

VUnited Scholars Newsletter

Monthly updates on Program happenings are provided in the VUnited Scholars Newsletter, “VUpdates,” which is emailed monthly to families and friends of the program.

Family/Guardian Information and Student Privacy

The role of the parent and their relationship to the institution as well as their student changes when the child enters college. Because students are no longer under IDEA, the student becomes more engaged in their educational process with the intention of developing increased skills towards independence.

The Family Educational Rights Act (FERPA)

The [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. Under FERPA, VUnited Scholars have certain rights with respect to their education records including the right to inspect, review, and seek amendment of their education records. In general, education records are defined as records maintained by the institution that are directly related to a student.

All personally identifiable information contained in student education records other than directory information is considered confidential information. This information includes but is not necessarily limited to academic evaluations; general counseling

and advising records; disciplinary records; financial aid records; letters of recommendation; medical or health records; clinical counseling and psychiatric records; transcripts, test scores, and other academic records; and cooperative work records. “Personally identifiable information” means that the information includes: (a) the name of the student; (b) the address of the student; (c) a personal identifier such as social security number; or (d) a list of personal characteristics or other information that would make the student’s identity easily traceable.

The University will generally not disclose personally identifiable information to third parties without the written consent of the student. The signed and dated consent should specify the records to be disclosed, the purpose of the disclosure, and to whom the records are to be disclosed.

VUnited Scholars can consent to disclosure of their education records information to family members or others by completing the [Student Consent to Disclosure of Educational Records form](#) and returning it to the Office of the Registrar. This form is provided to the student at the time of enrollment but can be submitted at any point of the student’s enrollment in the program. CPS staff verify signed FERPA waivers in Banner.

For more information about student records, please see the University’s [Disclosure of Student Records Policy](#).

Independent Living Skills

Office of Residence Life

VUnited Scholars live residentially on campus with supports in place by the program and the larger university, in conjunction with the [Office of Residence Life](#). The Office for Residence Life is committed to providing students with a residential experience that enhances and extends the educational mission of the University by promoting positive opportunities for personal development and facilitating a strong sense of community responsibility among residents. The Office believes that the development of a successful residential community depends on the willingness of its members to commit themselves to the common good of all and to, at times, compromise individual preferences to maintain fairness and civility.

Independent Living Advisors

The VUnited Scholars program has a unique staffing model through the Independent Living Advisors. Independent Living Advisors facilitate student

independent living support on campus. They strive to create a welcoming residential community and to maintain a comfortable and safe environment for VUnited Scholars students residing in residence halls. These individuals are the University's representatives to VUnited Scholars residential students, and consequently, they have broad responsibilities extending to all areas of the students' physical, social, academic, and emotional well-being.

Roommates

VUnited Scholars may live in single rooms or with a roommate situationally dependent on residential allowances on campus. Typically, all VUnited Scholars and program staff are housed in St. Mary's Hall. At the beginning of the first year, students will complete a roommate questionnaire to assist with housing assignments.

Housing assignments are the exclusive responsibility of the Office for Residence Life in partnership with the VUnited Scholars Program Director. The Office reserves the right to change or modify housing assignments and fill housing vacancies, as necessary, at any time. Residence Life reserves the right to override housing selections and address housing concerns, as needed.

Move In/Move Out

Move-in and move-out dates and times are established and promulgated by the Office for Residence Life. Students must move-in/move-out in accord with these dates and times, which will be received via email communication from the Orientation committee the summer before their first year.

Residential Conduct Expectations

Residential students are expected to comport themselves in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct, Housing Agreements, and all other University policies contained in the Student Handbook as well as with respect to the VUnited Scholars Program Expectations. Additionally, living in community requires sensitivity toward and respect for the needs and identities of others. As the primary enterprise of the University is education, conduct considered appropriate in other settings may be inappropriate or insensitive in a residential community that must be supportive of the educational goals of its constituents.

Additionally, the University reserves the right to reassign or temporarily revoke on-campus housing or take other appropriate administrative action as deemed

necessary, without a formal hearing, for those students whose conduct is considered disruptive or potentially detrimental to the individual, roommates, and/or others in the residential community.

Disruptive Residential Conduct

As residential living is intended to complement a student's academic pursuits, the creation of an "academic atmosphere" in the residence halls is essential to meeting educational goals. Toward that end:

1. Conduct which is disruptive to the residential community is prohibited at all times.
2. Residents should keep noise in their own rooms, in hallways and in common areas to a minimum and non-intrusive level.
3. Residents should maintain the volume of electronic or other devices at a level that does not disturb other residents or any member of the University community. The use of headphones or earphones is encouraged.
4. Sound amplification equipment placed in windows for the purpose of directing music into public areas is prohibited. These items may be banned or confiscated if they become a cause of complaint or disruption.

To achieve this goal:

- Each residence hall will maintain "Quiet Hours" from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., Sunday through Thursday and 11 p.m. to 8 a.m. on weekends.
- During those hours, residents are expected to refrain from any activity which is disruptive to the residential community and to remain particularly sensitive to the needs of fellow residents.
- During exam periods residence hall "Quiet Hours" will be extended to include 24 hours of each reading and exam day.
- When "Quiet Hours" are not in effect, consideration and respect for others should continue to guide a resident's conduct and activities. The Office for Residence Life may address concerns related to disruptive and/or intrusive noise at any time of day.

Sexual Misconduct Policy

Villanova University seeks to foster and maintain a community of mutual respect and concern for all of its members. There can be no greater violation of the terms of that community, or of the essential dignity of any member of it, than an act of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking or other forms of misconduct described in this Policy (collectively referred to as "sexual misconduct"). These acts constitute the deepest affront to University standards and will not be tolerated in any form. The University expects all

members of the Villanova community to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Villanova Mission Statement and its Enduring Commitments available at http://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/president/about_university/mission./html and all applicable University policies.

Villanova prohibits all forms of sexual misconduct, as defined in Section II of the Sexual Misconduct Policy, and any person, including students, staff, and faculty, found responsible for such conduct will face disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal or expulsion from the University. See Appendix B of the Sexual Misconduct Policy for the complete Title IX Notice of Non-Discrimination, applicable to matters involving conduct prohibited under Title IX.

Read full policy here:

[Villanova University Sexual Misconduct Policy v.6 \(policytech.com\)](http://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/president/about_university/mission./html)

For more community residential policies, please visit the Villanova Student Handbook: <https://studenthandbook.villanova.edu/>

Family Dinners

VUnited Scholars participate in independent skill building by means of regular Family Dinners. For each dinner, a small group of students will cook a meal alongside one of the Independent Living Advisors. The community then joins together in eating the meal with one another. Students engage in the process by means of:

- Collaborating on a plan
- Researching recipes
- Purchasing ingredients
- Meal preparation
- Cooking and baking
- Kitchen cleaning

Family Dinners build upon what is taught in the Nutrition and Wellness course, while facilitating independence skill building for students.

Career and Vocational Skills

The VUnited Scholars Internship program is designed to facilitate professional experiences geared towards meaningful career and vocational skills. It provides student-centered, strength-based work opportunities in diverse fields. The

program places priority on learning transferable work skills, empowering student self-discovery in the workplace, and supporting students to advocate for themselves in a safe environment. A requirement to earn the Certificate in Community and Professional Development is ~480 hours of career development experience over the two-year program.

Internships take place primarily on Wednesdays between 9:00AM and 4:00 PM. In some instances, circumstances may permit internships that meet on days or times outside the typical Wednesday internship. Each semester, students rotate to different internships on or off campus. Generally, internships are assigned on campus for the first year and intern off campus during their second year. Transportation to internships is planned and provided, as necessary. Ongoing support is provided for the students and placement staff, which includes on-site visits, supervisor/staff education, and individual support meetings.

VUnited Scholars have interned in diverse fields including sports, media, marketing, public safety, natural sciences, film, performing arts, business, hospitality, and education. We prioritize placing students in positions that are reflective of their strengths, skills, and career interests. Internships are updated and expanded each semester to best fit our students and to serve the needs of the employment community.

Past Internship Placement Locations

Students have successfully completed a variety of internships including:

Academy of Natural Sciences	Philadelphia Country Club
Arden Theatre	Philadelphia Phillies
Assumption Academy Preschool	Radnor Memorial Library
Baker Industries	Ronald McDonald House
Center for Aquatic Sciences	SPCA Brandywine
Delaware Blue Rocks	The Refectory
Fighting Back Gym	Villanova Baseball Team
Haverford College Arboretum	Villanova Campus Ministry
Inn at Villanova	Villanova Career Center
Ivy Rehabilitation Center	Villanova College of Professional Studies
Lower Merion Township	Villanova Dining Services
Mainline Network	Villanova Facilities and Game Operations

Villanova Fitness Facilities
Villanova Football Team
Villanova Biology Department
Villanova Mailroom
Villanova Music Department
Villanova Public Safety
Villanova School of Nursing

Villanova Second Story
Villanova Sports Equipment Operations
Villanova Sports Marketing
Villanova Sports Media
Villanova Swim Team
Villanova Wildcard Office
Villanova Women's Lacrosse Team

Benefits of Inclusive Employment

Research from Accenture, in partnership with Disability:IN and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), reveals major benefits of disability inclusion in the workplace. According to the Accenture Disability Inclusion Research Report, “companies that embrace best practices for employing and supporting more persons with disabilities in their workforce have outperformed their peers.”

Disability inclusion has been found to be a great benefit to employers, specifically across the following six areas:

1. Increased Innovation
2. Improved Shareholder
3. Improved Productivity
4. Access to Supplier Ecosystem
5. Improved Market Share
6. Enhanced Reputation

Other Resources:

[Getting To Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage](#)

[The Disability Inclusion Imperative](#)

Appendix A: VUnited Scholars Program Expectations and Policy Signature Form

Villanova University is a Catholic and Augustinian community. This means that Villanova is a place where people learn together, inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and St. Augustine. There are expectations for members of this community.

These expectations are all about **CARE** for yourself and for others.

VUnited Scholars are expected to be:

Compassionate | Active | **Respectful** | Engaged

Expectations are **important** because:

- 1) They help you make good decisions.
- 2) They help you learn and grow.
- 3) They help you get ready for life after Villanova.
- 4) They help our community be a happy, healthy, and safe place.

All community members must follow these Program Expectations.

1. Treat others with compassion, respect, and dignity. **This means:**
 - a. We will listen to our program staff, professors, and others who work at Villanova.
 - b. We will use kind words when we talk to others, when we text, and when we use social media.
 - c. We will tell the truth and be honest.
 - d. We will ask for help if we feel scared, worried, angry, confused, or overwhelmed.
 - e. We will have a positive attitude towards ourselves and others.
2. Be an active and responsible student. **This means:**
 - a. We will arrive on time for all class and program sessions.
 - b. We will complete assignments on time and to the best of our ability.
 - c. We will participate in class activities and discussions to the best of our ability.
 - d. We will communicate with professors about late work and when we need help.

- e. We will let the program staff and our professors know if we must leave campus for any reason unrelated to the program.
3. Create a safe environment where people and property are respected. **This means:**
- a. We will use kind words and interact safely with others.
 - b. We will respect the privacy of other students.
 - c. We will ask before touching other people's things or entering their room.
 - d. If people ask us to give them space, we will listen and respect their personal boundaries.
 - e. We will follow the rules about quiet hours in the residence hall. Quiet hours are 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., Sunday through Thursday and 11 p.m. to 8 a.m. on weekends.
4. Be an engaged and committed employee when we are at our internships. **This means:**
- a. We will be prepared, appropriately dressed, and on time for internships.
 - b. We will be respectful to coworkers, customers, and others within the workplace.
 - c. We will communicate with program personnel and work leadership about concerns, questions, and requests for time off.

Name

Date

Appendix B: Family Expectations Form

As family members we agree to support _____,
in the following ways:

- Reviewing the VUnited Scholars Handbook and Villanova University Student Code of Conduct with our student and communicating the importance of adhering to the code as well as other university policies.
- Communicating with VUnited Scholars program staff and striving to follow the requested protocol for communicating concerns.
- Allowing our student to participate in internships in the community as independently as possible.
- Encouraging students to participate in activities.
- Participating in conferences involving our Scholar.
- Following through at home on skill development with consideration of accountability measures.
- Facilitating with self-determination skills (e.g., independent decision-making) and development of personal preferences in our students.
- Considering the benefits and risks associated with attendance on a college campus.
- Recognizing the shifting role of parent/guardian from advocating for, to advocating with my adult child, encouraging them to communicate needs and concerns with VUnited Scholars staff, other university staff, friends, supports, etc., rather than doing it for them.

Name

Date

Name

Date

Appendix C: Learning Contract

Student Information	
Date	
Last Name	First Name
Student Phone Number	Student Email
Course	Semester/Term
Faculty and Course Information	
Course	Semester/Term
Instructor Name	Department
Phone Number	Email
Grading Scale: Normal S/U AU Other	

Learning Activities: Student will complete the following tasks and meet the following performance goals.

	Tasks to be completed	Performance Goal
Attendance		
Class Participation		

Appendix D: Financial Support

A variety of resources are available for financial support. How students utilize these sources varies, dependent upon a variety of factors, including what is available in their respective county/state and individual eligibility. Think College also has a helpful resource on [paying for college](#).

1. Comprehensive Transition Postsecondary Program

The VUnited Scholars program is a Comprehensive Transition Postsecondary program (CTP). This designation affords students the opportunity to receive funding from the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, and Federal Work-Study Programs.

Students must complete a [FAFSA](#) to determine eligibility.

2. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (“Voc Rehab”)

The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, or OVR, provides vocational rehabilitation services to help persons with disabilities prepare for, obtain, or maintain employment. Students must apply for services and be approved. Information is available [here](#).

3. Waiver Funding

Some students have been able to use waiver funding to support their attendance at Villanova. Villanova is currently qualified for ODP waiver services by Delaware County. If students have waiver funding, they work with their Supports Coordinator(s) on a plan. Villanova assists with facilitating any necessary information and billing. We can explore other states on a case-by-case basis.

Additional information is available [here](#).

Appendix E: Sample Fall Semester 1 Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-9:45		Fitness	INTERNSHIPS	Fitness	
10:00-11:15	Literacy	Career Readiness		Theology	Internship Reflection
11:15-12:00	Study Hall	Vocabulary		Vocabulary	Study Hall
12:00-1:00	LUNCH			LUNCH	
1:00-2:15	Computers	Career Mentors Study Hall		Career Mentors Study Hall	Film
2:30-3:45	Healthy Relationships	College Life & Personal Strengths		Public Speaking	Theatre
4:00-5:15	Study Hall	Nutrition			