Welcome to Vancouver Island University.

Known as for its reputation as a dynamic regional institution for both learning and applied research, Vancouver Island University (VIU) is committed to providing students with teaching excellence.

With nearly 18,000 full and part-time learners, VIU values a diverse range of training and education, and provides a rich variety of educational opportunities including trades, undergraduate, graduate, vocational and basic literacy programs.

What is a Special Purpose, Teaching University?

According to the University Act, Vancouver Island University is “a special purpose, teaching university that serves a geographic area or region of the province.” It provides “adult basic education, career, technical, trade and academic programs leading to certificates, diplomas and baccalaureate and masters degrees.” Further, it provides “so far as and to the extent that its resources from time to time permit... applied research and scholarly activities to support the programs of the special purpose, teaching university” (10: 47.1) This means that while faculty members’ primary role is high quality teaching, creative and scholarly activities will also be a vibrant element of faculty members’ professional lives.
VIU’s Core Values

Outlined in the Academic Plan, and directly related to enhancing a culture of teaching and learning at VIU, the following core values shape the practices of VIU faculty and staff:

**Learning:** we support student success, access to education, appropriate use of technology, development of literacies, communication and exchange of ideas across disciplines and locations, exploration and application of new thought and pursuit of lifelong learning

**Discovery:** through the pursuit of free enquiry we promote an enduring learning community

**Engagement:** we value ongoing cooperation with our partners in education, with communities in our region and with colleagues throughout the world

**Achievement:** we believe in the potential of our learners and are committed to promoting the excellence and success of our students, faculty, staff and alumni

**Diversity:** we value human diversity in all its dimensions and are committed to maintaining learning and working environments which are equitable, diverse and inclusive

**Celebration:** we celebrate the achievements of our students, faculty, staff, alumni and the communities we serve

**Sustainability:** we support a healthy sustainable environment through progressive operational practices and promotion of environmental awareness

VIU’s Core Objectives

The following five areas frame the core objectives of the institution as it is described in the Academic Plan.

**Student learning, engagement and success**

- Promote student leadership and the application of intellectual and practical skills to ensure the success of our students
- Encourage the development of literacies and communication skills in all of our instructional programs
- Enhance experiential learning opportunities and involvement in scholarship and community-based learning
• Provide effective student services that support programs, build the campus community and improve the quality of life of students

**Academic community**

• Maintain teaching as our priority in support of student learning and institutional identity
• Attract and retain faculty with expertise that supports the institutional vision
• Develop an appropriate identity and standards for members of our diverse academic community
• Enhance academic support services in order to empower faculty

**Program quality**

• Maintain our commitment to academic, applied, developmental, experiential and professional programs that provide multiple educational opportunities
• Continue to explore the development of high-quality programs, including graduate programs, that address identified needs
• Support programs with operationally sustainable services, technologies and facilities
• Promote a culture of program assessment and continuous improvement

**Community engagement**

• Sustain collaborative relationships with communities and educational partners in order to ensure optimal responses to regional cultural, economic, environmental and social needs
• Enhance collaborative relationships with Aboriginal communities in order to develop opportunities for, and to promote the success of, Aboriginal students
• Develop innovative multi-disciplinary programs that address the issues facing the region
• Promote awareness of global cultures, issues and conditions and the role played by the region nationally and internationally

**Institutional effectiveness**

• Promote a culture of respect, transparency and accountability
• Provide visionary administrative leadership that creates a valued institution
• Support faculty, staff and student involvement in University leadership and governance
• Build relationships with local, national and international organizations, alumni and friends that contribute to the reputation and success of the University
Vancouver Island University’s Teaching and Learning
Principles and Responsibilities

**Principle 1: Student Development**
The overriding responsibility of faculty is to contribute to the affective, physical, and cognitive development of the student, at least in the context of the faculty’s own area of expertise, and to avoid actions such as exploitation and discrimination that detract from student development.

**Principle 2: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**
VIU values human diversity in all its dimensions and promotes an equitable university that is inclusive and representative of our diverse communities.

**Principle 3: Content Competence**
Faculty maintain a high level of subject-matter knowledge and ensure that course content is current, accurate, and representative.

**Principle 4: Pedagogical Competence**
Pedagogically competent faculty communicate the objectives of the course to students, are aware of alternative teaching and learning strategies, and select teaching and learning methods that, according to research evidence (including personal or self-reflective research), are effective in helping students achieve the course objectives.

**Principle 5: Dealing With Sensitive Topics**
Topics that students are likely to find sensitive or discomfiting are dealt with in an open, honest, and respectful way.

**Principle 6: Dual Relationships With Students**
To avoid conflict of interest, faculty do not enter into dual-role relationships with students that are likely to detract from student development or lead to actual or perceived favouritism on the part of the faculty.

**Principle 7: Confidentiality**
Student grades, other academic records, and private communications are treated as confidential materials, and should be released only if the student has consented, in writing, to disclosure and if the disclosure is necessary for the performance of the faculty’s duties.
Principle 8: Respect for Colleagues
Faculty respect the dignity of colleagues and work cooperatively with colleagues in the interest of fostering student development.

Principle 9: Valid Assessment of Students
Given the importance of assessment and evaluation of student performance in university teaching and in students’ lives and careers, faculty are responsible for taking adequate steps to ensure that assessment and evaluation of students is valid, open, fair, and congruent with course objectives.

Principle 10: Respect for Institution
In the interests of student development, faculty are aware and respectful of the educational goals, policies, and standards of the institution in which they teach.

Related Links
Equity & Human Rights –
http://www.viu.ca/humanrights/index.asp/
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act –
http://www.viu.ca/foipop/
Prevention of Violence, Threats, and Intimidation (under review) –
**VIU’s Graduate Attributes**

**The Three Pillars of Our Graduate Attributes**

Our graduate attributes are grouped into three “pillars,” which we believe form a solid foundation of citizenship. These pillars are **Literacies** (i.e. the acquisition of knowledge), **Intellectual and Practical Skills** (i.e. understanding the application of gained knowledge), and **Civic Engagement** (i.e. appreciating that knowledge exists in context).

**Literacies**

**Reading**
Reading engages, situates, and analyzes a text in order to comprehend and make meaning. Readers learn to understand how texts are culturally and historically situated, to interpret using a range of genres, and to appreciate that there are different ways to approach a text.

**Written Communication**
Written communication is the use of writing to organize perspectives, knowledge, thoughts, ideas, and information and to present them in a clear and effective manner. Adept writers are able to negotiate different genres and situations.

**Oral Communication**
Oral communication is the use of speech to express perspectives, knowledge, thoughts, ideas, and information in a clear and effective manner. It includes the capacity to listen and to comprehend orally-communicated information.

**Information Literacies**
Information literacies include the ability to find and critically evaluate relevant information and its sources, and to synthesize the information with existing knowledge.

**Scientific Literacy**
Scientific literacy entails an understanding of the scientific method, including the roles of experimentation, numeracy, and reproducibility, sufficient to make evidence-based conclusions and to participate in informed civic debate.

**Technological Literacy**
Technological literacy includes an understanding of how technical innovation has influenced societies. Technological literacy involves an openness to new technologies and processes, as well as the ability to critically evaluate their relevance and uses.
Intellectual and Practical Skills

Disciplinary Expertise
Students achieve domain-specific knowledge and competence in their chosen areas of study.

Critical Thinking
Critical thinking is the ongoing practice of examining, analyzing, and reflecting on something before developing a position or conclusion.

Creative Thinking
Creative thinking occurs when established approaches are reimagined in order to arrive at a new way to represent or understand a subject. Creative thinking is characterized by a solid grasp of established practices within a field of study, by use of imagination and synthesis, and through initiative and risk-taking.

Inquiry and Ways of Knowing
Inquiry is the process of posing questions while trying methodically to answer those questions. Questions arise in relation to past inquiry within a field of study, emerging issues, and individual curiosity. Ways of knowing can be historical, cultural, and disciplinary.

Historical Understanding
Historical understanding is the capacity to see how texts, ideas, and events are informed by the past and situated in their own contexts. The ability to trace change or continuity over time extends to the historical basis of disciplines and knowledge, including how these relate to other social and cultural developments.

Safe and Ethical Practices
Students will become aware of, and adhere to, safe and ethical practices in their areas of study or profession. Such practices could relate to work in a lab, a shop, or a classroom, and includes adherence to ethical standards in research involving human participants and ensuring that the safety, health, welfare, and rights of participants are adequately protected.

Collaboration
Collaboration is the ability to work productively with others, especially within the context of an organization. Effective collaborators understand the processes by which organizations achieve their goals and apply skills and resources to achieve shared objectives.

Active Learning
Active or deep learning occurs when individuals are able to understand how they learn and how to use appropriate learning strategies given the situation, including planning and re-evaluating their approach.
Civic Engagement

Indigenous Perspective
An awareness of Aboriginal perspectives includes the different ways of knowing by which these perspectives enrich university life. Indigenous Perspective relates not only to the objective of exploring what Indigenous knowledge is but also to devising ways of integrating such knowledge into our learning.

Local Knowledge in a Global Context
A world view informed by geography, sustainability, culture, history, and current events is an important facet of citizenship in an era of mass culture and communication.

Intercultural Perspective
Intercultural perspectives comprise awareness and appreciation of different ways of knowing and being which encompass diverse peoples, cultures, and lifestyles.

Capacity to Engage in Respectful Relationships
Respectful relationships involve trust, acceptance, inclusion, and emotional intelligence. Graduates of VIU have the capacity to develop meaningful relationships and demonstrate respectful and genuine interest in all people, particularly when interacting with others who have different abilities or backgrounds.

Foundations for Lifelong Learning
Lifelong learners are self-motivated learners. They have the knowledge, skills, and attitude to engage in continuous learning; they are characterized by independence of thought, curiosity, and initiative. Lifelong learning is important for personal and professional development as well as for civic engagement.

Ethical Reasoning
Ethical reasoning is the application of a moral framework to a given situation or issue.

Integrative Learning
Integrative learning is the ability to make connections, synthesize and apply learning in new situations, and bridge theory and practice across disciplinary boundaries.
Support for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

The Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning

The Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning is committed to supporting faculty, staff, and students in order to enhance student learning experiences. The Centre offers a variety of programs and resources to support faculty new (and not so new) to Vancouver Island University.

The Centre’s Mandate
To assist Vancouver Island University in being a leader in providing high-quality learning through a strong commitment to student success, community engagement and associated scholarship.

The Centre’s Vision
To inspire excellence, innovation and inquiry into teaching and learning.

The Centre’s Mission Statement
This Centre works strategically in line with the Academic and Information Technology Plans and collaboratively with academic faculties, service and support departments, and faculty members, to promote and support innovation and excellence in the design and development of high quality and curriculum-supported learning opportunities, through the appropriate use and integration of evidence-based teaching tools, interactive technologies, and diverse learning environments, to enhance teaching and learning at Vancouver Island University. The Centre is a valued institutional hub facilitating the growth and development of learning and teaching at VIU through close collaborations at all campuses and through high quality professional knowledge, skills and services.

Recognition of Achievement in Teaching and Learning

VIU’s Recognition of Achievements in Teaching and Learning program recognizes and celebrates faculty members who are implementing enhancements into their practice resulting in high quality student learning experiences. Collaboratively designed with feedback from faculty serving on VIU’s 2016 – 2017 Council on Learning and Teaching Excellence, the program launched in August 2017 and is supported by the Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning. The program acknowledges and celebrates faculty who have implemented strategies and activities in their classrooms related to one of the four topic areas: Student Engagement and Learning; Design of Learning Experiences; Scholarly Reflection and Inquiry; Leadership and Community. Faculty interested in obtaining recognition of their achievements in a particular area complete required and optional activities and submit a summary of their work to a committee. Successful faculty will be celebrated at a campus-wide teaching and learning event twice a year.
where they will share some of their achievements. In addition, a printed and digital certificate will be presented to faculty to serve as a record of their work.

More info at: https://ciel.viu.ca in the Scholarly Teaching Practice Section

**Provost Awards for Excellence in Teaching Design and Practice**

*For full details, see:* [https://www2.viu.ca/pvpa/ProvostAwardsforExcellenceinTeachingDesignandPractice.asp](https://www2.viu.ca/pvpa/ProvostAwardsforExcellenceinTeachingDesignandPractice.asp)

**Teaching Design and Practice that Enhances Deep Learning**
This award will recognize an educator who has made contributions to advancing teaching and learning at VIU with a particular focus on design and practice that significantly enhance and support the development of deep approaches for student learning.

**Teaching Design and Practice that Aids in Student Learning and Increasing Retention**
This award will recognize an educator who has made contributions to advancing teaching and learning at VIU with a particular focus on design and practice of student success strategies which aid in student retention and persistence.

**Teaching Design and Practice that Employs Experiential Learning**
This award will recognize an educator who has made contributions to advancing teaching and learning at VIU with a particular focus on design and practice of experiential learning opportunities embedded within the course structure.

**Teaching Design and Practice that Focuses on Aboriginal Learning**
This award will recognize an educator who has made contributions to advancing teaching and learning at VIU with a particular focus on design and practice of fostering learning with Aboriginal students.

**Teaching Design and Practice that Focuses on International Student Learning**
This award will recognize an educator who has made contributions to advancing teaching and learning at VIU with a particular focus on design and practice of fostering learning with International students.

**Teaching Design and Practice that Uses Technology to Enhance Student Learning**
This award will recognize an educator who has made contributions to advancing teaching and learning at VIU with a particular focus on design and practice of using learning technologies to enhance student learning.
**Teaching Design and Practice that Involves Cross-Disciplinary Learning (Citizenship, Sustainability, Global Community)**

This award will recognize an educator who has made contributions to advancing teaching and learning at VIU with a particular focus on design and practice of students’ cross disciplinary/interdisciplinary learning in the areas of citizenship, sustainability and global community.

**Teaching Design and Practice that Employs Innovative Practices for Student Learning**

This award will recognize an educator who has made contributions to advancing teaching and learning at VIU with a particular focus on design and practice of educational innovations through implementing new ideas, programs, or approaches that foster student success.

**Teaching Design and Practice for Community-Based Learning in Regional Communities**

This award will recognize an educator who has made contributions to advancing teaching and learning at VIU with a particular focus on design and practice of engaging and connecting students to partners and communities within the local region around community-based learning experiences.

**Teaching Design and Practice for Exemplary Assessment and Evaluation in Student Learning**

This award will recognize an educator who has made contributions to advancing teaching and learning at VIU with a particular focus on design and practice of exemplary assessment and evaluation practices aiding in student learning.