

**Instructions for Completing an Application for Admission**  
**William & Mary School of Marine Science**  
**Virginia Institute of Marine Science**

- **The online application opens on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**
- **The online application and unofficial transcripts are due on or before January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024.** *Please take holidays into account and check with your university early about how to obtain an unofficial transcript.*
- **Letters of recommendation are due on or before January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024.** *It is very important that you ask your referees for letters early and explain to them that they will receive a direct request for a letter from the School of Marine Science.*
- **The application fee must be paid or waived on or before January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**

### **1. Application**

Use the link "Apply Online" on the left sidebar of the Admissions webpage to access the online application, or use this URL:

<http://www.vims.edu/education/graduate/admissions/index.php>

Once you create a username/password, you will be able to begin your application. Please make sure that you select the "School of Marine Science/VIMS" option when the portal asks you to identify which school you would like to apply to. Your application can be completed in one or more sessions before it is submitted. You will also be able to use the application portal to check the status of your application package once your application has been submitted.

### **2. Transcript(s)**

You must submit one pdf file that contains all undergraduate transcripts. If you have previous graduate-level coursework or a graduate degree, a second pdf file that contains all of your graduate transcripts must also be submitted. You will upload these files as part of the application process. You must include a transcript for every college or university attended regardless of the number of credits completed. As the application review process proceeds, you may be required to submit an official transcript for each college or university you attended. You will be notified electronically by March if you need to send official transcripts.

*If you are unable to provide an unofficial transcript with the online application, we recommend that you request transcripts be sent by your colleges or universities by no later than early December. You must have a transcript sent for every college or university attended regardless of the number of credits completed.*

To expedite the evaluation of records of foreign-educated students, English translations of transcripts of college records must be provided that name the courses taken, credits attempted, credits earned, and grades. Where transcripts do not give these details, the transcripts must be accompanied by an official statement explaining how the scholastic record may be compared to that of William & Mary. Details must be given as to whether the courses are given on a semester basis (15 credits per semester, 30 per year, 120 for graduation), quarter basis (15 credits per semester, 45 per year, 180 for graduation), or another basis. In addition, the grading scale must be explained showing the grade equivalence in terms of A (highest), B, C, D (passing), and F (failing).

*There is no minimum GPA requirement for admission to the School of Marine Science, however, most successful applicants have a GPA of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale.*

- *All applications are holistically reviewed to assess preparation for graduate-level study in marine science. The SMS recognizes that GPA may not be fully reflective of an applicant's ability or academic preparation and encourages applicants to provide any additional relevant information within the Personal Statement.*

### 3. TOEFL or IELTS Scores

All international applicants whose first language is not English, or who did not attend a college or university where the language of instruction was English, are required to demonstrate adequate English competency. Applicants may demonstrate competency by submitting scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System test (IELTS).

For TOEFL: VIMS Institution Code — 5115

- We accept TOEFL iBT, TOEFL iBT Home Edition, or TOEFL iBT Paper Edition
- *A minimum total score of 94 is recommended for the iBT.*

For IELTS – The School of Marine Science is listed among educational institutions as the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. VIMS only accepts scores submitted electronically by the IELTS test center. An institutional code is not required. Contact the test center directly where you took the IELTS test, and request that your test scores be sent electronically using the IELTS system.

- *The recommended minimum total IELTS score is 7.*

### 4. Statement of Purpose (Required)

The essay should be submitted as a pdf file through the online application. Follow the instructions in the application system for naming the file.

M.A. Applicants:

Science informs many cross-discipline actions and decisions. In **750 words or less**, address the following prompts: What are the scientific, curricular, and professional skills or experiences you possess that make you a good candidate for the professional M.A. degree in marine science? What specific areas or topics are you interested in focusing on for a capstone project and internship? Describe your career goals and how the M.A. in marine science degree from VIMS will help you achieve them.

M.S. & Ph.D. Applicants:

Describe your career objectives and how the School of Marine Science at VIMS will help you achieve your goals in **750 words or less**. Discuss any experiences that have prepared or motivated you to pursue an advanced degree in marine science, highlighting the research and professional interests you intend to explore during your graduate studies.

### 5. Résumé or CV

Provide a professional résumé that highlights your education, experience, and other relevant information. The résumé is submitted as a pdf file with the online application. Follow the instructions in the application system for naming the file.

### 6. Personal Statement (Optional)

A space is provided where applicants can provide any additional information that can help us to better understand their personal and academic journey within the context of their identity, values, goals, challenges faced, lived experiences, or any other factors they deem relevant during the consideration of their application materials.

## 7. Letters of Recommendation

Letters are requested automatically when you use the online application. The requests are sent when you enter the names of the referees.

Use the official university email (.edu) for any faculty who will provide letters of recommendation.

You will need three (3) letters of recommendation from individuals qualified to judge your scholarly and professional capabilities/potential. Requests for letters will be sent automatically as soon as you enter the contact information for your referees and then select "Save and Continue" on the online application. Your referees will receive an email notification directly with instructions on how to complete the letter of recommendation using our online system. Occasionally, recommendation letters will be sorted into the junk email folder; if your referee indicates that they did not receive an email from the School of Marine Science please ask them to first check in their junk folder.

*We recommend that you request letters by no later than early December.*

## 8. Application Fee & Fee Waiver

A non-refundable processing fee of \$44.00 is required. Payment must be either received or waived by January 4<sup>th</sup>.

The School of Marine Science is pleased to offer application fee waivers to individuals who meet any of the following criteria:

- Honorably Discharged Members of the U.S. Armed Forces
- Peace Corps and AmeriCorps Participants
- Fulbright Scholars
- McNair Scholars
- Graduates from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)\*
- Federal Pell Grant Recipient
- Individuals with Demonstrated Financial Need\*\*

Complete the Additional Information section of the application to request an application fee waiver and submit all required documents. Your application will not be processed until the required documentation has been received. An admissions coordinator will contact you after your waiver request has been submitted through the online application portal. If you pay the application fee while waiting for the fee waiver to be approved, we will be unable to issue a refund to you. International applicants are not eligible for application fee waivers.

\*Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) is a broad classification of U.S. higher education institutions which includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AAPISIs).

\*\*An applicant with demonstrated financial need may be granted an application fee waiver by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at the School of Marine Science. Please contact the Office of Academic Studies through the admissions email ([admissions@vims.edu](mailto:admissions@vims.edu)) for further information.

## 9. Virginia Residents

If you wish to claim Virginia domiciliary status, you will be able to apply for that status as part of the online application.

## 10. GRE Scores

GRE scores are not required for admission to the School of Marine Science (SMS). They are not used by the SMS or Admissions Committee to evaluate or rank applicants, and cannot be submitted through the application website. Individual faculty members may wish to see unofficial GRE scores, but they will not be shared with the Admissions Committee or other faculty members. We recommend that applicants for the M.S. or Ph.D. programs contact prospective faculty advisors to inquire if they wish to see GRE scores. Applicants for the M.A. program do not need to submit unofficial GRE scores to the M.A. Program Director.

### Additional Information

- International Students—If you are admitted, additional information will be required before an I-20 can be issued.
- If you have limited access to computers or if you have trouble downloading/printing any material, please contact us directly

### Contact Information and Mailing Address for Application Materials

Office of Academic Studies—Admissions

1370 Great Road

Gloucester Point, VA 23062 USA

E-mail: [admissions@vims.edu](mailto:admissions@vims.edu)

Telephone: (804) 684-7105

Fax: (804) 684-7881