

Instructions for Completing an Application for Admission

W&M's Batten School of Coastal & Marine Sciences at VIMS - Fall 2025 Entry Term

Key Dates

- Online Application Open Date – August 1, 2024
- Application Deadline – December 1, 2024
 - **Online Application**
 - **Recommendation Letters**
 - **Transcript**
 - **Supplemental Question Responses**
- Round 1 Review: Application Review by Faculty – Begins December 6, 2024
- Round 2 Review: Application Review by Admission Committee – Begins January 6, 2025
- Round 3 Review: Invitations for Interview/Campus Visit – Begins February 6, 2025
- Notification of Admission Decision – Begins March 3, 2025; Concludes April 1, 2025
- Offer of Admission Acceptance Deadline – April 15, 2025

Application Components

1. Starting an Online Application (Required)

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. Letters of Recommendation (Required)

Letters are requested automatically through the online application portal. These recommendation letters must be received no later than the same date as the application deadline, December 1, 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 W&M's Batten School of Coastal & Marine Sciences at VIMS. We strongly suggest you contact your references no later than early November in order to meet the December 1, 2024 submission deadline.

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 references and then select “Save and Continue” on the online application. Your references will receive an email notification directly with instructions on how to complete the letter of recommendation using our online system.

Occasionally, recommendation letter requests will be sorted into the junk email folder; if the person providing your letter of recommendation indicates that they did not receive an email from W&M’s Batten School at VIMS, please ask them to first check in their junk folder. Any questions may be directed to admissions@vims.edu.

3. Transcripts (Required)

You must include a transcript for each college or university attended regardless of the number of credits completed. Transcripts are not required for any high school dual enrollment credits.

Official vs. Unofficial Transcripts

Applicants are encouraged to submit an official transcript as part of their application materials. While unofficial transcripts are acceptable at the time of application, official transcripts will be required prior to the start of classes for all individuals entering the graduate program.

Transcripts are only considered “official” if sent directly from your college or university to W&M’s Batten School of Coastal & Marine Sciences. Most institutions, particularly those in the United States, provide official transcripts through a certified electronic platform. The two most common platforms are the National Student Clearinghouse and Parchment. Instructions on how to request a transcript will be available on your college or university’s website. If submitting an unofficial transcript, you will upload the file(s) as part of the application process.

The Admission Committee may request updated transcripts for any student who completed coursework in Fall 2024 once final grades are available.

International Transcripts

To expedite the evaluation of records of students educated outside the United States, English translations of transcripts must be provided. The translation should include degree enrolled or completed, dates/terms of enrollment, course/modules taken, credits attempted, credits earned, and grades earned. 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 system (15 credits per semester, 30 per year, 120 for graduation), quarter system (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).

Review of Transcripts

Previous academic performance is one measure used to assess if an applicant can succeed in a rigorous graduate program. The most successful applicants to our program have a GPA of 3.25 or

better on a 4.00 scale, and have taken sufficient mathematics and science coursework to enter an intensive graduate science program.

All applications are holistically reviewed to assess preparation for graduate-level study in marine science. The Admission Committee recognizes Grade Point Average (GPA) may not fully reflect an applicant's ability or academic preparation. Applicants may use the optional "Personal Statement" within the application to provide any additional contextual information related to their academic preparation, particularly as it may relate to academic performance or extenuating circumstances.

4. Statement of Purpose (Required)

Each applicant is required to submit a statement of purpose. You will upload your statement as a .pdf file through our online application system. The statement of purpose is limited to 750 words or less.

M.S. and Ph.D. Applicants Prompt

Describe your career objectives and how W&M's Batten School at VIMS will help you achieve your goals. 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.

M.A. Applicant Prompt

Science informs many cross-discipline actions and decisions. 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 W&M's Batten School at VIMS will help you achieve them.

5. Resume or CV (Required)

Each applicant must submit a professional resume or CV that highlights your education, experience, and other relevant information. This document is uploaded by you as a .pdf file within the online application.

6. Personal Statement (Optional)

Each applicant may submit an optional personal statement. Applicants upload their statements as a .pdf file through our online application system. The personal statement is limited to 500 words or less.

The personal statement enables an applicant to 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. This section should also be used to explain elements of your academic transcript that may be of concern to those who review your application.

7. Supplemental Question Responses (Required)

Our Admission Committee has requested all applicants provide answers to supplemental questions (outside of those included in the online application). Each applicant will answer two questions.

Responses may be no longer than 250 words each.

Applicants must email their responses to these questions to admissions@vims.edu no later than Sunday, December 1, 2024. Responses may be sent as text within the email or as an attachment.

M.S. and Ph.D. Applicants

- Describe an example of a time in your life when you took on the role of leader or key contributor in an activity, project, or event, related to any educational, professional or personal endeavor.
- Each applicant to the M.S. and Ph.D. programs is required to list one or two potential faculty advisors of interest as part of their application. Explain how you selected your prospective advisor(s).

M.A. Applicants

- Describe an example of a time in your life when you took on the role of leader or key contributor in an activity, project, or event, related to any educational, professional or personal endeavor.
- The Master of Arts (M.A.) in marine science degree can provide the skills and expertise to address environmental challenges, support sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, and help understand the inter-relationship between humans and the ocean. How do you see your personal M.A. journey ultimately benefiting society?

Application Evaluation Rubric

As indicated above, your submitted application packet will contain many elements. These collective components will aid the Admission Committee in evaluating the following attributes as part of their rubric. Please be sure to keep these traits in mind as you complete your application.

- **Perseverance, Maturity, and Independence** - Demonstrates ability to succeed in spite of challenges and/or ability to balance potentially competing obligations/workload.
- **Leadership and/or Contribution** - Shows initiative by taking key roles in activities or events and/or participates in optional activities linked to service, volunteerism, research, etc.
- **Collaboration** - Evidence of ability to collaborate in group/team settings.

- **Communication** - Demonstrates the capacity to effectively communicate, using written or oral skills, in a professional setting (e.g., scientific audiences, journals, the general public), or a record of improvement that suggests potential.
- **Institutional educational and research alignments** – Experience and coursework thus far suggests that applicant can succeed in the education and research setting at the Batten School & VIMS, or can readily address any gaps to enable success (e.g., through additional trainings, mentoring, coursework).

Questions?

Please reach out to us if you have any questions!

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