



M.S. & Ph.D. in Marine Science

Program Overview



The M.S. and Ph.D. degrees are designed for students who wish to pursue science-focused careers at an advanced level. The School of Marine Science offers diverse coursework in marine science, as well as advanced quantitative method courses, and courses or training programs that help students develop the technical and professional skills that employers seek. Faculty at VIMS are internationally known and respected researchers and can advise in areas such as aquaculture, habitat conservation and restoration, fisheries management, pollution issues, water quality, effects of climate change on marine ecosystems, or coastal flooding resilience.

Graduates of the M.S. degree are well-prepared for further graduate study or for marine science careers in academia, government, and other employment sectors. Graduates of the Ph.D. program are well-prepared for advanced science careers and leadership, including at colleges and universities, federal agencies, and in the private sector.

The **M.S. program** (32 credits) normally requires 2.5 to 3 years for degree completion. The **Ph.D. program** (42 credits) normally requires 4 to 6 years for degree completion, depending on a student’s prior preparation for advanced studies in marine science.

VIMS Profile

Founded in 1940, VIMS is one of the largest marine research and education centers in the United States and is at the forefront of estuarine and coastal marine science. With an annual budget of more than \$50 million and three campuses, VIMS has outstanding facilities, state-of-the-art equipment, modern technology resources for computing and simulation, and a fleet of coastal and estuarine research vessels—including its new flagship vessel the R/V Virginia.



The School of Marine Science at VIMS is a part of William & Mary, a world-class university. Through this connection, students at VIMS have access to courses and other resources through the university’s highly ranked schools in Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, and Law. With a graduate student body of 90-100, the faculty-to-student ratio in the School of Marine Science allows for a small and dedicated class size, at an average of 7-10 students per class.





The campus location in Gloucester Point, Virginia, is positioned to provide students with immediate access to Chesapeake Bay, the world's largest estuary, while also being only a few hours from Washington, D.C., and an hour from the state capital in Richmond, Virginia.

Alumni

VIMS has awarded more than 1,000 M.S. and Ph.D. degrees over the last 80 years. Recent M.S. program alumni have careers in government agencies (33%), colleges and universities (26%), consulting or industry (24%), and public education and outreach (17%). Most Ph.D. graduates have gone on to faculty or research positions in colleges and universities (56%), such as Texas A&M, NCSU, U Florida, Yale, U Hawaii, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Vanderbilt University, U Texas-Austin, LSU, Hampton University, U Delaware, American University and many other public and private institutions in the U.S. and abroad. A significant percentage of doctoral program graduates (24%) seek and attain research, management and policy positions in federal agencies such as NOAA, NMFS, EPA, and USGS, with most of the remainder in careers with state agencies, business and industry, or the nonprofit sector. Nearly all students graduating from the M.S. and Ph.D. programs have a job in the field of marine science at the time of graduation or soon thereafter.

Admissions



Applicants for the M.S. and Ph.D. program should have a strong background in basic science, including physics, chemistry, mathematics, and contemporary biology courses. Previous course work in statistics and using R are recommended. The prospective student must have a B.A. or B.S. from an accredited institution and should have completed undergraduate course work to match their graduate academic interests.

Prospective students for the M.S. or Ph.D. programs must identify and contact a potential faculty advisor to verify if space and funding is available.

Visit the website for further details: <https://www.vims.edu/education/graduate/index.php>

Financial Aid

VIMS recognizes the importance of supporting students in their study of marine science, and has fellowships, scholarships, and work-study opportunities available to help reduce the costs. Funding for students in the M.S. and Ph.D. programs comes from various sources, including institutional assistantships, fellowships, and tuition waivers; research grants and contracts awarded to the advisor; and external fellowship and research awards to the student. In order to assess funding availability in a faculty-led research group, prospective students should contact faculty members directly.

Contact Information

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Office of Academic Studies – Admissions

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<https://www.vims.edu/grad>



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