ADMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Office of Admissions

Undergraduate Admissions
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Graduate Admissions
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General Requirements

Application for admission by international students should be made directly to the Office of Admissions via the online application.

Application deadlines are as follows:

Freshman Fall  April 1
Transfer Fall  March 1
Freshman Spring  October 1
Transfer Spring  October 1
Graduate  Varies by academic program. Please check http://admissions.gmu.edu/grad for specific program details.

These deadlines ensure adequate time to process applications and prepare immigration documents. All international applications must be accompanied by the nonrefundable application fee. Items that must be submitted with the application form and fee are official transcripts and degree certificates (in original language and, if applicable, certified English translation); evidence of English proficiency (via official score reports from the TOEFL, IELTS or Pearson exam); the Certificate of Financial Responsibility (CFR); financial support documents; copy of passport identification page; and for those present in the United States, copies of immigration documents verifying current nonimmigrant status. Other documentation such as recommendation letters, essays, portfolios, etc., may be required by the academic program. Please visit Admissions (https://admissions.gmu.edu) for full details on items required and deadlines.

Applications from international students are reviewed with all other applications. Admission to the university is competitive; therefore, while minimum standards ensure that an application will be considered, they do not guarantee admission. The number of applicants, qualifications of the applicant pool, and the amount of available space determine the number of admission offers that Mason can make. In addition to overall admission requirements, some schools and colleges have individual requirements for acceptance into the major. For more information, see school or college admission requirements.

Applicants who are accepted to a program will receive a written offer of admission. Most students come to the United States on an F-1 visa, but students who are sponsored by the U.S. government, their home government, or another organization may be required to enter the United States on a J-1 Exchange Visitor's Visa. To be issued an immigration document (Form I-20 for F-1 status or Form DS2019 for J-1 status), students must prove they have sufficient financial support to cover their expenses while at Mason. If the documentation submitted is satisfactory, the university will issue Form I-20 for F-1 status or Form DS2019 for J-1 status and mail it to the address indicated on the Certificate of Financial Responsibility.

International students outside the United States may use their immigration documentation to schedule a visa interview with the U.S. embassy or consulate nearest their place of residence and apply for an F-1 or J-1 student visa. For more information about the visa application process, check with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, or go to the Department of State's website (https://www.state.gov).

Students in a nonimmigrant visa category other than F-1 or J-1 may submit the CFR and copies of immigration documents indicating their immigration status. They do not need to submit financial support documents unless they plan to change to a student visa. For more information pertaining to immigration status, contact the Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) at 703-993-2970. Additional information is available on the OIPS website (https://oips.gmu.edu).

Freshman and Transfer Requirements

A freshman student is a first time university student who has never enrolled in a college or university before while a transfer student is one who has completed course work at another college or university after graduating from high school. In addition to the requirements defined for all applicants, international students must meet the following standards:

- Freshman applicants must submit certified official copies of all secondary or high school transcripts in the original language along with an English translation, if applicable. Official results of any leaving certificates or university entrance exams also must be submitted.
- Transfer applicants must submit official transcripts from each post-secondary institution attended, sent directly to Mason from the institution.
- International students may be considered for admission without an SAT or ACT score through our score optional admission program; however, SAT or ACT results may be required for merit-based scholarship consideration. Applicants to Mason’s science and engineering programs must also submit a qualifying SAT or ACT score.
- Applicants must demonstrate English language proficiency. Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit TOEFL, Pearson Test of English, or IELTS exam results. To be considered for admission, applicants must have scored at least 80 with a minimum of 18 in each subsection on the Internet-based TOEFL, 550 on the paper-based TOEFL or must have received a score of 6.5 or higher with a minimum 6.0 in each subsection on the IELTS exam, or a 59 overall band score on the Pearson Test of English.

All English proficiency scores are valid for two years from the test date. Official test scores must be sent directly from the Educational Testing Service or IELTS. For more information, visit Test of English as a Foreign Language website (https://www.ets.org/toefl), the IELTS website (https://www.ielts.org), or the Pearson Test of English website (https://www.pearsonpte.com).
• Applicants with English proficiency exam results below the minimum qualifying score for direct entry may be referred to an INTO Mason Pathway or Academic English program (https://intohigher.com/us/en-us/the-universities/into-mason).

• All transcripts from colleges or universities outside the United States must be translated into English and evaluated course by course by a NACES (National Association of Credential Evaluation Services) recognized U.S. evaluation agency before an admission decision can be made. Applicants are responsible for the timely translation and evaluation of documents and all costs and fees associated with these services. A list of accepted evaluation agencies is available here (https://www.naces.org/members.htm).

• International students already in the United States with F-1 status must complete immigration transfer procedures within 15 days of the program start date. For processing of immigration transfers, contact OIPS at 703-993-2970 or visit their website (https://oips.gmu.edu).

Graduate Requirements
International students interested in pursuing graduate study must meet the following requirements:

• In order to be considered for admission, applicants must complete the online Application for U.S. Graduate Study and submit all required materials, including any supplemental documentation required by their academic program directly to the Office of Admissions.

English Proficiency Standards
Mason students participate in rigorous graduate coursework as part of their university educational experience. Therefore, students at Mason must have a full command of academic English at the graduate level in order to be successful throughout their studies. All new graduate students are expected to accurately comprehend written graduate-level English, clearly understand rapidly spoken English in classroom lectures and in professional settings, write with proper grammar and syntax, and be able to respond quickly in English using a vocabulary appropriate for collegiate settings.

For this reason, Mason has a high standard of English proficiency for graduate admission. All Mason graduate programs strictly require applicants to meet that English proficiency standard. Applicants who have earned a bachelor’s masters, or doctoral degree from a regionally accredited university in the United States, Canada (excluding province of Quebec), Commonwealth Caribbean (Antigua, Barbuda, Belize, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago), United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand are considered to have met that standard. All other applicants are required to take an English proficiency examination and meet minimum scores set by Mason in order to be considered for admission. The TOEFL, Pearson Test of English, or IELTS exams can be used to meet this requirement.

Decisions regarding English proficiency are the sole discretion of the Mason Admissions office.

Listed below are the English proficiency examinations that Mason accepts and the corresponding minimum score requirements and submission procedures. Individual programs reserve the right to set higher minimum scores:

TOEFL

• In order to be considered for admission, applicants must complete the online Application for U.S. Graduate Study and submit all required materials, including any supplemental documentation required by their academic program directly to the Office of Admissions.

Students with International Degrees
Mason requires the equivalent of a four-year U.S. bachelor’s degree from an appropriately accredited international institution of higher education for direct admission to a graduate degree program. All applicants who were educated outside the United States are required to submit an official credential evaluation, written either by an approved evaluation company or by Mason evaluators. Please review the International Transcript Submission Guidelines (https://admissions.gmu.edu/documents/internationalTranscriptGuidelines.pdf) for further details. Complete information on this and all international admissions requirements can be found at Admissions (https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/how-apply/international). Mason Admissions has final authority on equivalency of degrees.

• All transcripts from colleges or universities outside the United States must be translated into English, if applicable, and submitted to the Office of Admissions for evaluation. Mason will provide evaluation service free of charge for all international transcripts. Because of the volume, more time may be needed to process applications requiring a Mason evaluation. For expedited services, students can submit their documents to a recognized U.S. evaluation service at their own expense. A list of recognized evaluation services is available at Mason’s Admissions Office or online (https://www.naces.org).

• Graduate students’ documents should show the award for either a bachelor’s degree or equivalent, or a graduate degree.

Special Conditions for International Applicants
A complete list of application requirements at all levels can be found online (https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/how-apply/international).

Note the following:

• Federal regulations prohibit students on visitor visas (B-1 and B-2) from enrolling in school. Students who entered the United States on
a visitor visa should not plan to study. For more information, contact OIPS.

- Federal regulations prohibit F-2 spouses of F-1 students from engaging in full-time study, and F-2 children may engage in full-time study only from kindergarten through 12th grade. F-2 dependents may engage in study that is vocational or recreational in nature. F-2 dependents seeking to pursue full-time or degree study in the United States must change their status to F-1. For more information, contact OIPS.

- Students enrolled at the university in F-1 or J-1 nonimmigrant status must maintain full-time enrollment each fall and spring semester. For undergraduate students, this means 12 credit hours each semester. Full-time status for graduate students is defined by the Office of the University Registrar, and information can be found in the AP.6 Graduate Policies section of this catalog. Because of this requirement, F-1 or J-1 international students do not qualify for part-time programs.

- Admission for international students is offered for fall (August) and spring (January).

- Prospective students who seek to enter the United States in F-1 or J-1 immigration status, or who seek to attend Mason following attendance at another US school, must complete the Certificate of Financial Responsibility (CFR), which can be downloaded online (https://admissions.gmu.edu). The form and financial support documents must be submitted to the Admissions Office with the application.

- Students already in the United States should submit copies of immigration documents verifying current nonimmigrant status. This documentation should be submitted with the application for admission.

- Prior to issuing an I-20 or DS-2019 form, the University is required to verify that a student has sufficient financial support to pay for both educational and living expenses. If source is a sponsor, confirmed funding must be documented for the first year of study, typically with a sponsor letter and current bank statement or a scholarship award letter or an assistantship offer. The source of funds for subsequent years must be shown, although for sponsored students a bank statement is required only for the first year. Students who are self-funded must show funds on deposit for the full term of their program. The CFR gives an estimate of annual expenses, including tuition, living expenses, and health insurance; and it also explains what type of documentation is accepted.

- All new students admitted to the university must submit an Immunization Record Form signed by a health care provider. Requirements, information and forms are available online (https://shs.gmu.edu/immunizations).

- Financial sponsors who wish to be billed directly must provide a U.S. billing address. Mason does not bill third parties overseas. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure tuition and fees are paid on time.

**International Student Health Insurance**

University policy requires all F-1 and J-1 visa students to have health insurance. Federal law requires all students on a J-1 visa to have health insurance that includes coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation. Medical evacuation coverage pays for returning a seriously ill student to his or her home country. Repatriation coverage pays for returning a student’s remains to his or her home country.

Mason offers health insurance for students on J-1 and F-1 visas. When international students register for classes, the cost of this coverage is automatically billed to their account by the Office of Student Accounts. This fee is due by the tuition payment due date. Failure to pay this insurance fee or successfully obtain an exemption may result in the cancellation of class registration. Late fees may be assessed if charges are not paid by the deadline established by the Student Accounts Office.

International students are required to purchase insurance for fall and spring/summer semesters.

**Exemption from the International Student Health Insurance**

International students are automatically enrolled in the Mason Student Health Insurance Plan. International students with health insurance coverage from the following list may request an exemption from the Mason Student Health Insurance Plan. Submission of a request does not guarantee that a waiver will be granted. The Student Health Insurance Office reserves the right to audit all waivers in order to ensure compliance with University Policy 6002.

Students may apply for an exemption:

1. If they have a scholarship or government-sponsored program that provides insurance for them that meets or exceeds the Mason Student Health Insurance Plan.
2. If they or their spouse or parent have a United States employer who provides health insurance for them that meets or exceeds the Mason Student Health Insurance Plan.

Each fall, continuing F-1 and J-1 visa students are required to either pay for the Mason Student Health Insurance or successfully obtain an exemption. Exemptions must be obtained no later than one week after the last day to add/drop classes.

See here (https://shs.gmu.edu/insurance) for more information and exemption form.