

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

F-1 & J-1 Students



WILLIAM & MARY

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS,
SCHOLARS & PROGRAMS

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Welcome to W&M and VIMS!

The Office of International Students, Scholars & Programs (ISSP) serves William & Mary's thriving community of international students, scholars, faculty, staff and their families. We foster the personal, cultural and intellectual development of both the university and global community through holistic, collaborative programs and services. Coming from all over the globe, our international community is an integral part of William & Mary!



Reves Center for International Studies

200 S. Boundary Street, Williamsburg, VA 23185
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 8795, Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795

ISSP Staff Members



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ISSP helps with:

- Visa and immigration matters
- International student trips & events
- Support for international family members
- Information about campus resources
- Making connections with W&M students, faculty and staff
- Any other problems you might have

International-Students email list: Emails from ISSP with immigration and programming information.

International Post-it email list: Moderated email list for W&M community members to post notices, such as roommate searches, campus opportunities, apartments for rent, etc.

Walk-in hours

ISSP is located on the 2nd Floor of the Reves Center. Walk-in hours are Monday - Friday, 11:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Email for General Information & Questions

globe@wm.edu

Office Phone Number

757-221-3590

Appointments

[Schedule an appointment](#) with an ISSP Advisor.

ISSP Events & Programs

Programs and Trips

The Office of International Students, Scholars & Programs (ISSP) has a variety of programs designed to support your success at William & Mary and to help you experience the U.S. as fully as possible. Our regular programs include:

International Student Trips and Events

ISSP hosts several events each month of the academic year for the international community. These include events at W&M and some trips off-campus. Announcements and sign-up information will be sent out via email.

Global Friends Program

Provides new international students an opportunity to experience American life outside of campus, while also providing Williamsburg community members a chance to meet individuals from other cultures.

The International Family Network (IFN)

IFN offers support to the family members who accompany international students and scholars to W&M.

International Student Advisory Board (ISAB)

ISAB is composed of undergraduate and graduate international students from different academic programs and countries. ISAB provides outreach to international students and advice to ISSP on issues that are important to the international community.

International International Peer Leaders

International Peer leaders mentor a group of new graduate or undergraduate international students through the orientation process. Peer Leaders introduce W&M from a student perspective, and help welcome new international students to the W&M community.

Check your W&M email regularly for upcoming ISSP events and activities!





About Williamsburg

Williamsburg, Virginia is approximately 240 km south of Washington, D.C. and located midway between Richmond and Norfolk. Adjacent to the campus is Colonial Williamsburg, which along with Jamestown and Yorktown comprise the Historic Triangle.

Other nearby attractions include outlet stores, an arts district, Busch Gardens amusement park, and convenient access to restaurants, shopping, and movie theaters. Next to campus at the corner of Prince George Street and Richmond Road are a cluster of popular delis, pubs and taverns.

Find your way around campus with this interactive [W&M Main Campus Map](#).



About Gloucester Point

Gloucester Point, Virginia is located 21 km east of Williamsburg and is home to the VIMS main campus. VIMS is located near the convergence of the York River and the Chesapeake Bay, with ready access to the Atlantic Ocean. Gloucester Point is also part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, a system of parks, wildlife refuges, and historic sites administered by the National Park Service.

Find your way around around VIMS using this [VIMS Campus Map](#).

Before You Arrive

Pre-Arrival Emails

We are excited to have you at William & Mary! During the weeks leading up to your arrival in the U.S., you will receive a series of pre-arrival emails from ISSP with important topics for new international students. Make sure to check your W&M email regularly!

International Student Orientation

[International Student Orientation](#) is **required** for new **F-1** and **J-1** international students in the U.S., and is designed to make your transition to campus as smooth and successful as possible. Required orientation sessions will be held multiple times virtually in the weeks leading up to the start of the semester.

Undergraduate international students, including transfer and exchange students, are also required to join W&M's [New Student Orientation](#). Graduate students will have separate orientations with their academic programs.



Submit your Health Evaluation Form

All international students are required to submit a [Health Evaluation Form](#) to their Online Health Portal. This form provides the Student Health Center with a medical history and official immunization record for each student.

Fall Semester Deadline: June 1

Spring Semester Deadline: January 10

If you are missing any of the required vaccinations upon your arrival to the U.S., you can complete your missing vaccines at the [Student Health Center](#).



Packing List

When you come to the U.S. from your home country, it can be difficult to choose what to bring and what to buy after you arrive. Here is a reference packing list for [essential carry-on items](#):

- Passport and Visa
- Printed I-20 or DS-2019
- Admission or Invitation letter
- Financial documents
- SEVIS Fee payment receipt
- Some cash and/or a credit card
- Driver's license/International driver's license
- Medication
- Medical/immunization records with English translations
- Contact information for any friends or relatives in the U.S. (Name, phone number, and U.S. street address)
- An adapter and converter for U.S. electrical outlets; the U.S. operates on 120 V, 60 Hz

What to Leave at Home:

- [Prohibited and Restricted Items](#)
- Food items such as meat, cheese, fruits and vegetables
- Electric appliances

For a detailed packing list of items to bring from your home country, please visit [ISSP's website](#).

Airport Transportation Options

Explore our [Arrival Transportation](#) webpage to decide which airport to fly into and transportation options to W&M and VIMS.

F-1 & J-1 Students: Your Immigration Responsibilities

Following the immigration rules of your status is **your responsibility** and is **extremely important**. Check your W&M email **regularly** for important updates and information from ISSP!

1

Keep your immigration documents valid at all times

If your documents will expire during your stay in the U.S., you must contact ISSP at least **30 days before the expiration date**.

2

Be enrolled full-time during the Fall and Spring semesters

Undergraduate students must be enrolled in at least **12 credit hours** per semesters; Graduate students must be enrolled in at least **9 credit hours** per semester. If you need to drop below full-time, you must [request an authorization](#) from ISSP first!

3

Obtain a travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 prior to leaving the U.S.

You will need a valid travel signature to return to the U.S. on your F-1 or J-1 visa. Travel signatures cover all return travel to the U.S. for **12 months** from the signature date. You can request a travel signature online in [iStart](#).

4

Do not work without authorization

You can work [on-campus](#) at W&M for a max of **20 hours/week** during the fall and spring semesters; you can work over 20 hours/week during official school break (such as summer break). For any paid work off-campus, you must have **prior approval from ISSP** before you start working. Engaging in unauthorized employment may result in a termination of your SEVIS record, and you will be required to leave the U.S.

5

Notify ISSP of any program changes

You must obtain permission from ISSP in advance if you need to drop below full-time enrollment or extend your I-20/DS-2019. ISSP must update your SEVIS record for the following changes to be allowed:

- Changes of major or program funding
- Plans to transfer to a different school
- Plans to start a new degree program

6

Do not engage in illegal activities

Conviction of certain crimes can negatively impact your immigration status and may subject you to deportation from the U.S. If you are arrested or charged with a crime, notify ISSP immediately so that we can refer you to an immigration attorney.



After You Arrive

Immigration Check-in

You must be **in the U.S.** to complete the online immigration check-in:

- Login to [iStart](#) using your W&M login.
- Select **Immigration Check-In** from the left menu.
- Select the **Immigration Check-In** e-form and complete the information.

Housing

Students living on-campus will move-in during their check-in appointment with [Residence Life](#). Residence Life will not be able to accommodate early arrivals. Students planning to arrive before the designated move-in days should arrange their own [early housing](#), such as in a hotel.

There are also many off-campus housing resources and opportunities to explore. Some students arrange housing before arriving, while others make [short-term housing arrangements](#) first and then look for rentals after arriving. Visit ISSP's [Off-Campus Housing](#) webpage for additional resources.

Get your Tribe Card (W&M ID card)

The [Tribe Card](#) is W&M's official form of identification. It can be used to ride local buses and access residence halls, libraries, recreational facilities, and much more.

New student cards are typically issued by [Tribe Card Services](#) during or after your New Student Orientation program. To start the process, visit the [Photo Submission](#) webpage, and complete all three steps.



Photo courtesy of W&M University Marketing

Connect to the W&M Network

Wireless internet is free for you to use when you are on-campus.

- Use your W&M ID and password to [authenticate your computer](#). Select **eduroam** setup.
- Problems? Contact the **Technology Support Center** at 757-221-4357 or support@wm.edu.



Cell Phone Service in the U.S.

During the first few weeks at W&M, you can connect your existing cell phone to the internet and send texts using the free WiFi. Free WiFi is also available in most Williamsburg stores and establishments.

It may be possible to use a cell phone from your home country if it has a SIM card slot and has been unlocked. Pre-paid SIM cards can be purchased at select stores or online.

Take your time to do some research and talk to current students to decide if you need to purchase a new cell phone or select a phone service contract plan. Visit ISSP's website for more [Cell Phone/SIM card resources](#).

Popular Cell Phone Stores in Williamsburg

- [AT&T](#) | 5227 Monticello Avenue, Suite C
- [Straight Talk Wireless](#) | Walmart, 4670 Casey Blvd.
- [T-Mobile](#) | 4645 Casey Blvd., Suite 120
- [Verizon](#) | 4950 Monticello Avenue

Popular Cell Phone Stores near VIMS

- [Straight Talk Wireless](#) | Walmart, 6819 Walton Lane
- [Verizon](#) | TCC, Verizon Authorized Retailer: 2417 York Crossing Dr., N3, Hayes VA

Online SIM Card Options

- [J1 SIM](#)
- [campusSIMS](#)

After You Arrive

Banking in the U.S.

To [open a bank account](#), you will need to apply in-person and provide the following items:

- A valid passport
- W&M ID (some banks may offer benefits to students)
- Your physical street address and mailing address.

Banks near W&M

- [Chase Bank](#)
 - 202 North Henry Street, 757-345-7340
- [Truist Bank](#)
 - 5236 Monticello Avenue, 757-220-5931
- [Wells Fargo Bank](#)
 - 1006 Richmond Road, 757-220-6200
 - 4690 Monticello Avenue, 757-564-1006
- [Bank of America](#)
 - 1801 Richmond Road, 757-259-5481
 - 4620 Monticello Avenue, 757-220-3250

Banks near VIMS

- [Truist Bank](#) | 1478 George Washington Memorial Hwy, 804-93-6001
- [Wells Fargo Bank](#) | 2469 George Washington Memorial Hwy, 804-642-2185

Social Security Numbers (SSN)

Students who plan to work in the U.S. will need a [Social Security Number \(SSN\)](#) for payment and tax purposes. SSNs are only granted to F-1 students with work authorization or J-1 students who apply for the number.

Where to apply:

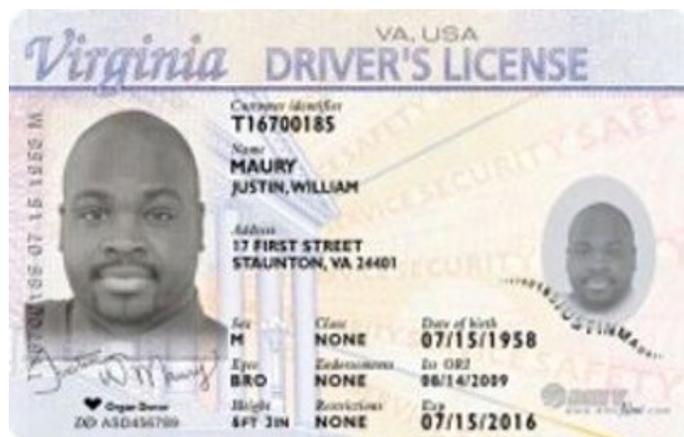
[Social Security Administration Office \(SSA\)](#): 11706 Jefferson Ave., Newport News, Virginia 23606

While having an SSN facilitates many things in the U.S., you can still function quite well if you [cannot get an SSN](#). You do not need an SSN to:

- Open a bank account
- Obtain a Virginia Driver's License or State ID card
- Rent, purchase, register, or insure a car
- Apply for a job on campus at W&M or VIMS
- Rent an apartment

Getting a Driver's License

Driver's licenses and state identification (ID) cards are issued by the state in which you reside; the laws for each state are different. If you plan to do a lot of driving in Virginia, or to other U.S. States, it is advisable to apply for a VA Driver's License. If you are employed in the U.S. and/or have a registered car in VA, you must obtain a Virginia license within **60 days**.



If you want to apply for a driver's license, learner's permit, or state ID card, you will need to apply in-person at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Williamsburg DMV | 5235 John Tyler Highway, Williamsburg VA 23185

Gloucester DMV | 6577 George Washington Memorial Highway, Gloucester, VA 23061

You will need to bring the following original documents:

- Two proofs of identity
- One proof of legal presence
- Two proofs of Virginia residency
- One proof of Social Security Number (if you have been issued one)

For more information about Driver's Licenses, please visit ISSP's [Getting a U.S. Driver's License](#) webpage.

Local Transportation

Public Transportation

The Williamsburg Trolley and Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA) bus lines provide a low-cost or free (with a W&M ID) method of local transportation. For the most up to date information on trolley/bus routes and schedules, visit [WATA's website](#) or get transit directions using [Google Maps](#).

Taxi & Rideshares

- Historic Taxi | 757-258-7755
- Williamsburg Taxi | 757-221-0004
- [Lyft](#)
- [Uber](#)

Zipcars

Zipcars are cars that you rent for a short period of time (a couple hours to a day). These cars are parked on-campus and are good for local trips, such as to the grocery store.

To rent a Zipcar, you must have your driver's license for at least one year. You can rent with a foreign license, but you may need to provide a translated driving record from your home country. For more information, including how to enroll and current rates, visit [WM Zipcar](#).

Car Rental Agency

You can rent a car from a traditional car rental agency using a foreign license; the agency will want to see your passport and W&M ID.

- You must be at least **21 years old**
- If you are under 25, there will be an additional surcharge per day
- An SSN is not required to rent a car

You are **strongly** advised to purchase the insurance with your rental car; minor accidents or scrapes on the car can be very expensive without insurance.

Additional Transportation Resources

- [Transportation to Williamsburg](#): Includes resources about airports, shuttles, buses, and trains.
- [W&M Parking and Transportation](#): Provides more information about public transportation, Zipcars, and out of town travel.
- [Bike Alliance](#): Provides information about bike rentals, group rides, and other bike safety resources.
- [Getting Around Williamsburg](#): Includes more information about local transportation near W&M.



Healthcare in the U.S.

Health Insurance

Due to the high cost of healthcare in the U.S., all international students must be enrolled in the [W&M sponsored student health insurance plan](#) or request a [waiver](#) by confirming you have a qualified health insurance policy.

F-1 Students: Health Insurance is not required for family members in F-2 status, however, we highly recommend that all family members have insurance coverage.

J-1 Students: J-1 students and J-2 dependent(s) are required to have health insurance that meets the [minimum coverage requirements](#).

Insurance Reminders

- **Create your [online insurance account](#):** You can use this account to reprint your insurance ID card, review insurance coverage information, etc.
- **Always carry your Insurance ID card with you:** If you see a doctor or visit a hospital, you will need to show your W&M Health Insurance card when you arrive.
- **Insurance is billed in two parts:** One installment is due with Fall tuition, another is due with Spring tuition.



For more information about health insurance, visit ISSP's [Student Health Insurance](#) webpage.

Seeking Medical Care

There are many ways to seek care for medical issues in the U.S. For more information, visit ISSP's [Understanding the U.S. Healthcare System](#) webpage.

Student Health Center

The [Student Health Center](#) is a low cost, full-service clinic on the main W&M campus. Appointments must be scheduled in advance. Visit the Student Health Center first **unless**:

- It is an emergency
- You are more than 14 km from Williamsburg
- The Student Health Center is closed

Urgent Care Clinics (Non-Emergencies)

If the Student Health Center is closed, we recommend visiting a local clinic if it is not a medical emergency.

Local Urgent Care Clinics:

- [M.D. Express Urgent Care](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [Williamsburg Urgent Care](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [Velocity Urgent Care](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [M.D. Express Urgent Care Gloucester](#) | Gloucester, VA
- [Velocity Urgent Care Gloucester](#) | Gloucester, VA

Hospitals (Emergencies)

Only visit a hospital if you are experiencing a serious medical emergency, such as severe bleeding, a head injury, loss of consciousness, etc.

Call **911** for ambulance transport if necessary. Ambulances can be very expensive, so only request transportation if you are experiencing a medical emergency.

Local Hospitals:

- [Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center](#) | 100 Sentara Cir., Williamsburg; 757-984-6000
- [Riverside Doctors' Hospital Williamsburg](#) | 100 Commonwealth Ave., Williamsburg; 757-585-2200
- [Riverside Walter Reed Hospital](#) | 7519 Hospital Drive, Gloucester; 804-693-8899

Safety at W&M



International Emergency Contact

Nick Vasquez | Associate Director, International Travel & Security
snvasquez@wm.edu | 757-221-1146

If you are experiencing a **serious crisis** during your time at W&M, contact Nick as soon as possible! This includes:

- Problems entering the U.S. (at an airport or land border)
- You are pulled over or arrested by the police
- You are hospitalized.

Safety Apps

The university has two free apps available to help students better prepare for an emergency:

Rave Guardian: Can be used to check in with family, friends, Campus Police, or others you trust to help you stay safe both on and off campus. You can set a safety timer to notify people you trust to check in on you if you are alone or in an unfamiliar place.

William & Mary Mobile: Can be used to access emergency resources and receive emergency information, alerts and reminders from the university.

General Safety Tips

- Be aware of your surroundings
- Walk with a friend at night
- Keep a picture or copy of valuable items
- Lock your dorm room or apartment when you leave
- Do not leave your belongings unattended in public spaces
- Lock and [register your bike](#) with Parking Services

Emergency Notifications

W&M has a number of ways to communicate to the campus community during an emergency situation.

W&M students, faculty and staff will receive a notification through text and email in the event of a campus-wide emergency, a natural disaster, or closings for inclement weather. Make sure to keep your contact information updated in [Banner](#).

Fire Safety

- Turn on the oven vent when cooking and **do not** leave the area unattended.
- Leave campus buildings **immediately** if the fire alarm sounds - never question the alarm!
- The Fire Department and Police will say when it's safe to go back inside the building.

Learn more about Fire Safety at W&M [here](#).

William & Mary Police

The W&M Police Department provides professional police, public safety, emergency communications, and emergency management services to the W&M campus community.

The W&M Police is available 24/7. Their telephone number is located on the back of your Tribe Card: **757-221-4596**. Call **911** in case of emergencies.



If you are pulled over by the police:

- The police car will have flashing lights and pull up behind your car
- You must pull over on the shoulder of the road
- **Stay in your car** - the police officer will come and talk to you.

Avoiding Immigration Scams



What Are Scams?

Scams are illegal schemes that aim to make money by deceiving people. Every year, scammers who claim to be from U.S. government agencies call or email international students to demand money and threaten them with arrest or deportation if they don't pay.

Common Scams

Common scams include phone scams, phishing email scams, and IRS tax scams. Scammers will claim to be from some of the following U.S. government agencies:

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Social Security Administration Office (SSA)
- Internal Revenue Services (IRS)

Things to Remember

- U.S. government officials will **never** threaten you or demand that you pay money. If someone contacts you and says "*if you do not pay them money, you will be arrested or deported,*" that is most likely a scam.
- It is very rare for the U.S. government to contact a student by phone or email. Contact is usually made through **mailed letters**.

- Never give out personal or financial information to unknown callers. If the caller seems to have a lot of your personal information, do not give them any more information.
- The website and email domain for an official U.S. government organization should end with **.gov**. If it ends with .com, .net, or .org, then it is most likely not the U.S. government.
- Sometimes scammers will hide their true phone number (known as **spoofing**) and appear to be calling from a legitimate U.S. government phone number.

Don't be afraid to hang up the phone or ignore a suspicious email. If you are contacted by someone claiming to be a government agency and you are not sure if it's legitimate:

- [Contact ISSP immediately](#). Do not let the scammers scare you into giving them money. ISSP will help to determine if it is a legitimate request.
- You can also report scams to the [W&M Police](#) and [W&M Information Technology](#).



Scammers can be very aggressive and will use scare tactics to try to intimidate potential victims. Your safety and security are a priority and concern to ISSP, so please familiarize yourself with the information and resources listed on our [Immigration Scams](#) webpage.

Working in the U.S.

On-Campus Employment

F-1 and J-1 students are eligible to work for William & Mary or VIMS with [certain limitations](#):

- **F-1 Students:** Employment authorization is not necessary for W&M or VIMS employment during the academic year and official school breaks.
- **J-1 Students:** Work authorization is needed, but it is very simple to get! Once you receive a job offer to work at W&M or VIMS, please contact an [ISSP advisor](#) for authorization.
- During the fall and spring semesters, students may work up to a total of 20 hours/week.
- During official breaks (winter break, spring break, summer break), students may work more than 20 hours/week for W&M or VIMS.

Finding W&M Employment

There are many options for on-campus employment. [Tribe Careers](#) is the main job, internship, and event posting site for the [Office of Career Development & Professional Engagement](#).

Many offices hire students the semester before they start working. Some resources for finding a job at W&M or VIMS include:

- [Academic Departments](#)
- [Auxiliary Services](#)
- [Student Unions & Engagement](#)
- [Campus Recreation](#)
- [Residence Life](#)
- [Swem Library](#)
- [Writing Resources Center](#)



Cohen Career Center



Off-Campus Employment

Students in valid F-1 and J-1 status must obtain work authorization **before** participating in off-campus employment.

F-1 Students

- [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\)](#) is an off-campus work authorization that allows F-1 students to gain practical experience in their major or academic program prior to graduation. CPT is approved by ISSP.
- [Optional Practical Training \(OPT\)](#) is a work authorization that allows F-1 students to gain practical experience in their major field of study for up to 12 months. OPT is typically used after graduation and is approved by USCIS.

J-1 Students

- [Academic Training \(AT\)](#) is an authorization for J-1 students to participate in an internship, practicum, or employment (paid or unpaid). AT is approved by ISSP.

Students in F-1 and J-1 status may engage in [volunteering and unpaid internships](#) as long as the activity is in compliance with the U.S. Department of Home Land Security's and the U.S. Department of Labor's regulations. Please contact ISSP if you have questions about volunteer work or unpaid internships.

Working or earning money without authorization is very serious! If you work without authorization, you may need to leave the U.S., and you may not be able to work in the U.S. after graduation.

Shopping & Grocery Stores

Local Grocery Stores

Grocery stores carry a variety of items such as fruits, meats, vegetables, dairy products, and non-perishable food.

Williamsburg, VA

- [Food Lion](#) | Walking; Bus Route 5: Monticello
- [Trader Joe's](#) | Bus Route 5: Monticello
- [Aldi](#) | Bus Route 5: Monticello
- [Publix](#) | Bus Route 5: Monticello
- [Earth Fare](#) | Walking; Bus Route 5: Monticello
- [Harris Teeter](#) | Bus Route 6: Jamestown

Gloucester, VA

- [Food Lion](#) | Driving
- [Aldi](#) | Driving
- [Walmart](#) | Driving

International Grocery Stores

If you want a larger selection of international ingredients, see below for nearby options.

Williamsburg, VA

- [Kielbasa Euro Deli](#) | Eastern European
- [Trader Joe's](#) | Variety of Foods
- [Cost Plus World Market](#) | Variety of Foods
- [La Tienda Tapas Bar & Market](#) | Spanish
- [Mi Bendicion Latin Market](#) | Latin American
- [International Bazaar](#) | Indian/Halal Foods

Newport News, VA

- [E-Mart](#) | Asian/Latin American
- [Farm Fresh International Food](#) | Asian/Latin American
- [Kundan International Grocery](#) | Indian
- [ubbego African SuperMarket](#) | African

Shopping (Non-Grocery Items)

After arriving in the U.S., you may need to buy personal, clothing and household items.

[Williamsburg Farmer's Market](#) | Fresh Seasonal food and farm products

- Available every Saturday on the Duke of Gloucester St. (near the main W&M campus).

[Marshalls](#) | Clothing & household items

- 1252 Richmond Road, Williamsburg, VA
- Walking; Bus Route 5: Monticello

[Goodwill](#) | Donated Clothing & Household items

- 1310 Richmond Road, Williamsburg, VA
- Walking; Bus Route 5: Monticello

[Premium Outlets](#) | Outdoor Shopping Complex

- 5715 Richmond Road, Williamsburg, VA
- Bus Route 2: Richmond Rd.

[Walmart Neighborhood Market](#) | Food & household items

- 4670 Casey Blvd., Williamsburg, VA
- Trolley; Bus Route 5: Monticello

[Dollar Tree](#) | Discounted Variety Store

- **4640 Monticello Ave., Williamsburg, VA**
 - Bus Route 5: Monticello

[Target](#) | Clothing, food, & household items

- 4630 Monticello Ave., Williamsburg, VA
- Bus Route 5: Monticello



Campus Life at W&M

Campus Culture

William & Mary is home to a vibrant and inclusive community of individuals with different backgrounds, talents and skills. We engage in diverse perspectives and seek wisdom in bridging differences.

Clubs & Organizations

With more than 450 campus clubs and organizations to choose from, staying active and engaged at W&M is a way of life. There are more than 200 special interest clubs inspired by political engagement, religious faith, ethnic and cultural pride, and environmental protection.

Here are just a few of the many student organizations:

- South Asian Student Association
- Muslim Student Association
- Esports at William & Mary
- Chinese Student Organization
- Global Innovation Challenge

Learn more about the many student clubs and organizations [here!](#)

Arts & Performance

Whether it's a night of comedy improv, installing a new exhibit at the Muscarelle Museum of Art or listening to a music ensemble perform, there are plenty of opportunities for international students to tap into the same creative energy!

- [Alma Mater Productions \(AMP\)](#)
- [Muscarelle Museum of Art](#)
- [Andrews Gallery](#)

Sports & Recreation

W&M has a thriving sport club and intramural scene, and a ton of opportunities for outdoor adventure. Visit the following websites to learn more about sports and recreation at W&M:

- [W&M Athletics](#)
- [Sport Clubs](#)
- [Campus Recreation](#)
- [Intramural Sports](#)
- [Tribe Adventure Program](#)



Photos courtesy of W&M University Marketing

Campus Life at W&M



Photos by David Sundberg/W&M University Marketing

Health & Wellness

Located next to the Sadler Center, the McLeod Tyler Wellness Center supports the physical, mental, and overall well-being of the W&M community. The Wellness Center is home to the Student Health Center, Counseling Center, Center for Mindfulness & Authentic Excellence, and the Office of Health Promotion.

Behind the Wellness Center, you can find a Meditation Labyrinth and Zen Garden to instill calm, contemplation, and creativity.

Student Health Center

The Student Health Center provides a full-range of low cost primary care services including the evaluation, treatment and prevention of all kinds physical, mental and social health issues. All full-time students are eligible to receive care at the Student Health Center.

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center offers a range of mental health services to students wanting help with personal concerns. Counseling Center staff specialize in the different issues and clinical concerns common to college students such as, relationship and family issues, academic and personal stress, identity development and personal growth.

Center for Mindfulness & Authentic Excellence

The Center for Mindfulness & Authentic Excellence (CMAx) promotes the research and application of the principles of values-centered flourishing, mindfulness, and integrative wellness.

Health Promotion

The Office of Health Promotion works to enhance the overall health and wellness of the W&M campus community through evidence-informed prevention efforts. Health Promotion staff also provide outreach workshops on a variety of health topics.

Campus Life at W&M

Spirituality & Faith

W&M's international community represents a diverse array of faith and spiritual traditions. The [Center for Student Diversity](#) (CSD) holds multi-faith events throughout the school year, and provides support to all students in their religious and spiritual development.

On-Campus Meditation & Prayer Spaces

There are several prayer and meditation spaces available to all students at W&M:

- [The Meditation Room](#) | Sadler Center, Room 310 (pictured on the right). Includes prayer kneelers, floor cushions and soft lighting
- Meditation Alcoves | Wellness Center (pictured below). Can be used for meditation and prayer. Reservations are recommended: [Room A](#); [Room B](#)
- [Prayer & Meditation Room](#) | Swem Library, Room 240

Student Religious Groups

There are many student groups, representing a broad spectrum of faith, available to everyone in the Tribe! Some student groups include:

- Buddhist Sangha at W&M
- Hindu, Sikh, and Jain Students Association
- Muslim Student Association
- Hillel at William & Mary

Visit [Tribe Link](#) for a complete list of student-led religious groups at W&M.



The Meditation Room (Sadler Center).

Religious Centers

For students interested in practicing their faith, there are several religious centers to explore in Williamsburg and the surrounding cities.

Williamsburg, VA

- [Buddhist Sangha](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [Christian Churches & denominations](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [Mosque of Williamsburg](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [Temple Beth El](#) | Williamsburg, VA
- [Shenkman Jewish Center](#) | Williamsburg, VA

Other Locations

- [Saints Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church](#) | Newport News, VA
- [Islamic Center of Hampton](#) | Hampton, VA
- [Richmond Hindu Temple](#) | Richmond, VA
- [Richmond Sikh Gurdwara](#) | Richmond, VA
- [Gurdwara Singh Sabha](#) | Richmond, VA
- [Hindu Temple of Hampton Roads](#) | Chesapeake, VA



Meditation Alcove (Wellness Center).

Photos courtesy of W&M University Marketing

Campus Life at W&M

U.S. Classroom Expectations

You may find your class at W&M to be very different from what you are used to in your home country. U.S. classrooms are generally informal, but rules can vary by professor. Many U.S. classrooms focus on active learning, where professors use a combination of lectures, classroom discussions, and group projects to make up the curriculum. This type of learning can feel intimidating at first, but don't be afraid to join in; your classmates and professor will listen to what you have to say.



Photo by Stephen Salpukas, W&M Photography

Tips for Academic Success in the U.S.

- **Review your class syllabus!** The syllabus will outline class expectations for the semester.
- **Attendance is typically required in the U.S.** This can vary by professor, but make sure to be punctual to your classes.
- **Classroom participation is often expected.** Be prepared to ask questions and engage in classroom discussions.
- **Study regularly** throughout the semester and complete class assignments on time.
- **Utilize professor/TA office hours.** Office hours are times where your professor or teaching assistant (TA) will be available to assist you.
- **Check your W&M email regularly** to stay up to date on university announcements, updates from professors, and important reminders from ISSP!

W&M Honor Code

The [Honor Code](#) is a code of ethics that many U.S. universities implement to prohibit lying, cheating and stealing. Violation of the W&M Honor Code and university policies can lead to failing grades on assignments or classes, academic probation, and suspension from the university.

As an international student, suspension from the university means that you may have to leave the U.S. **This can greatly impact your eligibility to work in the U.S. and apply for a future immigration status.**

Familiarize yourself with the Honor Code to ensure that you are following W&M's guidelines on academic honesty.

Plagiarism

Students often commit [plagiarism](#) (intentionally or unintentionally) when they use the words of another without properly citing or crediting the original source.

Common examples of plagiarism include:

- Copying a large body of text without citing it
- Rephrasing a piece of text in your own words without proper citation
- Failure to cite sources correctly
- Using your own previously written papers or research results, and making it appear brand new

Citation requirements for class assignments can vary, so make sure to consult with your professor on the most appropriate citation style for your class.

For tips and best practices to avoid plagiarism, review Purdue Owl's [Plagiarism Overview](#). See **Page 23** of this handbook for additional international student resources.

Source: Information adapted from Purdue University's [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#)

Campus Life at W&M



W&M Libraries

W&M Libraries consists of several libraries located on the main campus as well as within W&M's graduate and professional schools. Each library offers unique collections, research services and collaborative spaces for studying and research.

W&M Libraries include:

- Swem Library
- Chemistry Library
- Learning Resource Center
- McLeod Business Library
- Music Library
- Physics Library
- VIMS Hargis Library
- Wolf Law Library



TutorZone

Located in Swem Library, TutorZone offers free one-on-one tutoring, course specific tutoring, and time management consultations. Tutors are friendly and experienced students trained to assist with the development of independent learning skills in a variety of subjects.

TutorZone can help with:

- Learning skills vital to success in particular courses
- Practicing problem-solving skills
- Reviewing course material



Writing & Communication Center

The Writing & Communication Center can help you strengthen your writing and communication skills by providing resources, workshops, and individual support for all kinds of assignments and projects that require writing such as:

- Academic essays
- Presentations
- Posters
- Personal Statements
- Creative Writing



The Graduate Writing Resources Center (GWRC)

provides free resources to graduate students at any stage of writing. The GWRC also offers individual writing consultations as well as GWRC workshops and events.

Campus Life at W&M

W&M Traditions

William & Mary is the second-oldest institution of higher learning in the U.S., and is rich with history and traditions! Walk across campus and you'll see a love of tradition, a love of learning and a never-ending exchange of ideas and passions.



Convocation

The official start of the academic year and a chance for the entire W&M community to welcome the incoming class. After listening to a convocation speaker, the president of the university leads the new students through the Wren Building to the wild cheers and warm high-fives of the crowd. Afterward, everyone enjoys a delicious picnic dinner with live music.



Yule Log Celebration

Each December, students are treated to live festive music and singing, student reflections on themes of peace, joy and gratitude, and the reading of a special story by the university president. Afterward, students pile into the Great Hall to toss ceremonial sprigs of holly into the Yule Log fire for good luck.



Homecoming & Reunion Weekend

Since 1926, alumni and friends have gathered on campus in the fall to reconnect with each other and William & Mary. This weekend includes a variety of parties and receptions, as well as the Homecoming football game and tailgate.



Candlelight Ceremony

The night before graduation, all seniors flock to the Wren Yard for a candle-lighting ceremony. The atmosphere is fun and nostalgic, culminating in the illumination of the Wren Yard as candles are passed from classmate to classmate.

Things To Do

Need some inspiration on what to do outside of class? Check out some of our recommendations below! Don't forget to check your W&M email regularly for upcoming ISSP trips and events.



Things to do in Williamsburg

- Visit [Colonial Williamsburg](#)
- [2nd Sundays Art & Music Festival](#) | Outdoor festival with live music and arts & crafts for purchase
- [Movie Tavern Williamsburg](#) | Movie theater
- [Williamsburg Premium Outlets](#) | Outdoor shopping complex
- Visit [Williamsburg Parks](#)
- [Busch Gardens](#) | Amusement park. Offers special deals for W&M students in October
- [New Town](#) | Shopping, restaurants, and a movie Theater.



Things to do near Gloucester

- [Yorktown Beach](#) | Rent kayaks, paddleboards and bikes to explore the area
- [Riverwalk Landing](#) | Shopping and dining along the York River
- [YRC Cinema](#) | Movie theater
- [Machicomoco State Park](#) | Includes paved trails for walking or biking, campgrounds, and picnic areas
- [Gloucester Events](#) | [Yorktown Events](#)



Places to visit outside of W&M and VIMS

- [Newport News, VA](#) | 32 km from W&M
- [Hampton, VA](#) | 47 km from W&M
- [Richmond, VA](#) | 82 km from W&M
- [Virginia Beach, VA](#) | 95 km from W&M
- [Washington, D.C.](#) | 240 km from W&M

International Student Resources

ISSP Resources

[Banking](#)
[Cell Phones](#)
[Social Security Numbers \(SSNs\)](#)
[Filing Taxes](#)
[Health Care & Insurance](#)
[Driver's License](#)
[Local Transportation](#)
[Short-Term Housing](#)
[Off-Campus Housing](#)
[Resources for Family](#)
[ISSP Event Calendar](#)

Wellness & Safety

[Campus Recreation](#)
[Student Health Center](#)
[Counseling Center](#)
[Health Promotion](#)
[W&M Police](#)

Academics & Research

[Academic Calendars](#)
[Writing & Communication Center](#)
[Graduate Writing Resources Center](#)
[TutorZone](#)
[Bookstore](#)
[Charles Center for Academic Excellence](#)
[W&M Libraries](#)
[Plagiarism Overview](#)

English Language Resources

[Writing & Communication Center](#)
[Graduate Writing Resources Center](#)
[American Culture & Conversation Club \(ACC\)](#)
[College Partnership for Adult Learners \(CPALs\)](#)
[Literacy For Life](#)

Student Life

[Athletics](#)
[Center for Student Diversity](#)
[Community Engagement](#)
[Dean of Students](#)
[Student Organizations](#)
[Tribe Link](#)
[VIMS Student Life & Well-Being](#)

Campus Services

[Career Development & Professional Engagement](#)
[VIMS Career & Professional Development](#)
[Student Accessibility Services](#)
[Dining Services](#)
[Parking & Transportation](#)
[Residence Life](#)
[Tribe Card Services](#)
[Information Technology \(IT\)](#)
[VIMS Ombuds](#)

WELCOME TO THE TRIBE!

We hope you have a wonderful year at W&M!



WILLIAM & MARY

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS,
SCHOLARS & PROGRAMS