Welcome to the College of William & Mary and VIMS

Campus in early Autumn

Photo: Bo Dong

2014-2015

a special guide for our international students

About the Reves Center 2
Student Visa Information 3
Paying the SEVIS Fee 4
Arriving to the U.S. 5
Housing, Classes, & Bills 6
Bringing Family 6
Life in Williamsburg 7 - 8
Transportation (Car, etc) 9
Prepare for your Future 10
Health & Wellness 11
Packing Checklists 12 - 13
Reves Center Services and Programs

We are the “International Center” of the College of William and Mary. We support international students and scholars at the College and current William and Mary students and scholars going abroad. Our services and programs include:

- I-20 and DS-2019 issuance (so you can get your visa!)
- Immigration advising services
- Organization of trips and events
- Assistance to students and scholars transitioning to life at W&M

At international orientation you will have the opportunity to meet us and learn more about the services we provide to you!

Who We Are

Stephen Sechrist  ISSP Director, sjsech@wm.edu

Eva Wong  International Student & Scholar Advising, ywong@wm.edu

Emily Hogge  Immigration Specialist & Orientation Coordinator, echogge@wm.edu

Blair Gaskill,  Programming Coordinator Graduate Assistant, globe@wm.edu

Office Hours and Location

Except for official university holidays, we are open all year!
The International Student and Scholar office is on the second floor of the Reves Center for International Studies.

Mailing address
(not to be used for express mail)

Reves Center, College of William and Mary
P.O. Box 8795
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795

Phone: 757-221-3594   Fax: 757-221-3597   Email: globe@wm.edu
http://www.wm.edu/internationalstudents

Reves Center Walk-In hours:    11:00am-5:00pm, Monday—Friday
VIMS Walk-in hours (Sowers House): 1:00pm-3:30pm, Thursdays

Questions?

Check out our website, and contact us. We are excited to welcome you to William & Mary!
Getting a Student Visa

To enter the U.S., you will need a F-1 or J-1 student visa from a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. You may apply for a visa up to 120 days before your I-20 or DS-2019 start date.

To get your student visa, you will need:

- I-20 or DS-2019 (enclosed in this packet)
- Passport
- SEVIS Fee Receipt (see page 4, “Paying the SEVIS Fee”)
- Admission letter from the College of William and Mary
- Evidence of financial support (Certification of Financial Support, bank statement, scholarship letter, etc.)
- Evidence of ties to your home country (e.g. family and property ties, specific plans on how your U.S. education will help your future home country career, etc.)
- Visa application form DS-160
- Check with your U.S. Consulate for more requirements: www.usembassy.gov

- The visa application fee is $160. You must also pay the SEVIS fee (see page 4), and possibly a reciprocity fee, depending on the agreement between your home country and the U.S.
  F-1 students: http://tinyurl.com/F1visas  J-1 students & scholars: http://tinyurl.com/Jvisas

- Dependents: If you bring a spouse and/or children to the U.S., they will need F-2 or J-2 visas. If they apply at the embassy with you, you should bring proof of relationship (i.e. marriage certificate for spouse or birth certificate for children). If they apply at another time, they should bring copies of your documents when applying.

- At the U.S. Consulate: When the consular officer grants your visa, he or she will tell you when and where to get it. The visa will have an expiration date, but this expiration date is not when you must leave the U.S. If you maintain F-1 or J-1 status, you may stay in the U.S. until the end date on your I-20 or DS-2019 plus a grace period.
  F-1 students: 60 day grace period  J-1 students & scholars 30 day grace period

- Canadian and Bermudan citizens do not need a student or scholar visa; they may enter the U.S. with the I-20 or DS-2019, passport, admission letter, SEVIS fee receipt, and evidence of financial support. They must pay the SEVIS fee at least 3 days before entering the U.S. This fee cannot be paid at the border. See page 4 on the SEVIS fee.

- Changing Status: If you are in the U.S. in another status and want to change status to F-1 or J-1 without leaving the U.S, contact the Reves Center.

- Transferring Your Immigration Record to W&M: If you recently attended another U.S. school in F-1 status, and will be F-1 at W&M, have your SEVIS record transferred to W&M. If you do, you can use your existing F-1 visa, and will not need to pay the SEVIS fee again. But if your visa is expired and you travel abroad, you need a new visa before returning to the U.S. This also applies to J-1 students.
Paying the SEVIS Fee

Before applying for your F-1 or J-1 visa, you must pay a SEVIS Fee. This fee is in addition to the visa application fee.

- SEVIS Fee:
  - Applying for a F-1 visa (with I-20): $200
  - Applying for a J-1 visa (with DS-2019): $180

- Pay at least 3 days before the visa interview. Canadian and Bermudan citizens are not required to do a visa interview but should pay at least 3 days before entering the U.S.

- More information on SEVIS fee: http://tinyurl.com/sevisfeeFAQ

- F-2 and J-2 dependents are not required to pay the SEVIS fee.

- Pay this fee online or by mail (check or money order).

Instructions:

1. Visit www.fmjfee.com. Go to the bottom of the page. Click “Submit Form I-901 and Fee Payment”
2. If you will be applying for an F-1 visa, select “Form I-20.” If you will be applying for a J-1 visa, select “Form DS-2019.” Click “OK.”
3. Complete your personal information.
4. If you are an F-1 student (with I-20):
   - The form requires the “School Code” listed on your I-20. W&M campus code: WAS214F10684000
   - VIMS campus code: WAS214F10684001

   If you are a J-1 student (with DS-2019):

   - The form requires the “Program Number” listed on your DS-2019. W&M number: P 102647
5. The form requires the SEVIS Identification Number. This number is in the top right corner of your I-20 or DS-2019 document, begins with “N,” and is 10 digits.
6. Check the information for accuracy on the next page.
7. Choose “first class mail” or “expedited delivery.” First class mail is recommended because you can print the receipt at the end and this printout should be fine for your visa interview. You do not need to wait for the mailed receipt. You can print the online receipt and use that copy.
8. Enter your credit card information.
9. PRINT AT LEAST 2 COPIES OF THE SEVIS FEE RECEIPT!!!! Bring one copy to the visa interview, and show the other when you enter the U.S.
10. Pay the SEVIS fee in advance, and bring your SEVIS fee receipt to your scheduled visa interview and when you enter the U.S. You cannot pay the fee at the consulate.
What to expect when you arrive to the U.S.

At the port-of-entry (the airport or border where you officially enter the U.S.), be prepared to present your documents:

- Passport
- F-1 or J-1 student visa (located in your passport)
- I-20 or DS-2019
- Admission letter from William & Mary
- SEVIS fee receipt
- Financial documentation (such as bank statements, scholarship details, etc.)
- U.S. Customs Declaration Form (you will receive that on the flight to the U.S.)

Keep these documents in your carry-on luggage, as when you arrive in the U.S., the immigration officer may review your documents and ask you some questions regarding the purpose of your stay in the U.S.

A digital photo and fingerprints will be taken, and your passport, and I-20 or DS-2019 will be stamped and annotated F-1 or J-1 and D/S. D/S means you may stay in the U.S. as long as your documents are valid and you maintain legal status.

Note: If you have any problems entering the U.S, call 757-221-3594 (Reves Center) or on weekends and evenings, call 757-221-4596 (W&M Police).
The International Spouse Network (ISN) is a group of wives, husbands, and significant others who have accompanied their partners to Williamsburg and who have a connection to the College of William & Mary. Coming from all over the globe, members gather and share activities that promote friendship and understanding. Activities include English conversation classes, holiday celebrations, movie screenings, cooking, crafts, excursions, and children play dates.

Interested in joining the ISN? Sign up at: http://tinyurl.com/signupisn

The International Spouse Network website provides new families with information on life in America and Williamsburg; a handbook written by international spouses for international spouses is also available. http://tinyurl.com/isnhandbook

Husband, Wife, or Partner Joining You? International Spouse Network

- **Graduate Student Housing**— You can live on campus in the Graduate Complex, or off campus in housing you select. If you would like to live on campus, register early since spaces fill. More info about both options: http://tinyurl.com/wmhousing

- **Undergraduate Student Housing**— Freshmen must live on campus, and will complete a roommate questionnaire in May. Transfer students are not guaranteed on-campus housing, and should apply as soon as the application is active online if they are interested. http://tinyurl.com/applywm

- **Undergraduate Exchange Student Housing**— You will live on campus, and will receive information from the Global Education Office on the housing registration process.

- **Course Registration**— Freshmen will register for classes while on campus during their orientation. Undergraduate exchange students will register one semester before coming to campus, with the help of the Global Education Office. Graduate students should contact their departments for course registration information.

- **Paying Bills**— Access your bills online (due August 1 for fall, and early January for spring). More info: http://tinyurl.com/wmbills. Several payment options are available: http://tinyurl.com/wmpayment


Hot Topics: Housing, Class Registration, & Paying Bills
Life in Williamsburg, Virginia

W&M is located in the City of Williamsburg, which with the surrounding James City County, is home to about 83,000 people. Williamsburg has a small town atmosphere. Particularly in the summer, Colonial Williamsburg and other tourist sites attract many visitors.

Campus Photo Galleries: http://tinyurl.com/campusphotos

Climate: The weather in Williamsburg is moderate except for the summers which can be quite humid and hot. September to May is generally quite pleasant. The average daytime high temperature is around 3°C in January and 32°C in July and August. It is often sunny but rain can be frequent in June, August, and September.

If you are looking for some city life, two metropolitan areas are close to Williamsburg: Richmond and Hampton Roads.

- Richmond, the capital of the state of Virginia, is about 80km west of Williamsburg and offers many things to do and see. Cary Street and Shockoe Slip are great areas for going out.

- Hampton Roads, which comprises the cities of Virginia Beach, Norfolk, and Newport News has beaches, parks, museums, shopping, concerts, sporting events, and cultural festivals.

Tip! The Reves Center often organizes trips to urban areas, such as a trip to Washington DC each year!
Life in Williamsburg, Virginia

**Historic attractions:** Williamsburg is a world-renowned tourist destination. At its heart lies Colonial Williamsburg (“CW”), the restored 18th-century colonial capital of Virginia.

Forming the historic triangle with Williamsburg are Jamestown and Yorktown national parks, sites of the first English settlement (1607) and the end of the American Revolution (1781).

**Amusement parks:** The amusement parks Busch Gardens and Water Country USA offer great rides, roller coasters, and entertainment.

**Dining:** Williamsburg offers many restaurants, including a variety of ethnic cuisine such as French (Le Yaca), Indian (Nawab), and Chinese (Peter Chang).

**Going out:** New Town and High Street, offer fun places to “hang out” and relax. New Town has a large cinema, billiards (pool) hall, several coffee houses, restaurants, stores, and bars. It is easily accessible by bus from W&M.

Within walking distance of W&M are the Green Leafe Café, College Delly, Paul’s Deli, and Brickhouse Tavern, all of which are popular places for W&M students to hang out.

**Shopping:** Williamsburg and the surrounding areas offer many opportunities for shopping.

- **Outlet Malls:** There is a large outlet Mall (Premium Outlets) located in Williamsburg (includes Coach, Calvin Klein, J. Crew, Nike, etc.).

- **Three large discount department stores:** Walmart, Target, and Kmart can be found in Williamsburg as well as shopping centers.

- **Supermarkets:** All local supermarkets offer some international foods. Special international stores can be found in Newport News (30 km from W&M). Most months during the academic year, the Reves center offers a trip to E-Mart, a Korean and international supermarket in Newport News.

**Tip!** You can reach most shopping centers (including New Town and High Street) by bus, and the bus is free with your W&M ID!

A shopping trip to a discount store (such as Target) is available as part of International Orientation.
Transportation

**Bikes** – Many students purchase bikes to get around campus, both new and used. There is a bike sale in September with low cost used bikes (of varying quality levels).

**Local Bus and Trolley** – Williamsburg bus and Trolley are free with your student ID. They do not always run on time, and do not run very late at night. Hours are limited on weekends, in the summer, and during school breaks. If you live off campus and will not have a car, we recommend you live in walking distance from W&M or on the bus route.

**Train and Intercity Buses** – There is a small train station in walking distance of W&M, typically with two trains daily. Trains are run by Amtrak and are sometimes delayed, but go to many cities (Richmond, Washington, DC, and other cities on the East Coast). Greyhound buses also run from the train station.

**Taxis** – If you would like to use a taxi, it is best to call the taxi operator (or save the numbers in your phone), since taxis are not readily available without doing so.

**Zip Car** – Cars that can be rented for short periods of time (ie 2 hours for a grocery trip) are available on campus. To be eligible, you may need your driving record from your home country (translated to English) if you haven’t had a U.S. driver’s license very long, so bring this to W&M if you’re interested. See http://tinyurl.com/zipcarwm

**Cars** – Undergraduate students living on campus are usually fine without a car, and as freshman or sophomores are often not eligible for a parking permit. Graduate students living off campus often find it helpful to have a car, particularly if they are at W&M longer than a year. See http://tinyurl.com/buywmcar

**VIMS** – On the Gloucester campus, there are very few options for public transportation, and the public highway is very busy and unsafe for walking or biking. If you are studying at VIMS, consider purchasing a car. Some students wait until they have been at VIMS for awhile, and then take this step.
Preparing for Your Future: *English & Career Prep*

Having great English makes it **much** easier for you to make American friends and be marketable for jobs. Here are some tips to practice English and prepare for your future career:

1. **Join Clubs.** There are 500+ clubs at W&M! This is a great way to meet American students, and to improve your English. Complete list: http://tinyurl.com/wmclubs

2. **Visit the Career Center:** There are many workshops and events to help you at W&M. Learn how to format your resume in the U.S. style, and practice English at networking events! There are three centers: Cohen Career Center, and the Law and Business School Career Centers.

3. **Use the Writing Center:** This center will help you with academic writing. It can be useful for learning the U.S. writing style.

4. **Volunteer:** In the U.S, service projects are very common. Employers value this, and it is another way to practice English. http://tinyurl.com/wmvolunteering

5. **Get a Conversation Partner:** W&M has a Conversation Partner program (preference given to Arts & Sciences grad students). There is also a Virtual Conversation Partner program for before you arrive! Apply and practice English. http://vcpp.blogs.wm.edu

6. **Take a Class:** Many classes can help you practice English and become more comfortable in the U.S. Examples:
   - *Academic Writing for International Students* – WRIT 101A 02
   - *Writing & Research American Style* – ENGL-150W (Freshmen Seminar)
   - *Fundamentals of Oral Communications* – SPCH 102
   - *Public Speaking* – SPCH 201

7. **Practice Networking:** Did you know that up to 70% of jobs in the US are found through networking? LinkedIn is a great way to start building your networks. See LinkedIn tutorial for more info: http://tinyurl.com/networkingwm
Health & Wellness

Stay healthy and well at W&M with many resources:

- **Health Insurance Requirement** - U.S. health care can be very expensive, so all students are required to have health insurance at W&M and are billed for the College plan. Language house tutors are required to have insurance, but will purchase this themselves.

- **Gap Coverage** - If you will be in the U.S. before your W&M insurance starts, we strongly recommend that you buy health insurance to cover you during that time. If you get sick or hurt, it can be very expensive without insurance!

- **Student Health Insurance Dates** – Fall coverage: August 1 - January 15 Spring/Summer coverage: January 16 - July 31

- **Student Health Insurance Fees** – Academic year 2013-2014 was $1561 (Fall: $709, Spring/Summer: $832). 2014-2015 fees will be set in April 2014, billed in August and January.

- **Student Health Insurance Waiver** - If you have qualified health insurance, you may apply for a waiver. More info: http://tinyurl.com/waiverinsurance

- **Dental Care** - Routine dental coverage is an additional fee for students ($554 in 2013-14). If you will not have dental coverage in the U.S, consider scheduling dental cleanings and procedures while you are at home.

- **Vision Care** - Limited vision care is available with student insurance. You may want to consider having eye appointments and getting glasses or contact lenses while you are at home.

- **Counseling Center** - It’s free and confidential for students to speak with a counselor on campus. This is a great way to get support while you’re here.

- **Fitness** - W&M Recreation Center (“the Rec”) is a fitness center with exercise machines, free weights, climbing wall, racquetball courts, and indoor pool. It’s free with your W&M ID and often open until 11pm! Low cost fitness classes in yoga, weight lifting, kickboxing, and more (typically free the first week of classes) are also very popular.

- **Trips** - W&M Recreation has many trips and programs like backpacking, climbing, surfing, kayaking, and caving trips. Info: http://tinyurl.com/wmtrips
Checklist for What to Bring to the U.S. (Suggestions)

- **Small toiletries**– For your first night. If you will be staying in a hotel, they typically have shampoo, conditioner, and soap.

- **Bedding, bath towel, and wash cloth** for when you first arrive. If you will be staying in on-campus housing, your mattress will not have pillow or sheets. On-campus housing mattress size is “extra long twin,” approximately 36in x 80in x 8in (91.4cm x 203.2cm x 20.3cm).

- **Blanket**– If you will stay in on-campus housing, in the summer some rooms have air conditioning and can be very cold by international standards. In the winter it is sometimes also cold.

- **Layered clothing (sweaters, jackets, etc)**– In summer it is often very hot outside and very cold inside, due to air conditioning. Bring a wide range of clothes to dress in layers.

  - **Traditional clothing**– There may be opportunities for you to showcase clothing from your home country (performances, international gatherings, etc.)
  - **Traditional medicine**– This may not be available in the U.S, but check customs regulations before bringing
  - **Spare eye glasses/contact lenses**– Often more expensive in U.S.
  - **Specialty kitchen items**– If you use kitchen tools only common in your country, you may want to bring them. Check popular U.S. housewares websites (Bed Bath & Beyond, Target, Walmart, Amazon, etc) to see if your item is available in the U.S.
  - **Traditional spices**– Check customs regulations before bringing
  - **Laptop computer**– Bring a laptop if you would like a keyboard in your own language. See the "Buy" list for advantages of buying a laptop in the U.S.
  - **Photos of family, friends, your home city or town**– If you bring digital files, you can easily print photos at local pharmacies and using internet services.
  - **Electronic voltage converter and plug adaptor**– Bring these, especially the plug adaptor (converter only if needed), so you will be able to charge your electronic devices.
  - **Driving record, home country driver’s license or international license**– If you will drive in the U.S, even for short periods (like renting a car for holiday), bring these. W&M has Zip Car hourly car rentals, but you may need your driving record (translated to English) if you haven’t had a U.S. driver’s license very long.

![If you bring traditional clothing, you may be able to wear it for campus celebrations.](image1)

You may want to bring specialty kitchen items, such as a sushi mat.
Checklist for Packing Your “Carry On” Luggage

You’ll pack many items, but we recommend you keep these with you on the plane:
- Passport with F-1 or J-1 visa
- I-20 or DS-2019
- Admission letter
- Financial Documentation (what you used to get your F-1 or J-1 visa: bank statement, scholarship letter, etc.)
- SEVIS fee receipt
- Contact information (telephone numbers, address) for where you’ll stay when you first arrive
- Medications (with prescription documentation)
- International calling card or mobile phone (if you have one)
- Dependents travelling with you should have their passports, F-2 or J-2 visas, I-20s or DS-2019s, and proof of relationship (e.g., copy of birth certificate or marriage certificate)
- Change of clothes in case your luggage is delayed

Checklist for What to Buy in the U.S.

When you pack, you won’t have room for everything. If you’re not sure how expensive items are in the U.S, check websites of popular U.S. retailers like Target, Walmart, and Amazon.

Additional suggestions: http://tinyurl.com/bringvsbuy

- Large electronics—Examples: microwave, vacuum, and mini refrigerator. Consider coordinating with your roommate(s) on who purchases which items.
- Cell phone—May be easier to wait to buy this. If you bring a cell phone, check that it can be "unlocked." Most U.S. phones do not work with SIM cards, and use CDMA network (though AT&T and T Mobile do permit SIM cards and use GSM network. There is a Williamsburg AT&T store).
- Laptop with Ethernet card—If you buy your laptop in the U.S., you may be eligible for a student discount, such as through Tribe Computers. You will also be able to purchase a warranty or tech support packages. If you buy a laptop in the U.S, you can always purchase a keyboard sticker online in your native language.

What Not to Bring

- Food items—Such as meats, cheese, fruits, and vegetables
- Restricted items—by U.S. Customs and Border Protection http://tinyurl.com/restricteditems

When you Arrive at W&M

- Check-in with the Reves Center. We will give you information about things to do during your first days in the U.S. and complete your immigration check-in. Check-in times are listed in your packet.
- Check-in to your residence hall (if you will live on-campus).
- Get a W&M student ID card at the ID Office in the Campus Center.
- Visit your academic department (graduate students).
- Open a bank account (optional).
- Purchase textbooks when you know your schedule. The College bookstore is at 345 Duke of Gloucester Street, or buy them online.
- Get a cell phone (if you don’t have one and would like one)
- Shop for items for your room. The Reves Center offers trips to Target during international orientation.