

# EXCHANGE FACT SHEET

## ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026

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## CONTACTS

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## IMPORTANT DATES

APPLICATION CYCLE	FALL 2025 (and Academic Year 2025-2026)	Spring 2026 (and Calendar Year 2026)
Applications & Nominations Open	February 1	September 1
<b>NOMINATION DEADLINE</b>	<b>MARCH 15</b>	<b>OCTOBER 1</b>
Course Offering Finalized	Mid March	Mid October
<b>APPLICATION DEADLINE</b>	<b>APRIL 1</b>	<b>OCTOBER 15</b>
Approximate Timeline for Acceptances	Early May	Early November
On-Campus Housing Application	Upon Acceptance	Upon Acceptance
Course Registration Begins	Mid-May	Mid-November
Suggested Arrival Date	<b>August 20 (TENTATIVE)</b>	*January 13(TENTATIVE)
<b>MANDATORY ORIENTATION (In-Person)</b>	<b>August 21 (TENTATIVE)</b>	<b>*January 14(TENTATIVE)</b>
First Day of Classes	August 25	January 20*
Last Day to Add/Change classes	September 2	January 27*
Last Day to Drop classes	September 8	February 10*
Last Day of Classes	December 8	May 4*
Final Exam Period	December 10-17	May 6-13*
Departure (if living in on-campus housing)	*5pm on last day of exam period	*5pm on last day of exams

*\*Dates are estimated. The Office of the University Registrar maintains academic calendar at [registrar.gmu.edu/calendars](http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars)*

# APPLICATION PROCESS

## ELIGIBILITY

Students must attend a current partner university and be nominated by their home institution for the exchange program.

### 1) Academic Requirements

**Undergraduate:** 2.5 GPA minimum (on a 4.0 scale).

Students should have completed at least ONE (1) YEAR of study at the bachelor level by the time of arrival.

**Graduate:** 3.0 GPA minimum (on a 4.0 scale).

Students should have completed at least ONE (1) SEMESTER of study at the master/postgraduate level by the time of arrival.



### 2) English Language Proficiency Requirements

\*See table below

### 3) Financial Requirements (See Exchange Website)

During the application process, students must also show sufficient funding of their program in order to apply for a J-1 Student Exchange Visa (non-U.S. Citizens only).

For more information, including minimum USD amounts required and acceptable documentation, please see the [Incoming Exchange Website](http://StudyAbroad.gmu.edu/exchange) ([StudyAbroad.gmu.edu/exchange](http://StudyAbroad.gmu.edu/exchange))

## NOMINATION

Students must be nominated by their home institution by nomination deadline *using student's full legal name on passport*

- [Online Exchange Nomination Form](#) (**Password to access form sent separately via e-mail**)
- Official Transcripts can also be sent along with nominations (transcripts forwarded by student are considered *unofficial*)
- GEO will contact nominated students with a link to the Incoming Exchange Application portal (MasonAbroad)

## APPLICATION

- **ONLINE APPLICATION**
- **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT (in English)**
  - MUST be sent by the home institution directly to Mason/GEO (May be sent via e-mail by mobility coordinator)
- **COLOR COPY OF VALID PASSPORT**
  - Passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond program END date
- **FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION (non-U.S. citizens only)**
  - Certificate of Financial Responsibility
  - Proof of Funding documentation
  - See "VISA" section below and [Incoming Exchange Website](#) for full financial requirements
- **OFFICIAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EXAM SCORES (non-U.S. citizens only) - ALL SCORES <2 YEARS OLD**
  - **TOEFL:** *Official* test scores must be sent electronically using Mason's school code (5827)
  - **IELTS:** *Official* test scores must be sent directly to Mason by testing center
  - **DUOLINGO:** *Official* test scores must be sent electronically to Mason from Duolingo portal

### English Language Proficiency Minimum Score Requirement

TOEFL	Internet-based	Undergraduate <i>*Required minimum in each section: 18 points</i>	<b>80 Total*</b>
		Graduate <i>*Required minimum in each section: 20 points</i>	<b>88 Total*</b>
IELTS	Academic	Undergraduate <i>*Required minimum in each subsection: 6.0</i>	<b>6.5 overall*</b>
		Graduate <i>*Required minimum in each subsection: 6.5</i>	<b>7.0 overall*</b>
DUOLINGO	Academic	Undergraduate	<b>110 Total</b>
		Graduate	<b>120 Total</b>

# STUDENT VISA REQUIREMENTS

Students entering the U.S. on J-1 visas are Exchange Visitor Students in the BridgeUSA program.

Non-U.S. citizens are required to obtain a J-1 visa (students with U.S. citizenship must travel on their U.S. passport). In order to apply for a J-1 Visa, students must first receive a DS-2019 Form from Mason (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status). This form is issued AFTER students have been accepted into the exchange program.

## REQUIRED AT APPLICATION (*See Application Section Above*)

1. **Passport:** Must be valid for six (6) months beyond the end date of the exchange program
2. **Certificate of Financial Responsibility** (available on MasonAbroad application portal)
3. **Proof of Funding Documents**
  - See [Incoming Exchange Website](#) for acceptable proof of funding documentation and minimum amounts required to be shown.

## UPON ACCEPTANCE

### 1. Welcome Packet

Mason will provide an electronic Welcome Packet on student's MasonAbroad application portal  
The Welcome Packet includes the DS-2019 form and exchange program acceptance letter

### 2. Pre-Arrival Guide

Mason's J-1 Visa Compliance Officer, Christine Bodziak (cbodziak@gmu.edu) with the Office of International Programs and Services will contact accepted students and provide a pre-arrival visa guide that explains the visa process and other important information regarding J-1 regulations

### 3. Student Visa Application and Appointment

Once students have their Welcome Packet/DS-2019, students will need to [apply for their J-1 Exchange Visa](#)

## DURING EXCHANGE PROGRAM

1. **Full-time Enrollment & Attendance:** Students are **required** to enroll full-time and *attend and participate* in classes  
Full Time Enrollment: 12 credits minimum for undergraduate students; 9 credits for graduate students)
2. **In-Person Requirement and Online Courses:** Current government guidance states that J-1 students to have only one 3 credit fully online or hybrid course as part of their full-time enrollment requirement. Once a student meets the minimum enrollment requirement (12 credits for undergraduates and 9 credits for graduate students) they may enroll in additional hybrid or online courses.
  - **Hybrid courses** that meet for at least 60% in-person may be counted as an in-person course (less than 60% face-to-face is considered fully online).
  - **NOTE:** There is always the possibility that updated guidance will be issued that reverts to the pre-pandemic requirement of not allowing exchange students to have any fully online classes count towards their full-time enrollment requirement.

## \*EMPLOYMENT & OTHER WORK ACTIVITIES\*

Work activities are restricted for Exchange Students. Any work activity that occurs after entering the U.S. with their J-1 visa **MUST** be pre-approved by GMU. GMU's Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) provides advising and pre-approval for work authorization for activities including but not limited to:

- Job/Employment, Internship, Training
- Paid or unpaid
- Full-time or part-time
- NOTE: Volunteering opportunities should also be clarified with OIPS as there are guidelines that must be followed.



# ACADEMICS & COURSES

## COLLEGES & SCHOOLS AT MASON

George Mason University is divided into ten schools or colleges (See [Colleges & Schools](#))

- [Antonin Scalia Law School](#) (\* *Unavailable for exchange*)
- [Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution](#)
- [College of Education and Human Development](#)
- [College of Engineering & Computing](#)
- [College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)
- [College of Public Health](#)
- [College of Science](#)
- [College of Visual and Performing Arts](#)
- [Schar School of Policy and Government](#)
- [Costello College of Business](#)

## COURSE OFFERING

There are two ways students can search for potential classes: the *University Catalog* and the *Schedule of Classes*

### University Catalog

Students can search the online catalog to view **all** courses offered at Mason regardless of term

### Schedule of Classes

Students can search the Schedule of Classes to see courses offered in a **specific term** (i.e. Fall 2024)

\*FALL SEMESTER class schedule is finalized and published online in *MARCH*

\*SPRING SEMESTER class schedule is finalized and published online in *OCTOBER*

\*Classes are generally offered in the same semester  
(i.e. a class offered last year fall semester is likely to be offered again in the fall)

## RESTRICTIONS & LIMITATIONS

**RESTRICTIONS:** The following subjects/areas are **unavailable** to exchange students:

- Undergraduate Nursing courses
- J.D. courses offered at the Antonin Scalia Law School
- Honor (HNRs) coursework
- Thesis/capstone courses (reserved for Mason degree-seeking students)
- BMGT courses in the Master of Science in Management Program

**LIMITATIONS:** The following subjects are open to exchange students but may have **limited availability** due to demand:

- Courses in the College of Engineering & Computing (*Specifically undergraduate IT & Computer Science*)
- Courses in the School of Business

**\*ACADEMIC PREREQUISITES\*:** Individual courses may also have required prerequisites (courses that must be completed prior to taking a more advanced course). Students must show they meet through a [Course Override Request](#) process on the MasonAbroad application. NOTE: The University Catalog shows each course's prerequisites [catalog.gmu.edu/](http://catalog.gmu.edu/)

## IMPORTANT REGISTRATION NOTE

- **\*\*REGISTRATION IS NOT GUARANTEED. ALL STUDENTS SHOULD BE PREPARED TO FIND ALTERNATIVE COURSES/SUBJECTS\*\***
- Courses may not be offered the term being attended, may get cancelled, or spots may fill up, or prerequisites may not be met.
- As well, the course override approval process can take some time and in the waiting period courses may fill up.
- Therefore, students should ensure they have plenty of alternative courses.
- We are unable to reserve spaces for exchange students or require departments to add spaces for exchange students.

## REGISTRATION PROCESS

- Registration will open in mid-May (Fall semester) and mid-November (Spring semester) AFTER acceptance
- Students register themselves online after they have set up their PatriotPass/Mason student email.
- Students can ADD or DROP classes generally through the first week of each semester.
- **Required Course Load per Semester: 12 - 15 credit hours (undergraduate) / 9 credit hours (graduate)\***

**\*NOTE REGARDING CHANGES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC:**

- **Prior to Covid-19**, exchange students were required to take a minimum of 12 credits (Undergraduate) or 9 credits (graduate) of coursework *fully in-person or hybrid*.
- **For the current 2024-2025 academic year**, undergraduate students must have at least 9 of 12 credits in person with 3 credits able to be online. U.S. government guidance may change prior to 2025-2026 academic year.

# HOUSING & MEAL PLANS

## IMPORTANT: ON-CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION IS NOT GUARANTEED

Students apply for housing **AFTER** they have been accepted into the Exchange program. Students will use their Mason NetID to log into the housing application portal. Further instructions will be on students' MasonAbroad application portal. After submitting the housing application, students will receive a housing selection date and time.

It is **very important** that students select their housing on their assigned date and time. Students who do not select housing during their assigned time will go to the end of the list and less likely to be placed on-campus.

Please see [Housing Important Dates](#) for housing start/end dates (typically move-out is 5PM on last day of a student's exams)

**Academic Year students on-campus over Winter Break must apply for additional housing AND pay additional housing fees**



## Undergraduate Students

Subject to availability, students are generally placed in **double** occupancy bedrooms in on-campus student residences. *Please note single occupancy rooms are limited and subject to availability with preference given to those requiring disability accommodations.* Mason offers two types of accommodations for undergraduate exchange students – *suites and apartment* style.

## Graduate Students

Graduate student accommodations on campus are extremely limited and preference is given to those requiring disability accommodations. Most graduate students live off-campus. Please note the Main Campus (Fairfax, VA) has only Townhouses or the Angel Cabrera Global Center (ACGC). Beacon Hall is located on Mason's SciTech Campus located in Prince William, VA. Connected by a campus shuttle that takes approximately 45minutes to over 1 hour depending on traffic.

## Housing Options

### Suite-Style

Consist of either a singleΔ, double, or triple room with a shared bathroom (a maximum of six residents will share a bathroom). A handful of suites have kitchenettes (sink, microwave, small refrigerator). Each student will receive a bed, chair, desk, dresser, and closet (free Wi-Fi and cable).

**MEAL PLAN: \*IMPORTANT\* Those living in suites must buy one of the [Independence Meal plans](#).**

• Eastern Shore*	• Hampton Roads*	• Piedmont / Tidewater
• Mason Global Center	• Whitetop*	• Blue Ridge / Sandbridge

### Apartment Style

Consist of fully furnished unit with full kitchen, dining area, living room, and a combination of single Δ or double rooms with at least one bathroom (maximum of six students per apartment). Each student will receive a bed, chair, desk, dresser, and closet (free Wi-Fi and cable).

**MEAL PLAN: Those living in apartments can choose to buy a [voluntary meal plan](#), but it's not required.**

• Liberty Square*	• Northern Neck*	• Student Apartments*
• Potomac Heights*	• Rogers*	• Townhouses*

Δ Single occupancy dormitories are rarely available and are primarily reserved for students with disabilities.

\*Students studying abroad for the [academic year](#) who wish to spend any part of winter break at Mason should live in one of these dorms.

### OFF-CAMPUS: Resources

Students should utilize the services offered by Mason's [Off-Campus Housing Service](#)

**MEAL PLAN: Those living off-campus can choose to buy a [voluntary meal plan](#), but it's not required.**

## ESTIMATED EXPENSES

Tuition/Course fees	\$0	Exchange students do NOT pay tuition/course fees to Mason
On-Campus Housing (Paid to Mason)	\$3,640 - \$4,900 \$3,640 - \$5,510 \$5,785 - \$6,890	Per semester (triple occupancy) Per semester (double occupancy) Per semester (single occupancy)
Mandatory Health Insurance <sup>⊕</sup> (Paid to Mason)	\$1,362 (Fall) \$2,220 (Spring/summer)	Health insurance is mandatory for visitors on a J-1 visa <b>*NOTE THE HIGHER INSURANCE COST FOR SPRING STUDENTS*</b> *Costs based on 2024-2025 Academic Year Rates
Meal Plan (Paid to Mason)	Starts at \$2810 + Bonus Funds*  VARIES  \$1,600 - \$2,800*	Independence Meal Plan  Other Meal Plans (for students with a full kitchen or off-campus)  Per semester for living off campus  <i>Bonus Funds</i> can be used in most on-campus dining venues for additional purchases outside of the meal plan. Bonus funds are non-refundable and must be used by the end of the semester.  More information can be found on the Mason Dining web page: <a href="https://masondining.sodexomyway.com/meal-plans/">https://masondining.sodexomyway.com/meal-plans/</a> <b>*Costs based on 2024-2025 Academic Year Rates</b>
Estimated Transportation Costs	\$1,304 \$2,368	Students living on-campus Students living off-campus
Public Transportation	Free with Mason ID  \$4 - \$6 / one-way	Campus shuttle and local CUE bus (around Fairfax)  Metro train to Washington, DC (Requires <a href="#">SmartTrip Card</a> )
SEVIS Fee (Form I-901) Nonimmigrant Visa Application Fee (Form DS-160)♦	\$220 Minimum of \$160 (varies by country)	Paid to the U.S. Government Paid to U.S. Consulate
Personal Expenses	\$2,302 \$5,194	Per semester for students living on-campus Per semester for students living off-campus
Books and Supplies	\$1,314	Per semester (books can be bought used or rented for less)



**\*Costs are estimated based on Academic Year 2024-2025**

- ♦ Health insurance is mandatory for visitors on a J-1 visa.
- More details are available on the [Student Health Services website](#).
- ♦ Fee(s) subject to change. For non-U.S. citizens on a J-1 visa only.

## POST-PROGRAM TRANSCRIPTS

At the completion of the semester, each student will receive ONE (1) transcript free of charge and sent to the home institution. Transcripts will be sent *digitally* unless physical copies are requested by the home institution.

- Students can order additional transcripts for a fee through the Office of the Registrar [online](#).
- Post-Program Transcripts will be sent in late-January (Fall students) and late-June (Spring students)
- **\*\*\*NOTE: If a "hold" is placed on a student's account, official transcripts will be withheld until hold is resolved.**