VIMS | William & Mary
Virginia Institute of Marine Science

M.S. in Marine Science

32 Credit Hours

Curriculum Map
Fall 2025

Core Curriculum (13-15 Credits)

*Students must pass all Batten School & VIMS core courses with a B- or better, **before** the end of Year 2 in the program.*

Fundamental Core (6-7 credits)

Choose three courses from the following options:

- MSCI 501A – Physical Oceanography (2)
- MSCI 501B – Chemical Oceanography (2)
- MSCI 501C – Marine Geology (2)
- MSCI 501D – Biological Oceanography (2)
- MSCI 501E – Aquatic Health (2)
- MSCI 501F – Fisheries Science (2)
- MSCI 521 – Adv. Marine Geology (3)
  (in lieu of MSCI 501C, but not both)

Interdisciplinary Core (2 credits)

- MSCI 503 – Interdisciplinary Research in Estuarine & Coastal Systems (2)

Quantitative Core (3 credits)

Choose one course from the following options:

- MSCI 504 – Fundamentals of Statistical Methods & Data Analysis (3)
- MSCI 554 – Princ of Numerical Computing (3)
- MSCI 556 – Statistics & Data Science (3)

Science Communication Core (2-3 credits)

Complete MSCI 505 during first year, preferably in semester of matriculation:

- MSCI 505 – Fundamentals of Science Communication (1), **and**

Choose one course from the following options:

- MSCI 506 – Scientific Communication Skills (2)
- MSCI 508 – College Science Teaching (1)
- MSCI 509 – Communicating Science to Diverse Audiences (2)
- MSCI 548 – Scientific Illustration (1)

Batten School & VIMS Electives (11-13 Credits)

Any Batten School & VIMS grad course ≥ MSCI 500 (except courses used to fulfill the core curriculum)

Thesis (6 Credits)

Original research in field of discipline. Projects are chosen in consultation with the student's academic advisor or co-advisors.

- MSCI 599 – Thesis (1-12)

Expanding Your Curricular Options

With the permission of the academic advisor(s) and Batten School & VIMS Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, up to six credit hours of relevant non-Batten School & VIMS graduate-level coursework, including courses on the Williamsburg campus or through cross-registration agreements with other institutions (e.g., Old Dominion University), may be counted as electives toward the degree.

See Next Page for Course Sequencing Suggestions

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Course Sequencing Suggestions – Based on Fall Matriculation, 36-Month Timeline

Full-time enrollment requires at least 9 credit hours during fall or spring and 3 credit hours during summer.

Year 1 – Fall Semester

- Fundamentals – 1 course (2-3 cr)
- Quantitative – 1 course (3 cr)
- MSCI 505 (1 cr)
- Electives (2-3 cr)

Year 1 – Spring Semester

- Fundamentals – 2 courses (4 cr)
- MSCI 503 (2 cr)
- Science Communications (2 cr)
- Electives (1 cr)

Year 1 – Summer Semester

- Electives (0-2 cr)
- Thesis (1-3 cr)

Year 2 – Fall Semester

- Electives (6 cr)
- Thesis (3 cr)

Year 2 – Spring Semester

- Electives (3-4 cr)
- Thesis (5-6 cr)

Year 2 – Summer Semester

- Electives (0-2 cr)
- Thesis (1-3 cr)

Year 3 – Fall Semester

- Thesis (9 cr)

Year 3 – Spring Semester

- Thesis (9 cr)

Year 3 – Summer Semester

- Thesis (3 cr)