

RECRUITER'S GUIDE & TRAINING MANUAL



The VMI Alumni Association

Our mission is to organize alumni and old cadets of VMI into one general body to keep alive the memories of Institute life and by their efforts promote the general welfare of the Institute and the successful prosecution of its educational purposes.

Dear Volunteer,

I want to thank you for taking on the task of helping us with recruiting young men and women to fill our incoming rat class. You and other alumni across the country are integral to our overall recruiting effort and are important to ensuring that VMI remains a strong, vibrant, and unique institution. Because of your location, you are in a unique position to speak with high school students who would not normally apply to VMI and possibly students that have never heard of VMI.

Without your insight and enthusiasm, these young people would not have come to our attention and would not have applied. Applying to VMI is a highly personal decision, and your face-to-face contact with these prospective cadets will help them make one of the most momentous decisions of their young lifetimes. You know what your VMI experience means to you: Apply that experience to help young men and women make a decision that will give them lifelong benefits.

Please read this guide closely. You will find that the core values of VMI drilled into you as a cadet remain the foundation of the VMI experience. This guide contains valuable information about academic offerings, life at VMI, and the admissions process that will help you speak with students, parents, teachers, counselors, and coaches.

If you have any questions, please contact Brandon Bissell '98, VMI Alumni Association director of alumni outreach.

Thank you,

Joseph R. Hagy, MA
Lieutenant Colonel
Director of Admissions
Virginia Military Institute

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MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the VMI Alumni Association's Support of Admissions Program to:

- Identify and encourage young men and women who are qualified to apply for admission to Virginia Military Institute.
- Enable and empower our alumni to cultivate relationships within their communities that promote an accurate view of VMI with a focus on teachers, counselors, coaches, and other youth leaders.
- Cover ground where admissions can't and support at various college fairs, service academy nights, and other similar potential recruiting opportunities across the country.

SUPPORTING IN YOUR AREA

- Contact your local alumni chapter president to see what kind of admissions support efforts are already taking place in your chapter.
- Contact Brandon Bissell '98 at the VMI Alumni Association at bbissell@vmiaa.org to notify him of your interest.
- Contact Brandon Bissell '98 or Chase Perry '07 from the admissions office at perrywl@vmi.edu to see if there are any college fairs near you that the admissions team cannot get to. Often, there are two recruiting "seasons"— one in the fall and another in the spring. It is good to have an idea of when college fairs are taking place.

THE “DO’S AND DON’TS” OF ALMUNI RECRUITING

When interacting with a prospective cadet, parent, teacher, counselor or coach, keep the following in mind.

DO:

- Be up to date with general information pertaining to VMI (reference material in this guidebook and at www.vmialumni.org/volunteerleadership for assistance).
- Be positive, friendly, and professional. To some students, teachers, parents, counselors, and coaches, you are VMI.
- Be aware of NCAA compliance rules when speaking to a student interested in participating in athletics. Encourage students to reach out to a VMI coach if they are interested in playing an NCAA sport. Contacts are listed in the back of this guidebook.
- Contact Brandon Bissell '98 or Chase Perry '07 (bbissell@vmiaa.org or perrywl@vmi.edu) if you find out about a college fair that you would like to support.
- Contact Brandon Bissell '98 (bbissell@vmiaa.org) if you are making a visit to a high school or if you are interested in meeting with students, teachers, counselors, college and career advisors, JROTC instructors, coaches, athletic directors, or principals near you.

DON'T:

- Comment on any student's likelihood of being offered an appointment to VMI.
- Predict financial aid possibilities.
- Answer any question that you do not know the answer to. Reference the contacts list in this guidebook, and if necessary, offer contact information of someone who might know the answer to the question.
- Talk negatively about any other college or university.

VMI AT A GLANCE

ABOUT VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

Founded in 1839 in Lexington, Virginia, as the nation's first state-supported military college
As of 2022, about 1,500 cadets, 65% in-state, 13% Female, 87% Male, 48 states, 8 countries

Degree Programs: Undergraduate, liberal arts

Student to Faculty: 11:1

Tuition: \$30,588 in-state / \$60,396 out-of-state

Athletics: 18 NCAA Division 1 Athletics programs (11 men's and 7 women's), club, and intramural sports (www.vmikeydets.com)

Mascot and Colors: Moe the Kangaroo; red, yellow, and white

ROTC

Cadets are required to participate in one of the four (Army, Marines, Navy, or Air Force) ROTC programs during their cadetship. Roughly 50% of graduates choose to commission upon graduation, though it is not required.

HONOR AND SERVICE

VMI cadets are men and women of honor and integrity. They live by a simple code, the VMI Honor Code, which states that "A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, nor tolerate those who do." Cadets look for opportunities to serve others and can often be found tutoring in classrooms, helping in food kitchens, serving as EMTs, helping with Special Olympics, and on and on.

ACADEMICS

VMI's education includes a broad, four-year core curriculum with programs in engineering, science, liberal arts, and social sciences. VMI also offers an array of enrichment opportunities, including study abroad, undergraduate research, service learning, and the Institute Honors Program. VMI offers an intimate learning environment with an 11:1 cadet-to-faculty ratio, which provides cadets with excellent opportunities for academic success.

MILITARY AND CIVILIAN CAREER PATHS

Both civilian and military employers recognize the rare qualities of self-reliance, initiative, perseverance, integrity, and self-discipline instilled by VMI and often seek out cadets even before graduation. Cadets who commission from VMI routinely receive their top branch or occupational specialty selection. Cadets who begin their careers in the civilian world step into that world with a kind of confidence that's rare.

ADMISSIONS AND CADET PROFILE

An in-depth look at enrollment information for current and historical classes is available on the admissions web site at <https://www.vmi.edu/about/offices-a-z/assessment-and-institutional-research/institutional-research/data-dashboard/>

APPLICATION DEADLINES

<http://www.vmi.edu/admissions-and-aid/apply/>

Application opens Sept. 1 for high school seniors.

Early Decision (binding) deadline: Nov. 15

Priority Decision deadline: Feb. 1. Deposits deadline: May 1.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should be 16 to 22 years of age and may not be married or a parent.

They must be physically fit for enrollment and graduates of accredited secondary schools.

SAT or ACT and satisfactory character recommendations are required.

MAJORS AND MINORS

VMI offers a rigorous education that includes a broad undergraduate program with majors in engineering, science, liberal arts, and social sciences. Woven into every curriculum is leadership and character development that benefit graduates for life. VMI professors are known for their expertise, teaching excellence, mentorship, scholarly engagement, commitment to service, and collaborative work with cadets.

With opportunities for undergraduate research, study abroad, honors programs, and service learning, VMI cadets have choice and variety in how to enrich and personalize their education.

U.S. News and World Report consistently ranks VMI

among the nation's top five

public liberal arts colleges.

MAJORS

Applied Mathematics
Biology
Chemistry
Civil Engineering
Computer Science
Economics and Business
Electrical and Computer Engineering
English
History
International Studies
Mechanical Engineering
Modern Languages
Physics
Psychology

MINORS

Art History and Visual Culture
Asian Studies
Astronomy
Business
Chemistry
Computer and Information Science
Computer Engineering
Cybersecurity
Economics
Exercise Science
History
International Studies
Leadership Studies
Literary Studies
Mathematics
Military History
Modern Languages
National Security
Philosophy
Physics
Psychology
Rhetoric and Writing

CONCENTRATIONS

Aerospace Engineering
Art History and Visual Culture
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Ecology, Conservation, and Organismal Sciences
Financial Management
Global Management
Interdisciplinary Studies in Latin America
Literary Studies
Military History
Nuclear Engineering
Philosophy
Rhetoric and Writing

DISTINCTIONS

Student to Faculty 11:1
Undergraduate research
Graduate school partnerships
All classes taught by faculty
Robust study abroad and exchange programs

ROTC REQUIREMENT

<http://www.vmi.edu/cadet-life/citizen-soldiers/rotc-requirement/>

All cadets complete leadership classes in one of the Institute's four ROTC programs: Army, Marines, Navy, or Air Force. Because VMI is one of eight direct-commission schools, they also have the option to enter the Coast Guard upon graduation.

VMI's ROTC programs are among the best in the nation, offering cadets exposure to active-duty bases, state-of-the-art field training equipment, and high-ranking military officials. This training gives cadets a distinct advantage in any career path, and cadets who elect to commission regularly receive their preferred branch or occupational specialty selection.

- VMI Army ROTC is the largest in the country and regularly commissions more cadets—and often more Distinguished Military Graduates—than any other Army ROTC unit in the country.
- VMI Air Force ROTC is the third largest in the nation, and many cadets pursue flying.
- Cadets in VMI's Naval ROTC regularly qualify for the highly selective special warfare (SEAL) and nuclear power programs.
- Marine-option cadets consistently have one of the highest graduation rates in the nation at Marine Corps Officer Candidate School.

Approximately 50% of VMI graduates earn a military commission, and about 18% make the armed forces a long-term career.

FINANCIAL AID *<http://www.vmi.edu/financialaid>*

At VMI, we believe financial aid is an investment in our cadets and their futures and work to make education dollars go further. There are grants, loans, merit and need-based scholarships, ROTC and athletic scholarships, veteran's benefits, and other ways financial aid can help. On average, more than 88% of cadets receive some form of aid.

VMI BASED SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

In most cases, applicants are considered automatically for need-based scholarships after submitting the VMI Financial Aid Application and FAFSA. Merit scholarships require separate applications.

Institute Scholars Program - Merit

For academically strong and well-balanced high school students. Financial need is not a criterion.

State-Specific Merit Scholarships

- James C. Sansberry Scholarship - Indiana students (info sheet in portal)
- Cameron Scholarship - Wilmington, North Carolina students (info sheet in portal)
- Dominion Energy - Citizen Soldier Scholarship - Virginia students (info sheet in portal)

ROTC and Outside Scholarships

Cadets may receive ROTC scholarships for Army, Marines, Navy, or Air Force. Prospects can apply for three- and four-year scholarships during the application process, and there is also the ability to earn two- and three-year scholarships after cadets have begun their education at VMI. Scholarships can cover tuition and may also include allowances for books and fees and living expenses. ROTC scholarships are administered through the awarding military branch.

VMI will award 100 Call to Duty Scholarships to members of the Class of 2027 who are recipients of the three and four-year ROTC national scholarships. These Call to Duty Scholarships will cover the cost of housing (room) and food (board) at the Institute for cadet recipients. This is an annual award. To keep the Call to Duty scholarship each semester, cadets must continue to demonstrate eligibility for their ROTC scholarship. ROTC will work with the Office of Financial Aid to determine continued semester eligibility prior to the beginning of each semester.

Loans

VMI participates in the Federal Direct Student Loan Program, providing federally insured, low-interest, long-term loans to cadets and/or their parents to help cover the costs of college. To be eligible, students must file the FAFSA.

Forbes Magazine ranks VMI on its list of
Top 25 Public Colleges
with the
Highest Earning Graduates

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL

How do I arrange a visit to VMI?

Contact the Office of Admissions, sign up for an open house weekend, or come for a tour of post. Learn more about admissions at: <http://www.vmi.edu/admissions-and-aid/visit/>.

What are your class sizes?

The largest class you will have at VMI will be approximately 25 students in some first-year classes, but the average upper-level class size is 12.

ROTC

For questions pertaining to ROTC at VMI, refer to the Contacts Page in this guidebook and reach out to the appropriate ROTC office. More information is also available here: <http://www.vmi.edu/academics/departments/>.

BIOLOGY

Will the biology curriculum prepare me for entry into medical and dental school?

Yes. Approximately 30% of our majors go to medical or dental school.

Do you have an early acceptance into medical programs?

Yes. We have such agreements with a number of medical schools, including Virginia Commonwealth University – Medical College of Virginia, Eastern Virginia Medical School, and the AEdward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine.

What about preparation for other health professions?

Our majors enter programs in pharmacy, nursing, physician assistant, physical therapy, forensics, and health administration.

Does biology accept Advanced Placement credits?

Yes.

Can I minor or major in another subject and still be a biology major?

Yes, our Bachelor of Arts degree in biology allows for extra free credits for just this purpose.

ENGLISH, RHETORIC, AND HUMANISTIC STUDIES

Will an English degree help get me into law school?

Although law schools do not require a specific undergraduate degree program, an English B.A. is a common path into law school and one that's been taken by many cadets throughout VMI's history, including prominent alumni such as Marshall Mundy '56, a former member of the Board of Visitors, and Senior U.S. District Judge Steve McAuliffe '70.

Successful law school applicants are able to think logically; argue effectively; and read, speak, and write at highly advanced levels. In fact, most law schools will expect you to come in having already acquired these skills in your undergraduate degree.

As an English major at VMI, you will learn and practice these skills in every class, and you will also learn the principles behind the skills so that you can adapt them to new situations.

What careers can I have with a B.A. in English?

An English B.A. gives you lasting and portable skills in communication, rational thinking, research and analysis, persuasion and argument, and multiple forms of expression—skills that are profitable in a wide range of careers.

An English B.A. also opens the door to graduate study in English, law, business, education, public relations, web development, creative writing, technical writing, political communication, professional writing, journalism, community development, broadcasting, screenwriting, library science, nonprofit management, and more.

Why do employers hire people with degrees in the humanities?

Powerful communication skills: Employers consistently place written and verbal communication in the top five to 10 skills they look for when hiring.

Knowledge of human nature: More importantly, perhaps, employers are increasingly looking for people who can bring knowledge of human nature into the workplace. They face challenges in analyzing and applying data, creating compelling technologies and products, and running businesses in ways that are both productive and ethical. Employers today need applicants with the knowledge of human motives, culture, and forms of expression that you get from a study of great works of literature, rhetoric, philosophy, and art.

Employers need people who can remain relevant because they know how to learn—who can research, analyze, apply, and communicate new knowledge. Moreover, while modes of communication change, the skills of thinking and writing with depth, precision, and clarity do not: They are always marketable.

What is rhetoric?

Rhetoric is the study and practice of strategic and effective communication, especially persuasion and argument. It focuses specifically on the communication we engage in in order to make decisions, craft policies, and take action in the world of human affairs, especially the state, law, and business.

Studying rhetoric is about gaining deep knowledge of human nature and mastering powerful skills of communication in multiple forms, from interpersonal and written to visual and digital.

Does the ERHS department have ties with graduate schools?

A B.A. in English from VMI, with its focus on rhetoric and its multidisciplinary nature, prepares cadets for a wide range of graduate programs in English. In particular, graduate and professional programs in rhetoric, applied writing, and digital media continue to proliferate as employers urgently require people with advanced skills in communication, persuasion, knowledge of human nature, and research and analysis.

The ERHS department has a committee for graduate studies that can help cadets identify, prepare for, and apply for the right graduate or professional program for them.

ERHS currently has a partnership with NOVA Southeastern University's M.A. program in composition, rhetoric, and digital media that provides three guaranteed VMI slots with the understanding of possibly lower GPAs and no GRE requirement.

What about partnerships with businesses and organizations?

All English majors at VMI are required to take ERH 411—Fieldwork. In this course, taken either in a regularly scheduled class or as an independent study, cadets work with external partners in business, professional, or nonprofit organizations to develop and apply skills in research, written and interpersonal communication, project management, and digital media. In recent years, the ERHS department has connected cadets in ERH 411 with 10-plus local partners, and the list is growing each semester.

The ERHS department has an internship coordinator who can help students find and apply for summer internships.

ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING

What's the difference between Computer Engineering and Computer Science / CIS?

In truth, there is not a hard line dividing the two disciplines—some topics more naturally fall in computer science (algorithms, web design, database systems) and others in computer engineering (digital design, embedded systems), but there are lots of areas of overlap (networking, cybersecurity, computer architecture, and machine intelligence, to name a few).

At VMI, the computer engineering program (as part of the B.S. in electrical and computer engineering) has strengths in:

- Embedded systems
- Including the Internet of Things
- Machine intelligence
- Robotics

The computer science program has strengths in:

- Cybersecurity
- Human-computer interaction

What math courses will prepare me to begin the ECE degree?

Many students assume they need Calculus I before starting the ECE program. While earning a 4 or 5 on an AP Calculus exam establishes the required mathematical background and provide cadets the option to start at the Calculus II level, this is not necessary.

What is needed is a strong foundation in pre-calculus algebra. Armed with this, the cadet will do well in the mathematical entrance pretest, which will allow them to excel in first-semester Calculus I. Unfortunately, we sometimes see cadets who take non-AP calculus courses or take AP Calculus courses before they have a firm grasp of the underlying algebra, which can be counterproductive.

There is a large variance in the material non-AP calculus courses include; some are very good, but others neither provide the skills to do well in Calculus II nor review the pre-calculus algebra skills needed to do well if the student opts to retake Calculus I. We suggest students take pre-calculus algebra before attending, and if they feel ready to take calculus, make it AP or IB Calculus.

Each new cadet must also satisfy placement testing requirements before matriculating. The math placement test will give you an idea of where you stand.

PSYCHOLOGY

What can someone do with a psychology degree?

The psychology degree is very versatile, such that a psychology graduate can gain employment in almost any area open to people with any liberal arts degree. In addition, employers in some areas such as mental health, law enforcement, criminal justice, education, management training, and sales prefer candidates with a psychology degree.

Does VMI's Psychology Department accept AP credit, and if so, what score is necessary to test out of Introduction to Psychology?

Yes; 4 or 5.

Does VMI's Psychology Department accept transfer or dual enrollment credit for psychology courses?

Yes, provided these courses are taken prior to matriculation. After matriculation, most psychology courses must be taken at VMI.

CHEMISTRY

What bachelor's degree options does the Department of Chemistry offer?

The department offers a B.A. and a B.S. The B.S. degree offers the choice of two tracks: Pre-med or research.

Is the Department of Chemistry approved by the American Chemical Society (ACS)?

Yes

Does the Department of Chemistry offer a minor?

Yes

Can I do research with a professor?

Yes, cadets may conduct research during the academic year and/or during the summer.

Can I dual major in chemistry?

Yes, but double majors at VMI can be difficult unless you matriculate with significant credits.

MODERN LANGUAGES

Do the military branches offer scholarships for summer/semester-long study abroad programs?

We are currently preparing a proposal for Project GO (<http://www.rotcprojectgo.org>) through the Department of Defense, which will fund ROTC students' studies abroad for the critical languages (Chinese and Arabic are offered at VMI).

Can VMI athletes study abroad?

This is a coaching/administration decision and involves whether the sport is in season and can affect student eligibility.

Do VMI exchange programs with military academies offer classes in English?

This is being discussed by our partners in Germany (Helmut-Schmidt-Universität). Enrollment is the main issue—whether the courses in English will receive enough students.

Can I double major?

We have many modern languages majors who also major in international studies and history and also some with double majors in economics/business and English. You may not double major within the modern languages department, however. A Spanish major may minor in Arabic, for example, and a double minor in languages is possible.

How many times can I study abroad during my cadetship?

This is regulated by the limit of credit hours earned during summer programs, which is 18 (essentially six courses).

What are the language honor societies at VMI?

Sigma Delta Pi—Spanish; Pi Delta Phi—French; Phi Sigma Iota—international (all languages). Check the respective websites concerning what you need to qualify.

How can I practice languages and keep my skills up?

While at VMI, you can attend weekly informal language tables (French, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish) moderated by a faculty member. We also have group study sessions in the evenings for help with homework and assignments; both advanced students and professors are available.

Cultural and language-related events are offered at VMI and at Washington and Lee University. Local foreign film festivals are also favorite activities.

CONTACTS

GENERAL

Admissions 540-464-7211
Alumni Association 800-444-1839
Financial Aid 540-464-7208
Regimental Band 540-464-7646
Chaplain 540-464-7727

ROTC

Army ROTC 540-464-7351
Air Force ROTC 540-464-7354
Naval ROTC 540-464-7329

MEN'S NCAA TEAMS*

Basketball: Luke Colwell, assistant coach, colwellln@vmi.edu
Baseball: Ray Noe, assistant coach, noerd@vmi.edu
Cross Country: Danielle Gray, head coach, graydk@vmi.edu
Track and Field: Zack Scott '89, director of T&F and XC, scottdz@vmi.edu
Football: Bill Parker, assistant coach/recruiting coordinator, parkerwh@vmi.edu
Soccer: Nick Regan, head coach, regannj@vmi.edu
Lacrosse: James Purpura, head coach, purpurajr@vmi.edu
Rifle: Lt. Col. Bill Bither, head coach, bitherwf@vmi.edu
Swimming: Scott Thacker, head coach, thackergs@vmi.edu
Wrestling: Jim Gibson, head coach, gibsonjm@vmi.edu

WOMEN'S NCAA TEAMS*

Cross Country: Danielle Gray, head coach, graydk@vmi.edu
Track and Field: Zack Scott '89, director of T&F and XC, scottdz@vmi.edu
Soccer: Chris Haught-Thompson, head coach, haught-thompsoncs@vmi.edu
Water Polo: Danielle Montenegro, head coach, montenegrod@vmi.edu
Rifle: Lt. Col. Bill Bither, head coach, bitherwf@vmi.edu
Swimming: Scott Thacker, head coach, thackergs@vmi.edu

* ***Updated Lists available at www.vmikeydets.com***