



Mason Learning Into Future Environments (LIFE):



10/15/2026

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What is the Mason LIFE Program?

Mason LIFE is a model 4-year Inclusive Postsecondary Education program (IPSE) for students with intellectual disabilities that focuses on academics, employment, campus involvement, learning to live independently, and developing social skills.

Mason LIFE offers a student-centered approach to postsecondary education where students learn, work, explore, and live together at George Mason University while earning a certificate of completion.

<https://masonlife.gmu.edu/>

Who are we serving?

- 56 students total 2026-2027
 - 1st years – 17
 - 2nd years – 12
 - 3rd years – 14
 - 4th years – 13
- Out of state students include:
Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland,
North Carolina, California, and
Washington D.C.



Philosophy

The Mason LIFE program strives to be a model postsecondary education program that focuses on research, academic progress, campus integration, employment opportunities, and the development of independent living and social skills. The goal of the program is not to duplicate the K-12 experience but rather assist students in becoming independent and advocating for themselves on their own.



As a certificate program, we mirror the degree-seeking student experience.

Components

- Academics
 - Foundational Academics (Mason LIFE only)
 - Exploration (University courses)
- Employment
 - On and off campus internships
- Housing
 - Living on campus (optional)
- Community Involvement
 - Joining clubs, attending university events, creating lifelong friendships

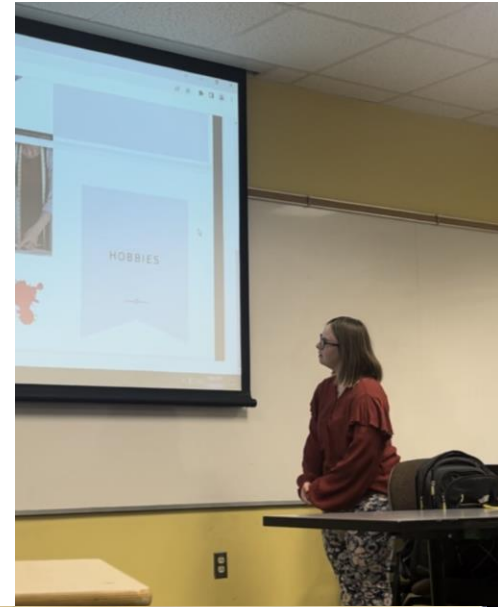
Foundational Academics

- Foundational Academics (FA) provides continuous education for Mason LIFE students, where instruction is delivered predominantly by graduate-level support staff (FASS) pursuing a special education career path or related fields.
- Mason LIFE FA requirements:
 - Literature
 - Math
 - Writing
 - Banking
 - Self-Regulation
 - Independent Living Skills
 - Human Sexuality and Relationship Fundamentals



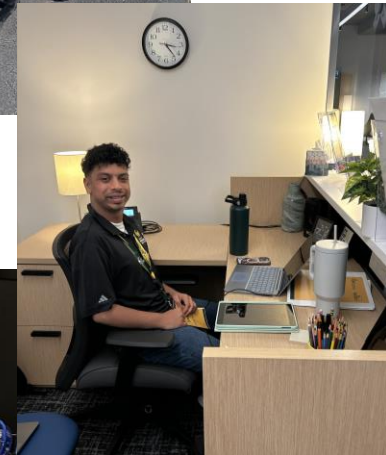
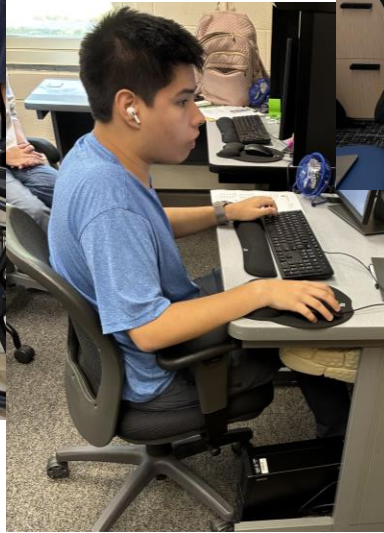
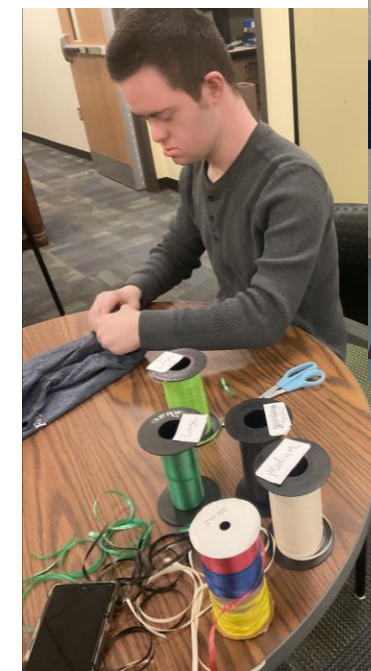
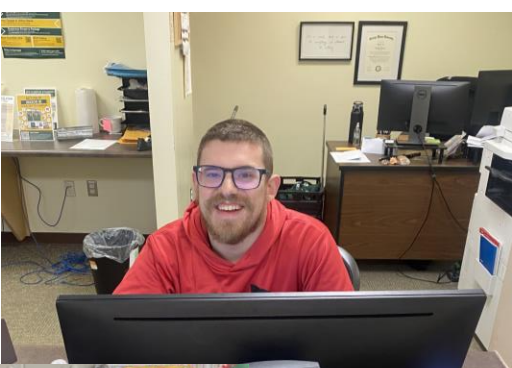
Exploration

- Students participate in university courses and will be supported accordingly. Through these courses, students will learn academic skills, build autonomy, and learn to apply their knowledge.
 - Faculty must give prior approval before enrolling a student in class.
- Students earn a certificate of completion at the end of this program which includes a Comprehensive Concentration of their choice.
 - 5 classes = Comprehensive concentration, 3 classes = Minor concentration
- Students will also be enrolled in a graded support class for additional assistance. These support classes provide an opportunity to do homework, class assignments, and review course materials. Since Mason LIFE students do not earn course credit, all coursework will be individualized.



Employment

- Our students are *Emerging Professionals* who participate in a wide variety of on and off-campus internships.
- We provide trained employment coaches who support inclusion at the internship.
- Students learn professional communication skills, job-specific tasks, and there is a focus on supporting executive functioning in the areas of memory, self-regulation, and flexibility.
- We have nearly 40 employment partners, both on- and off-campus, in a variety of industries.
- Students will take an Employment Skills seminar each year in addition to worksites or internships.
- Students experience mock interviews, career exploration experiences, and they create resumes and LinkedIn pages in preparation of the transition to working life.
- Mason LIFE does not guarantee job placement upon exiting the program.



Housing

- Students will develop and practice daily living skills related to household management.
 - This includes meal planning and preparation, chores such as laundry and cleaning, and adhering to a personal budget.
 - An Overnight Support staff resides in the unit. Day Support staff assists with daily living skills.
- Students are expected to safely and productively spend a minimum of 3-4 hours without support.
 - Support staff are students so they may not be in the unit during program hours (9:00 am – 4:00 pm).
 - In rare occasions (e.g. emergencies/or planned leave) a suite may not have support staff. Family will be informed of such incidences and day support will check in with the suite at or around curfew.
- All students will take an independent living class to further their skills in daily living, recreation, and relationships.
- All students will participate in team-building to understand interpersonal interaction and connections.



Community Involvement



- Community Involvement aims to facilitate inclusion in on-campus and off-campus events and build a strong identity as a GMU Patriot.
- GMU has many organizations, intramural clubs, sports, and university-wide events that our students love to attend.
- Students are expected to participate in activities and join at least 1 **new** on-campus organization and attend one activity per week. There are more than 700 Mason student organizations and clubs to choose from!





Alumni Stats:

- 84% Employed
- 73% Work independently
- 47% utilize public transportation or drive to work



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Program Costs

- **Fall 2026/Spring 2027 Tuition Rates:**
- In-State Tuition: \$14,316 for undergraduates, \$17,964 for graduate students.
- Out-of-State Tuition: \$39,313 for undergraduates, \$40,308 for graduate students
- **Housing On-Campus Program Fees:**
 - Room Fee: \$14,790 per year
 - Support Fee: \$12,587 per year
 - Total Housing Costs: \$27,377 per year

*Tuition/support fees subject to change based on changes made from the university.

Financial Assistance Resources

- Federal financial aid/Pell Grant funding (based on federal criteria through FAFSA <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>)
- Virginia529 College Savings Plan or ABLEnow accounts
 - Pays only tuition portion of the Mason LIFE program
 - <https://www.virginia529.com>
 - <https://www.ablenow.com>
- Community Service Board (Fairfax County residents only)
- Mason LIFE offers a several competitive scholarships to qualified students to help defray costs associated with attending Mason LIFE:
 - Bridget Healy Memorial Scholarship – open only to continuing LIFE students, not incoming students; GPA requirement
 - Mats Hormel vQ Endowed Scholarship – open to incoming and continuing LIFE students
 - Thomas and Carol Wheeler Fund Scholarship – open to incoming and continuing LIFE students
 - *Scholarships require recipients to demonstrate financial need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Financial Aid (FAFSA). Find more information about FAFSA: <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>*

Thank you for attending

Please feel free to reach out with
any questions.

(703) 993-3905

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