**Institutional Profile**

Founded as a branch of the University of Virginia in 1957, George Mason University became an independent institution in 1972. As a young university, Mason has made impressive strides in size, stature, and influence in just a short time. Today, Mason is Virginia’s largest public university, with ten schools and colleges devoted to a variety of areas of study. As Mason expanded beyond its Fairfax campus, it followed the revolutionary “distributed campus” model, today including additional Virginia campuses in Arlington and Prince William counties. Now, the student population represents more than 130 countries with over 34,000 students. Mason is an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world.

Mason grew rapidly to become a major player in higher education field in the region and nationally. The university’s dynamic research culture and innovative academic programs prepare Mason’s diverse student body for 21st century careers. Its commitment to teaching excellence and cutting-edge research enrich the academic experience. Located in the National Capital Region, students enjoy extensive cultural opportunities, experiences, and access to the most sought-after internships and employers in the country. The University has campuses throughout Northern Virginia (Fairfax, Arlington, Prince William, and Loudon Counties), as well as in Songdo, Korea, and cooperative relationships globally.

Mason is ranked among the highest research institutions in the country by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. The University moved into the highest research ranking in February 2018, based on a review of its 2013-2014 data that was performed by the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University Schools of Education. The review showed that Mason’s total research expenditures grew from $77 million in 2008-09 to $99 million in 2013-14. The increase was driven by growth in research expenditures in science and engineering, which doubled during that period.  The university also increased the number of doctoral degrees it conferred by 27 percent in that same period. By earning the highest classification, Mason – the largest public research university in Virginia – joins [an elite group of 115 institutions](http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/lookup/srp.php?clq=%7B%22basic2005_ids%22%3A%2215%22%7D&start_page=standard.php&backurl=standard.php&limit=0,50) known for performing research at the highest level.

The University’s commitment to science and engineering research complements its traditional strengths in economics and social sciences, which have earned the university numerous awards including two Nobel Prizes and three Andrew Carnegie Fellowships. The university has made important progress in biomedical research, neuroscience, cybersecurity, information technology and other scientific and technological domains. The university has built state-of-the-art laboratories for infectious disease and biomedical research and expanded its research infrastructure.

In August 2014, Mason strengthened its commitment to policy, government, and international affairs education, research, and service. By merging two substantial units—the former School of Public Policy and former Department of Public and International Affairs—Mason consolidated its activities and enhanced its ability to lead in these areas and advance the public good. In establishing the Schar School, the University sought to took advantage of its location adjacent to the nation’s seat of government, offering students and faculty unique opportunities to study federal executive and legislative governance in addition to agency policy activities.