

Before entering the application

Q1: What is the purpose of the VASA application?

A1: The sole purpose of the VASA application is to calculate the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) if the student is otherwise ineligible to complete the federal FAFSA form. The VASA application does not provide unique access to any state aid program nor create any new state aid program. The VASA application, by itself, does not provide final verification of whether any student is eligible for state aid. To award state financial aid, the institution must first confirm that the student is a Virginia student (usually within the admission process) and then that the student meets all the eligibility requirements for the state program. The VASA application then provides the EFC, which is used to determine eligibility for need-based aid.

Q2: Who should complete the VASA application?

A2: Virginia students who are undocumented, DACA recipients, certain non-immigrants or are otherwise ineligible to complete the federal Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) should complete the VASA application.

Q3: Who is a Virginia student?

A3: A student is considered a Virginia student if the institution confirms that the student is eligible for in-state tuition through one of the following:

- 1) Code of Virginia §23.1-502 and augmented by the Domicile Guidelines - is domiciled in Virginia.
- 2) Code of Virginia §23.1-505 - meets the military dependent requirements or
- 3) Code of Virginia §23.1-505.1 - meets the tuition equity provision requirements.

Visit www.schev.edu/domicileguidelines for detailed information.

Q4: Do I need to file both the VASA application and the FAFSA?

A4: No. If you are a United States citizen or an eligible noncitizen (studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility), you should file a federal FAFSA to apply for federal and Virginia financial aid each academic year. If you complete both the federal FAFSA and the VASA application, the institutions will use the results from the federal FAFSA and disregard the state application if you meet FAFSA eligibility requirements.

Q5: When is the deadline to file a VASA application?

A5: Each Virginia institution determines its own deadline for a student to submit an application for financial aid. Students should follow the same deadline that's provided for filing the FAFSA. A list of the deadlines can be found at www.schev.edu/financialaiddeadlines. For this initial year of the program, we have requested that the institutions exercise flexibility with their deadline.

Q6: How often must the VASA application be completed?

A6: The VASA application calculates the EFC based on a specific tax year and therefore needs to be completed annually.

Q7: How is my VASA Application information used once I submit it?

A7: Once you have completed your application, your application information (including calculated EFC) will be sent to the Virginia institution(s) you selected. Your EFC is an important part of determining your eligibility for need-based financial aid as it assesses your family's ability to pay based on information provided on the VASA application. This is not necessarily what the family is required to pay but it is an important factor in determining financial need and need-based aid.

Public institutions will use the student's EFC from the VASA application to determine their financial need for state aid and possibly institutional aid. Private institutions will use the EFC from the VASA application to determine financial need of Two-Year College Transfer Grant applicants and possibly institutional aid.

Q8: To which state aid programs does the VASA application give access?

A8: By itself, the VASA application does not grant direct access to any state financial aid program; rather it provides an EFC that the institution can use to determine need for state need-based financial aid (i.e., Virginia Commonwealth Award, Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program, Two-Year College Transfer Grant, Virginia G3). To be considered for state financial aid, students must be deemed a Virginia student (see Question 3 above) and meet the specific requirements for the aid program. Visit www.schev.edu/stateaid for program details.

Q9: Can high school dual enrollment students apply for state financial aid using the VASA application?

A9: To be considered for state financial aid, the student must be officially admitted and enrolled as a degree-seeking student. Generally speaking, dual enrolled students are enrolled into college courses but are not officially admitted into the college offering the courses.

Q10: Would students with disabilities who graduate with an Applied Studies Diploma be eligible to apply for state aid through the VASA application?

A10: This question is primarily about being eligible for admission into an institution. To be considered for state aid, all students must be considered a Virginia student admitted into an eligible degree program at an eligible institution. Persons eligible for admission include those who 1) have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent; 2) passed the state's General Educational Development (GED) test; 3) meet the state's homeschool completion requirements; or 4) has been determined by the institution to have the ability to benefit from the education or training offered by the institution based on the satisfactory completion of 6 semester hours, 6 trimester hours, 6 quarter hours, or 225 clock hours that are applicable toward a degree or certificate offered by the institution.

Q11: Would students who drop out or cannot pass the requirements for a standard diploma, but are not students with disabilities, be eligible to apply for state aid through the VASA application?

A11: To be considered for state aid, all students must be considered a Virginia student admitted into an eligible degree program at an eligible institution. See explanation in question 12.

Q12: What if I am enrolling into an out-of-state (or non-Virginia) institution?

A12: The VASA application's sole purpose is to calculate a valid EFC for determining eligibility for Virginia state need-based financial aid and we have created access only for those participating Virginia institutions. There is no obligation for any other institution to honor the results of this Virginia application; however, students may print the VASA Application Report (VAR; currently called "Master Regent Access PDF") and submit that to their out-of-state or for-profit institution for consideration.

Creating your Account

Q13: Why do I need to create an account for the VASA Application?

A13: The VASA application is used to collect highly personal information needed to evaluate eligibility for need-based financial aid. This is your personal information so it needs to be password protected so that only you and your institution have access.

Q14: How do I create an account and start the application?

A14: Go to www.VASAapp.org and click on the "File the VASA Application" button. At the initial sign-in, you will be requested to sign up for an account by clicking on "Sign Up." This registration process matches up your email address with a password that you provide. Since your account contains sensitive information, memorize or store your password in a safe place. Do not share your password with anyone. You will use this password to complete the initial VASA application for the upcoming year and for a renewal application in future years. Once you have completed the registration, you can sign into your account and begin your application.

Q15: Can my parent and I use the same email address?

A15: No, the student and the parent signing the VASA application must each have their own separate email address. It will be impossible to complete the application process if the same email address is used for both.

Q16: What do I need to do after setting up my VASA account?

A16: Once you have set up an account, you will be required to reenter the application through an account validation email that the system will send to you. This is to verify your email address. Click on the web link in the email and you will be directed to log into your account.

Q17: What if I forget my password?

A17: If you forget your password, click "Reset your Password" on the login screen and follow the instructions.

Application Questions

Note: You will have opportunities to save your information so that you can return later to complete the application; however, you cannot save information on a page if you have not answered all questions on that page.

Q18: Is how I enter my name important?

A18: Yes. Enter your full name and all other personal information as it appears on any official documents you may have such as a driver's license, school records, or social security card. Avoid using nicknames or abbreviated names. It is critical that the name entered onto this application exactly matches that which was used for your application for admission. It is also important that your parent's name and personal information (if applicable) be entered correctly and match throughout each step of the application process.

Q19: How should I answer the question referring to when I became a legal resident?

A19: This question refers to your actual physical presence in the Commonwealth and does not reference a person's legal status.

Q20: How do I answer the question about being convicted of a drug offense while receiving student financial aid?

A20: The VASA application questions mirror the FAFSA questions, so currently, the application requires students to answer this question. However, the Commonwealth of Virginia has never included this restriction and the question will be removed from the VASA application in future years. Students should respond honestly but with confidence that the answer, whether "yes" or "no," will not affect their eligibility for state aid. If the student has never received federal student aid, the answer would be "no," regardless of whether there ever was a conviction of any kind.

Q21: Do I need to respond to the Selective Service certification statement?

A21: Yes. While the federal government has removed this requirement for eligibility for federal student aid, currently, the Commonwealth of Virginia requires that state aid recipients meet the federal Selective Service requirements. You can learn more about who is required to register at www.sss.gov/register/who-needs-to-register/. Please read the selective service certification statement as "I certify that I meet selective service requirements."

Q22: How do I register for Selective Service if I do not have a Social Security Number?

A22: According to the Selective Service frequently asked questions:
<https://www.sss.gov/faq/#registration>

If you have a social security number, you are required to provide it. [50 U.S.C. 3802(b); 32 CFR 1615.4(a)]. However, you are not required to have a social security number to register with Selective Service.

Since the SSN entered into the Selective Service registration form must accurately match with the SSNs in the system database, we recommend leaving this field blank if the registrant does not have a SSN.

Financial questions

Q23: Which year's financial information should I provide?

A23: Similar to the federal FAFSA application, the VASA application is based on "prior-prior year" financial information. This is to ensure that applicants are more likely to have completed tax forms available to assist in completing the application. For the 2022-23 award year, students should provide the financial information for the 2020 calendar year (for 2022-23, 2021 is the immediate prior tax year so 2020 is the prior-prior tax year).

Q24: Whose financial information should be reported, mine or my parents?

A24: The application will ask a series of questions to determine if a student should be considered dependent or independent. If dependent, include parent information.

Q25: What if there is a lost job or reduced employment since the reported tax year?

A25: If a person had a change in finances from 2020 to 2021, the student can request that the college conduct a professional judgment decision. If deemed appropriate, the college can change the information to reflect 2021 data instead.

Q26: Do I need to submit any documents with the application?

A26: Students need to be prepared to produce documents verifying any information provided on the application. They won't need to submit that with the application, just have it available if an institution should request it. Having the tax and other financial information on hand while completing the VASA application ensures that there is no conflict in the data. If an institution finds that answers were provided fraudulently, the student could be subject to dismissal from the institution.

Q27: How do I answer if there was no income to report?

A27: For any financial answer where there is no amount, respond by entering "0."

Q28: What if I (or the parent) did not earn enough money to be required to file state taxes?

A28: There are of course cases where "did not file" is a legitimate answer but the family needs to be prepared to prove that there was not enough income to require filing. That could lead into some detailed questions from the institution.

After submitting the application

Q29: Will I receive a confirmation email?

A29: No. Once you successfully submit the VASA application, the portal will display a message that says "you're all caught up on required documents." You can view and print your VASA Application Report (VAR; currently called "Master Regent Access PDF") by clicking on the "Documents" tab in your VASA account dashboard then selecting "Show All Documents."

Q30: When will I be notified about financial aid awards?

A30: Once you have completed your application, your application information (including calculated EFC) will be sent to the Virginia institution(s) you selected. Virginia's financial aid programs are decentralized, so state and institutional awards will be determined and announced by the institution through its financial aid notification system. Contact institutions' financial aid offices for specifics on their awarding process.

Q31: Can I make corrections and/or add schools to my application once it is submitted?

A31: Yes, but you will need to send an email to tuitionequity@schev.edu to request that your application be reopened so you can make corrections/updates. Once you make these changes, you will have to go through the e-signature process again in order to successfully submit your application.

Q32: Where can I find my EFC?

A32: If you have successfully submitted your application (must include required signatures), your EFC will show above the "Certification and Signature" section on the last page of your (VAR; currently called "Master Regent Access PDF").