



## VASA Application Administration Guidance

*Working Document – Last updated May 23, 2023*

### Use of application

1. **The VASA application does not by itself verify eligibility for any state financial aid program.** It has a single purpose – to provide a usable Expected Family Contribution, or EFC (to be renamed the Student Aid Index – SAI by 2024-25) number for need-analysis. Institutions still need to evaluate whether the student is a “**Virginia Student**” under the law by meeting domicile, military dependent provision or the Tuition Equity provision requirements and then meets the specific requirements for any program awarded.
  - a. For private institutions, the VASA application helps verify whether the student meets the EFC requirement for the Two-Year College Transfer Grant.
  - b. Any institution may choose to use the results of the VASA application for institutional aid purposes.
2. Students should be directed to the VASA application launch page at [www.VASAapp.org](http://www.VASAapp.org) to start an application and for helpful resources.
3. To the extent practical, all rules, requirements, procedures and guidance for the storage and protection of information provided by the VASA application, determination of need, verification, and how to respond to questions on the form shall be consistent with those used for federal title IV financial aid.
4. All concerns where conformance with federal law is impractical or impossible shall be handled on a case-by-case basis by the institution in consultation with SCHEV until this guidance can be updated.

### Student eligibility

1. Any Virginia student unable to obtain a valid EFC through completion of the federal FAFSA may complete the VASA application.
2. If an institution receives results from the state VASA application and the federal FAFSA, the institution must use the federally provided information when determining eligibility for student awards. In such cases, the results of the VASA application may be dismissed.
3. To receive financial aid controlled by the public institution or the state, the student also must meet either the state domicile, military dependent provision or the Tuition Equity provision requirements and the specific requirements for any program awarded.
4. Students holding a valid F, H3, J, or M visa and their derivatives (USCIS legal term referring to “accompanying spouse and minor children”) are not eligible for state financial aid through determinations of domicile and or the Tuition Equity provision.

## **Awards and Funding**

1. Students completing the VASA application or the federal FAFSA must be subject to identical packaging rules and formulas.
2. Tuition equity, qualifying military dependent and Virginia domiciled students must be subject to identical packaging rules and formulas.
3. Rules 1 and 2 above cannot be circumvented by packaging at separate times. If the institution separates these two groups of students for packaging purposes, the identical rules and formulas still apply.
4. Students completing the VASA application and considered for state financial aid must be funded out of the institution's standard financial aid appropriation. Once these funds are exhausted, there are no other resources.

## **Roles**

1. SCHEV:
  - a. Develop and implement a communications plan for the general public, access professionals, students, their families, and institutions to clearly describe the purpose of the application and who is eligible to submit it.
  - b. Make student-level data available to the institutions on a scheduled basis (currently running Tuesdays and Fridays).
  - c. Assist institutions with resetting passwords for web portal accounts.
  - d. Add or amend institutional permissions and access to the web portal.
  - e. May select students for verification, if necessary.
  - f. Provide technical support and coordinate with the portal developer, as appropriate. For technical support, send an email to [tuitionequity@schev.edu](mailto:tuitionequity@schev.edu).
2. Institutions:
  - a. Communicate with current and prospective students about the availability of the VASA application, who should submit it and where to find it ([www.VASAapp.org](http://www.VASAapp.org)). Post this information on their website.
  - b. On an as-needed basis, retrieve and secure data from the web portal that is then downloaded onto institutionally controlled or contracted servers or databases.
  - c. Update student level data according to professional judgment review, if applicable.
  - d. May select students for verification. See details below.
  - e. Update student level data according to verification process, if applicable.
  - f. Serve as the primary student contact for explanation of the state aid process, interpretation of the results of the application, determination of need and answering other questions about the state financial aid process.
  - g. Evaluate whether the student is a "Virginia Student" under the law by meeting domicile, military dependent provision or the Tuition Equity provision requirements and then meeting the specific requirements for any program awarded.

h. Process example:

<b>Current process:</b> Admissions confirms student's Virginia domicile status.	<b>New <u>concurrent</u> process:</b> Admissions confirms student meets Tuition Equity provision.
Student completes the federal FAFSA.	Student completes the VASA application.
The EFC is provided to financial aid office.	The state EFC is provided to the financial aid office.
Financial aid determines financial need and eligibility requirements.	Financial aid determines financial need and eligibility requirements.
Financial aid office awards aid.	Financial aid office awards aid.

### **Verification**

1. The state will not require verification for the 2022-23 or 2023-24 applications.
2. The state does not prohibit verification. Institutions retain full authority:
  - a. To randomly or systemically verify details provided on the VASA applications to determine the veracity of the system and data collected.
  - b. To verify any individual application if it has reasonable cause to question the accuracy of the data submitted.
3. Institutions shall follow verification procedures issued under federal methodology for federal title IV.

### **Miscellaneous**

1. Students requiring assistance in setting up an account or completing the application should use the existing structures, institutions and organizations currently assisting in completing the FAFSA.
2. Institutions are encouraged to be aware of the inherent lack of trust within this group of students, so accurate and timely communication is very important.
3. Institutions should make every effort to ensure that students completing the VASA application are considered on an equal basis to the extent possible as students completing the FAFSA.
4. The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that state aid recipients meet the federal Selective Service requirements. For information regarding who is required to register and how to verify registration, visit [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov).