

University Scholarships and Financial Aid

Student Financial Aid Checklist

*Document is for 17-18. Dates may change for 18-19 school year.

1. Virginia Tech Admissions Application Available on August 1

<http://www.admiss.vt.edu/>

2. Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at

www.fafsa.gov by January 15th

The FAFSA can be submitted starting October 1, 2016 until June 30, 2018 and will require your 2015 tax information. A completed FAFSA is **REQUIRED** for ALL federal and MOST state and institutional aid. If you have missed the January 15th priority deadline, please complete the FAFSA as soon as possible.

- **Review your Student Aid Report (SAR).**

- Your SAR is emailed to you from the FAFSA Processing Center approximately 3-5 days after your FAFSA is submitted. It is also available to you at fafsa.ed.gov. Your SAR contains valuable information that may save you time and money! **Read the comments section of your SAR to ensure your FAFSA was accepted and to view any instructions on how to make corrections.**

- If your FAFSA was 'rejected,' follow the steps outlined to successfully resubmit your FAFSA. If you make a correction to your FAFSA, you will receive an updated SAR.
- If your FAFSA was selected for verification, you will receive an email from University Scholarships and Financial Aid (USFA) listing items needed to complete verification. You may also refer to your HokieSPA for a list of required documents. Do not send documents unless requested. Once submitted, please allow 2-3 weeks for processing; however, processing times may be extended during peak periods.

3. Apply for scholarships through the Scholarship Gateway by February 15

To be considered for general scholarships you must complete the General Scholarship Application available through the Scholarship Gateway by February 15th each year. Recipients are selected by committee members from throughout Virginia Tech. In addition, these scholarships require that you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by the priority deadline.

4. Research for scholarships both outside VT and with your VT department during January

Many scholarships are awarded by Virginia Tech colleges and departments. The application process and deadlines vary. Please see

http://www.finaid.vt.edu/types_of_aid/University-Scholarships/Academic/Academic-Scholarships.html for more details.

Outside scholarships are any scholarships a student receives that are not directly from Virginia Tech. For more information on outside scholarships go to

http://www.finaid.vt.edu/types_of_aid/University-Scholarships/Outside-Scholarships/Outside_Scholarships.html.

5. Review your financial aid award letter

An Award Letter will be mailed to the permanent address for prospective students. This letter will give details of your financial aid award package. The award package is the list of financial aid offered to you for a particular aid year. We will also send out an Award Email Notification to both prospective and returning students. The email address provided on the FAFSA will be used for prospective students until the acceptance deadline has passed. After that time, the VT email account will be the primary form of communication for both new and returning students. For more information on the financial aid award package please see <http://www.finaid.vt.edu/receive/receive-award-package.html>.

6. Accept offer of admission by May 1

Prospective freshman must give their regular decision responses to the Virginia Tech Office of Undergraduate Admissions by May 1st. Transfer students must communicate their decision response by June 1st. <http://www.admiss.vt.edu/>

7. Set up your HokieSPA (Hokie Student Personal Access)

HokieSPA is the primary information gateway for every student. Through HokieSPA students can update personal information as well as view financial aid information from USFA. Certain financial aid requirements can only be completed on HokieSPA. Because these requirements have deadlines, we recommend that newly admitted students set up HokieSPA as soon as they are able (HokieSPA is not available until the matriculation fee has been paid). Please see <http://www.finaid.vt.edu/receive/hokie-SPA.html> for more information.

8. Check your VT email for requests for information during February and March

After being offered admission to Virginia Tech and paying the matriculation fee, new students will receive instructions to create a **PID** (Personal Identification) and an accompanying password. With this PID and password, the student can create a Virginia Tech email account.

Communications with new students directly through the Virginia Tech email account begin immediately after the acceptance deadline. Therefore, we recommend that students frequently monitor their VT email account.

9. Create a FERPA Pass Code so you can authorize parents or others to discuss your account

According to the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, university staff cannot discuss financial aid matters with anyone other than the student, unless the student has provided authorization. Without the FERPA Information Release, we cannot discuss student information with parents, guardians and authorized payers. To comply with FERPA, parents must provide a FERPA pass code with each information request. The FERPA pass code is an 8-character pass code created by the student through **HokieSPA** [Hokie Spa Tab>FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act Disclosure.)]

10. Accept and/or decline your financial aid awards by June 1

By going to your HokieSPA (Hokie SPA > Financial Aid Information > My Award Information > Award Package by Aid Year > Award Overview Tab) you can read about the loans and grants you have been offered. You can then decide if you want to accept, reduce or decline offered loans on the “Accept Award Offer” tab found under HokieSPA Financial Aid Information.

11. Complete loan requirements for direct student loans by June 15

First time Federal Direct Stafford Loan Borrowers will need to complete the entrance interview and master promissory note online at studentloans.gov. You will find a guide on accepting loans, federal work study and completing student loan requirements at <http://www.finaid.vt.edu/guide-loan-requirements.pdf>.

12. Check for outstanding processing requirements or holds

Review HokieSPA for incomplete processing requirements (Hokie SPA > Financial Aid Information > Eligibility Requirements) such as incomplete scholarship thank you letters, etc. and financial holds from the University Bursar. See our page on possible reasons for financial aid delays or refunds at <http://www.finaid.vt.edu/receive/receive-delay-aid-refund-page.html>.

13. Set up HokieSPA Guest Account Access

The guest account feature on HokieSPA (Hokie SPA > Guest Account Access) allows a student to release their financial aid information such as their award letter to selected individuals. When a student releases aid information, access to that information by the individual is allowed for all aid years. Please see <http://www.finaid.vt.edu/receive/hokie-SPA-guest-access.html> to set up guest account access.

14. Set up Authorized Payer

Only the student may establish parents or others as authorized payers or those who can make a payment to their University E-bill. The student must login to the e-billing and payment system through the HokieSPA (Hokie SPA > University Account Information > View and Pay E-bill) and then click on Authorize Payers in the left navigation bar. More information can be found at http://www.bursar.vt.edu/billing_payment/authorized_payers.php.

15. Enroll in Direct Deposit

Students may enroll for direct deposit of student refunds and any employment pay received through their HokieSPA (HokieSPA > University Account Information > Enroll in Direct Deposit). If you are not enrolled in direct deposit the University Bursar will mail any financial aid refunds to the permanent mailing address in your HokieSPA. More information on direct deposit can be found at <http://www.bursar.vt.edu/refunds/>.

16. Check your account status to see if you have a balance due

Check your HokieSPA to see your E-bill and if you have a balance due (Hokie SPA > University Account Information > View and Pay E-bill). You can sign up for the budget tuition plan if you want to make monthly payments rather than one large payment on the balance. (Hokie SPA > University Account Information > Apply for the budget tuition plan). More on the budget tuition plan can be found at http://www.bursar.vt.edu/billing_payment/budget_tuition.php.

Other payment options include:

- Parents of dependent students can apply for a Parent PLUS loan if needed at www.studentloans.gov (parent must log in and fill out application and credit check). If loan is needed to pay balance due and for living expenses, allow 2 weeks.
- Students can apply for a non-federal [private/alternative loan](#) from the lender of their choice. If loan is needed to pay balance due and for living expense, apply by July 1.

17. Report Outside Scholarships

Outside Scholarships are any scholarships a student receives that are not directly from Virginia Tech or a department within Virginia Tech (i.e. College of Engineering). Please make sure to fill out the [Scholarship Reporting Form](#) and turn it into University Bursar.

18. Clarify Your Full-time/Part-time Status

If you are not going to be enrolled as a full-time student (12 credit hours undergraduate/9 hours graduate) please notify our office at finaid@vt.edu.

19. Search for a Federal Work-Study (FWS) Position (if awarded)

Federal Work Study (FWS) is a program that provides part-time employment opportunities to eligible students (based on the results of the FAFSA) to help meet expenses related to education. To search for a FWS job, students will need to log on to the [Hokies4Hire](#) website. Please note that new students will not have access to Hokies4Hire until after June 20th. More on FWS can be found at http://www.finaid.vt.edu/types_of_aid/fws/fws-student-gilde-2013.pdf.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Do **NOT** Risk Losing **YOUR** Financial Aid Eligibility - **KNOW THE POLICY!**

<http://www.finaid.vt.edu/appeals/sap/SAP.html>

The academic progress of all federal aid recipients is monitored on an annual basis. Students are highly encouraged to familiarize themselves with Virginia Tech's Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. Note that this policy differs from the University's Probation and Suspension Policy. **Students who fail to meet the standards of satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes are INELIGIBLE for financial aid.**