



Before You Begin

If you are an international applicant, please see the special instructions towards the end of this document.

The PROFILE Process - Step-By-Step

1. **Register for PROFILE**, verifying that you are filling out the application for the correct school year.
 - Make sure that only one person on one computer is signed in to your application. You may get locked out of your PROFILE Application and it will not be processed correctly if more than one person is signed in to your application at the same time.
 - You may wish to print or save the Registration Instructions from the Home Page. Customized Application Instructions will be provided after you register.
 - If your parents are divorced or separated, your custodial parent(s) should complete the application. The custodial parent(s) are the parent or parents with whom the student has lived the most during the 12 months prior to filing the application. If the applicant has spent an equal amount of time in both parents' households during the past year, then the custodial parent is the parent who provided the most financial support during this period.
2. **Print or save your customized Pre-Application Worksheet and Application Instructions** available at the end of Registration. (If you miss them, they are available from the Home Page.) Most applicants find that completing the Pre-Application Worksheet speeds up the online process considerably.
3. **Complete the PROFILE Application** using your completed Pre-Application Worksheet and the navigation and completion tips below.
 - Help for specific questions can be found by clicking each question's "?" button or Help Code, by using the Search Help feature, and by reviewing information in the Help Desk.
 - If you submitted a 2015-16 PROFILE Application and used the same user name this year some information may have been pre-filled from last year's application. **Please review this information carefully.**
4. **Submit your completed application.** The submit process will prompt you to complete any required fields that you have left blank, will note any possible discrepancies in information, and provide a final opportunity to review and correct the information you have entered.

5. Once you have submitted your application, you cannot change any of the data online you have provided for the colleges and programs you selected. Please carefully review your data before submitting it. **Complete the payment process.** A valid credit or debit card is required. We accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover. When you click submit at the end of this process, you are submitting your payment and application information for processing.
6. **Save your PROFILE Acknowledgment** for your records. A copy of your Acknowledgment can be used to provide updates directly to your colleges and programs if updates are necessary.

Navigating the Application

- **Saving** - Your registration information is not saved until the registration step is completed. Once you have registered, you can save the information you provide as you complete the application. You do not need to complete the entire application at one time. Your information is saved each time you click "Save," "Save & Continue," or click on another section. If you want to sign out of your application in the middle of a section and return to your application later, click "Save & Exit" to leave.
- **Navigating** - At the top of each application screen you will see "GO TO SECTION." Using that drop down list box you can navigate to any section of your application.
 - Do not use your browser's "Back" and "Forward" buttons to move through your application. Only use the buttons within the application such as "Previous" and "Continue," or "Save & Continue." The application's buttons will save your information as you move through the application, but your browser's buttons will not.
 - Parent sections have a green and white background. All other sections are blue and white.
- **Printing/Saving** - At any time, you can print or save a copy of the information that you have entered by clicking "Print/Review Application" at the top or bottom of any application screen.

Completing the Application

Estimating - If actual income and expense figures for 2015 are not available, estimate as best you can. Questions that contain U.S. IRS tax line references are displayed based on the tax return you or your parents report filing or planning to file for 2015. If you filed a different tax return type in a previous year, or you need additional help estimating, see the **Help Desk** for more information including tips, draft U.S. federal income tax forms, and a U.S. federal income tax line reference table.

Number format - When a question asks for a number - an amount of money, a telephone number, etc. - enter numbers only. Do not enter currency symbols, commas (,), periods (.), or cents (decimals) in a financial field. Round to the nearest dollar or whole number. In non-financial fields (e.g. telephone number), do not enter hyphens, parentheses, or spaces.

Does not apply - If a financial question (**income, assets, or expenses**) does not apply, **enter a zero (0)**. **Do not** leave it blank unless specifically instructed otherwise. Non-financial questions (e.g. a year, a name) should be left blank if they do not apply.

Pre-filled information - If you submitted a 2015-16 PROFILE Application some information may be pre-filled from last year's application. Please review your information carefully.

On-Time - Your application will be considered on time if you **submit** your PROFILE by midnight **Eastern Time** of your earliest priority filing date. The College Board will begin processing your application immediately after submission.

User name - Put your user name and password in a safe and accessible place. You will need it to return to your PROFILE Application. You may use the same user name from year-to-year. Using the same user name and password next year will pre-fill some of your information. You cannot use the same user name and password for other family members, even in a different processing year.

If your parent filed the application for you last year using his or her password, you can reuse that user name and password. It does not matter whether the student or the parent owns the username. If the parent would like to keep PROFILE information from the student, he or she should create a separate user name and password.

Pop-up blocker - Help text and important edits will often be blocked if you have a pop-up blocker on. We suggest you turn it off while completing this application.

Gather the information below before filling out the Application:

- 2015 federal income tax return(s), if completed
- 2014 federal income tax return(s)
- W-2 forms and other records of money earned in 2015
- Records of untaxed income and benefits for 2014 and 2015
- Current bank statements
- Current mortgage information
- Records of savings, stocks, bonds, trusts, and other investments
- Your noncustodial parent's email address, if applicable.

If a tax return won't be filed: Even if you will not file an income tax return for 2015, it will be necessary to report any earnings for the year. Also, records documenting the income reported on the PROFILE will very likely be needed by your colleges and programs.

If a tax return has not been completed yet: If you haven't completed a 2015 federal income tax return but will be filing one, it is recommended that one be completed before the PROFILE Application is filled out. However, if the student's colleges or programs have an early priority filing date and completing the tax return is not possible, [*estimate 2015 income and benefits using income and tax records from 2014*](#) and salary and other financial records from 2015. See the Help Desk for more information on estimating, including tips, draft U.S. federal income tax forms, and a U.S. federal income tax line reference table. If you need to correct PROFILE information after filing the tax return, do so directly with the student's colleges and scholarship programs.

Independent Students

Please note, some colleges and programs require financial aid applicants to report parents' information even if you meet the conditions for "independent" student status. This is because

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they have limited institutional grant aid, and may take the parents' resources into account in deciding how much aid to award an independent student. If the parents' sections are displayed on your application, that information is required by your college or program; you must provide information about your parents in those sections. Questions regarding a college's application policies should be directed to that college's financial aid office.

International Applicants

If your country's tax year does not follow the calendar year you should collect the information listed above for your country's last tax year that ended or will end before April 1, 2016, and the year previous to that. If, for example, your country's tax year runs from April 1 to March 31, collect the information for the tax year that ended or will end March 31, 2016 and the tax year that ended March 31, 2015. If your country's tax year runs from July 1 to June 30, collect the information for the tax year that ended June 30, 2015 and the tax year that ended June 30, 2014.

Throughout the application, wherever you are asked for information from "your country's most recent tax year," report information from your country's last tax year that ended or will end March 31, 2016.

You will also be asked questions about your household expenses. You should gather those records as well.

You must complete the application in English using standard American keyboard characters: letters (A-Z), numbers (0-9) and punctuation (.,:;'?!\$@%#=#). Umlauts, tildes, or similar characters not found on a standard American keyboard may cause processing problems.

Additional Requirements

You may be notified as part of your Registration Confirmation or Submittal Acknowledgement for the following requirement:

Noncustodial PROFILE (NCP) - If your biological or adoptive parents are divorced or separated and your college or program requires it, your Registration Confirmation or Acknowledgement will contain information you will need to provide to your noncustodial parent so he or she can complete the NCP. **NOTE:** You will be given an opportunity at that time to have the College Board notify your noncustodial parent directly via email. Please have your parent's email address available at that time, as this is your only opportunity to have the College Board notify your parent on your behalf.