



VIRGIN ISLANDS HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In order to fulfill the requirements of Act 8155, known as the Virgin Islands Higher Education Scholarship Program, the University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees, pursuant to Section 1(i) of such Act, hereby promulgates the following regulations and procedures:

1. The Virgin Islands Higher Education Scholarship Program (VIHESP) and its underlying policies are subject to the level of funding provided by the Government of the Virgin Islands to the University of the Virgin Islands on an annual basis. This free tuition policy program is also dependent on the University receiving continuing contributions and grants from the private sector and the federal government. These gifts and grants may come with certain conditions and restrictions and thus should not supplant the Government's annual contribution.
2. VIHESP shall be made available only to residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands who meet the requirements of Section (d) (1) - (6) of the Act and matriculate in one of the degree programs at the University of the Virgin Islands. UVI Online students must meet the same residency requirements of Section (d) (1) - (6) of the Act. However, any Virgin Islands high school graduate who meets all the other requirements of the Act, but who had been displaced due to hurricanes Irma and Maria and graduates from a high school outside of the Territory, but maintains their domicile in the U.S. Virgin Islands, shall be eligible for this scholarship.
3. Based on the availability of funds in the VIHESP, the Administration is authorized to apply VIHESP funding first, before applying other federal, private and local awards to address student financial needs. In accordance with the Act, the University of the Virgin Islands may award full or partial scholarships to students pursuing their first associate degree or bachelor's degree, or the combination of first associate and first bachelor's.

In order to unlock the "Plus," features of the program, all students are encouraged to 1) apply for and complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid ("FAFSA") application by March 1 for summer/fall priority or November 1 for spring priority; and 2) accept all available federal and local financial aid awarded, and 3) accept all other means of financial aid or grants, except loans.

4. In order for new students to qualify for the funds, they must apply for admission to the University of the Virgin Islands no later than March 1 of the calendar year in which the student wishes to enroll and must make a deposit by June 1 of that same year, which indicates an intention to attend. For new students applying for the Spring semester, they must apply by November 1 and submit their deposit by December 1.
5. Continuing/Returning students must apply for VIHESP funds by March 1 of the year they are enrolled, which indicates their intention to return in the Summer or Fall semester. They must also complete a FAFSA application by March 1. Continuing/Returning students for the Spring semester must apply by October 1.
6. To qualify for VIHESP funds, a student must attend the University of the Virgin Islands on a full-time, matriculated basis (minimum of 12 credit hours per semester), or on a part-time basis (which is defined as a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester), with the exception of those students who have approved accommodations due to special needs as a result of self-disclosed disabilities, as outlined in the University's policies. Students who have spent at least the previous semester as a full-time (at least 12 credit hours) or part-time (6 credit hours) student during the academic year may enroll in summer courses and are eligible for these scholarship funds even though they are enrolled in less than 6 credit hours during the Summer semester.
7. VIHESP can only be used for students obtaining their first degree, which shall be an Associate's or Bachelor's degree, or both, but only up to the total credit hours required for the degree program (the University Catalog outlines the total credit hours required for each degree offered at the University). The minimum degree requirement is 120 total credit hours, although degree programs range in total credit hour requirements and exceed the minimum. In exceptional circumstances, as determined by the University of the Virgin Islands, students may receive VIHESP funding up to a maximum of 140 total credit hours. Exceptional circumstances may apply to students who need skill courses or who switch majors that require them to take additional credits in order to graduate. All requests for exceptional circumstances must contain the appropriate documentation and must be approved by the Provost.
8. If the student transfers to another college or university, or leaves the University of the Virgin Islands, the scholarship will immediately terminate. No benefit of the scholarship is transferrable to any other university in or outside of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The above restriction does not apply to students participating in the National Student Exchange Program, other study abroad programs, or students participating in the University approved 3-2 Engineering and Boston University School of Medicine Early Medical School Selection programs at partner institutions. In regards to the 3-2 Engineering

program, funds will be awarded only to the level that the student would have received if attending UVI. The student must exhaust all other financial aid resources provided by all other sources and the VIHESP funds must be paid directly to the partner institutions.

9. Any VIHESP scholarship recipient who otherwise withdraws or is involuntarily separated from the University due to academic dishonesty; violations of the University's Code of Conduct, as may be amended from time to time; or for violation of any other rule or regulation of the University, shall have their benefits immediately terminated. Accordingly, the seven-year grace period for satisfying the work requirement under the Act will commence.
10. A data file containing the names, Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), resident status, major and amount requested for each student applying for VIHESP funds will be developed, maintained and provided to the Commissioner of Finance at the start of each semester, including Summer sessions, in order to draw down the funds from the Virgin Islands Revolving Scholarship Fund. This submission should occur immediately after the University's Census date of each semester. **Appendix 1** contains the Census and submission dates for each semester.
11. Section 1 (e) (1-3) of VIHESP creates a mandatory work requirement for all students who receive a scholarship. Since all students will not receive the same amount of aid each semester, the formula contained in **Appendix 2** provides specific guidance in regards to the work requirement based on the amount of aid received. This formula is consistent with the 1-year and 3-year work requirements contained in the Act.
12. The seven-year work requirement grace period is triggered when a student who has received funding from VIHESP leaves the University. If the student returns to full-time status, the grace period is tolled and will remain so until the student graduates or leaves the University again. Upon returning, if the student meets all other requirements of VIHESP, then he/she is eligible for funding under the program.
13. Pursuant to Section 1 (c), the VIHESP Scholarship Board shall consist of the individuals in the following positions: Vice Provost of Access and Enrollment Services, Director of Financial Aid, Director of the Center for Student Success, Director of Institutional Research, and a faculty member recommended by the Provost and approved by the President. The Controller will serve as an ex-officio member. The recommendations from this Board must be approved by the Provost, Vice President for Administration and Finance and the President.

14. Section 1 (d) (3) and (4) require students to have and maintain a 2.5 CGPA in order to qualify for VIHESP funds. If a student is admitted to the University who does not have a cumulative 2.5 GPA, but achieves a cumulative 2.5 GPA while matriculating at UVI, that student shall be eligible to receive VIHESP funds. This GPA requirement shall be interpreted to apply to the cumulative GPA and not the GPA of a particular semester. The University will develop a retention and support program that works with all students below a cumulative 2.5 CGPA in order to assist them in qualifying for VIHESP funding.
15. Pursuant to Section 1 (f), students must execute an agreement with the University indicating that they will repay the funds received if they do not satisfy the work requirement outlined in the Act. **Appendix 3** contains the contract that each student must execute. The interest rate applied to repayment should be that of the applicable University loan interest rate not to exceed the prime rate. Interest payable on the loan commences at the end of the seven-year grace period after graduation.
16. The University Administration shall establish an appeal process for any student denied VIHESP funding or who is required to repay funding for failure to meet the work requirement. The appeal should be first made to the VIHESP Scholarship Board, and then to the Provost and President if the student is not satisfied with the VIHESP Scholarship Board's decision.