



## PROFILE Online 2012-13

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### Help Desk

Select a Help Section: 

### 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. If you will be starting college or returning to college in the fall of 2012 or the spring of 2013 use the 2012-13 version.
  - 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 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.
  - If you qualify and your college or program requires it, your Registration Confirmation will contain information on completing the Noncustodial PROFILE (NCP). Follow those instructions.
- 2. Print 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 2011-12 PROFILE Application and used the same user name this year some information may have been pre-filled from last year's application. Please review your 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. Once you have submitted your application, you cannot change any of the data online you have provided for the colleges and programs you selected. (If you send your PROFILE information to **additional** colleges and programs through the "Add Colleges to Submitted Application" process you will have the opportunity to update your application responses. Your updated data will **only** be reported to the added colleges or programs.)
- 5. Complete the payment process.** A valid credit or debit card or U.S. based checking account is required. We accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, and online check. When you click submit at the end of this process, you are submitting your payment and application information for processing.
- 6. Print your PROFILE Acknowledgment** for your records. You may also be notified of additional requirements including the Institutional Documentation Service (IDOC) and the Noncustodial PROFILE (NCP) as part of your Acknowledgment. Follow the instructions detailed in your Acknowledgment. A copy of your Acknowledgment can be used to send 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," because 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** - At any time, you can print 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 2011 actual income and expense figures 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 2011. 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 for 2010 and 2011.
- **Number reformat** - 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 2011-12 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.
- **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.

### The information below will be helpful to have available when filling out the Application. We suggest you gather them before completing the application:

- 2011 federal income tax return(s), if completed
- 2010 federal income tax return(s)
- W-2 forms and other records of money earned in 2011
- Records of untaxed income and benefits for 2010 and 2011
- 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 2011, 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 2011 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 2011 income and benefits using income and tax records from 2010](#) and salary and other financial records from 2011. 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 for 2010 and 2011. 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 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 policy 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, 2012, 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, 2012 and the tax year that ended March 31, 2011. If your country's tax year runs from July 1 to June 30, collect the information for the tax year that ended June 30, 2011 and the tax year that ended June 30, 2010.

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, 2012.

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 a standard American keyboard. Umlauts, tildes, or similar characters not found on a standard American keyboard may cause processing problems.

### **If you have additional questions**

- Click on "Help Desk" at the top of most pages for further information. There you will find:
  - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
  - Glossaries in English and Spanish
  - Tips for Separated and Divorced Parents, Self-Employed Parents, and Estimating Income, and International Applicants
  - Institutions that require the PROFILE and Noncustodial PROFILE (NCP)
  - Blank 2011 U.S. IRS Tax Forms
  - U.S. Federal Income Tax Form Line Reference Table for 2010 and 2011
  - Security Information
- Click on "Contact Us" at the top of most pages to contact customer service via telephone or email.

\* If your biological or adoptive parents are divorced and you are notified to have the Noncustodial PROFILE completed, you will be given an opportunity at the end of Registration to have the College Board notify your noncustodial parent directly. You will need to enter your noncustodial parent's email address at that time. 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.

**To register for PROFILE, return to the top of this page and click "Close Window."**