

Applying to the VAR program

Who is eligible to apply for VAR status?

Advanced graduate students who are degree candidates at another university and who have made arrangements with a specific Graduate School faculty member for a research project under his or her direct supervision may be admitted to the Division of Special Registration as Visiting Assistants in Research. Undergraduate students in combined or simultaneous B.S./M.S., B.A./M.A., or similar programs are not considered advanced graduate students. Student research conducted at Yale must be part of the visiting student's thesis or dissertation. Students in Master's programs that do not require a thesis are not eligible for admission as VARs.

How long may I be registered as a VAR student?

Initial appointment may be for any length of time up to one year. After the initial appointment, students may apply for reappointment. Students are limited to cumulative enrollment of two years in all non-degree programs in the Graduate School.

How do I find a research advisor?

It is the responsibility of the applicant to make contact with an appropriate advisor and to secure a letter of invitation. Typically, students who come to Yale as VARs are either already collaborating with a member of the Yale faculty, or wish to be at Yale to work with a specific scholar whose research is of interest to them. Faculty members are under no obligation to take VAR applicants, and students will not be admitted to the program without a faculty sponsor. Students interested in a specific project who are seeking a compatible advisor are encouraged to review the research descriptions posted by most professors on their department websites.

What transcripts do I need? Do they need to be in English?

VAR applicants should provide official undergraduate transcripts showing completion of the bachelor's degree or foreign equivalent, and current graduate school transcripts. All transcripts must be in English, or translations must be provided.

What other supporting materials are required for my application?

A list of all application material can be found here:

http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/admissions/dsr_var.html

Please note that there are three documents without which the application cannot be considered:

1. Letter of Invitation from a Yale professor
2. Document from the home institution asserting that you are enrolled as a graduate student.
3. Evidence of financial support (for international students only).

What happens after I submit my application?

Applications must be sent to the Graduate Admissions Office at Yale. The applications are reviewed by the Deans' Office to make sure all required documents are included. You will be notified if additional information is required.

Once the application is complete, it will be reviewed by the department to which you applied. Successful applicants require approval of both the department and the Graduate School Deans' Office.

If you are admitted as a VAR, you will receive a letter of acceptance, with a reply form. You will be required to return the reply form, indicating whether or not you will enroll in the VAR program. Once we have this form, you will be entered as a registered non-degree student, and will be permitted to begin your studies on the date indicated in the admission letter.

When can I start? What should I do if my arrival or departure dates change?

International students cannot start until at least two months after the complete application is received by the Graduate School. Domestic students may begin one month or later after the application is received.

The VAR program has a rolling admission process, which means that you can begin at any time of year and stay for any length of time up to one year, with the possibility of renewing for a second year. It is important to remember that the date of arrival and the length of stay should be agreed to by the research advisor, and should be consistent with the available funding. If there is a mismatch between your dates and the dates indicated by the funding agency or by your research advisor, this will delay approval of your application while we clarify the dates of study.

In some cases, students find it necessary to: delay their start date after they have been offered admission; extend their stay beyond the period originally requested; or terminate their program early. A delay in the start date is possible provided the research advisor approves and the source of funding remains available to the student. Similarly, an extension of the period of study is possible under the same conditions, provided the student has not exceeded two years of study at Yale. Truncation of study is always possible. In any of these cases, both the department to which the student has applied and the associate dean of the Graduate School should be notified of the change in date, and a new letter with revised dates will be sent to the student.

I am an international student. When will I obtain my visa? I need to make an appointment with the embassy and purchase my plane tickets.

Once you have been accepted as a VAR and the Admissions Office has documented you as a new student, the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) will contact you in 3-6 business days, by e-mail, and ask you to fill out a biographical questionnaire. OISS will then complete the DS-2019 immigration document, which will then be courier mailed to you. This document includes the SEVIS ID number, which you will need to pay the SEVIS fee and book the visa appointment. As there are several stages to this process, including the mailing and delivery of forms, you can facilitate the visa process by responding promptly to queries from OISS, and making sure that you have provided appropriate documentation to support your statement of financial support. Questions regarding the visa process can be directed to newstudents.oiss@yale.edu.

What do I do with the reply form?

Please complete the reply form and fax the form to the Office of Graduate Admissions at (203) 432-6724. Please do not return the reply form as an email attachment.

I sent in my reply form, how can I confirm that you received it?

If you want to check on the status of the reply form, please send an e-mail to graduate.admissions@yale.edu

Can I take classes?

No. Non-degree students who wish to take classes should apply as Special Students, not VARs. The Special Student program charges tuition to non-degree students on a per course basis.

When I arrive

What should I do when I arrive in New Haven?

International VAR Students should first check in with the Office of International Students and Scholars, 421 Temple St and should bring their passport and immigration documents. Their second stop should be to inform their Yale department and advisor that they have arrived.

Domestic students should first inform their Yale department and advisor that they have arrived.

After notifying your department, go to the Registrar's Office at 246 Church Street for instructions about receiving your ID card, Net ID, e-mail access and other important information.

Will the University provide housing during my visit?

No – University-based housing is not guaranteed to admitted VAR students and the students are responsible for their living expenses. Entering VARs must identify their own housing. Information about housing options can be found at www.yale.edu/gradhousing/

When will I receive my ID?

When you arrive, bring either your passport or current US Driver's License to the Registrar's Office at 246 Church Street. There you will receive an authorization to obtain an ID card. After you receive this authorization, you may go to the ID Center, located in the same building.

When will I have an email account? How do I go about obtaining one?

When you arrive, bring either your passport or current US Driver's License to the Registrar's Office at 246 Church Street. You will either be given a Net ID and pin, or a request for a new ID will be made at that time.

Funding

The application asks me to provide 'proof of funding'. What is this?

Students are required to show proof of sufficient financial support to cover tuition and living expenses while at Yale. This may include support from your home institution, an external award agency, or personal funds. A letter from the school or agency detailing the amount and dates of the award, or a bank statement, is usually required. **For international students**, the visa requirements do not allow students to enter the U.S. supported solely by personal funds. Some portion of your support must come from your home institution, an outside fellowship, or your advisor at Yale.

Does Yale provide financial aid to VAR students?

The Graduate School does not provide financial support to Visiting Assistants in Research. Most VAR students provide their own funding through external awards or personal resources. If funding is provided by the faculty advisor at Yale, the level of support, including stipend, tuition, or other payments, should be specified in the invitation letter. For international students, any

funding coming from outside of Yale, including personal funds, should be documented in the application for visa purposes.

I have not received my bill or I want Student Financial Services to directly bill my funding agency.

Billing issues should be directed to Student Financial Services at either sfs@yale.edu or 203-432-2700.

When and how does Yale expect me to pay the tuition? Should I do that before my arrival or should I pay that when I am there?

Your tuition bill will be sent to your yale.edu e-mail address, after you arrive at Yale. The bill is payable upon receipt, and will include instructions on methods of payment.

My research advisor at Yale is providing some financial support. When and how will I be paid?

This will vary from department to department, so please contact the Registrar in the department to which you have applied to find out how your funding will be provided.

Other

I am traveling with my spouse. Will he/she be able to have a Yale ID?

Yes. Spouses or same-sex partners of Yale Graduate and Professional students are eligible for a Student Affiliate ID Card which confers certain privileges with regard to the campus shuttle services, athletic facilities, and library, museum admission, film society screenings, discounts at the Yale Repertory Theatre and Yale athletic events, among others. Students should bring a valid ID and proof of marriage (copy of license) or domestic partnership (e.g., joint lease, civil union, joint banking statement) to the Office of the Registrar at 246 Church Street. Pending approval of the documentation, the Registrar will issue a card permitting the spouse or same-sex partner to obtain an affiliate ID from the University's ID Center.

The office to which you referred me has not responded. What do I do?

If you are trying to contact one of the support offices and are having trouble getting a response to your questions, please contact the Registrar in the department to which you have applied. The department Registrar will be able to help you identify the appropriate person to contact.