



Photography: © Sebastia Galbany

# Start your creative career at VAAS

## Professional Training Program Guidebook

### Visual and Applied Arts School

Apply online: <https://phareps.org/vaas-apply-now/>

Contact us: +855 (0)5 395 2424; [admissions@phareps.org](mailto:admissions@phareps.org)

More information:

[www.facebook.com/phareVAAS](http://www.facebook.com/phareVAAS)

<https://phareps.org/about-us-vaas>

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# INTRODUCTION

*Phare Ponleu Selpak passionately believes in the power of the arts to change lives.*

## What is VAAS?

The Visual and Applied Arts School (VAAS) is a school in Phare Ponleu Selpak (PPS), created in 2016 with the support of French co-funding partners Agence Francaise de Development (AFD) and CCFD-Terre Solidaire. VAAS provides students with professional training in graphic design, visual arts and animation. The professional program offered at VAAS prepares students for Cambodia's future creative industry and tertiary-based economy. The PPS campus also includes a Kindergarten, Performing Arts School with Music, Dance, Theatre and an internationally renowned Circus program. Integrated Social Support services are provided to all students. For more information on our schools, please see the PHARE website.

## Why study visual and applied arts?

Graphic Design, Animation and Visual Art are areas of high employment potential in the current and future job market in Cambodia and internationally. Once students have completed their professional training at VAAS they are equipped to work in these sectors as freelancers, to run their own business or join a company or organization. To secure solid jobs for our graduates, VAAS has relationships with over 40 companies around Cambodia.

*100% of VAAS students have found paid employment within one year of graduating.*



Photography © Sebastia Galbany

# OUR PROGRAMS

VAAS offers four levels of artistic trainings: Leisure classes for young students, Academic classes for inexperienced young adults, Preparatory course for those wanting to apply for the vocational program, and Vocational Education & Training Program. This guidebook focuses on the vocational training program only.

**If a student is under the age of 16, please see our website or contact us for more information on our Leisure and Academic classes.**

## Preparatory Class:

This one-year course introduces you to the visual and applied arts. If you receive good grades (yearly average above 50%) at the end of this year, you can undertake an interview and may be admitted to the vocational training program.

## Vocational Training Program

All students take foundation classes and choose one specialty: Animation, Graphic Design, or Visual Arts. This three-year vocational training program prepares students with the skills, experiences, and networks to help find a job that pays after graduation and build a sustaining career.

**Quality Curriculum:** to meet industry demands, VAAS regularly updates the curriculum and software. Students at VAAS are ahead of the crowd and highly sought after by companies in Cambodia and abroad for this reason.

**Internship Program:** all students in the professional program must complete a 2-month professional internship in the break between year 2 and year 3. Students apply their learnings to hands-on work with real-life paying clients.

**Professional & Life Skills:** to prepare the students better for their professional and independent lives, VAAS aims to make the program holistic by providing of a range of professional and life skills classes from managing personal finances to effective communication.

**Job Support:** special staff at VAAS are dedicated to supporting students to find jobs. Our Job Facilitator ensures students are job ready with a professional Curriculum Vitae, artistic portfolio, interview skills and positive work ethic.

## Program commitment

Students in the one-year preparatory class must attend morning classes at VAAS every weekday (Monday - Friday). Students in the vocational 3-year program must commit to full-time study with classes every weekday (Monday - Friday) from 8.00am until the afternoon, including occasional weekend workshops.

## Curriculum

Students in Preparatory Class complete a variety of classes, including:

- Art Expression
- Painting
- Drawing, Model and Perspective
- Illustration
- Photoshop and InDesign
- Art History

Students in the Vocational Training Program complete foundation classes in years 1, including:

- Art Expression
- Structure and Anatomy
- Model, Volume, Perspective
- Writing
- Story Board (Animation)
- Computer Skills (PS, FL, ID)
- Painting
- Graphic Design
- Video
- Art History and Khmer Art

Students choose one area to specialize in (Graphic Design, Animation or Fine Art) after their first year. Students learn and refine their skills in year 2, before completing an internship. The final year of study (year 3) is an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they have learned and showcase their skills to potential employers through a *personal project*.

For more information on our Curriculum, please view our website or contact VAAS staff.

**“A creative job means having to create new things for humanity. You learn about humans and what they need and then take the next step to create for them. We mix traditional and modern to create something new.”**

*BUTH Sonrin, VAAS Graduate and current Graphic Design Teacher*

## WHO CAN APPLY?

To study at VAAS, you should be:

- Creative and interested in the arts
- Aged 17 or older
- Living in Cambodia.

You need passion, but no art experience, to enter our one-year **Preparatory Class\***. You must pass an Admission Test to enter our three-year **Vocational Training Program**.

### Admission Test

The entrance examination for the vocational program normally consists of:

- Drawing a live model
- Artistic expression
- Art History test - reading, writing, expression abilities
- Oral examination with the juries - explain why you want to study at VAAS and discuss any artwork you have made. You do not need artistic experience to join VAAS, just ambition and passion for art!

*\*If VAAS receives too many applicants to the Preparatory Class, students from lower-income families will be prioritized.*

**“After graduation, students will get a job because the school takes action... The school is not concerned whether you are poor or rich. VAAS supports us with the materials we need to study with.”**

*MIL Kosol, VAAS Graduate, Creative Studio Animator*



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# SCHOOL FACILITIES AND FEES

## THE ONE-YEAR PREPARATORY CLASS IS FREE!

Students who have little or no experience in drawing can apply for our Preparatory Class and, if accepted, study for free. We want the arts to be accessible to all Cambodians, so we cover the costs of this year, which prepares students for the vocational training program.

## The three-year VAAS Vocational Program is worth \$6000.

It costs approximately \$2000 per year in direct school costs to educate one student. In addition to qualified teachers, a student at VAAS has access to excellent facilities, including: 40+ computers with graphic design and animation software, professional cameras and equipment, fully equipped photo studio and sound studio, art materials, and an art library.

Our school aims to be open to all students and operate as a non-profit school.

We receive some support and subsidize costs so that **the annual fee for our Vocational Program is reduced to \$720.**

While students are expected to invest in their own education, there are several options for students to pay under the Financial Aid Program.

My family  
can afford to pay  
the full fees

- Apply and pass the Entry test
- Register as a "full-fee" student
- Pay \$720.0USD to VAAS\*
- Begin study

My family  
can not afford to  
pay the full fees

- Apply and pass the Entry test
- Complete a **Family Assessment**
- Agree to Financial Aid Package
- Begin study, pay back VAAS with **Financial Aid options**

*\*Payment in installments by term is possible*



We believe education  
should be available to all.



# FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDENTS

Financial Aid is a new initiative that ensures VAAS' vocational program is accessible to ambitious students in Cambodia, regardless of one's social or economic background. The two streams of financial aid include scholarships and pay-back options.

## Who can receive Financial Aid?

To be eligible for Financial Aid, students must be Cambodian, from a low-income family, and registered at VAAS in the 3-year professional program. PPS' Social Support Department will conduct a Family Needs Assessment to determine the level of financial aid.

**Students enrolled in Preparatory Class do not need to pay fees and are therefore not eligible for Financial Aid. Scholarships and financial aid packages become available when students enter the professional program and need to start paying annual fees.**

## Scholarships

Students from low income families may receive a partial or full sponsorship that will reduce their annual school fee. A Family Assessment conducted by our Social Support team will determine the scholarship amount.

Students may also seek scholarships from non-governmental organizations or other sources. Once the scholarship amount has been deducted from the \$720 fee, the student and their parents or guardians can use our "pay-back options" to pay the remaining fee. If a student is not eligible for a scholarship, they may still be eligible for a Financial Aid package.

## Financial Aid Package

- **Monthly contribution:** a student's family or guardian can pay what they can afford every month, such as \$10 per month.
- **Work on campus:** a variety of job opportunities are available on campus; students can pay by working for a set number of hours.
- **Loan:** students can pay back a non-interest loan when they graduate and start earning income. Terms and conditions apply.



## Examples of Financial Aid

	Scholarship	Financial Aid Package			TOTAL
		Student Loan	Campus Work	Step by step fees	
Student 1	\$200	\$300	\$220 / hours	None	\$720.00
Student 2	\$100	\$340	\$100 / hours	\$180 (\$15 x 12)	
Student 3	None	\$140	\$200 / hours	\$360 (\$30 x 12)	
Student 4	None	None	\$220 / hours	\$500 (\$250 x 2 )	
Student 5	None	None	None	\$720 (\$180 x 4)	

Every family's situation is different. For families that can pay a higher "monthly contribution", the student will have fewer hours to work and no loan. To cater for everyone's situation, PPS' Social Support team will work closely with each family to create a Financial Aid Package.

### Students currently living outside Battambang are encouraged to apply to VAAS.

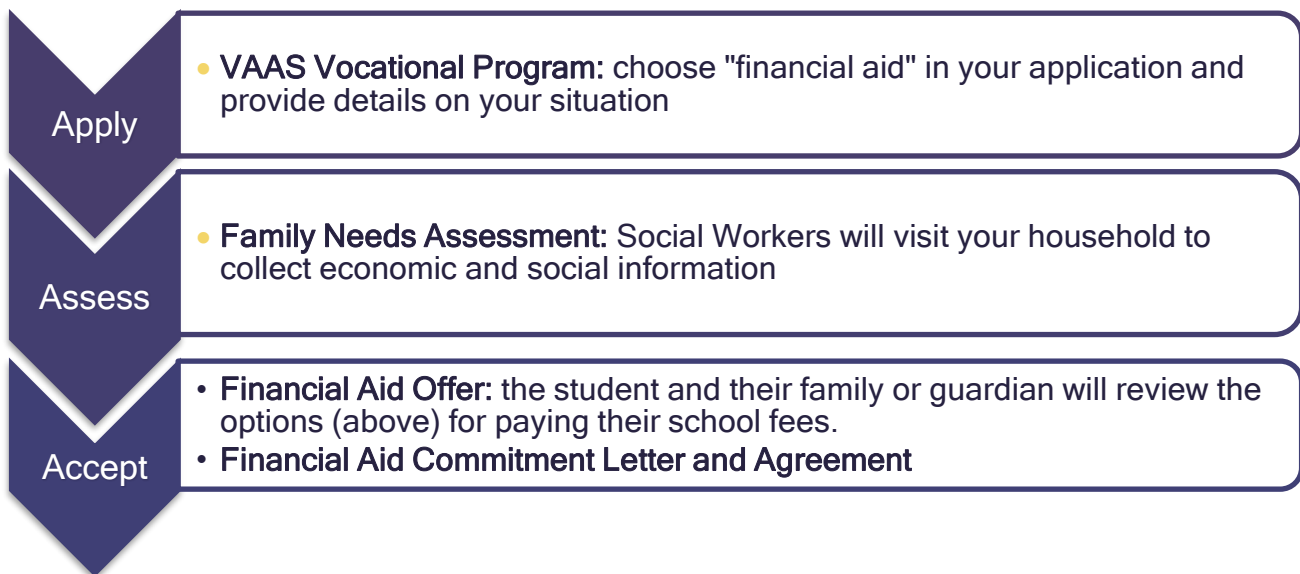
If accepted, we will support you to find local accommodation and settle into Battambang.

Students eligible for financial aid may also receive financial support to pay for accommodation and living expenses.

### Support for students enrolled in the VAAS Preparatory Class

Some students in the Preparatory Class may be eligible for social support (i.e. free lunches, funds for materials etc.). A Family Assessment will determine the level of support.

## How do I apply for Financial Aid?



# HOW TO APPLY

## 1. Submit the application form online or in print.

Paper applications must be submitted in person to a VAAS Staff member or at the PPS campus in Battambang. The online application form can be submitted from anywhere in Cambodia. When you submit your application form, you can apply for **Financial Aid** (see page 7 for more details). **You must attach** (hardcopy or electronic) photocopies of: family book (cover and parent information); student birth letter, 2 passport size photos. Please check the PPS website or Facebook page for the application deadline date.

## 2. Attend the Admission Test at PHARE

**Preparatory Class:** no admission test is required.

**Professional Program:** all applicants for year 1 must be tested after the submission of the application. The test takes two days: day 1 is a written test and day 2 is a 15-minute oral test. A tour of the campus will also be provided. Please bring any examples of your artwork (drawing, painting, video) to the oral test. If you are a regional student, you must come to Battambang at least one night before the first test. Current test dates will be updated on our website and Facebook page.

## 3. Meet with our Social Support staff

**If you have requested Financial Aid:** our Social Support team will visit you and your family or guardian to conduct a Family Assessment. This Assessment will measure your income and determine how much support you are eligible for. The Family Assessments will be completed in August; each assessment takes a few hours.

**If you have not requested Financial Aid:** you can proceed to step 4.

## 4. Agree to your placement letter

You will receive a personal offer to study in either Preparatory Class or Year One of professional training. Your offer will include details of your Financial Aid plan, which you must agree with to enroll.

## 5. Prepare for your studies!

A complete orientation will be provided in the first few days of school. Students living in other parts of Cambodia will receive advice on how to move to Battambang. The new school year usually starts in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of September. The start date can be found on our website and Facebook page.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Can I skip the Preparatory Class and go straight to Year One?

Yes, if you achieve a high score on the Admission Test you can skip Preparatory Class and go straight to Year One of Vocational Education and Training Program. If you would like to go straight to year One, you must show examples of your artwork during the oral examination (paintings, drawings, sketches, sculpture, photography etc.). In the oral examination, you will need to talk about your art and why you want to study at VAAS.

### Do I need art experience to apply at VAAS?

No, you just need to be interested and excited to apply! If you have no experience, you can join the one-year Preparatory Class and then apply for the vocational training program.

### Is the Vocational Training recognized by the Cambodian Ministry of Education?

PPSA Visual and Applied Arts School choose to implement a specialized curriculum that will prepare students with the most up-to-date skills and abilities. As we do not follow the Cambodian Ministry of Education curriculum, the Ministry does not formally recognize our certificate. However, Phare Ponleu Selpak operates under the guidance of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and has an MOU signed with them. In addition, close collaboration with the Provincial Departments and authorities is maintained. The Provincial Governor always attends our Graduation Ceremonies and commends our students for their achievements. You can be confident that a VAAS certificate will be adequate for starting your career in the visual arts, graphic design and animation industries.

### I do not live in Battambang now, but I want to study at VAAS. What can I do?

You are encouraged to apply to study at VAAS and attend the entry examination. You may be eligible for Financial Aid, either or both for tuition and living, which would allow you to gain support to live in Battambang for the duration of the program. Please contact us and we can provide more advice directly.

### Can I earn income while studying?

Yes, students can work if they continue to pass all their tests and complete their coursework to a satisfactory standard. The school is generally open from 8am - 5pm, so students have time in the evenings and on weekends to work at their choice. In addition, a variety of work opportunities are available on campus and through the school's social enterprise - Phare Creative Studio. Many VAAS students even begin to earn income from their creative skills (i.e. graphic design, commissioned painting, hostels and hotels, murals etc.)

### Are families involved in study?

A community (liaison) book has been set up to link the school to families and tutors. Absences, achievements and events are tracked in this book. Families or tutors are asked for regular signatures to ensure the students get maximum support in their studies. At the beginning and end of the school year, we hold Parent Meetings to share information between the school, students, and parents. During these meetings, your families may raise any concerns you have.

### Can students with disabilities study at VAAS?

VAAS believes that disabled learners have the right to study with non-disabled learners as much as possible. VAAS strives to cater to all learner's needs on a case by case basis. Please enquire with our Social Support department for more information.

### Students currently living outside Battambang

Students currently living outside Battambang are encouraged to apply to VAAS. If accepted, we will support you to find local accommodation and settle into Battambang. Students eligible for financial aid may also receive financial support to pay for accommodation and living expenses.

### Why should I move to Battambang for study?

- **Cambodia's creative city:** Battambang is home to many art galleries, boutiques, and creative experts. The architecture in Battambang has been influenced by the French, so you will enjoy walking around our beautiful town.
  - **Relaxed and quiet:** Battambang has all the necessary facilities, restaurants and attractions without the busy traffic and city noise.
  - **Safety:** Battambang has a low crime rate, making it a great city for students to live.
  - **Welcoming school:** When you join VAAS, you become part of Phare Ponleu Selpak's creative family. At PPS you can make friends with like-minded creative people and get to know students and staff from different disciplines (performing arts, music, theatre etc.)
- Unique Education:** VAAS is a leading school for animation, graphic design, and animation. Our graduates are sought after by employees across Cambodia and internationally. If you want to work in the creative industries, VAAS will offer the most up-to-date training.

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

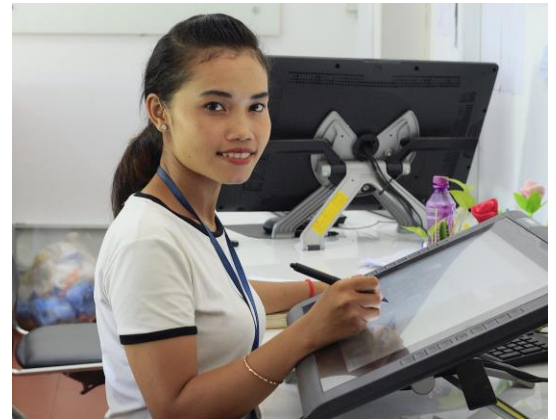
### **KAN Chanthorn, Animation Student**

*I am a student in Animation class and I believe in my ability to work locally in Cambodia. I have the opportunity of a career in the arts and the ability to freelance, choosing and prioritizing a job based on my interest. Young people should study at PPS because students will become professional artists based on the skill that they have selected. I am confident that I can get a good job after graduation.*



### **SON Sreyneang, Animation Graduate**

*I am very happy at VAAS, I feel like it is my home and I feel very welcome. Teachers are high quality and I can choose my skill, there are a lot of skills to choose from. A creative job in Animation is a very rare skill in Cambodia, which means that when you know this skill you are a priority in the job market. It is also a job that I love and I never feel bored. I want more students to join the program. It would be good to have more students in the next generation of artists.*



### **LIM Sreyleang, Graduate and Freelance Designer**

*I began my career in design while I was also in accounting school. Once I finished my degree at university, I came to VAAS full time. When I came here for the first time, I found my family, not just friends. We study together, we do everything together. When we have problems we always sort it out. It is not just the skill that you study and find a job. It is a job of talent. When you have freedom to go outside the lines, you will create something new.*



## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Once students have completed their professional training at VAAS they are equipped to work as freelancers, to run their own business or join a company or organization. Here are some career paths that graduates may choose to pursue:

**Animators** produce stories and graphics for 2D or 3D animation used in festivals, advertisements and education. Animators use technology and drawing skills and work for paying clients. The animation industry is growing in Cambodia. VAAS is preparing students to find careers as skilled Animators.

**Graphic Designers** create visual material for products and activities, such as logos, websites, advertisements, books, magazines, posters, computer games, packaging, products, exhibitions and presentations. Graphic designers create ideas and innovations for different customers. Apply to VAAS to start your journey in Cambodia's growing industry.

**Visual Artists** create original works of art such as painting, sculpture, and video that are displayed in galleries, museums or in the public space. Their artwork can be sold to private collectors, hotels, restaurants or organisations. Artists from PPS have exhibited in art galleries and travelled overseas for their art. A Fine Artist can also share their creativity to work with schools, art tourism and community organisations.

**Communication experts** are responsible for a company's relationship with different target audiences. Communication experts use written, visual and verbal skills to create communication materials such as posters and presentations. They may also manage social media and emails with different clients.

**Illustrators** use their creative skills in art and design to communicate a story, message or idea. Illustrators can work with writers to produce leisure or education books, comics, or other design material.

**Web Designers** plan, create and code web pages to fit customer's requirements. They are involved in the technical and graphical aspects of web pages. Web designers may create new sites or maintain existing sites for both commercial, educational and government organizations.

**Apply to VAAS to start your creative career.**

Demand for qualified professionals in the cultural field is growing,  
while the number of graduates remains low.