



2026-2027 Unusual Circumstances Application

Student's Name _____ Social Security Number _____ - _____ - _____
Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____ Cell Phone _____

Introduction:

If a student who would otherwise be considered dependent upon their parents can document extenuating circumstances that prevent them from obtaining parental information to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), they may be eligible to appeal their unusual circumstance. If approved, the student's FAFSA will be updated to reflect the student's new dependency status, and parental data will be excluded from the student's financial aid determination. Please note:

1. If you (the student) answered "yes" to any question on page 3, you are already considered an independent student and do not need to complete this form.
2. Students claiming self-sufficiency and/or students whose parents do not claim them on their tax return will not be considered independent students, per federal regulation

Basis for an Appeal:

Students may appeal their unusual circumstance only when they have severe circumstances within their family that prevent them from obtaining their parents' financial information.

Instructions:

Please review this form carefully before beginning. **Remember to submit this form with all documentation required for your circumstances including a personal statement from you and a letter/documentation from a third-party. Any application without additional documentation will not be reviewed.**

Reasons for Appeal:

_____ **Your family situation is unacceptable due to abuse or you have been abandoned by both parents.** An abusive situation may be the result of physical abuse, emotional abuse, or drug or alcohol abuse. In many cases, a professional counselor has counseled you to live apart from your parent(s).

Submit:

1. A letter from you explaining the situation in detail.

2. A letter (**on official letterhead**) explaining the situation in detail from a pastor, social worker, psychologist, high school counselor, teacher, doctor, or another counseling professional.
3. One or more of the following:
 - a. A letter, preferably from someone other than a relative or a friend (i.e. – the parents of a friend of the student, a neighbor, an employer)
 - b. Police reports
 - c. Court reports
 - d. Documentation from a social agency

_____ **Your custodial parent has died and your natural parent is still living.** You, however, have neither had contact with nor received support from this parent.

Submit:

1. A letter from you explaining the situation in detail.
2. A copy of the death certificate for the deceased custodial parent.
3. A letter from an adult professional (**on official letterhead**) or objective third party which supports your claim that you have neither lived with nor received financial support from the non-custodial parent for a significant period of time.

_____ **You are no longer eligible for independent status due to divorce.** You must have been married for at least two years and maintained a residence separate from you and your spouse's parents while you were married. You now maintain separate residences and pay all expenses from your own income and assets.

Submit:

1. A letter from you explaining the situation in detail.
2. Legal documents verifying your status.
3. A letter from an adult professional (**on official letterhead**) or objective third party which supports your claim.

_____ **You have other extenuating circumstances not already described above which prevent contact with your parents.**

Submit:

1. A letter from you explaining the situation in detail.
2. A letter from an adult professional (**on official letterhead**) or objective third party which supports your claim.

Student Certification

I certify that all of the information on this form and all other documentation provided with regards to my appeal are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I also agree to provide additional documentation, if required, to complete my appeal or document how my living expenses are being met. Furthermore, I swear or affirm that I have not knowingly or intentionally provided any false or fraudulent documentation.

Student Signature

Date

****All decisions made by the University are final and cannot be appealed****

Already considered an Independent Student if...

You are considered an independent student for financial aid purposes if you meet one of the following conditions at the time you complete and sign the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):

- You're married on the day you apply (even if you are separated but not divorced).
- You were born before Jan. 1, 2003
- You are or will be enrolled in a master's or doctoral degree program (beyond a bachelor's degree) at the beginning of the 2026-2027 academic year.
- You are currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training.
- You're a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces. (A "veteran" includes students who attended a U.S. service academy and were released under a condition other than dishonorable. For more details on who is considered a veteran, see the explanatory notes on the FAFSA.)
- You have children who will receive more than half their support from you between July 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027.
- You have legal dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half their support from you now and through June 30, 2026.
- When you were age 13 or older, both your parents were deceased and you were you in foster care or a dependent or ward of the court.
- You are or were an emancipated minor as determined by a court in your state of legal residence.
- You are or were in legal guardianship as determined by a court in your state of legal residence.
- At any time on or after July 1, 2025, your high school or school district homeless liaison determined that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless.
- At any time on or after July 1, 2025, the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, determined that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless.
- At any time on or after July 1, 2025, the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determined that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless.

If you meet one of the above conditions, you do not need to complete this form. You are considered an independent student and parental information is not required on your FAFSA.