

DEPENDENT OR INDEPENDENT?

Your answers to questions on the FAFSA[®] form determine whether you are considered a dependent or independent student.

Here are the questions that determine your dependency status for the 2025–26 school year.

Were you born before Jan. 1, 2002?	Yes	No
As of today, are you married? (Answer “No” if you are separated but not divorced.)	Yes	No
At the beginning of the 2025–26 school year, will you be working on a master’s or doctorate program (such as an M.A., MBA, M.D., J.D., Ph.D., Ed.D., graduate certificate, etc.)?	Yes	No
Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training? (If you are a National Guard or Reserves enlistee, are you on active duty for other than state or training purposes?)	Yes	No
Are you a veteran of the U.S. armed forces?*	Yes	No
Do you have children or other people (excluding your spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you now and between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026?	Yes	No
At any time since you turned age 13, were you an orphan (no living biological or adoptive parent)?	Yes	No
At any time since you turned age 13, were you a ward of the court?	Yes	No
At any time since you turned age 13, were you in foster care?	Yes	No
Are you or were you a legally emancipated minor, as determined by a court in your state of residence?	Yes	No
Are you or were you in a legal guardianship with someone other than your parent or stepparent, as determined by a court in your state of residence?	Yes	No
At any time on or after July 1, 2024, were you unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?***	Yes	No

* Answer “Yes” (you are a veteran) if you (1) have engaged in active duty (including basic training) in the U.S. armed forces (military, naval, air, or space service) and were released under a condition other than dishonorable; (2) served full-time as a Reservist or member of the National Guard; or (3) were called to federal active duty. Also answer “Yes” if you are not a veteran now but will be one by June 30, 2026.

* Answer “No” (you are not a veteran) if you (1) have never engaged in active duty in the U.S. armed forces, (2) are currently a Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) student or a cadet or midshipman at a service academy, (3) are a National Guard or Reserves enlistee activated only for state or training purposes, or (4) were engaged in active duty in the U.S. armed forces but released under dishonorable conditions. Also answer “No” if you are currently serving in the U.S. armed forces and will continue to serve through June 30, 2026.

** You’ll be considered provisionally independent and will be allowed to fill out the FAFSA form as an independent student if you indicate that you are unaccompanied and homeless or at risk of being homeless on the FAFSA form for the first time and you don’t have a determination from an individual at an eligible agency. An individual at an eligible agency includes one of the following:

- Your high school or district homeless liaison or designee
- The director or designee of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving those experiencing homelessness
- The director or designee of a project supported by a federal TRIO program or a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant
- A financial aid administrator

If you answered “Yes” to one or more of the questions above:

Then for federal student aid purposes, you’re considered to be an independent student and will not be required to provide information about your parents on the FAFSA form.

If you answered “No” to every question:

Then for federal student aid purposes, you’re considered a dependent student, and you must provide information about your parents when you fill out the FAFSA form.