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FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID PURPOSES

ARE YOU DEPENDENT OR INDEPENDENT?

Most students entering college directly from high school are considered **dependent students**. This means that your parents are expected to contribute to your education expenses. If you are **independent**, on the FAFSA, you will only report your income and assets (and those of your spouse, if you are married).

Specific rules govern whether you are considered independent for the purposes of student financial aid. Take our test to determine your status.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is your starting point for most student financial assistance programs. Many states and schools also use the FAFSA as part of their application process for non-federal aid.

| For the 2010–2011 academic year, you’re an independent student IF at least one of the following applies to you <i>(Other criteria may apply.)</i> | TRUE | FALSE |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. You were born before January 1, 1987. | | |
| 2. You are married. | | |
| 3. You are or will be enrolled in a master’s or doctoral program (beyond a bachelor’s degree) during the 2010–2011 school year. | | |
| 4. You have children who receive more than half their support from you. | | |
| 5. You have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half their support from you and will continue to receive more than half their support from you through June 30, 2010. | | |
| 6. You are an orphan or ward of the court (or were a ward of the court until age 18). | | |
| 7. You are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces (“veteran” includes students who attended a U.S. service academy and were released under a condition other than dishonorable). | | |
| 8. You are currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training. | | |
| 9. At any time on or after July 1, 2008, your high school or school district homeless liaison determined that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless. | | |

Dependency Override

In special or unusual circumstances, the school’s financial aid administrator could change your status from dependent to independent if you provide documents supporting this change. The decision relies on the administrator’s best judgment.

Not an Option

Your parents may not simply say that they won’t financially support you through college for you to be classified an independent student.