



2018-2019 Independent Student Definition

The law governing the Federal Student Aid Programs is based on the premise that the family is the first source of the student's support and the law provides several criteria that decide if the student is considered independent of his or her parents for aid eligibility. A student who answers **YES** to any of the following criteria is considered independent:

- Were you born before January 1, 1995?
- As of today, are you married? Answer yes if separated, but not divorced.
- Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces or currently serving on active duty for purposes other than training?
- Do you have children or dependents other than your spouse who live with you and will receive more than 50% of their support from you between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019?
- At any time since you turned age 13, were both of your parents deceased (orphan), were you in foster care or were you a ward/dependent of the court?
- As determined by a court in your state of residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor?
- As determined by a court in your state of residence, are you or were you in legal guardianship to someone other than your parents?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2017 was it determined you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or at risk of being homeless? This determination can be made by a school district homeless liaison, the director (or designee) of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or the director (or designee) of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program.

There are **unusual situations** in which a financial aid administrator can exercise dependency overrides. Unusual situations that would be considered for further review include: parental abandonment, physical abuse, emotional abuse, substance abuse, the death of the student's custodial parent or other situations. *If you believe your circumstance warrants further evaluation, please provide the following:*

1. A signed statement by the student explaining the situation in detail.
2. A minimum of TWO letters (three preferred) from third parties who know the student's circumstances. At least one must be from a professional (teacher, high school counselor, member of the clergy, social worker, etc.). Others can be from family members or friends. These letters must fully explain the specific situation the student found themselves in, how that situation was rectified, where and with whom the student is now residing and how the student is being supported.
3. If applicable please provide:
 - a. A copy of the death certificate if custodial parent is deceased, and
 - b. Documentation showing the custodial relationship i.e. divorce decree, etc.

Your dependency status will be reviewed after receipt of **all** documents. You will be contacted by NMC email with the determination.

Non-Discrimination Policy Notice

Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, genetic information, height, weight, marital status or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities and admissions. nmc.edu/nondiscrimination

Submit to: **Northwestern Michigan College – Enrollment Services**

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