



EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Financial Aid

2026-2027 Unusual Circumstances Application

(Formerly: Dependency Override Application)

What is considered an Unusual Circumstance?

Unusual Circumstances are reviewed due to extreme circumstances such as documented abuse or abandonment by the parent. A Financial Aid Administrator may override the requirement for the parent information for such causes. Unusual Circumstances at Eastern are determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the situation, supporting documentation provided, and whether the situation is enough for a student to be considered independent.

Who is your parent for Financial Aid purposes?

A parent is your biological or adoptive parent. Grandparents, legal guardians, and foster parents are not considered parents, unless they have adopted you. If they have adopted you, you must complete the FAFSA with their information.

Am I Independent or Dependent?

The U.S. Congress established the following thirteen criteria/questions, in order to determine a student's dependency status. These criteria/questions are from **Step Three through Step Seven (Student)** of the **FAFSA Application**. If you are able to provide documentation for any of the questions, you may not need to submit this application.

- Where you born before January 1, 2003?
- As of the date you filed the FAFSA, were you married? (Answer 'Yes' if you are separated but not divorced.)
- At the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year, will you be working on a master's or doctoral program?
- Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training?
- Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?
- Do you now have or will you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027?
- Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and receive more than half of their support from you, now through June 30, 2027?
- At any time, since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you dependent or ward of the court?
- As determined by a court in your state or legal residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor?
- Does someone, other than your parent or stepparent have legal guardianship of you, as determined by a court in your state of legal residence?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2026, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2026, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2026, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

What conditions are considered for an Unusual Circumstance

- Left home due to an abusive or threatening environment
- Are abandoned by or estranged from their parents
- Have refugee or asylee status and are separated from their parents or their parents are displaced in a foreign country
- The student or custodial parent(s) is incarcerated and contact with the parents would pose a risk to the student
- Are otherwise unable to contact or locate their parents
- The student has been removed from the parent(s) residence by court order
- Other unusual or extraordinary circumstances, events or incidents, particularly ones related to any of the automatic conditions for independence listed on the FAFSA
- Other supporting documentation such as police reports or court orders

What conditions DO NOT merit a Unusual Circumstance

- Parents refuse to provide information on the FAFSA and/or for the Verification process.
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes.
- Parents refuse to contribute to a student's education (i.e., pay tuition/fees, etc.)
- A dependent student who demonstrates self-sufficiency.
- A student who does not wish to communicate with parents.
- A student previously considered independent for financial aid purposes, but is not meeting the 2026-2027 criteria.



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PURPOSE

An Unusual Circumstance at Eastern is determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the situation, the supporting documentation provided, and whether the situation is reason enough for a student to be considered independent rather, than dependent.

INSTRUCTIONS

If you have never appealed for independent status before, please complete this form and provide the information and documentation requested below. Failure to return this form within **two weeks** could result in denial of your request.

Note: Upon receipt of **all the required documentation**, your application will be submitted to the Unusual Circumstances Committee for review. If additional documentation is required, we will be notified you via your Eastern email. If your **appeal** is approved, your **FAFSA** will be processed as an **independent** student for this academic year. If it is **not approved**, you will be required to correct your FAFSA with parental information and a parent's signature.

A. Student Information

| | | |
|------------------------|--------|-------------|
| Name: | | Eastern ID: |
| Address: | | |
| City: | State: | Zip Code: |
| Telephone Number: | | |
| Student Date of Birth: | Email: | |

B. Unusual Circumstances Request

All unusual circumstance requests require the following documentation. Please be as specific as possible.

- A personal statement (preferably typed) with your signature and date, detailing your situation.
- Separate statements on letterhead from two adult professionals who can verify your circumstances. Adult professionals include clergy members, attorneys, school guidance counselors, medical doctors, mental health professionals, law enforcement officers, Department of Child and Family staff, and officers of the court.
- Legal or court documentation of abandonment, abuse, etc. as appropriate.
- A copy of your 2024 IRS Tax Return Transcript
- Copies of your 2024 W-2 forms if you worked, regardless of whether or not you filed taxes.
- Verification Worksheet
- Any additional documentation requested based upon your individual circumstance. **(Continued on the next page)**

C. Please answer the following questions:

1. How long have you been living on your own? _____
2. Regarding Parent (1) and Parent (2), when is the last time you:
 - a. Lived with (from month/year to month/year) Parent (1) _____ Parent (2) _____
 - b. Had contact with (month/year) Parent (1) _____ Parent (2) _____

Explain the nature of contact:

c. Where do your parents live? Parent (1) _____ Parent (2) _____

3. Who is currently supporting you?

Name: _____ Address: _____

- a. Describe nature of support provided.

4. When were you last claimed as an exemption on your parent(s) federal income tax return? _____

5. Do you own a car? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, who is responsible for the car payments and/or auto insurance payments?

☐ Self ☐ Parent (1) ☐ Parent (2) ☐ Other

D. Certification and Signature

By signing this application, I certify that all of the information reported on this application is complete and correct.

Student Signature

Date