

UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCE 2025-26 Dependency Change

Federal law assumes that the family has the primary responsibility for meeting the educational costs of students. Therefore, a student must meet certain federal criteria to qualify for financial aid as an independent student. If you do not meet one of the criteria listed on the FAFSA, you will be evaluated as a dependent student, meaning that your parents must provide income and asset information. If there are extraordinary circumstances that may warrant a re-evaluation of your dependency status, provide the following information so that the Financial Aid Office may make this determination.

A financial aid administrator may override a student's dependency status because of "other unusual circumstances" that exist in the family, which cause parents to be unable to assist the dependent student with his/her educational expenses. "Unusual circumstances" may include, but are not limited to:

- + Student has been a victim of domestic violence and no longer resides with parents;
- + Student has been part of an abusive family environment (e.g., sexual, physical or mental abuse);
- + Abandonment by parents (i.e., no contact for one year and no support for at least one year);
- **→** Incarceration or institutionalization of both parents; or
- → Death of both parents (or death of only parent in a single family household)

The following circumstances **DO NOT** merit a dependency override:

- **→** Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency;
- → Parents refuse to contribute to the student's education;
- + Parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification;
- + Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes

If you believe you have an unusual circumstance that would qualify you as independent from your parents, you are requested to complete the following:

- 1. Request for Change of Dependency (attached)
- 2. <u>Personal Letter</u> (attached) A letter stating your extenuating circumstances, what has caused you to become independent from your parents, when you became independent and how you have provided for your own necessities (shelter, food, clothing, transportation, medical care, etc.).
- 3. <u>Professional Letter</u> A letter on letterhead from a guidance counselor, teacher, coach, physician, social worker, clergy, or other individuals who have been involved in the circumstances in a professional capacity. All letters need to include a telephone number and address where the individual can be reached for follow-up questions.
- 4. <u>Reference Letters</u> (attached) Two reference letters from third parties (friend, aunt, uncle, siblings, grandparents, etc.) who personally have knowledge of your situation and who can verify your circumstances.
- 5. Signed copies of your 2023 and 2024 federal tax returns. If a tax return was not filed, submit a statement of nonfiling from the IRS.

This information will be used to make a decision. In some cases a personal interview with the Director of Financial aid may be necessary to finalize a determination.



2025-26 Unusual Circumstances – Personal Letter

Student Name	Date of Birth	Date of Birth		
Current Address	City/State/Zip			
EMAIL address				
I have lived at this address since: Month	Day Year			
Describe your current relationship (even if it is non-				
Provide the date and place of your last contact with	your parent(s)			
Provide information on how you have been supported amount of support that has been provided to you, and	ed (who you have been living with and for how long, the kind and any kind of income you have earned or will earn)			
Certification Statement: I certify that all of the information reported is true a the information requested is not supplied, my reque	nd complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if all of st will be denied.			
Student's Signature	Date			

Return this form and any attachments to:

Office of Financial Aid – East Texas Baptist University | One Tiger Drive, Marshall, TX 75670 | Phone: 903-923-2138 Email: financialaid@etbu.edu | Fax: 903-934-8120



2025-26 Unusual Circumstances – Reference Letter #1

Applicant's Name			
How long have you known the applicant?			
What is your relationship to the applicant	?		
To your knowledge, does the applicant red	ceive any financial support from p	parents? Yes No	
Please provide a detailed statement that exto change his/her dependency status for fi parents, why they are unable to contribute applicant's situation as out of the ordinary	nancial aid purposes. Include infecto the applicant's education, and	ormation regarding the applicant's relative any additional information that will d	ationship with his/her
I certify that the information reported is tr further information or clarification.	rue and complete to the best of my	knowledge. I understand that I may	be contacted for
Address			
Name of Reference		Relationship	
Signature of Reference		Date	
	Cit	y/State/Zip	
Rest time to contact you	Work Phone	Home Phone	



2025-26 Unusual Circumstances – Reference Letter #2

Applicant's Name		
How long have you known the applicant?		
What is your relationship to the applicant?	_	
To your knowledge, does the applicant receive any fir	nancial support from parents? Yes	No
Please provide a detailed statement that explains your to change his/her dependency status for financial aid parents, why they are unable to contribute to the appliapplicant's situation as out of the ordinary. You may	ourposes. Include information regarding the cant's education, and any additional inform	ne applicant's relationship with his/her nation that will distinguish the
I certify that the information reported is true and computer information or clarification.	plete to the best of my knowledge. I under	stand that I may be contacted for
Address		
Name of Reference	Relationship	
Signature of Reference	Date	
	City/State/Zip	
Best time to contact you	Work Phone	Home Phone