

Reporting Same-sex Marriage on the FAFSASM

Does the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSASM) consider a same-sex marriage to be a marriage?

Yes, if the couple is legally married. Consistent with the Supreme Court decision holding Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional, same-sex couples (both the student and the student's parents) must report their marital status as married if they were legally married in a state or other jurisdiction (foreign country), without regard to where the couple resides or where the student will be attending school.

The above applies to all 2014–15 FAFSAs and all 2013–14 FAFSAs first being submitted on or after December 13, 2013.

For 2013–14 FAFSAs first submitted before December 13, 2013, applicants have the option to change the student's or parent's marital status, but only if the student or parent was legally married under state law at the time the FAFSA was originally submitted but he or she could not respond as married based on prior DOMA interpretations.

If my parents are of the same sex, how do I respond to the parent section of the FAFSA, where it refers to my “mother” and “father?”

Regardless of whether your married parents are of the same sex or opposite sex, both parents should provide separate information on the FAFSA. (Find out who counts as your parent at StudentAid.gov/fafsa-parent.)

Here's some guidance on what to do depending on which FAFSA you're filling out:

- 2014–15 FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov: Instructions will be updated effective Jan. 1, 2014. However, changes to the actual FAFSA questions to use gender-neutral terminology for married parents (“Parent 1” and “Parent 2” instead of “mother” and “father”) will not be made until April 2014.
- 2014–15 paper FAFSA: Instructions on the 2014–15 paper FAFSA reflect the new definition of married; and the FAFSA questions refer to Parent 1 and Parent 2.
- 2013–14 FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov: Instructions will be updated effective Jan. 1, 2014. However, changes to the actual FAFSA questions to use gender-neutral

terminology (Parent 1 and Parent 2) for married parents will not be made on the 2013–14 FAFSA. Simply ignore the question labels. It does not matter which parent completes which set of questions.

- 2013–14 paper FAFSA: The instructions and questions on the paper 2013–14 FAFSA reflect the old definition of marriage (before the Supreme Court decision). Again, ignore the question labels as indicated above.

Where can I get more information about filling out the FAFSA?

Visit StudentAid.gov/fafsa to learn

- what information you'll be providing on the FAFSA,
- when to file the application,
- how to determine whether you'll need to provide parent information,
- who counts as your parent on the FAFSA, and
- what happens after you submit your FAFSA.

Fill out the FAFSA for FREE at
www.fafsa.gov

Learn about federal student aid: StudentAid.gov.

Ask questions: studentaid@ed.gov or 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).