



## VAULT ADVISOR FAQ

### THE BASICS | What is Vault Advisor?

The Vault Advisor tool uses a 7-minute survey, algorithms and calculators that help you get a real grip on all of your student loans. Vault Advisor simplifies the 70+ repayment scenarios and helps employees find the best repayment plan through a web tool and live one-on-one advising service. The tool allows you to navigate the various federal repayment options, including insight on the impact of paying extra per month towards your loans or if refinancing is a good choice for you. We even provide you with a step-by-step walkthrough guide to put your plan into action. Whether you want to lower your payments or pay your loans off faster, we can help.

### THE BASICS | How does Vault Advisor help with repayment?

Vault Advisor simplifies the 70+ repayment scenarios and helps employees find the best repayment plan through a web tool and live one-on-one advising service. The tool allows you to navigate the various federal repayment options, including insight on the impact of paying extra per month towards your loans or if refinancing is a good choice for you.

### THE BASICS | How does Vault Advisor help with college planning/paying for college?

While we don't provide a platform to help with paying for college, below is some information that should offer some insight.

The first step will be for you and your child to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This is the application the federal government requires students to complete in order to receive federal aid, including certain grants. You can complete the application here: <https://fafsa.ed.gov>.

While your FAFSA application is processing, both you and your child should look into applying for the countless scholarships available.

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Fastweb is a great resource that allows you to search their scholarship database for free. Once you complete the FAFSA and receive your financial aid package, next steps are figuring out what aid to accept and how to cover any differences. At a high level, the order in which a student/borrower should accept financial aid is (from first to last):

- Scholarships and grants
- Federal subsidized loans
- Federal unsubsidized loans
- If the financial needs for college are not covered after the above three options, then a larger conversation is needed to discuss additional options.

These include, in no particular order:

- Private loans in your daughter's name,
- Parent Plus loans in your name for your daughter's education
- Private loans in your name
- Family contributions.

If you decide to apply for private loans, there are multiple options. Information to consider:

- The interest rate for private loans is dependent on the financial profile of the applicants and can possibly be as high as double digits.
- In order to be approved for a private loan, the applicants must be approved by the underwriting qualifications of the lender. These qualifications are proprietary, and while you may be denied by one private lender, you could be approved by another.
- Repayment may begin as soon as the loan is disbursed. Other options include making interest-only payments or fully deferring payments until graduation. These options vary based on lender.
- FAFSA application not required.
- If you all decide to take out private loans, your child may qualify in his or her name only, based on his or her financial history. This means that he or she would be solely responsible for paying off the loan, in the eyes of the lender. If your child does not qualify for a private loan by themselves, it is possible for you to co-sign on the loan. In this scenario, all parties on the loan would be considered responsible for the loan. This means that if, your child stops paying the loan, you would become responsible for the debt.

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An alternative to private loans is Parent Plus loans issued by the federal government. Parent Plus loans are loans that you would take out for your children's educational expenses. Therefore, you would be the primary borrower. A few things to note about Parent Plus loans:

- The interest rate for Parent Plus loans is 7.6% fixed rate for the 2017-2018 academic year
- In order to qualify, you must not have an adverse credit history, including any foreclosures, bankruptcy discharges, tax lien, etc.  
Note: this is not the same as not having a low credit score.
- Repayment may begin as soon as the loan is disbursed. You may defer payments until your daughter graduates school, but interest would accrue on the balance during the deferment period.
- Must apply yearly for FAFSA
- Parent Plus loans have very few repayment options, when compared to Federal Loans your child might receive, if you end up having trouble meeting the minimum monthly payment. Once your child graduates college, there is no way to place Parent Plus loans in his or her name without refinancing them with a private company. However, Parent Plus loans also have no loan limits. This means that you are able to borrow as much money needed to cover your child's cost of attendance, as well as for any other children that may attend college in the future.

If you do decide that a Parent Plus loan is something you would consider, but are denied for a Parent Plus loan due to adverse credit history, your child should contact the financial aid office and request higher loan limit for Direct Unsubsidized Loan.

Deciding between private loans or Parent Plus loans is a personal family decision. What makes sense for you family is dependent on many factors. Of course, family contributions outside of federal/private loans is another factor to consider.

### **The Basics | Does Vault Advisor work on mobile browsers?**

Yes, Vault Advisor is optimized for mobile browsers.

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### Sign Up | How do I set up my account?

Create your account with the login instructions provided to you. Next, complete your Vault profile, adding your federal and/or private loans. Then, you can view or edit any of your loan information to make sure all of your data is correct. If everything looks good, you can view and select the repayment option that works best for you, download a step-by-step guide that answers any questions and helps you put your plan into action. You can see the impact of paying extra per month or decide if refinancing is the best choice for you.

### Sign Up | How long does it take to complete Vault Advisor?

Completing your Vault Advisor account takes less than 7 minutes. We ask simple questions (such as your marital status, family size and income) in order to provide the most accurate information to help crush your student loans.

### Sign Up | How does a family member set up an account?

One of the benefits of creating a Vault Advisor account is that you can invite your immediate family members to create their own Vault Advisor account.

To send an invite, simply log into your Vault Advisor account and click on the ellipse more options icon at the top right of the screen. From there, you'll be given the option to send invites. Fill out all of the required information and then an invite will be sent out to your family member.

Please note, not all employers allow family members to be invited. If you cannot invite a family member with the directions above, please reach out to your HR team.

### Login | Where do I login?

To log into your account please visit your company's Vault landing page or click [here](#).

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### Login | How do I login?

We're excited to have you on the team of loan crushers. If you're having issues logging into your account, try the tips below:

- Did you accept your invite? You'll need to accept your Vault Advisor invite and create a password, before logging into your account.
- Are you using the correct email? You may need to use your work email address or a specific email provided by your employer to access your account.
- Are you on the right page? Make sure you have the right login page, which can be found [here](#).
- Don't remember your password? If you don't remember your password you can reset it via email [here](#).

If you have any issues with setup or questions, remember we're here to help. Just email [genius@vault.co](mailto:genius@vault.co). That's it.

### Login | How do I reset my password?

Don't remember your password? If you don't remember your password you can reset it via email [here](#).

If you have any issues with setup or questions, remember we're here to help. Just email [genius@vault.co](mailto:genius@vault.co).

### My Loan Info | Does Vault Advisor help with private student loans?

Yes, within your Vault Advisor account, you'll be able to add your private loans and see the impact of paying extra per month on those loans or determine if refinancing is a good option for you.

### My Loan Info | Does Vault Advisor help with public/federal student loans?

Yes, within your Vault Advisor account, you'll be able to import your federal

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loans and see the different repayment plans you qualify for. You can also see the impact of paying extra per month on those loans or determine if refinancing is a good option for you.

### **My Loan Info | Does Vault Advisor help with public/federal student loans?**

Yes, within your Vault Advisor account, you'll be able to import your federal loans and see the different repayment plans you qualify for. You can also see the impact of paying extra per month on those loans or determine if refinancing is a good option for you.

### **My Loan Info | Does Vault Advisor help with non-US student loans?**

Unfortunately, Vault Advisor only works with US based federal and private student loans. If you have any questions about your non-US loans, you should reach out to your servicer.

### **My Loan Info | How do I import my student loan data from the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)?**

When logged in to Vault, after you've setup your profile data, you'll be directed to the screen titled "Retrieve Federal Student Loan Information" where you will enter your NSLDS username and password. NSLDS is a national database on all loan information, and by entering in your login information into our tool, it lets us download all your loan details into our system.

If you already have a username and password, but have forgotten one or both, retrieving them is pretty easy.

To access your username:

- Go to <https://www.nsls.ed.gov/npas/pas/pub/ForgotUsername>
- Select either option 1) "Email" to have your username retrieved via email or option #2) "challenge questions" if you don't have access to the email you used to sign up with.
- Follow the on-screen instructions to complete the process.

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To reset your password:

- Go to <https://www.nsls.ed.gov/npas/pas/pub/ForgotPassword>
- Selection option 1) “Email” to have your password reset via email or option 2) “challenge questions” if you don’t have access to the email you used to sign up with.
- Follow the on-screen instructions to complete the process
- Some people don’t have a NSLDS account set up, is it possible that’s the case for you? If you haven’t created a username with NSLDS before, you can go to this link <https://www.nsls.ed.gov/npas/index.htm> and click on the “Create an FSA ID” tab. Then follow the on-screen instructions at this link to create a profile.

Once you’ve created an account with NSLDS, you can go back to the Vault tool to download all your loan data and keep moving through the tool.

The NSLDS website often encounters issues unrelated to us. If you’re sure that you’re entering your username and password correctly, but you still cannot import your student loans, please try again at a later time and/or with a different browser.

Still experiencing issues? Reach out to us at [genius@vault.co](mailto:genius@vault.co).

### My Loan Info | Do I qualify for student loan forgiveness?

Total loan forgiveness options are only available for federal debt and only through 2 ways: Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) or Income-Driven Repayment Forgiveness. We’ll discuss these 2 options further below.

#### Public Service Loan Forgiveness

PSLF is a federal program that allows your federal student loan debt to be forgiven if you:

- Make 120 months (10 years) of qualifying payments
- Be on an income-driven repayment plan such as REPAYE, IBR or PAYE
- Work for a qualifying non-profit or government agency during the 10 years

Please note, PSLF is an all-or-nothing program. This means that if you do not complete the 10 years of non-profit/government work, then the entire amount of your student loans plus any accrued interest will be due.

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### Plan Based Forgiveness

Income-Driven repayment forgiveness allows your federal student loan debt to be forgiven if you:

- Make 20-25 years, depending on plan, of qualifying payments
- Be on an income-driven repayment plan, such as REPAYE, IBR or PAYE, for the full 20-25 year forgiveness period
- Stay on the same repayment plan for the full term, without switching plans.
- Please note, any amount of debt forgiven by the government will be considered income by the IRS and will be taxed accordingly.

### Teacher Loan Forgiveness

If you're a teacher at a Title I school, you can also have a portion of your debt forgiven through the Teacher Loan Forgiveness (TLF) program. Teacher Loan Forgiveness (TLF) is a federal program that will provide up to:

- \$5,000 for teaching any subject
- \$17,500 for teaching secondary math, secondary science, or any level special education

This program is an all or nothing program, in order to receive these benefits, you must teach in an eligible low-income school for five consecutive years.

Log into your Vault Advisor account to learn more about these programs and your qualifications.

### My Loan Info | What do I do if my loans are in default?

If your loans are still in default, your next steps on your loans will be to get them out of default by going through the rehabilitation process. In order to start the rehabilitation process, you will need to reach out to your loan servicer.

Once your loans are rehabilitated, you'll be able to explore and decide on the right repayment plan for you.

### My Loan Info | What Is loan consolidation?

Consolidating loans can help to lower student loan monthly payments if a borrower does not qualify for an income-driven repayment plan. By combining



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all the individual loans into one, loan consolidation allows borrowers to extend the repayment time 10 years and even up to 30 years. Doing this lowers your monthly payment, but increases the total repayment amount.

### My Loan Info | What is refinancing? And, do I qualify?

Refinancing is a great way to lower your interest rate on your student loans. When you refinance, you ask a new company to pay off your current loan balance. Then, you would begin to make payments with the new company.

If you were to refinance, it's possible you'd have a larger or smaller monthly payment, depending on the length of the loan term and the interest rate you qualified for. If you'd like to look into whether you'd qualify for refinancing, rates can be anywhere from 2.5% to 7%. The rate offered will depend on your financial profile, what type of loan (fixed vs variable), and the term length (5-20 years).

There are three main things the refinance companies look at when checking eligibility:

- Income above \$24k
- Credit score above 680
- Reasonable amount of savings and/or investments

Here are the companies we recommend as of now if you want to learn more:

- [Citizens One](#)
- [Laurel Road](#)
- [Credible](#) (marketplace)

For Citizens One, Laurel Road, and Credible, this will not affect your credit. They have a “soft” application that takes less than 4 minutes so you can get a quote without it impacting your credit score.

Please note, if you do choose to refinancing your federal student loans, you will lose all federal protections, including income-driven repayment plans and forgiveness. Therefore, if you look into refinancing, I'd strongly recommend you look at it for your private loans only.

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### **My Loan Info | What is the difference between fixed vs. variable interest rates?**

Deciding between a variable interest rate and a fixed rate loan is a great question. I'll provide you some more information on both types, but at the end of the day, only you will know what works best for your risk tolerance and financial situation.

Fixed rate loans are loans where the interest rate will be the same for the entire loan term. This means that your minimum payment will never change. You'll be able to budget much easier, knowing that your minimum monthly payment will be the same throughout the life of the loan.

Variable rate loans are loans where the interest rate changes if the reference rate changes. Many refinancing companies use the 1-month LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rate) to determine their variable rate, which they update monthly. This means that it'll always be possible for your minimum monthly payment to change every month. But if the reference rate stays low, you could see significant savings over the length of the loan. Additionally, there's no limit to how much the reference rate can increase, but some companies do have a maximum APR on their loans, check with your servicer to see if that's true.

Since 2009 the 1-month LIBOR rate has remained very low, but unfortunately, we do not know if interest rates will increase or decrease in the future.

If you're still unsure, certain companies allow you to switch from a variable rate to fixed rate loan, and vice versa, without any fees. While, you may be allowed to switch, the new APR will be based on prevailing interest rates and your financial profile at the time of your change request. This means that the new interest rate could be higher than what you are currently being offered. Again, check with your new potential servicer to see if that's the case with them.

### **My Payments | What is Auto-Debit?**

Auto-debit is a great way to saving money and time on your student loans. Most loan servicers provide a .25% interest rate reduction if you sign up to pay your monthly payment via auto-debit. This interest rate reduction can help save you time and money over the course of your loan repayment and is something we encourage.

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Note: you can ask your loan servicer to change your due date to better align with your payroll, if that would help you manage signing up for auto-debit.

### **My Family | How do I invite a family member?**

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To send an invite, simply log into your Vault Advisor account and click on the ellipse more options icon at the top right of the screen. From there, you'll be given the option to send invites. Fill out all the required information and an invite will be sent out to your family member.

Please note, not all employers allow family members to be invited. If you cannot invite a family member with the directions above, please reach out to your HR team.

### **My Profile | How do I find my AGI (Adjusted Gross Income)?**

Depending on what form you used, your AGI (Adjusted Gross Income) can be found on your most recent tax return here:

- Form 1040, Line 38
- Form 1040A, Line 21
- Form 1040EZ, Line 4

Note: you'll want to round this amount to the nearest whole dollar.

### **My Profile | How do I find the combined AGI (Adjusted Gross Income) for my household?**

We ask for both your spouse's and your income because there are several repayment plans that use income as a factor for your monthly payment.

If you each file jointly instead of individually, enter your best approximation of both of your individual AGIs (Adjusted Gross Income).

### **More Help | How do I get more help?**

If you didn't see the answer to your question, reach out to us at [genius@vault.co](mailto:genius@vault.co).



**Vault**