



Student Loan Tips

What Is a Cosigner and why you might need one for a Student Loan?

Learn what a cosigner is, how they help students qualify for private loans, and what both students and cosigners should know before applying.

By **Jen O'Donald** / June 5, 2025

4 min read

When you're applying for a private student loan — especially as an undergraduate — there's a good chance you'll come across the term **"cosigner"**. But what exactly does a cosigner do, and why might you need one?

Here's a quick breakdown of everything you need to know.

What Is a Cosigner?

A **cosigner** is someone — usually a parent, guardian, or trusted adult — who agrees to take equal responsibility for a loan. That means if you can't make your payments, the cosigner is legally responsible for repaying the loan.

For private student loans, a cosigner acts as a **credit backer** — helping you qualify for better rates or get approved if you don't have sufficient credit history or income.

Why Do Most Students Need a Cosigner?

Most undergraduate students are just starting out financially and don't have the credit score, income, or borrowing history needed to get approved on their own. Private student lenders want to see a proven ability to repay — and that's where a cosigner comes in.

At GradBridge, most students will need a cosigner — especially because we focus on near-approval borrowers who narrowly missed approval with a traditional lender.

A strong cosigner can:

- Improve your chances of approval
- Help you qualify for a lower rate
- Provide reassurance to the lender

Who Can Be a Cosigner?

Cosigners are typically:

- Parents or legal guardians
- Grandparents or extended family

- Trusted family friends

To be eligible, a cosigner usually needs:

- **A strong credit history**
- **Steady income**
- A willingness to take on legal responsibility for repayment

What Should You and Your Cosigner Know?

Cosigning is a serious financial commitment. Before moving forward, be sure to:

- Have an open and honest conversation
- Set expectations for communication and repayment
- Understand how missed payments can impact both your credit scores
- Explore repayment plans together

GradBridge makes the process transparent and simple — so both student and cosigner know what to expect every step of the way.

Bottom Line: A cosigner can be the key to unlocking a private student loan when federal aid or savings aren't enough. If you've been declined by a traditional lender, GradBridge gives you a second chance — and your cosigner helps make that possible.