



Student ID Number: _____

2016-2017 DEPENDENCY APPEAL FORM

Last name	First Name	M.I.	Social Security Number
Address (include apt. no.)		Date of Birth	
City	State	Zip Code	Phone Number (include area Code)

Federal regulations are based on the idea that students (and their parents or spouse) have the primary responsibility for paying for their post secondary education. If you are considered a dependent student according to the federal aid definition, your aid eligibility is determined by using your parent's income and asset information in addition to your information. Dependent students are required by law to provide parental information and signatures to be considered for financial aid (STUDENT GUIDE 2016-2017).

The federal definition of an independent student is that at least one of the following apply to you:

- 24 years of age or born before January 1, 1993.
- Pursuing a master's or doctorate program.
- Legally married as of today (Common law marriage is acceptable only with a certificate of common law marriage).
- Have children that **YOU** support more than 50% from your own resources (If you have a child but can not document that you provide more than 50% support for the child, you will not meet the definition of independence).
- Have legal dependents that live with you and who you support more than 50%, now and through June 30, 2017 (Claiming a person on your tax return does not meet the definition of a legal dependent).
- An orphan, both parents are deceased, or ward of the court (were a ward of the court until 18 years of age).
- Veteran of the U. S. Armed Forces (and do not have a dishonorable release).
- Currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training.
- At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?
- Are you or were you an emancipated minor as determined by a court in your state of legal residence?
- Are you or were you in legal guardianship as determined by a court in your state of legal residence?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2015, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2015, 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 was homeless?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2015, 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?

The Higher Education Act allows a financial aid administrator to make dependency overrides on a case-by-case basis for students with unusual circumstances. If the administrator judges that an override is appropriate, he/she must document the unusual circumstances. However, none of the conditions listed below, singly or in combination, qualify as unusual circumstances or merit a dependency override:

- 1) Parents refuse to contribute to the student's education;
- 2) Parents are unwilling to provide information on the application or for verification;
- 3) Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes;
- 4) Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency.

Unusual circumstances do include an abusive family environment or abandonment by parents and may cause any of the above conditions. In such cases a dependency override might be warranted and must be documented.

Occasionally, due to unusual circumstances, a student can be considered an independent student. A financial aid administrator will take the following unusual circumstances into consideration:

- Both of your parents are incarcerated or deceased.
- Your parents reside in another country for at least six months and cannot be reached by normal means of communication.
- One parent is deceased and the other is incarcerated.
- You are a recent refugee, granted such status by the U. S. Immigration Status.
- Other reasons will be taken into consideration, but remember the financial aid administrator will not automatically do this and the decision is final. This decision cannot be appealed to any school or agency including the U. S. Department of Education.

To petition for a waiver of the federal regulations, please gather the appropriate documentation of your situation, including the items listed below. Then, submit all required documentation to the Financial Aid Office.

1. A copy of each of your 2015 W-2 forms.
2. A copy of your 2015 federal tax return transcript.
3. Verification of your 2016 year-to-date income, taxable and nontaxable.
4. A typed detailed letter explaining why you believe you should be considered an independent student.
5. Provide a copy of your current lease agreement.
6. Up to three (minimum of one) reference letters explaining your unusual circumstances. Use the 2016-2017 DEPENDENCY APPEAL REFERENCE FORM.
7. FAFSA completed with the student's information and signature.

NOTE: No action will be taken on your application unless you present the documents requested.

When all the required documents have been received, a financial aid administrator will review your request and, if warranted, override your dependency status on the FAFSA. You must provide documentation to the satisfaction of the financial aid administrator that you are truly self-supporting for him/her to override your dependency status. In general, you will be expected to document sufficient income, usually \$10,300 or more for 2015, to establish self-sufficiency.

THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE INDEPENDENT FOR FINANCIAL AID PURPOSES.

My signature below certifies that I have attached the appropriate documentation and that all information provided is true. I agree to provide additional documentation if requested. I understand that the penalty for providing false or misleading information is \$20,000 fine, a prison sentence, or both. I understand that the dependency override decision does not remain in affect from one year to another. The school must approve an override appeal on a year-to-year basis and may deny the request for any given year.

I also understand that just because my parents do not support me, that I no longer reside in their house, my parents do not claim me on their tax return, my parents and I do not get along, or my parents refuse to pay for my college education DOES NOT warrant the financial aid office to override the federal definition of dependency. Also, living with and supporting a person does not make that person my legal dependent. As of the Higher Education Act of 1992, a financial aid administrator does have the authority to override a student's default dependency determination, but only in unusual circumstances and with proper documentation.

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

For Office Use Only

_____ Approved under professional judgment

_____ Denied under professional judgment

Reasons:

Financial Aid Professional _____ Date _____

