



## DEPENDENCY STATUS APPEAL STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Students who are dependent for federal student aid purposes must provide parent information on the federal financial aid application (FAFSA). Federal financial aid regulations determine which students are considered dependent and independent. Any student who is not considered independent under the statutory definition is automatically considered dependent and must provide parent information. In **extraordinary and documented** cases, a financial aid administrator may override a student's dependency status for the purpose of applying for financial aid. The student must be unable to obtain parent information due to extenuating circumstances.

**The following circumstances, individually or in combination, do not qualify as extraordinary circumstances meriting dependency override consideration:**

- 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.
- Student demonstrates total financial self-sufficiency
- Student does not live with parents

**Extraordinary circumstances may include:**

- Abandonment by parents (e.g. no contact and no support for one year or longer)
- An abusive family environment that threatens the student's health or safety
- The student is unable to locate the parents
- Incarceration or institutionalization of both parents for an extended period

**To appeal your dependency status due to unusual and extenuating circumstances, you must provide the Financial Aid & Scholarship Department a typed detailed letter addressing each of the following items:**

1. Identify the location of each of your biological parents. If whereabouts for one or both parents are unknown, explain when and how this came to be.
2. Describe the last time you had contact with each biological parent-when, where, and the nature of the contact.
3. Describe in detail the extraordinary circumstances that caused the break in the relationship between you and each biological parent. Describe the unusual circumstances that prevent you from filing the FAFSA with parental information. Explain why you cannot obtain parental information.
4. Describe how you have been self-supporting:
  - a. When did you start meeting your expenses without parental support?
  - b. How have you provided for yourself?
5. Sign and date your statement.
6. Attach to your statement, any additional information to support your appeal such as a court, police or other public records to help document your unusual and extenuating circumstances.

**In addition to your letter, you must submit a second letter from a third party professional who is familiar with your situation.** This third party professional is one who can corroborate the facts you present in your letter. Examples of third party professionals include a teacher, counselor, clergyperson, social worker, etc. Please see the attached instructions for third party professional letter. Please give the instructions to the professional that will be writing the 3<sup>rd</sup> party letter.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at (818) 677-4085.



## Dependency Status Appeal Form Third Party Professional Letter Instructions

*(Letter must be typed on company letterhead from the professional's place of business)*

Students who are dependent for federal student aid purposes must provide parent information on the federal financial aid application (FAFSA). Federal financial aid regulations determine which students are considered dependent and independent. Any student who is not considered independent under the statutory definition is automatically considered dependent and must provide parent information. In **extraordinary and documented** cases, a financial aid administrator may override a student's dependency status for the purpose of applying for financial aid. The student must be unable to obtain parent information due to extenuating circumstances.

Documentation of extraordinary circumstances must include a letter from a third-party professional that knows the student's situation. Examples of a third-party professional include a teacher, counselor, medical authority, member of the clergy, government agency, or court. Note that family members and friends do not qualify for this purpose. The letter must be on letterhead from the professional's place of business, and **must include the professional's signature, professional title, contact information, and the date.**

The following circumstances, individually or in combination, **do not** qualify as extraordinary circumstances meriting dependency override consideration:

- 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.
- Student demonstrates total financial self-sufficiency
- Student does not live with parents

Extraordinary circumstances may include:

- Abandonment by parents (e.g. no contact and no support for one year or longer)
- An abusive family environment that threatens the student's health or safety
- The student is unable to locate the parents
- Incarceration or institutionalization of both parents for an extended period

Please note that the third-party professional letter is not a letter of recommendation, therefore, good grades and other accomplishments are not relevant to this process. This letter is to explain what you know of the relationship between the student and the parents, and the extraordinary circumstances that prohibit the student from filing a FAFSA with a parent. Please include any information that you feel best describes the student's situation. The following is a list of information that **MUST** be included in your letter:

1. What is your relationship to the student?
2. How long have you known the student?
3. When was the last time the student lived with and/or received financial support from a parent?
4. When was the last time the student had contact with **each** parent?
5. The whereabouts of **each** biological parent (even if parents are separated). If whereabouts for one or both parents are unknown, explain when and how this came to be.
6. What are the extenuating circumstances that prevent the student from filing the FAFSA with a parent?
7. Any knowledge of the relationship between the student and **each** parent.
8. How has the student provided for himself or herself without parental support?
9. Your handwritten signature, professional title, contact information, and the date.