

Dependency Override Policy

Students who do not meet the automatic independent student qualifiers for federal financial assistance, but who are truly self-supporting and independent, will be given the opportunity to prove their status and have their applications reconsidered for a dependency override. Dependency overrides will be considered on a case by case basis only upon the student's request.

Guiding Principles

- A dependency status override must not be based solely on a student not residing with his/her parent(s).
- A dependency status override cannot be based on a parent's unwillingness to contribute to the cost of the student's education. Financial aid eligibility is based on the family's ability to contribute towards the cost of education, not their willingness to pay.
- Letters from family members, friends or neighbors are not considered acceptable third party documentation.

Process

Any student who requests that he/she be considered to be an independent student must speak to or meet with the Director of Student Financial Assistance (DSFA) or designee for counseling. Options for providing documentation will be discussed in this session. It is the student's responsibility to provide any documentation that the DSFA or designee requires as well as to contact third parties and have documentation sent to the Office of Student Financial Assistance.

Acceptable Documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- Notes from interview with the financial assistance administrator
- Signed, dated statement explaining why you feel you should be considered independent. Describe the circumstances that led to you living independently from your parent(s). Provide information about where you have lived and worked to support yourself since you left your parent(s).
- If student is tax filer, signed, dated copies of the student's federal income tax returns for the most recent 2 years
- If student is not a tax filer, signed, dated copies of non-tax filing statements for the most recent 2 years
- If parent(s) is/are tax filers, signed, dated copies of the parental federal income tax returns for the most recent 2 years

- If student is a car owner, signed, dated copy of car title and car insurance policy
- Signed, dated proof of health insurance
- Signed, dated copy of house/apartment lease and/or rent receipts for the student's living arrangement
- Signed, dated statement(s) from a disinterested third party or parties, such as the police, high school guidance counselor or administrator, social worker, minister or other respected community leader who has first hand, long-term knowledge of the student's circumstances.

Individual determinations of dependency status for federal student aid programs must be made in a manner consistent with institutional policies regarding the awarding of all need-based financial aid, including federal and state aid. Students deemed independent for federal student aid generally must also be independent for state and institutional aid.