

**Dependency Appeal  
2011-2012**

Students classified as dependent may petition to be reclassified as independent based on documented adverse family circumstances. The criteria used to determine a student's dependency status for federal financial aid purposes are established by the U.S. Department of Education. If you can answer yes to any one of the following questions, you will automatically be considered an independent student and will not need to file an appeal:

1. Were you born before January 1, 1988?
2. At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased? Answer yes, for biological or adoptive parents, even if you are now adopted.
3. At any time since you turned age 13, were you in foster care? Answer yes even if you are no longer in foster care as of today.
4. At any time since you turned age 13, were you declared a dependent or ward of the court? Answer yes even if you are no longer a dependent or ward of the court as of today. For federal student aid purposes, a ward of the court is not someone who is incarcerated.
5. Are you or were you an emancipated minor as determined by the court in your state of legal residence? Answer no if you are still a minor and the court order is no longer in effect or the court's decision was not in effect at the time you became an adult.
6. Are you or were you in legal guardianship as determined by a court in your state of legal residence? Answer no if the court order is no longer in effect or was not in effect at the time you became an adult.
7. At any time on or after July 1, 2010, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless?
8. At any time on or after July 1, 2010, 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?
9. At any time on or after July 1, 2010, 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?

If you do not meet one of the above conditions, but still feel there are circumstances that warrant being considered independent of your parents, you must complete this form and provide the appropriate supporting documentation required for your situation. The following are examples of some special circumstances that could be considered for an appeal and required documentation:

<b>Your parents are incarcerated.</b>	<b>Documentation of incarceration</b>
<b>You have left home due to an abusive family environment.</b>	<b>Court documentation or police report(s) and letter from a counselor or other professional source*</b>
<b>You do not know where your parents are and are unable to contact them (and you have <u>not</u> been adopted).</b>	<b>Letter from high school guidance counselor and letter from one other professional source*</b>
<b>Your supporting parent is deceased and you have no contact with your surviving parent.</b>	<b>Copy of death certificate and letter or document from one professional source*</b>

\*The following are suggestions for acceptable professional sources: Minister, Doctor, Attorney, Counselor/Therapist, Teacher/Professor, Employer/Supervisor, University administrator, or Caseworker. (Generally, letters from parents, friends, or roommates are not acceptable).

Any letter submitted as documentation should be on letterhead stationery, if appropriate, and should include the following:

- The length of time and the nature of the writer's relationship to you
- The reason why you cannot provide your parents' information on the FAFSA
- The writer's signature, address and telephone number

PLEASE NOTE: Upon receipt of your documentation, it may be necessary to request additional information to clarify or supplement information already submitted. You will be notified if additional information is needed.

Not all situations are considered a special circumstance. The following situations, on their own, would not be considered through appeal:

- Your parents do not want to provide their information on your FAFSA
- Your parents refuse to contribute to your college expenses
- Your parents do not claim you as a dependent on their income taxes
- You do not live with your parents

If you feel you are eligible to appeal your status after reviewing the above information, please complete the next two pages.



