



Financial Aid Office  
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## Unusual Circumstance Request for Independent Status

UM ID#: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name, First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DAPEAL 2425

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

**This request is for attendance beginning (circle term): Aut 2024/ Spring 2025/ Summer 2025**

The Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1992 clearly states which students shall be considered independent of parental support for educational costs. These rules are explained on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If you do not qualify under those rules, the Financial Aid Administrator may consider, under professional judgment, exceptional circumstances that would allow a student to be given independent status. Under the HEA Sec 480 (d)(9), the FAFSA Simplification Act incorporated additional unusual circumstances to consider when a student is unable to contact a parent or where contact with parent poses a risk to such student.

Per federal regulations, the following are situations are NOT considered an unusual circumstance:

- a) Parents don't want to provide information on the FAFSA or verification;
- b) Parents don't feel it is their responsibility to provide financial assistance for college, career school or trade school;
- c) Parents no longer claim child as a dependent for income tax purposes; or
- d) Student no longer lives at home and/or student demonstrates total self-sufficiency.

Therefore, if the reasons above are the only circumstance, then you are not an independent student and your parent(s)/contributor(s) *must* include their information on your FAFSA. Update your FAFSA at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov). However, you can request unsubsidized Direct Loans only if you cannot obtain their information.

**REASON FOR APPEAL:** The FAFSA requires parent information unless you meet an exception to be considered an independent student. **Exceptions are made only when adequate documentation of dire extenuating circumstances exists.** Extenuating circumstances are generally defined by students' inability to have contact with their parents.

Some examples are:

- a) Student has been abandoned by or estranged from their parent(s) and has not been adopted.
- b) Student left home due to an abusive situation.
- c) Student has been legally granted refugee or asylee status.
- d) Student is incarcerated or parent(s) are incarcerated.
- e) Student is a victim of human trafficking as described in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

**DAPEAL=R**

**Please answer the following:**

Identify the location of each of your parents. If your parent(s) are deceased, attach a copy of their death certificate or public obituary notice. If your parent(s) are incarcerated, attach a copy of their official federal or state documentation.

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Describe the last time you had contact with each parent (when, where, and the nature of the contact):

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What circumstance listed above qualifies you for consideration to be an independent student? Please provide specifics that you are willing/able to share but enough to provide information for consideration:

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➤ **Supporting documentation:**

- Provide signed statements from two adults familiar with your situation who can corroborate the factors you listed above.
  - Examples of such persons would include therapist, clergy, social workers or other social services personnel, court officials (or copies of court documents), teachers/advisors, high school counselors, GEAR UP/TRIO representative, tribal agency or police officers.
- ***At least one signed statement should be from someone who is not a relative or friend.***

**Required documents to be submitted for your appeal:**

- A completed *Unusual Circumstance Request for Independent Status* form (this form)
- Supportive documentation
- Letters of support (attached):
  - Letter #1: Name of individual: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job title or relationship: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Letter #2: Name of individual: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job title or relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Warning:** If you purposely give false or misleading information to help establish eligibility for federal student aid, you may be subject to a \$20,000 fine, a prison sentence, or both.

Important: Per the federal regulations, all letters of support and documentation must have a 'wet' hand-written signature using a pen or stylus. Signatures cannot be computer generated. Documentation must be presented along with Unusual Circumstance to be considered. We highly suggest providing strong signed letters of support on letterhead or documentation such as court documents, lawyer statements, police statements, counselor/therapist statements, teacher or advisor statements over letters from friends or family. Please allow up to six weeks during peak processing times for consideration.