



Petition to Be Declared an Independent Student for Federal Aid (Title IV) Purposes

81

Student's Full Name _____

Student's UGA ID _____

Student's UGA Email _____

Student's Telephone Number _____

The law governing Federal Student Aid (Title IV) categorizes students as "dependent" or "independent" based on the premise the student and parents have the primary responsibility for meeting the student's educational costs. This premise applies even when the parents are not actually supporting the student.

The institution's financial aid administrator is given the statutory authority to exercise "professional judgement" and declare a dependent student to be independent if he or she determines this action would be reasonable in light of documented **unusual or unique** circumstances.

A decision to declare a student to be independent applies only to the student's Title IV Federal Aid at the University of Georgia and only to one award year. Students declared independent for the academic year must be **reviewed annually**.

The financial aid administrator's decision is final and is **not** appealable to the U.S. Department of Education.

If you can document the **unusual or unique** circumstances governing why you feel you should be declared independent for Title IV Federal Aid purposes, you may petition for a dependency override by providing documentation. Be sure you sign your statement.

NOTE: Parents refusal to contribute financially or unwillingness to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or the student not being claimed on the parent(s)' Federal Tax Return, or the student showing total self-sufficiency are not reasons to declare a student Independent for Federal Student Financial Aid. However, some unusual circumstances which qualify as reasons to declare a student Independent may include, but are not limited to: parental abandonment of the student, abusive family environment which threatens the student's physical/emotional health or safety, or a student's inability to locate parents for a long-term and on-going basis.

Required items:

- Signed statement describing your unusual or unique family situation including:**
 - The last time and the circumstances under which you had contact with your parents, and
 - How you previously met and plan to continue meeting your living expenses.

- Documentation from at least one of the following sources:**
 - Official court documentation which specifically details your unusual or unique family situation;**OR:**
 - Statements from at least two third party individuals that can verify your statement. These can come from either of the following:
 - Preferably from a public or non-profit agency, court or professionals (ministers, counselors, teachers, etc.) which possess **first-hand knowledge** of your unusual or unique circumstances.
 - If no agencies, courts or professionals have been involved, you should provide for our consideration: detailed, **notarized** statements from **at least two adults** who identify their relationship to you and who have **first-hand knowledge** of your circumstances.

- Please include your most recent Federal Tax Transcript, W-2's, or a statement explaining how you financially supported yourself for the last calendar year.

Important Notes:

- The submission of **incomplete** or unsigned document(s) will delay processing.
- All required documentation must be **received** in order to complete the professional judgement process.
- Correspondence from OSFA will be sent to you via email from osfapj@uga.edu, including any requests to complete and sign documentation. Incomplete or unsigned document(s) submitted to OSFA will NOT be returned to you.
- When faxing documents to OSFA, please allow two business days before asking us to confirm receipt.

During peak processing times (June-September) allow us up to four weeks for processing once all documents have been received.

I certify the information provided is true and correct. If independent status is approved, I am aware I must document this status on an annual basis.

Student's Signature _____

Date _____