



Columbia College Financial Aid Office Dependency Override Eligibility and Form

Columbia College ~ 11600 Columbia College Drive ~ Sonora, CA 95370
Last Name A-L: (209) 588-5105 Last Name M-Z: (209) 588-5272

The Department of Education determines a student's status as dependent or independent by the answers the student provides on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students are classified as dependent or independent because federal student aid programs are based on the principle that students (and their parents) are considered the primary source of support for postsecondary education.

There are however, situations where a student may have an unusual circumstance in which he/she should be considered independent. In such cases, the student can complete the Dependency Override form and attaching a personal letter summarizing their situation in detail (remembering to include supporting documentation) and a signed letter from a third party professionals (i.e. minister, social worker, school counselor or teacher, physician, therapist, prison administrator, or law enforcement officer) who is aware of your situation and can certify the facts that you are presenting.

Circumstances given consideration:

- Student's voluntary or involuntary removal from their parents' home due to an extreme situation that threatened the student's health and/or safety.
- Student suffered verifiable/documented parental abuse and contact with the parent would put the student in danger emotionally and physically.
- Incapacity of parents(s) due to incarceration or institutionalized.
- Other extenuating circumstances that can be documented such as abandonment by parents or student being unable to locate his/her parents.

NONE of the conditions listed below qualify as unusual or merit a dependency override;

- 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 does not live with his/her parents or has been supported by other relatives or friends.
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency.

All requests must be documented and show that all financial and emotional contact with your parents has been severed as a result of an unusual circumstance. Each Dependency Override will be reviewed by the Director of Student Financial Services and approved or denied based upon the student's individual extenuating circumstances and documentation that was provided. All decisions are final and not subject to higher appeal.

Note: Being considered independent does not automatically make you eligible for more financial aid.

- Documentation that your parent is deceased, institutionalized, or incarcerated.
 - Documentation confirming that there is a protective/restraining order that prohibits you from having contact with your parents.
 - Other legal documentation that would explain why parental information should not or cannot be obtained for you financial aid.
3. Submit a signed letter from a third party professionals (i.e. minister, social worker, school counselor or teacher, physician, therapist, or law enforcement officer) who is able to verify your situation and can certify the facts that you are presenting. The letter should be submitted on letterhead from the persons place of employment and include their full address and phone number. Letters from other students and/or friends are not considered an independent third party and will not be accepted.

I certify that the information provided is true and correct and may be used to override federal regulations regarding my dependency status. I understand that if I move back with my parents, resume contact, or receive any kind of support from them, I must report this to the Financial Aid Office **immediately**. I authorize the Financial Aid Office to contact the third party professional and verify all information provided by myself and them. I understand that false statements will be cause for denial or repayment of financial aid.

Student signature

Date

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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Based upon professional judgment, this petition has been

Approved Denied

Comments: _____

Director of Student Financial Services

Date