

**Dutchess Community College**  
**Office of Financial Aid**  
**Petition for Dependency Status Review**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address \_\_\_\_\_

Financial Aid regulations assume that the family has primary responsibility for meeting the educational costs of students. Students are classified as dependent or independent because Federal student aid programs are based on the idea that students (and their parents or spouse, if applicable) have the primary responsibility of paying for post-secondary education.

According to the Federal government, **none** of the following merit a dependency override:

- Parents refuse to contribute to a student's education
- Parents are unwilling to provide information for the application or verification
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency

Occasionally, due to unusual circumstances, students should not be considered dependent. You may petition this office for a waiver of federal regulations requiring parental information if you can document why you should be considered an independent student.

Please attach a separate typewritten sheet which explains in detail all of the following information:

1. Identify the location of both of your parents.
2. Describe the last time you had contact with each of your parents – when, where and the nature of the contact.
3. Explain the unusual circumstances which should make you an independent student.
4. Describe how you have been self-supporting:
  - i. How have you paid your expenses?
  - ii. When did you begin paying your expenses without parental support?

Also please attach one form of non-vested third party documentation which supports your case. Documentation must be detailed and specific to your circumstances and can be from a court, social service agency, or respected member of the community (member of the clergy, teacher or counselor). This statement must be on official letterhead.

See Reverse for Dutchess Community College Guidelines for dependency status.

**Please note:** For each additional academic year Federal regulations require that your independent status be reaffirmed.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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For office use only:

Approved

Denied

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## DEPENDENCY STATUS

Upon applying for Federal student aid, your answers to certain questions will determine whether you're considered dependent on your parent(s). You must, therefore, report their income and assets as well as your own. If you're independent you must report only your own income and assets (and those of your spouse, if you are married).

Students are classified as dependent or independent because Federal student aid programs are based on the idea that students (and their parents or spouse, if applicable) have the primary responsibility of paying for post-secondary education.

You are considered an independent student for the 2008-2009 academic year if at least one of the following applies to you:

- You were born before January 1, 1985
- You are married
- You are enrolled in a graduate or professional educational program
- You are an orphan or ward of the court (or were a ward of the court until age 18 and can provide documentation)
- You are a veteran of the U.S. armed forces
- You have legal dependents other than a spouse

If you claim to be an independent student, your school may ask you to submit proof before you can receive any Federal student aid. If you think you have unusual circumstances that would make you independent even though none of the above criteria apply to you, talk to an aid administrator. You can petition to have your dependency status changed based on the required documentation you provide. Please understand that decision will not be automatic, as it needs to be reviewed with all the counselors in the Office of Financial Aid.

**None** of the conditions listed below qualify as unusual circumstances or merit a dependency override according to Federal Government guidelines:

- Parents refuse to contribute to a student's education
- Parents are unwilling to provide information for the application or verification
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency

Dutchess Community College's institutional policy is that documentation should come from a non-vested third party on official letterhead and indicate family circumstances that would preclude the student from using parental information to obtain aid. Examples should include references to situations of drug, alcohol, sexual, verbal, physical and/or psychological abuse.

The decision to change your dependency status is based on the aid administrator's judgment along with the other counselors in the Office. This decision is final and cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education.