

Changing Schools

The determination of a dependency override by a financial aid administrator at one institution is not binding at another institution. The law requires that the financial aid administrator at the school the student is currently attending make the determination and that the institution keep on file sufficient documentation to support its decision.

Renewing a Previous Dependency Override Decision

Section 480(d) also requires that a determination of unusual circumstance(s) must be made each award year. A determination of independence in one award year does not mean that the student would automatically be an independent student in subsequent award years. The financial aid administrator must affirm in the subsequent year that the conditions for determining the student to be independent continue to exist and continue to make the expectation of a parental contribution inappropriate.



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How Do I Apply For A Dependency Override?

If after reading the circumstances that constitute a dependency override you feel you meet the qualifications, you may request a dependency override at Jefferson College by completing the following steps:

- Complete the Jefferson College Dependency Override Request form;
- Submit all documentation explaining and supporting your unusual circumstances to the Office of Student Financial Services;
- Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with the student portion completed

Student Financial Services will notify you once a decision of your dependency status has been made.



CONDITIONS SUPPORTING THE USE OF DEPENDENCY OVERRIDES

BY FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS



OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES
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U.S. Department of Education Independent Student Definition

Section 480(d) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), defines an independent student as someone who fits into one or more specific categories. Under the categories, a student is independent and exempt from listing parental information on their federal student aid application if the student:

- Is 24 years of age or older by December 31 of the award year in question
- Was an orphan, foster child, or ward/dependent of the court at any time since the age of 13
- Is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces
- Is a married individual
- Has legal dependents other than a spouse that will receive more than half their support from the individual
- Has a legal guardian that has not legally adopted the student
- Is an unaccompanied homeless youth documented as such by a high school homeless liaison, emergency shelter, homeless youth shelter, or transitional housing program

Dependency Override Definition

In addition to the preceding categories, an individual who does not qualify as an independent student under one of these categories may be considered an “independent student” under section 480(d)(7) of the HEA. Under that provision, a student is considered to be an independent student if he or she is a student for whom a financial aid administrator makes a documented determination of independence by reason of other unusual circumstances. Such a determination by a financial aid administrator is called a “dependency override.”

Definition of “Unusual Circumstances” In Accordance With Dependency Override Regulations

Section 480(d) provides the financial aid administrator with latitude in determining what constitutes unusual circumstances. These practices include, for example, making dependency overrides in the following situations:

The student (’s)

- Has been physically, sexually, emotionally, or mentally abused by an immediate member of the family and has therefore removed from the parent(s) residence
- Parent(s) are incarcerated or hospitalized for long-term care
- Parent(s) are deceased
- Has had a death of a custodial parent and the student has no contact with the non-custodial parent
- Parent(s) cannot be located
- Was married and is now divorced

Required Documentation

Third party written documentation supporting a student’s unusual circumstance is required and must be provided by one of the following:

- School official
- Counselor
- Social Worker
- Teacher
- Member of the clergy
- Lawyer
- Judge
- Physician

Dependency Override Exclusions

In recent years, the Department of Education has identified conditions that, individually or in combination with one another, do not qualify as unusual circumstances and do not merit a dependency override:

- A parents refusal to contribute to the student’s education;
- Parents unwillingness to provide information on a student’s FAFSA;
- Parents unwillingness to provide information for income verification;
- Parents not claiming the student as a dependent for income tax purposes;
- Student’s unwillingness to reside in parents household;
- Student’s demonstration of total self-sufficiency

If you are applying for a dependency override based upon one or more of these conditions, your dependency override will not be granted.

Additional Exclusions

In most cases, a dependency override cannot be granted to a student residing in a parent’s household or to a student who was claimed as a dependent on the parent’s tax form. In addition, the fact that a student’s parents live in another country does not qualify as an unusual circumstance.

Also, in some cases emancipation of a student by his/ her parent(s) may not render the student independent for federal student aid application purposes.