

Dependency Override Appeal Information and Instructions

Federal financial aid regulations assume that the student and his/her family have the primary responsibility for meeting the educational expenses for the student. If a student is considered dependent, according to the federal definition, aid eligibility is determined by using parent income information in addition to the student's information. Dependent students are required by regulation to provide parental information and signatures in order to be considered for financial aid.

What makes a student dependent or independent?

Dependency status is determined by the US Department of Education based on responses to a number of questions. If a student meets any one of the following criteria at the time the FAFSA is completed, he or she is automatically considered independent and does not need to provide parental information:

- Born before January 1, 2000
- Married as of the date the FAFSA is submitted
- Will be in a graduate program at the beginning of the award year (Master's, PhD, etc.)
- Is currently serving on active duty for purposes other than training
- Is a veteran of the US Armed Forces
- Has child(ren) who receive *more than half of their support* from the student, or has legal dependents, other than a spouse or children, who live with the student and who receive *more than half of their support* from the student
- Was an orphan, foster child or ward/dependent of the court at any time since the age of 13
- Is a court-determined emancipated minor (not emancipated for the purposes of child support)
- Is in a legal guardianship
- Was determined at any time since July 1, 2022 to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or was self-supporting and at risk of being homeless

What is a Dependency Override?

There are situations, generally when extreme and unusual circumstances exist, where dependent students can be considered independent. A dependency override can occur when a financial aid administrator exercises professional judgment to supersede the Department of Education's definition of dependency. If the appeal is approved, the student would not be required to submit parental information on the FAFSA, and would therefore be eligible for financial aid as an independent student. An override will only be considered on a case-by-case basis for a student with documentable circumstances that indicate that they should be determined to be independent.

Situations that could be considered for a dependency override

The following examples *could* be submitted for consideration. This list is not exhaustive but provides examples:

- A student's voluntary or involuntary removal from their parent's home due to an extreme situation that threatened the student's health or safety
- Incapacity of parent(s) such as incarceration, mental/physical illness or the inability of the student to locate the parent(s)
- Other extenuating circumstances that can be adequately documented

The following situations, by themselves, WOULD NOT be considered:

- Student does not live with parent(s)
- Student is self-supporting
- A parent(s) refusal to provide income information vital to the completion of the FAFSA
- A parent(s) inability or unwillingness to pay for college expenses for the student
- A student not being claimed as a dependent on parent(s) tax return

Things to consider prior to completing the dependency override appeal:

- A dependency override is granted on a yearly basis, therefore a student must reapply each award year and the student must be able to submit documentation regarding their current status until they meet at least one of the criteria stipulated in the federal definition of dependency stated above.
- All requirements of the Dependency Override Appeal must be completed prior to a decision being made. Dependency override appeals approved at other institutions will not automatically be accepted at Capital University.
- An approved dependency override will not guarantee an increase in your financial aid award.
- The decision of the Financial Aid Office at Capital University is final and cannot be appealed to the US Department of Education

Steps involved in a dependency override appeal:

1. Meet with a financial aid counselor to discuss the situation
2. Complete the Appeal Form and gather all required documentation
3. Return completed appeal documents:

BY MAIL

Capital University Financial Aid Office
1 College and Main
Columbus, OH 43209

-or-

IN PERSON

Financial Aid Office
Yochum Hall, first floor
Student Services Center

4. If the documentation is complete, the appeal will be reviewed by a committee and a final decision will generally be made within 10 days.
5. If the appeal is approved, notification will be sent electronically to the student's Capital e-mail address. Corrected information will be submitted to the US Department of Education and the financial aid package will be revised based on the student's new status as an independent student.
6. If the appeal is denied, a letter of explanation will be sent electronically to the student's Capital e-mail address.

If the dependency override appeal is approved:

The Financial Aid Office will be required to verify the income information that was submitted on the FAFSA. If the appeal is approved, the student will need to complete and submit:

- 2023 Financial Aid Verification Worksheet
- Use of IRS Data Retrieval Tool **or** student's 2021 Federal Tax Return Transcript **or** student's 2021 1040 Tax Return with Schedules 1, 2, and/or 3. **If the student filed taxes in 2021**
- Copies of all 2021 W-2 forms

These documents can be submitted with the appeal documentation. If the appeal is denied, however, additional parental tax documentation may be required.

If you have any questions about the Dependency Override process or regulations, please feel free to contact our office at:

Phone: 614-236-6511 or 1-866-544-6175

Fax: 614-236-6926

E-mail: finaid@capital.edu

Website: www.capital.edu/finaid

Office hours: 8:30am – 5pm (summer hours may vary)