



2023-2024 Dependency Appeal Request

The Department of Education's belief that the primary responsibility for financing a student's education rests with the student and his/her family. Unless a student is classified Independent for Financial Aid purposes by Federal definition, parental income and asset information must be included in determining eligibility for Financial Aid.

Federal regulations on the FAFSA define the criteria that you must meet to be considered an independent student. If you do not meet any of those criteria, you may submit an appeal to the Financial Aid office to review your situation and determine if you are eligible to be considered an independent student. An appeal may only be approved for exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Student a victim has been part of an abusive family environment (e.g., sexual, physical or mental abuse)
- Student has been a victim of domestic violence and no longer resides with parents
- Abandonment by parents (i.e. no contact with parents or support for at least one year)
- Incarceration or institutionalization of both parents
- Death of both parents (and death of only parent in single family household)
- Parental drug or alcohol abuse
- Other

The following conditions DO NOT merit a dependency override:

- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency
- Parents refuse to contribute to the student's education;
- Parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes
- Student does not communicate with parents

** Note: Parent means your mother and/or father, or your adoptive parents. Parent does not mean foster parents, or grandparents.

If you do not meet one of the conditions listed on the FAFSA, but still feel there are extenuating circumstances, which might warrant you being considered independent of your parents, for purposes of Financial Aid, you may explain those circumstances in a petition. Completion of this form and submission of documents does not guarantee approval of a dependency appeal. Approval of an appeal does not guarantee receipt of additional aid nor does an approval at a prior institution guarantee an approval at WCU.

Please note: If you are approved for a dependency appeal, your dependency status must be reevaluated each year until you are meeting federal criteria to automatically be independent.

To begin the petition process, please answer the questions listed on the appeal form and submit all documentation together. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.



Dependency Appeal 2023-2024

Student's ID Number: _____ Email: _____

Student's Name: _____ Cell Phone #: _____

STEP 1: Complete and submit 2023-2024 Free Application for Federal Student aid (FAFSA) online at: <http://www.fafsa.gov>. WCU's title IV School Code is: 002981

STEP 2: Write, sign and attach a detailed explanation of your exceptional circumstances. Your signed and dated statement must include:

- Your relationship with your biological or adoptive parents (mother and father)
- Specific dates of events that caused your separation from your parents
- Where you have lived since separating from your parents
- Your sources of income and how you have supported yourself while living apart from your parents

STEP 3: Two signed and dated letters from third party professionals documenting their first-hand knowledge of your exceptional circumstances. Include contact information. The Financial Aid Office may contact these references for additional information or clarification of your situation.

- Professionals include: social workers, teachers, doctors, ministers, counselors, etc.
- Letters should be detailed and refer to their actual knowledge of your circumstances
- Police reports may substitute for one letter.
- You may not include letters from friends or family unless they have first-hand knowledge of your situation.

APPEALS SUBMITTED WITHOUT ABOVE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

STEP 4: CERTIFICATION SECTION

If you purposely give false or misleading information on this worksheet, you may receive a fine, prison sentence, or both.

By signing and dating this form, I certify that all information is complete and correct. I understand the decision of the Appeals Committee is FINAL and cannot be appealed.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____