



**2009-2010
HOW TO REQUEST A DEPENDENCY OVERRIDE**

The U.S. Congress designed the Federal Title IV programs around the belief that families have the primary responsibility to pay for higher education. The objective of financial aid programs is to help students pay the difference between the cost of education and the amount their families can contribute. Students apply for student financial aid using information on the income and assets of their parents, unless they meet the Federal Title IV definition of independent. Federal Title IV legislation defines an independent applicant for federal student aid to be one who meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Born before January 1, 1986
- Married at the time of completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid
- Enrollment for 2009-2010 in a master’s or doctorate program
- Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces
- Currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, or is a National Guard or Reserves enlistee called into federal active duty for other than training purposes
- Having children who receive more than half of their support from him or her between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010
- Having dependents (other than children or spouse) who live with the student and who receive more than half of their support from the student, now and through June 30, 2010
- At any time when the student was age 13 or older, both of the student’s parents were deceased, the student was in foster care, or the student was a dependent/ward of the court
- Emancipated minor as determined by a court in the student’s state of legal residence
- Legal guardianship as determined by a court in the student’s state of legal residence
- On or after July 1, 2008, a high school or school district homeless liaison determined that the student was an unaccompanied homeless youth
- On or after July 1, 2008, an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determined that the student is an unaccompanied homeless youth
- On or after July 1, 2008, a director of a runaway or homeless youth center or transitional living program determined that the student is an unaccompanied homeless youth or is self-supporting and at risk of being homeless

Sometimes extraordinary circumstances make it impossible for a student who does not meet the definition of independent to obtain his or her parent's financial information. Examples of extraordinary circumstances include documented cases of child abuse, incarceration of custodial parent, or estrangement from parents. In such cases, Towson University may authorize a Dependency Override, allowing the student to apply for aid as an independent student, using only his or her income and asset information.

Students who wish to apply for a Dependency Override must submit the following documentation:

1. A letter of explanation, written by the student, explaining the extraordinary family circumstances that led to the student leaving the parent's household. The letter must include information on the student’s means of support since leaving the parent's household.
2. Letters (on letterhead) from three professionals verifying the family circumstances described by the student. Professionals may include guidance counselors, clergy members, teachers, doctors, family counselors, mental health professionals, and law enforcement personnel.
3. Signed copies of the student's federal income tax returns for 2007 and 2008.

Towson University will not grant a Dependency Override when the sole basis for the request is that parents do not claim the student on income tax returns, or when parents simply do not wish to contribute to educational expenses. Students whose parents refuse to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) may participate in the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Student Loan Program by completing the 2009-2010 Parent FAFSA Refusal Form, available as a printable form at the Forms and Publications page of the Financial Aid Office Web site at www.towson.edu/finaid.

LETTERS OF APPEAL AND ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION SHOULD BE SENT TO THE FINANCIAL AID APPEALS COMMITTEE. The Committee will send written notification of its decision to the student two weeks after receipt of all documentation.

MAIL	FAX	IN PERSON
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