



## DEPENDENCY OVERRIDE 2025-2026 Award Year

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

The U.S. Department of Education determines a student's status for receipt of financial aid as dependent or independent by the answers the student provides to the questions listed on the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. The federal student aid programs are based on the premise that the family [parent(s)] is considered the primary source of the student's financial support for a college education and financial assistance is meant to supplement, not supplant, the family's ability to pay for college.

The Higher Education Act allows financial aid administrators to make dependency overrides on a **case-by-case** basis for students with **unusual circumstances**. A justifiable reason to excuse parents from the student's financial responsibility must exist and appropriate documentation must be provided to the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA). However, **none of the conditions listed below will qualify as unusual circumstances**; and, therefore, are not sufficient reasons for determining a student's status as independent and will not warrant a dependency override:

- Student's parent(s) refuses to contribute to the student's educational costs;
- Parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification;
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes;
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency

The following information covers the procedure that is used to determine a student's eligibility for a "Dependency Override". The OSFA will review the student's request for an override by examining the supporting documentation provided by the student and, using professional judgment, will either approve or deny the student's request. The student will be notified of the decision by email to the student's UTEP email address.

### SECTION I: CIRCUMSTANCES GIVEN CONSIDERATION

- A student's voluntary or involuntary removal from their parents' home due to an extreme unusual circumstance that threatened the student's health and/or safety and due to these conditions, parental support was terminated.
- Incapacity of parent(s) such as incarceration, mental or physical illness or the inability of the applicant to locate the parent(s).
- Other extenuating circumstances that can be sufficiently documented.

### SECTION II: REVIEW PROCEDURES

- An official notification of the OSFA's decision will be emailed to the student; and, if applicable, an explanation of any further actions necessary to complete the student's application for financial aid.

**To be considered for a "Dependency Override", complete page 2 and submit the form along with all required documentation listed on page 2 of the form to the OSFA.**

**PLEASE NOTE: IN ACCORDANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS, THE OSFA'S DECISION IS FINAL AND CANNOT BE APPEALED TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.**

# DEPENDENCY OVERRIDE STUDENT CERTIFICATION

Please print clearly. Do not leave any item blank.

1. Did anyone claim you on their 2024 Federal Income Tax Return? (Check one)

YES – Person’s name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

NO

2. Did anyone claim you on their 2023 Federal Income Tax Return? (Check one)

YES – Person’s name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

NO

## Documentation Required (Please Attach):

A. A personal letter of appeal explaining the reason for your request for a dependency override. The letter should be **no more than one page** and you should provide as much detail as possible describing your separation from your parents. **You are required to include the following information in this letter:**

- The whereabouts of your biological/adoptive father (parent 1) and biological/adoptive mother (parent 2) including their current living arrangements. Include the frequency of contact you have had with them and the last contact you had with each parent during the past five (5) years.
- Why you cannot provide parental financial information on the 2025–2026 FAFSA.
- Where and with whom you have resided during the past five (5) years.
- Who has provided support to you over the past five (5) years.
- Your name, ID# and your signature with the date you signed the letter.

B. Letters from **two individuals** who can attest to your personal situation.

These letters should be **no more than one page** and provide as much detail as possible describing your separation from your parents.

- These letters should be from a professional individual, who is not related to you, who has **first-hand knowledge** of the student’s personal situation – for example, a counselor, social worker, clergy, police, etc.
- Each letter should be on formal letterhead and must include the individual’s name, title or position, address, phone number and the letter must be dated and signed.

The two individuals cannot be related to each other AND must reside at separate addresses.

C. A signed copy of the student’s 2022, 2023 and 2024 Federal Income Tax Return Transcripts or Tax Returns. If you did not file taxes in one or more of those years, please request a non-filing letter from the IRS website.

**I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION LISTED ON THIS FORM AND ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS CONCERNING MY REQUEST FOR A DEPENDENCY OVERRIDE ARE CORRECT AND COMPLETE.**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

WARNING: If you purposely give false or misleading information on this worksheet, you may be fined, be sentenced to jail, or both.

For Office Use Only:

Approved:

Not Approved:

Date:

Initials: