

2020 – 2021

REQUEST FOR INDEPENDENCE CONSIDERATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

Read through the following information carefully. Any dependent student can make a request to be considered independent for financial aid purposes. Use the information below to assist you in understanding the application process, who may qualify, and the documentation you will be required to provide. We understand that often students who seek an override find it difficult to discuss their personal circumstances. However, in order to approve your request we must fully document your situation. If at any time you wish to discuss your case, please contact the Student Service Center. Your file will be reviewed by a Financial Aid Advisor. **All information provided will be kept strictly confidential.**

Federal regulations allow for the use of professional judgment to grant an override of the dependency status on a case-by-case basis for **students with extenuating circumstances beyond their control**, who do not automatically qualify as an independent student for financial aid purposes. It is important to note that dependency status for federal financial aid is different than for federal income tax and state financial aid purposes. Qualifying for one does not automatically qualify you for another because they have different criteria.

Federal guidelines clearly state that the following situations **do not qualify** as extenuating circumstances and therefore would not result in approval of a dependency override.

- ❖ Parents refusing to financially contribute to your education.
- ❖ Parents unwilling to provide information on the application or for income verification purposes.
- ❖ Parents not claiming you as a dependent for income tax purposes.
- ❖ A student demonstrating total self-sufficiency.

The following examples are only a guide of situations that could merit a dependency override. They are not the only situations that will be considered, just examples of what has been considered in prior applications.

- ✓ No contact with parents due to circumstances beyond your control.
- ✓ Physically or sexually abusive family environment.
- ✓ Abandonment by parents.
- ✓ Parental drug and/or alcohol addiction.
- ✓ Other documented unusual circumstances.

The documentation you submit **must** support an extenuating or unusual circumstance. If you document your circumstances, then it will be reviewed. As part of your request you must provide the following information.

1. Submit a 2020-2021 FAFSA application at www.fafsa.gov.
2. Complete and submit the attached Request for Independence Consideration form.
3. Provide a signed written statement of your personal circumstances.
4. Provide a signed written statement from at least two reliable third parties with knowledge of your situation.
5. Submit any additional documentation that will help your case (i.e. police reports, court papers, etc.).

Upon review of your application further information may be requested to clarify or support your case. All requests and decisions will be sent to your SUNY Canton email.

Got Questions? Contact the Student Service Center at (315) 386-7616 or toll-free at 1-800-388-7123.

Student Name: _____ ID: _____

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INSTRUCTIONS: This form is for those students who do not meet the federal independence criteria and feel they have special circumstances that should be taken into consideration. *The definition of an Independent student is different for state aid, therefore appeals to the state must be done separately through HESC in Albany in a separate request.*

IMPORTANT: All information submitted in support of this application will be kept strictly confidential in a sealed envelope after review.

1. **ALL STUDENTS:** Complete the 2020-21 FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov. You may leave the parent section blank until your dependency status has been determined.

2. **Returning/Continuing SUNY Canton Students:** Complete this section only (unless situation has changed).

Check all that apply:

- Check here if you were granted Independent status for the 2019-2020 academic year at SUNY Canton. New students go to #3. (If you were previously considered independent due to homeless status you may need to complete #3. Contact the Student Service Center with questions.)
- Check here if your situation has not changed and you are again requesting consideration for independent status for the 2020-2021 academic year. Read and sign the certification in question #4.
- Check here if you are now living with, or reconciled with, your parents. (*In this case you need to complete the FAFSA with their parental information*).

3. **New Students Only:** Complete this section and be sure to provide all required documentation as stated below.

Indicate the month and year that you last lived with either parent. _____ / _____
Month Year

Explanation of Extenuating Circumstances:

- A. Please explain, on a separate sheet of paper, the reason(s) that you left your parents household and the extent of contact you have with both mother and father at this time. In this letter please indicate where and with whom you are currently residing and how you are being supported. This letter must be signed.
- B. Additional Documentation Required:
 - ✓ At least **2 signed** letters from reliable third parties who can back up your request. The parties writing on your behalf must have first-hand knowledge of your situation and be able to describe it fully. (*Reliable third parties are adults who are familiar with your situation such as a counselor, clergy, teacher, attorney, school counselor, or adult relative other than your parents*).
 - ✓ Any other documentation that you would like to submit to support your request. (*Examples include, police reports, court papers, etc.*)

4. **All Students:** Sign the certification below.

I certify that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I am aware that the information above constitutes an application for funds from the federal government and that any material omissions, or false and misleading information, may result in penalties under federal law. If changes occur, I will notify the Student Service Center in writing. **Return this form to the One Hop Shop with all required documentation.**

Student Signature

Date

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