



Financial Aid Office

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## Dependency Override Appeal 2023-2024

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **WT Student ID number:** \_\_\_\_\_

What is a Dependency Override?

\*When referring to "Parent(s)" in this document we are referring to a student's biological parent(s) or adoptive parent(s) (if adopted at age 12 or earlier)\*

When you completed your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the questions in the student status section determined that you were required to apply for Financial Aid as a *Dependent* student and include your PARENT(S) information. Financial Aid administrators have the authority to change a student's dependency status, based on supporting documentation, from dependent to independent in cases of extreme, or unusual family circumstances.

Some examples of extreme, or unusual family circumstances:

- Abusive family environment (physical, mental, sexual abuse, or other forms of domestic violence)
- Abandonment by both parents (usually in cases of one or more years)
- Incarceration or institutionalization (mental and/or physical illness) of both parents
- Parent(s)' whereabouts unknown or parent(s) cannot be located
- An unsuitable household (child removed from household and placed in foster care)
- Other extenuating circumstances that can be sufficiently documented.

Please note according to the Department of Education, the conditions listed below ***do not*** qualify as unusual circumstances meriting a Dependency Override:

- Parent(s) are refusing to contribute to the student's education
- Parent(s) are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification
- Parent(s) are not claiming student as a dependent for income tax purposes
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency
- Student does not live with their parent(s)

### Helpful information:

- All submitted documentation will be reviewed by our committee of financial aid directors to determine if the student will be granted a dependency override. Official notification of the decision will be sent to the student via email; and, if applicable the financial aid office will make necessary corrections to the student's FAFSA on behalf of the student. All documentation will be securely maintained in the student's Financial Aid file.
- A Dependency override is granted on a yearly basis. If a student is granted an override in the previous academic year, that student must reapply each year.
- Please submit all documents as soon as possible to the Financial Aid office to avoid processing delays. If you have any further questions, please reach out to the Office of Financial Aid immediately.

- Documents can be uploaded through your student BuffAdvisor account, mailed, or faxed. Paperwork received via email cannot contain any Personally Identifiable Information (i.e. social security numbers, date of birth, etc.).

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Complete all requirements outlined below before submitting this appeal to the Financial Aid Office. Be thorough as the information provided on this appeal will ultimately determine your eligibility to receive financial aid at WTAMU. **If you have been approved for a Dependency Override Appeal at West Texas A&M University in previous years, you do not have to complete requirements for # 2, 3 and 4 below.**

1. Write a **PERSONAL STATEMENT** on a separate piece of paper explaining your situation and attach it to this form. You must describe your current relationship (even if it is non-existent) with your biological or adoptive father and mother. Please address the following questions in your statement:
  - Describe the nature of your relationship with each of your parent(s) and provide a detailed account of your circumstances.
  - Provide the date and place of your last contact with your parent(s).
  - Do you live with someone other than your parent(s)? Does that person financially support you? How long have you lived with this person(s)?
  - Do you support yourself? If yes, what year did you begin supporting yourself?
2. Provide a **LETTER FROM A PROFESSIONAL** who is familiar with your case and can verify reasons for your independent status request (i.e. high school or college counselor, social services agency official, pastor or clergy member, mental health professional, law enforcement office, teacher, etc.) The letter must be on *official letterhead* and must include the individual's name, title or position, address, contact number, and original signature. The letter must also contain the following information:
  - Describe the nature of the person's relationship with the student and length of time known.
  - Describe any knowledge of the student's relationship with his/her parent(s).
  - Describe when the last time the student lived with and/or received financial support from his/her parent(s).
3. Provide a **PERSONAL REFERENCE LETTER** - This individual cannot be related to you and should be able to verify the reasons why you are not able to provide your parent(s)' information on the FAFSA (i.e. friend, co-worker, neighbor, mentor, etc.). The letter must include the individual's name, relationship to you, address, contact number and original signature. The letter must also contain the following information:
  - Describe the nature of the person's relationship with the student and length of time known.
  - Describe any knowledge of the student's relationship with his/her parent(s).
  - Describe when the last time the student lived with and/or received financial support from his/her parent(s).
4. Provide **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION** that verifies/substantiates the reasons for your independent status request. This is an essential part of your petition as providing sufficient documentation supports your statements. Some examples of supporting documentation are:

- Documentation confirming that a parent is deceased, institutionalized, or incarcerated.
  - Documentation confirming that there is a protection/restraining order prohibiting you from having contact with your parent(s).
  - Other legal documentation to explain why parental information could not be obtained to determine financial eligibility
5. Complete the **2023-2024 FAFSA**. If you do not have parent information available, you may leave responses to parent questions blank on the FAFSA, pending review of your Dependency Override Appeal by the Financial Aid Office. Note that your FAFSA will be considered rejected and incomplete without parental information. Make sure WTAMU's school code (003665) is listed on the FAFSA.
6. If indicating you are self-supporting financially, the following documents are required:
- Your 2021 tax return and W2's
  - Your 2022 tax return and W2's
  - Your Year to date paycheck stubs

**By signing this form, I certify that:** (Student initial by each statement)

- \_\_\_\_\_ All statements and/or supporting documentation are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand that further documentation may be requested if needed in order to reach a decision.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Once a decision has been made, I will be notified in writing via my WTAMU student email.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if my petition is denied, my status will remain as a Dependent Student and I will need to provide parental information to continue with my application for financial aid.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If my appeal is approved, I must adhere to the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy posted on the WTAMU Financial Aid website to continue receiving aid at WTAMU.

Student's printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Use Only:

Approved/Denied	Initials	_____	Date: _____
Approved/Denied	Initials	_____	
Approved/Denied	Initials	_____	

Director Comments: \_\_\_\_\_