

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE DEPENDENCY STATUS APPEAL

The United States Department of Education (ED) sets the criteria to determine the dependency status for financial aid applicants. There are two types of students – dependent and independent. The Higher Education Amendments of 1992 have redefined the criteria by which dependency is determined. Under the new criteria, most unmarried undergraduates under the age of twenty-four are considered dependent.

The Department of Education realizes, however, that there are some exceptions. For this reason, it allows financial aid administrators the use of professional judgment to override the criteria in extreme circumstances and classify students as independent. Professional judgment must be justified and supported by adequate documentation.

If, after answering the questions in Step 3 of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you are classified as dependent but believe that you should be considered independent, you may appeal. The acceptable reason for filing an appeal for professional judgment is outlined below. If you feel that you are eligible to file an appeal, you must complete the Dependency Status Appeal Form and return it, along with the required documentation, to the University of Delaware Financial Aid Office, Newark, DE 19716-6390. Your appeal will be evaluated and a decision will be sent to you within two weeks. Failure to answer all questions adequately or failure to furnish all required documentations will delay or cause your appeal to be denied.

Remember, your appeal depends on the information which you furnished to the Financial Aid Office. The more information and documentation submitted, the better your chances of having your appeal approved. All information will be kept strictly confidential. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Financial Aid Office.

REASONS AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

A situation exists in your family that makes it unreasonable or impossible for you to obtain parents' income and asset information. Examples of such situation would be abandonment, parental drug abuse, parental mental incapacity, physical or emotional abuse, parental incarceration, or severe estrangement.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED: You must write a personal statement in which you explain the situation which exists in your family. When writing your statement, be complete and specific. The more information you provide, the better your chances will be of having your appeal approved. Please be assured that all information will be held in strict confidence.

In addition to the above, you must provide statements from at least two third party sources (not family members) that are familiar with, and can verify your circumstances. Sources would include teachers, clergy, guidance counselors, law enforcement officials, or doctors. These statements must be on business letterhead and signed.

You must also submit photocopies of the following:

- * Signed copies of your federal income tax returns for the most recent year.
- * Documentation of any untaxed income you received in the most recent year, such as Social Security or Veterans benefits, worker's compensation, unemployment, etc.
- * Federal Verification Worksheet, signed and dated.

