



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

REQUEST FOR A DEPENDENCY OVERRIDE – INFORMATION



The US Department of Education determines a student's status as dependent or independent by the answers the student provides on the seven questions listed in Step Three of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students are classified as dependent or independent because federal student aid programs are based on the principle that students (and their parent or spouse) are considered the primary source of support for postsecondary education.

In rare and well-documented cases, a student's financial aid dependency classification may occasionally be changed due to circumstances like abusive family situations, release into court custody for their protection, current parental incarceration or complete parental abandonment. An appeal for reclassification to independent student status is usually granted on the basis of a complete irreparable breakdown of a family relationship due to more than personal choice.

Note that the factors below do NOT make a student eligible for a Dependency Override:

- + Parental unwillingness to give information or financial help to the student.
- + Whether or not the parents claim the student on their federal tax return.
- + Whether or not the student lives with the parent.
- + Whether or not the student pays all their own expenses.

The following information covers the procedure that determines a student's eligibility for a Dependency Override.

Victoria University of Wellington's Financial Aid Director will review a student appeal by examining the supporting documentation provided by the student and will either approve or deny the student request. The student will be notified in writing within 14 days of the decision being made.

NOTE: The Financial Aid Director's decision is final and cannot be appealed to the US Department of Education.

Circumstances given consideration

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

Review procedures

1. All submitted documentation will be reviewed by the Financial Aid Director.
2. An official notification of the Director's decision will be sent to the student along with an explanation of any further action necessary to complete his/her application for aid.

Renewal of a Dependency Override for future years

A Dependency Override is granted on a yearly basis. Therefore, a student who was granted a Dependency Override in the previous academic year must reapply each subsequent year. The Financial Aid Director will request documentation from the student regarding their current status for review.



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REQUEST FOR A DEPENDENCY OVERRIDE – APPLICATION



Student name

Student ID

Email

Contact phone

1. Did anyone claim you on their Federal Income Tax Return for the past year?

YES NO

If YES: Person's name

Relationship to you:

2. Did anyone claim you on their Federal Income Tax Return for the year before the past year?

YES NO

If YES: Person's name

Relationship to you:

3. Have you previously been approved for a Dependency Override at Victoria University of Wellington?

YES NO

SECTION A.

A personal letter of appeal, explaining the reason for your request for a dependency override

Provide as much detail as possible describing your separation from your parents. The following information is required:

- + Include the last contact you had with each biological parent and the frequency of contact with each biological parent over the past five (5) years.
- + Explain why you cannot provide parental financial information on the FAFSA.
- + Describe your living arrangements over the past five years, including with whom you resided and who has provided support to you.
- + Ensure your name, Social Security number, student number, and signature are included in the letter.

SECTION B.

Letters from two individuals who can attest to your situation

Each letter should provide as much detail as possible describing your separation from your parents.

- + One letter must be from a professional individual not related to you – counselor, social worker, clergy, police etc.
- + Each letter must include the individual's name, title or position, address and signature.
- + The individuals cannot be related to each other AND must reside at separate addresses.

I certify that the information listed on the form and all supporting documents concerning my request for dependency override is correct and complete.

Student signature

Date (Day/Month/Year)

Submit to:

US Financial Aid
Victoria International
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600, Wellington
New Zealand

Or by hand to:

Financial Aid Director
Level 2, Rutherford House
Pipitea Campus
23 Lambton Quay
Wellington