



2023-24 Dependency Override Appeal

Office of Student Financial Services

What is a Dependency Override?

The definition of a dependency override is a dependent student's inability to submit parental information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) due to an unusual circumstance. You must clearly demonstrate an adverse family situation to be considered independent for financial aid purposes.

What circumstances qualify for a Dependency Override?

The US Department of Education has given the Student Financial Services Office guidance regarding situations that do and do not qualify as an unusual circumstance that would potentially merit a dependency override.

The following circumstances DO NOT merit a dependency override:

- **Parents refusing to contribute to the student's education;**
- Parents unwilling to provide information on the application or for verification;
- Parents not claiming the student as a dependent for income tax purposes; and/or,
- Student demonstrating total self-sufficiency.

However, the following circumstances may merit a dependency override:

- An abusive family environment that **threatens the student's health or safety**. The dysfunction may result from sexual, physical, or emotional abuse; drug/alcohol abuse; or other forms of domestic violence.
- Abandonment by parents
- Death of a custodial parent and abandonment by the other natural parent
- Incarceration or institutionalization of both parents
- Parents whereabouts unknown or parents cannot be located

Required Documentation for a Dependency Override Appeal

For the Student Financial Services Office to consider you for a Dependency Override, you must complete this form and provide the following documentation:

1. Complete and submit the 2022-23 FAFSA online at studentaid.gov
2. A signed and dated personal letter from you explaining the situation in detail for the reason of separation from your parents.
3. A signed and dated letter from an objective third party who can attest to your situation and support your claim.

If applicable to your situation provide the following:

1. A letter on original agency letterhead from a professional individual not related to you (counselor, social worker, teacher, clergy, attorney, doctor, etc.) This letter cannot be from an individual employed at Mercyhurst University.
2. A copy of the death certificate for the deceased custodial parent.
3. Copies of any police or court reports.
4. Copies of any other supporting documentation pertinent to your unusual circumstances, including, but not limited to social agency records, medical records, etc.



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Name: _____ Mercyhurst ID: _____

1. Did anyone claim you on their 2020 or 2021 Federal Income Tax return? YES NO

If YES, please provide the person's name and their relationship to you:

Person's Name: _____ Relationship to Student: _____

2. Are/Were you included as a dependent under your parents' health insurance plan this year or last?

YES NO UNSURE

3. Have you gathered all the required documents listed on the front of this form for your appeal?

YES NO UNSURE

Student Certification and Affirmation:

By signing this document, I certify that all information reported is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I further understand that purposely providing inaccurate or false information may result in denial, reduction, withdrawal and/or repayment of financial aid, legal action, imprisonment and/or fines.

I understand that the decision of the Student Financial Services Office is final and cannot be overturned. The authority to perform dependency overrides is specifically restricted to financial aid administrators.



Acceptable signatures include blue or black ink, an electronic signature using a stylus or finger, or an image of the individual's signature affixed to the form. **Typed signatures using font text will NOT be accepted.**

Student's Signature Date

Note: The FAFSA® must be filed annually. If your override is approved, you are required to notify us if your circumstances change in subsequent years. If not, we will presume your independent status should continue.

Submit form & all documentation to:

Mail to: Mercyhurst University
Student Financial Services - Old Main 115
501 East 38th Street
Erie, PA 16546

Email: sfs@mercyhurst.edu

Fax: 814-824-2072

OFFICE USE ONLY

Appeal Determination: Approved Denied

Notes:

SFS Counselor's Signature Date