

## Financial Aid Office 2011-2012 Dependency Override Form

The Federal government believes that students and their parents have the primary responsibility to pay for education. However, the government recognizes exceptions to this rule and allows students to appeal based on extreme circumstances. For federal aid purposes, an independent student is someone who is/was any one of the following:

- Born before January 1, 1988
- Living with legal guardian as determined by a court of law
- Emancipated minor as determined by a court of law
- Deemed at risk of homelessness
- Married as of the date you filed your 2011-12 FAFSA
- Working on a master's or doctorate program
- Have children and will provide more than half support between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012
- Presently live with dependents other than children or a spouse, and will provide more than half support through June 30, 2012
- Orphan, foster child, or ward of the court (until age 18)
- Veteran of the armed forces
- Currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces

The financial aid administrator, in determining a dependency override, focuses on truly exceptional circumstances and consideration of individual cases. Examples of extraordinary circumstances include documented cases of child abuse, incarceration of custodial parent, or estrangement from parent.

A dependency override can be made only to change a student's status from dependent to independent. Financial aid administrators cannot use professional judgment to consider a student independent solely on the basis of the student's previous independent status or because the student is "self-supporting."

The dependency override may not be used to make an otherwise ineligible student eligible for federal aid, or because the parents are unwilling to provide financial data or support. You must reapply each year for consideration at SU. Proving self-sufficiency, living independently, parent(s) refusal to complete the FAFSA and/or pay for education are **NOT** sufficient reasons for changing dependency status.

### **Students who wish to apply for a Dependency Override must submit the following documentation to the SU Financial Aid Office:**

1. A letter of explanation, written by the student, explaining the extraordinary family circumstances that led to the student leaving the parent's household. The letter must include information on the student's means of support and estimated annual expenses since leaving the parent's household.
2. Letters (on letterhead) from three professionals verifying the family circumstances described by the student. Professionals may include guidance counselors, clergy members, teachers, doctors, family counselors, mental health professionals, and law enforcement personnel.
3. Signed copies of the student's federal income tax returns for 2010.
4. 2011-12 Independent Verification Worksheet.

***If requested, I agree to provide further documentation to substantiate the information provided. I understand all dependency override decisions are made on a case-by-case basis; and this written request does not guarantee approval and may not ultimately result in actual change of the financial aid status.***

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ SU ID # or SSN: \_\_\_\_\_