

***FAQS regarding Dependency Overrides/Requests
to be Independent under the FAO's Professional Judgment***

Q. 1 Are colleges required to consider Dependency Override (DO) requests in regard to federal financial aid?

A. 1 NO. The law (Federal Title IV) leaves the decision up to the individual college. Further, the college follows guidelines established by the US Department of Education as to what can be considered in determining a student's dependency status. The law requires only that the college consider each request on an individual case by case basis, and that the college be consistent and "reasonable" in its decisions.

Q. 2 What is a Dependency Override?

A. 2 A Dependency Override is an instance when a Financial Aid Officer uses professional judgment to reprocess a FAFSA to make a student independent who would otherwise be considered a dependent student by federal law. These instances are subject to stringent guidelines set by law.

Q. 3 Is my parent's refusal to fill out my FAFSA, or provide federal tax data sufficient grounds for a Dependency Override?

A. 3 NO. The U. S. Congress has declared under Title IV that such refusal will not be grounds for independent treatment.

Q. 4 Must I file a FAFSA to be considered for a Dependency Override?

A. 4 YES, you must first file a FAFSA using your base year income data before we are able to consider your request. You should fill out the FAFSA as completely as possible and follow the instructions to submit without a parent's signature.

Q. 5 Does WCU select students who request a Dependency Override for federal verification?

A. 5 YES, The student should obtain a WCU Verification Statement at the same time that he/she completes the Appeal To Be An Independent Student Request Form. The DO request will not be considered until verification is complete.

Q. 6 Does WCU have to honor a DO processed by another college or vice versa?

A. 6 NO. WCU reserves the right to make our own determination of the student's dependency status.

Q. 7 Must I be officially admitted to WCU as a matriculated student working towards a degree to be considered for a Dependency Override?

A. 7 YES, only students who meet all Federal Title IV eligibility requirements may be considered for a D.O.

Q. 8 How do I apply for a Dependency Override/Appeal to be an Independent Student determination?

A. 8 Obtain the WCU Appeal to be an Independent Student form corresponding to the academic year in which you are enrolled, e.g. 2011-2012, etc. The form may be obtained from the WCU Financial Aid homepage or by contacting the office.

Q. 9 When may I obtain the WCU Appeal to be an Independent Student form?

A. 9 It is generally available on the Financial Aid Homepage at the end of February each year. On the homepage in the left hand column, scroll to the bottom and choose the button marked "Frequently Requested Forms".

Q. 10 Will PHEAA treat me as an independent student in regard to Pennsylvania state grants?

A. 10 Not necessarily. PHEAA has the right to use a different definition for determining Independent Status for purposes of PA tax monies. Contact PHEAA at **1-800-692-7392** for a "Financial Independent Form" for consideration as an independent student for PA State Grant purposes.

Q. 11 Is the decision of the Financial Aid Office final?

A. 11 YES. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Student Financial Assistance will not entertain appeals and have ruled that the FAO's decision is final.