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Unusual Circumstances Form

What are considered unusual circumstances?

On the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), a set of questions determines a student's dependency status. Students who are considered dependent are required to report parental information on the FAFSA. Even though a student may be considered dependent on the FAFSA, there may be unusual circumstances that prevent the student from including their parents' information. Financial aid administrators may exercise professional judgment and grant an unusual circumstances appeal and change a student from dependent to independent.

What is an unusual circumstance?

Unusual Circumstances Appeals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and under very limited circumstances. An unusual circumstance **can include** parental abandonment, an abusive family environment that threatens the student's health or safety, parents being incarcerated, or the student being unable to locate their parents. An unusual circumstance **does not include** the parents' refusal to contribute to the student's education, the parent's unwillingness to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification, not claiming the student as dependent for income tax purposes, or the student demonstrating total self-sufficiency.

What is the process?

The student must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and, on the application, select "yes" to the question that asks, "Do unusual circumstances prevent the student from contacting their parents, or would contacting their parents pose a risk to the student?" After completing the FAFSA, the student must complete the Unusual Circumstances Form and return it to The Office of Student Financial Services. Once the Office of Student Financial Services receives the Unusual Circumstances Form and required documentation, it will be reviewed. A final determination of dependency status will be made as soon as practicable but no later than 60 days after the student enrolls. The final determination will be emailed to the student's LMU email account. A financial aid offer will be sent to the student after the determination is made if the student meets all other eligibility requirements. Any student who receives an approved Unusual Circumstances Appeal will be considered independent for each subsequent award year at LMU unless the student informs the Office of Student Financial Services of a change in circumstances or conflicting information regarding dependency status is found.

Student Information – Please check one and attach the required supporting documentation.

Student Name	Date of Birth	LMU Student ID

Part #1

☐ **I have an unusual circumstance that merits a change in dependency status, and I am submitting the required documentation listed below:**

☐ Personal Statement that is **signed and dated** by you that addresses the following: a detailed explanation of your current relationship with each of your parents, what led to the relationship status, the date on which you last spoke to your parents, how you are supporting yourself, and information about where you are living now; **AND**

Student Name: _____ LMU Student ID #:_____

☐ Supporting documentation (examples: documentation to confirm that a parent is deceased, institutionalized, or incarcerated, documentation confirming a protection/restraining order is in place); **OR**

☐ Two **signed and dated** letters written on official letterhead from **two** different professionals (such as a counselor, minister, attorney, social worker, etc.) that verify the family circumstances you described in your personal statement. The letters must address your relationship with both parents and cannot be from family relatives.

Part #2

☐ **I do not have an unusual circumstance that would merit a change in dependency status, but I am unable to provide information about my parents. I am submitting the documentation below to receive only a Direct Unsubsidized Loan.**

☐ A **signed and dated** statement from my parents indicating they:

- Refuse to fill out the FAFSA on my behalf; **OR**
- Do not provide me any financial support, and indicate the date the support ended and that they will not provide any financial support to me in the future.

☐ If your parents refuse to sign and date a statement, you may submit two **signed and dated** letters written on official letterhead from **two** different professionals (such as a counselor, minister, attorney, social worker, etc.) that verify your parents' refusal to complete the FAFSA or provide financial support. The letters cannot be from family relatives.

Part #3

☐ **I do not have an unusual circumstance that would merit a dependency override, and I will update my FAFSA to include parental information.**

I certify that all information reported is true, accurate, and complete. Purposely giving false or misleading information may result in fines, imprisonment, or both.

Student Signature:_____ Date:_____