

## Unusual Circumstances Appeal

Academic Year: 2025-2026

Form: Dependency Override

Student's Name:

University ID #:

The U.S. Department of Education determines each student's dependency status based on the information provided on the FAFSA. Students may submit an appeal to UMD requesting that their dependency status be overridden, but such an appeal can only be approved in certain limited and exceptional circumstances. Unwillingness and/or inability of your parents to financially support you, or living on your own and paying your own bills are not by themselves considered to be exceptional circumstances.

## Instructions:

- 1) Complete and submit the 2025-2026 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. Be sure to include UMD's school code, 002103.
- 2) Complete, sign and date this form to indicate that you have read it in full.
- 3) Type, sign and date a personal statement explaining your exceptional circumstance(s). Your signed statement must include a complete history of:
  - your relationship with your biological and/or adoptive parents;
  - specific dates of events that caused your separation from your parents;
  - where you have lived since separating from your parents; and
  - how you have supported yourself while living separately from your parents.
- 4) Gather proof of your source(s) of income, including copies of your 2023 W-2 / 1099 forms and a signed copy of your 2023 IRS Form 1040 and all accompanying schedules. If you do not have a copy of your federal 1040, please request a free official 2023 **Tax Return Transcript** from the IRS at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript>.
- 5) Obtain signed and dated testimonial statements from **two different third-party professionals** (clergy members, counselors, social workers, lawyers, police officers, physicians) typed on their official business letterhead, documenting their firsthand knowledge of your exceptional circumstance(s). The Office of Student Financial Aid may need to contact these references for clarification of your situation, so complete contact information must be included.
  - **The statements should be detailed and refer to specific events the writer has direct personal knowledge of. They should not be reiterations of information you have shared with them.**
  - An official police report may be substituted for one testimonial statement.
  - Statements from friends or family members are not acceptable.
- 6) Scan your appeal form, personal statement, income documents and testimonial statements and submit them to the Office of Student Financial Aid via. Be sure that your scans are clear and legible and that all attachments have a Windows compatible file extension, such as ".jpg" or ".pdf". Scans that are illegible or cannot be opened may cause your submission to be delayed or rejected.

*Appeal reviews will be completed within 3-4 weeks of receipt of all requested documents, but not longer than 60 days from the date all documentation has been received (or from the date the student enrolls, whichever is later). After the initial evaluation of your submitted documents, additional supporting documents may be requested which may lengthen the review time. Submission of an appeal does not guarantee approval of an appeal. Additionally, approval of an appeal does not guarantee receipt of additional aid. You are responsible for all outstanding charges with UMD.*

Appeals submitted without all required documentation listed above cannot be considered.

If your dependency appeal is approved for the current academic year, your status may be reevaluated for each subsequent academic year until you naturally meet the federal criteria for being considered an independent student.

*I, the undersigned, attest that I have read this form in full and that the information provided in my appeal is, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate. I acknowledge that submission of this appeal does not guarantee a change in my dependency status nor receipt of additional financial aid, and that all decisions of the Unusual Circumstances Committee are final and cannot be changed.*

Student's Signature

Date

*(must be signed by hand, not typed)*