

# Dependency Override Request Form

2019-2020

## BASIC DEPENDENCY INFORMATION

### Federal Policy on Dependency

Students: are considered to be dependent until they reach the age of 24\* - unless they:

- are married (or)
- are an orphan (or)
- are a ward of the court (or)
- are a veteran (or)
- are on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces (or)
- are in graduate school (or)
- are considered homeless or at risk of homelessness (or)
- have dependents

(\*Note: for 2019-2020 -students born before 1/1/1996 are considered independent.)

### Federal Policy on Schools Overriding Dependency

Federal guidelines allow schools to exercise “professional judgment” in overriding a student’s dependency status. The student would need to verify “unusual” or “exceptional” family circumstances before a school can change a dependent student’s status to that of independent.

### What are “unusual” or “exceptional” family circumstances?

There are no absolute definitions for “unusual” or “exceptional” family circumstances. However, examples might include abusive family situations, dysfunctional families, or families who have broken up because of alcohol or drug abuse. The parent’s unwillingness to assist a student, though, will not solely be a reason for a dependency override.

***To request an override of your dependency status by the SMC Financial Aid Office  
you must submit (at least) the following:***

- A letter explaining your “unusual” or “exceptional” family circumstances.
- Two typed letters from a **teacher, counselor, priest, rabbi, social worker, medical professional, or lawyer who can verify your “unusual” circumstances-on “letterhead” stationary.**
- The [Independent Verification Worksheet](#), with appropriate income information included on that form.