

**Financial Aid Office**  
**PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT INFORMATION STATEMENT**  
**DEPENDENCY STATUS OVERRIDE**  
**2009-2010**

In accordance with federal regulations, the Student Aid Office may take into account a student's special circumstances to make an adjustment to a student's dependency status as determined by federal guidelines. The adjustment must be reasonable and documented, and the institution is held accountable for the decision made. Indicated below are the guidelines for professional judgment at Cleveland State Community College for a dependency override.

DEPENDENCY STATUS OVERRIDE

**(You must submit a personal written request regarding your situation.)** Parental unwillingness or inability to assist a student with his/her educational expenses does not relieve their obligation or responsibility, nor does it constitute independence on the student's part.

The choice made by the student to move out of his/her parent's home and be financially independent from them does not constitute independence for the purpose of financial aid. If the student can meet one of the following criteria, then a **Dependency Status Override Form** must be completed before a Professional Judgment decision may be considered.

1. Severe estrangement from parents. Examples include abandonment, parental drug/alcohol abuse, parental mental incapacity, physical or emotional abuse, parental incarceration (written statements from at least three professional adults must document any of these examples). Professional adults would include teachers, clergy, guidance counselors, law enforcement officials, or doctors. These statements must be signed and dated. If the statements are NOT on business letterhead the statement must have an attached business card.
2. You are divorced after being married for at least two years and maintained a residence apart from your parents and your former spouse's parents during the time you were married and you now maintain a separate residence from your parents and pay ALL expenses from your own income and assets.

## **CLEVELAND STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEPENDENCY STATUS APPEAL**

### **Policy**

Parents bear the primary responsibility for funding their daughter's or son's undergraduate education. Undergraduate students who meet certain criteria automatically qualify for independent status for federal and state financial aid eligibility.

The federal government sets the criteria to determine the dependency status for financial aid applicants. The Higher Education Amendments of 1992 have redefined the criteria by which dependency is determined. Under these criteria, most unmarried undergraduate students under the age of twenty-four are considered dependent.

If, after answering the questions in Step Three of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA), you are classified as dependent but believe that you should actually be considered independent, you may appeal. There are several circumstances that would allow you to be considered independent. If after reviewing the criteria outlined on the next page, you feel that you are eligible to file an appeal, complete the attached Dependency Status Appeal form and call our office (423-472-7141) to schedule an appointment with the Financial Aid Director.

Your appeal will be evaluated and a decision will be communicated to you. Failure to answer all questions adequately or failure to furnish all required documentation will delay or cause your appeal to be denied.

Your appeal depends on the information which you furnish to the Financial Aid Office - both your personal statement and the required documentation. Be complete and concise. All information will be held strictly confidential. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Financial Aid Director.

Cleveland State Community College  
3535 Adkisson Drive  
Cleveland, TN 37312  
(423) 472-7141

Special Consideration Request for INDEPENDENT STATUS

INDEPENDENT STATUS MUST BE REQUESTED AND APPROVED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION PROCESS.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SS#: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Submit a WRITTEN STATEMENT explaining your special circumstances and request for adjustment and attach it to this form.
2. Written statements from at least three professional adults verifying circumstances – Professional adults would include teachers, clergy, guidance counselors, law enforcement officials or doctors.

Check below your reason for request and submit required documentation to support reason.

**A parent's unwillingness to furnish income information does not constitute independent status for financial aid purposes.**

Special Circumstances/Estrangement from Parents

Examples (parental abandonment, parental drug/alcohol abuse, parental mental incapacity, physical or emotional abuse, parental incarceration)

- Student's Tax Return (if any)
- Copy of lease agreement in student's name
- Health Insurance, bills and receipts in student's name

Prior Marriage

- Date of marriage
- Current pay stub
- Divorce Decree/Letter (Statement) from Lawyer
- Current lease agreement in student's name
- Bills, receipts in student's name

Please list all your expenses, source of payment, and income.  
**PLEASE COMPLETE EACH ITEM BELOW.**

Expenses (average monthly)

	Cost	Paid by Whom
Rent	\$ _____	_____
Food	\$ _____	_____
Utilities	\$ _____	_____
Transportation	\$ _____	_____
Medical/Dental	\$ _____	_____
Personal/Misc.	\$ _____	_____
Insurance (Health)	\$ _____	_____
Car Payment	\$ _____	_____
Income	\$ _____	
Earnings from work	\$ _____ (monthly amount)	
Non-taxable Income	\$ _____ (monthly amount)	
Other (please list)	\$ _____ (monthly amount)	
	\$ _____	
	\$ _____	
	\$ _____	

**BY SIGNING THIS STATEMENT, I CERTIFY THAT ALL INFORMATION SUBMITTED IS TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.**

**I UNDERSTAND THAT, AS THE STUDENT, BY SIGNING THIS APPLICATION I AM CERTIFYING THAT ALL INFORMATION CAN BE VERIFIED.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT – DEPENDENCY OVERRIDE

### I. Income guidelines for students awarded independent status.

\$4500 is the minimum required income used for students that are not solely self-supporting (living with relatives or friends of family-not in an adult, roommate relationship). These students must have a total income of at least \$4500. Earnings less than \$4500 will be supplemented with an untaxed income component bringing it to \$4500.

\$8000 is the minimum required income used for independent students claiming sole financial responsibility for themselves. (These students may be living alone or in an adult roommate situation.) Financial aid proceeds may be included in the accounting of \$8000 income. An untaxed income component will be added for those students unable to document \$8000 of income.

**STOP**  
**This page for OFFICE USE ONLY**

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FA Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

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**PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT**

APPROVED

DENIED

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SIGNATURE

DATE

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