



Office of Student Financial Services
200 Hawk Drive, New Paltz, NY 12561-2438
Ph: 845-257-3250 • Fax: 845-257-3568

Student's Name _____

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Student ID

Address _____

Financial aid regulations assume that the family has primary responsibility for meeting the educational costs of students, therefore most students are considered dependent for financial aid purposes. Some students can be considered independent if they meet certain criteria. **Please read the information below, check the appropriate box, and sign and return this form with the additional documentation indicated.**

Special note for returning students who have been approved for independent status at SUNY New Paltz in prior years: You must submit a written letter confirming that your circumstances have not changed. You will not need to provide other documentation again unless specifically requested by a Financial Aid Advisor.

You are automatically considered an independent student for 2021-2022 if you meet at least one of the following criteria:

- You were born before January 1, 1998.
- You are married (as of the date the 2021-2022 FAFSA is filed).
- You are a graduate student (enrolled in a master's or graduate certificate program).
- You are currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training.
- You are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces.

You may also be considered independent for 2021-2022 if you meet one of the following criteria, however you must provide appropriate documentation before a final determination of independence can be made. Most situations that qualify for independent status involve the involuntary dissolution of the family unit and can be documented. A cover letter explaining the situation is required. Please check the condition below that best describes your situation and provide the documentation indicated.

- Both parents are deceased, or you were in foster care, or a dependent/ward of the court at any time since you turned age 13. Provide death certificates or court documentation of status.
- Are or were an emancipated minor as determined by a court in your state of legal residence. Provide court documentation from your state of legal residence. Please note that New York State does not grant emancipation status to minors.
- Are or were in legal guardianship (by someone other than your parent or stepparent) as determined by a court in your state of legal residence. Provide court documentation.
- Now have or will have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. You must provide a 2019 signed IRS tax return transcript (from the Internal Revenue Service Web site at www.irs.gov and request a "Return Transcript" for 2019), and/or a letter explaining living arrangements, earnings and support information, and the name of person(s) claiming child(ren) if other than self.
- Have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2022. You must provide a 2019 signed IRS tax return transcript (from the Internal Revenue Service Web site at www.irs.gov and request a "Return Transcript" for 2019), and a letter explaining living arrangements, earnings and support information.
- Were determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless by a director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at any time on or after July 1, 2020. Provide written, signed documentation from shelter or agency on organization letterhead.
- Were determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless by your high school or school district homeless liaison at any time on or after July 1, 2020. Provide written, signed documentation from school liaison on district letterhead.
- Were determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless by a director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program at any time on or after July 1, 2020. Provide written, signed documentation from agency on organization letterhead.

None of the following situations qualify as sufficient to merit a change to independent status:

- Parents refuse to contribute to a student's education.
- Parents are unwilling to provide information for the application or verification.
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes.
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency and does not live with parents.

If you have concluded that your situation does not meet the stated criteria and would like to withdraw your request for Independent status, you will need to update your 2021-2022 FAFSA record to include your parent's information and FSA ID. You will also need to change your answers to the Independence questions to No. If you are having difficulty with this process please contact the Student Financial Services Office and ask to speak with a Financial Aid Advisor. The decision to change a student's dependency status is based on the administrator's judgment and is final and cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education. Transfer students who have been approved as Independent previously at another institution are not automatically independent at SUNY New Paltz and must provide documentation of their situation.

Student signature _____ *Date* _____