Section 480(d) of the Higher Education Act defines an independent status as a student who meets one of the following criteria.

- Were you born before January 1, 1992?
- As of today, are you married?
- At the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, will you be working on a master’s or doctorate program?
- Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training?
- Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?
- Do you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016?
- Do you 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, 2016?
- At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a ward of the court?
- As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor?
- As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you in legal guardianship?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2014, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2014, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2014, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

Students who do not meet the standard requirements for independent status may complete this appeal to be considered independent for financial aid purposes. Appeals for independent status are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and are only granted for **unusual**, documented circumstances such as:

- Student’s voluntary or involuntary removal from parents’ home due to an abusive situation that threatened the student’s safety and/or health
- Incapacity of parents such as incarceration, disability or mental or physical illness
- Inability of the student to locate the parent(s) after making reasonable efforts
- Other extenuating circumstances sufficiently documented by a signed letter from a third party

The following conditions are **not** considered unusual and **do not qualify** for an appeal:

- Parents’ refusal to contribute to the student’s education
- Parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes
- Student demonstrates that he or she is totally self-sufficient
If you believe that you should be considered an independent student for financial aid purposes, please complete the following steps:

1. Complete your Free Application for Federal Students Aid ([FAFSA.gov](https://www.fafsa.gov)) without parent information. If your appeal is denied you will need to make a correction to your FAFSA to add parent information and signature.

2. Submit a personal letter of appeal to the financial aid office, indicating why you should be considered an independent student for financial aid purposes.

3. Submit supporting documentation from authoritative, objective, third-party individuals or organizations.* These may be letters to the financial aid office from individuals who have first-hand knowledge of your situation, copies of legal documents, or other applicable documentation.

   Examples of appropriate third party documentation include (but are not limited to):
   
   a. Counselors or teachers  
   b. Clergy  
   c. Community groups  
   d. Government agencies  
   e. Medical personnel  
   f. Courts  
   g. Prison administrators  

*Letters of support from relatives and friends are not considered third-party, and will therefore only be accepted for cases in which other appropriate documentation cannot be obtained (case-by-case).

4. Remember to include your name and Washburn ID # on the documents that you submit, and to indicate that these documents are for an “Independent Appeal.” Documents may be submitted by mail, fax, or email.

5. You may want to give a copy of this appeal form to anyone writing a letter of support for you, so that he or she can see what constitutes as grounds for an appeal, and focus his or her letter on the most appropriate points of support.

After reviewing your circumstances carefully, we will decide if you must provide parental information of your circumstances or allow you to proceed without providing parental data.

Please allow a minimum of ten business days for completion of the appeal process upon receipt of all requested documentation.

I certify that the information provided by me is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if I receive financial aid based on incorrect information I will have to pay it back. I also understand that if I purposely give false or misleading information, I may be fined, sent to prison, or both.