

**2009-2010  
REQUEST FOR INDEPENDENT STATUS**

The University of Wyoming  
Office of Student Financial Aid  
Department 3335  
1000 East University Avenue  
Laramie, WY 82071

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ W# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Federal regulations define the circumstances in which students are considered financially independent of parental support for their educational costs. These rules are explained in the Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA) and are listed on the back of this form. If you do not qualify under those rules, the Financial Aid Administrator may consider, using professional judgment, exceptional circumstances, which would allow you to be considered financially independent for purposes of federal financial aid.

I understand that I do not meet the requirements for gaining independent status, but my home situation is such that I believe that neither of my parents should be expected to contribute to my education. I understand that my parent's unwillingness to provide support or my choice not to accept support are unacceptable reasons to make this request. (See the reverse of this form for more information on acceptable reasons.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I have attached a written description of my unique circumstances, which makes me someone who has not been, and who should not be, financially dependent on either of my parents. Provided with this form are three letters (from non-familial sources such as foster parents, social workers, clergy, counselors, police; etc.), justifying my situation. (Note: In addition to the three letters, statements from a parent(s) may also be included, along with statements from adult siblings, all which will be reviewed for appropriateness.) Letters attached are from the following people:

Name of Individual	Job Title or Relationship to me
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I understand this is a request that is subject to the professional judgment of the UW Financial Aid Office staff. This request may be subject to further documentation and any decision is final.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Warnings: If you purposely give false or misleading information on this form to help establish eligibility for federal student aid, you may get a \$10,000 fine, a prison sentence, or both. A professional judgment made in a financial aid office applies only to the school where the decision was made. It is NOT automatically transferable to (an) other institution(s).

Office use only \_\_\_\_\_

IND-NEW

### **Federal Definition of a Financially Independent Student**

Federal regulations define a financially independent student as one who can answer “yes” to one of the following questions:

- Were you born before January 1, 1986?
- As of today, are you married? (Answer “Yes” if you are separated but not divorced.)
- At the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year, will you be working on a master’s or doctorate program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, graduate certificate, etc.)?
- Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training?
- Are you an honorably discharged veteran of the U. S. Armed Forces, or will be by June 30, 2010?
- Do you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010?
- 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, 2010?
- At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?
- 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 as determined by a court in your state of legal residence?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2008, 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, 2008, 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, 2008, 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?

### **More Information on Acceptable Reasons to Exempt Parents from Their Contribution Toward Student’s Education Costs**

A basic tenet of financial aid philosophy is that the family has the first responsibility to assist a student with their education costs. The requirements listed above are federal law and only exceptional situations will be considered for exempting parents from their responsibility. Generally only situations where a serious actual or potential threat exists to the student’s well being will be considered. This threat can be either physically or emotionally abusive in nature and may be the result of a parents’ mental illness, addiction or other forms of imbalance which affect the parent-student relationship to the detriment of the student. In these situations, the Student Financial Aid Office does not wish to subject the student to parental contact, which could cause additional conflict. Thus the student must carefully and fully explain their particular situation and provide three forms of third party (non-familial) documentation (statements from social services, counselors, police, lawyers, clergy, etc.) to support their appeal of the federal requirements. These records are never shared with anyone other than the student and are used solely to verify the student’s estrangement with their parent or parents