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ID#A

2016-2017

Proof of Independence Review Form

Student's Name _____

Student's ID or Social Security Number _____

Student's 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 Orange 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 **2016-2017** if you meet at least one of the following criteria:

- ☐ You were born before January 1, **1993**?
- ☐ You are married
- ☐ You are a graduate student (enrolled in a master's or grad certificate program)
- ☐ You are currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces
- ☐ You are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces

You may also be considered independent for **2016-2017** 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 your circumstances is required. **Please check the condition below that best describes your situation and provide the documentation indicated.**

- ☐ Both parents are deceased, you were adopted, you were in foster care, or a ward of the court, at anytime since you turned 13. Provide death certificates or court documentation of status.
- ☐ Have children who will receive **more** than half their support from you between July 1, **2016** and June 30, **2017**. Provide **2015** tax returns and/or a letter explaining living arrangements, earnings and support information, and the name of person(s) claiming child(ren) if other than self.
- ☐ Are or were in legal guardianship as determined by a court. Provide court documentation.
- ☐ Have dependents (other than your children or spouse) that live with you and receive **more** than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, **2017**. Provide **2015** tax returns, and a letter explaining living arrangements, earnings and support information.





2016-2017

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Office of Financial Aid

Proof of Independence Review Form (con't)

___ Are or were an emancipated minor as determined by a court in your legal state of residence. Provide court documentation from your state of legal residence. **Please note that New York State does not grant emancipation status to minors.**

___ Were determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless by a director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Provide written, signed documentation from shelter or agency on organization letterhead.

___ Were determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless by your high school homeless liaison. Provide written, signed documentation from school liaison on district letterhead.

___ Were determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless by a director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program. Provide written, signed documentation from agency on organization letterhead.

The following situations **do not** qualify as sufficient to merit a change to independent status:

- Parents refusal 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

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 FAFSA record to include your parent's information and signature. 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 Financial Aid Office and ask to speak to 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 Orange and must provide documentation of their situation.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

