

Professional Judgement Appeal - Unusual Circumstances

Student Information/Resource Statement
2026 - 2027 Academic Year

Student ID # _____

For Office Use Only

DISCLAIMER: CONTENT WARNING FOR POTENTIALLY TRAUMATIC MATERIAL

We encourage you to approach this content with caution. We recognize that topics related to trauma can evoke strong emotional responses, and it's important to prioritize your well-being while engaging with this material. It's okay to prioritize your mental health and well-being above all else. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed or in need of support while consuming this content, we urge you to reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or mental health professional for assistance. Please take care of yourself and prioritize your emotional needs as you navigate this content.

Please print clearly. Do not leave any item blank.

Student Name: _____ Student ID# _____
Last First MI

The Professional Judgement Appeal - Unusual Circumstances process is used to address on a **case-by-case basis** a student who claims to be independent but does not meet the federal criteria. Many students feel they are independent because they are currently living on their own or because their parents no longer claim them on their income taxes. The Financial Aid Office is **required** by federal law to consider parent information unless the student meets specific criteria as defined on the FAFSA. Parent refusal to contribute to education costs or provide income information is not, by itself, a basis for a review. We may be able to override your dependent status if **unusual family circumstances** exist that make it impossible for the student to contact their their parent(s).

THE FOLLOWING BELOW IS NOT CONSIDERED A UNIQUE AND EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCE

- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency
- Student is currently living on their own
- Student's desire for grants instead of loans.
- Student does not wish to communicate with parent(s).
- Parent(s) unwillingness to complete the parent section of the FAFSA application.
- Parent(s) unwilling or unable to contribute to the student's education.
- Parent(s) did not claim the student as an dependent for their income tax purposes.

SOME CIRCUMSTANCES GIVEN CONSIDERATION WHERE PARENTAL SUPPORT HAS BEEN TERMINATED

- A student's voluntary or involuntary removal from their abusive family environment that threatens the student's health or safety.
- Deceased Parent(s)
- Incarcerated Parent(s)
- Parental Drug Abuse
- Unusual parental circumstances that can be sufficiently documented. (e.g., inability to locate parents, abandonment by parent, etc.).
- Parent(s) lives out of the country and student is unable to contact them.

A Financial Aid Officer will review the student's appeal by examining the supporting documentation provided by the student and will either approve or deny the students request. This decision is final and cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education.

If appeal is eligible: We will notify students via Saint Paul College email. Your financial aid will then be packaged based on independent status. Additional documents may be needed because of corrections to your account. You should check your Saint Paul College email to see if you have a new status letter on your eServices account.

If your appeal is not eligible: We will notify you via Saint Paul College email. In order to receive a financial aid award, you will be required to provide parent financial information and parent signature(s) on your 2026-2027 FAFSA. All decisions on dependency overrides are made based on Professional Judgment by the Financial Aid Office at Saint Paul College. All decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

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Instructions & Required Steps

STEP 1

Student Statement *(Required)*

Your statement must explain the following:

- Your current relationship with your parents
- The last date of contact with each parent and the frequency of contact over the last 3 years, minimum
- Specific dates of the events and detailed explanation of your separation from your parents
- How have you been supporting yourself financially
- Where and whom have you been living
- Statement MUST include a hand written signature and date

STEP 2

Third Party Professional Letter *(Required)*

One original letter from a professional individual documenting their first-hand knowledge of the students special circumstance.

A third party individual can be, but not limited to: a counselor, current/former teacher, social worker, clergy, police, doctor, agency official, pastor, community leader etc.

The letter must:

- Included the students first and last name in the statement
- Relationship between the professional and the student
- A detailed explanation referring to the actual events—this should be from the writer’s direct knowledge of the students circumstance
- The statement from the third-party professional MUST have a letterhead of the business or organization they are representing
- If letterhead is not obtainable, the letter must be notarized and include the third parties name, business/organization they represent, title, phone, email, address and date
- Statement MUST include a hand written signature and date

STEP 3

Personal Supporting Letter *(Required)*

One original letter from someone who can verify their first-hand knowledge of the students special circumstances.

The letter must:

- Be notarized
- Must include the individuals name, address, phone, email
- Included the students first and last name in the statement
- Relationship between the individual and the student
- A detailed explanation referring to the actual events—this should be from the writer’s direct knowledge of the students circumstance
- A second Third Party Professional Letter will also meet this requirement as long as it is from a different person and would not need to be notarized
- Statement MUST include a hand written signature and date

STEP 4

Supporting Documents

If you have additional supporting documents, please include them with this form.

Documents include but doesn’t limit to:

- Social agency reports
- Court decree
- Medical records
- Death certificates
- Documentation that verifies the parent is incarcerated

Student Certification:

I certify that the information provided on this appeal and the attached documents is true, complete, and accurate. I understand that purposefully providing false information could result in a reduction and/or repayment of aid, and/or denial of future appeals in this and future years.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

If your signature is typed you must upload it into the Secure Uploader at www.saintpaul.edu/faforms

For Financial Aid Office Use Only:

Outcome: Eligible for Professional Judgment
 Not eligible for Professional Judgment

FPP: _____

Comments: _____

Financial Aid Authorization: _____ Date: _____