



## 2008-2009 Appeal for Independent Status

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SS# \_\_\_\_\_ STUDENT ID \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_

The 2008-2009 *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) asks the following questions to determine if a student is considered independent for financial aid purposes:

- Were you born before January 1, 1985
- At the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, will you be working on a masters or doctorate program (such as MBA, MD, JD, PhD)
- As of today, are you married?
- Do you have children who receive more than half of their support from you?
- Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who will live with and who will receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2009?
- Are both of your parents deceased or are you (or were you until age 18) a ward/dependent of the court?
- Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?
- Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for the purposes other than training?

A "yes" response to any of these questions determines that a student is independent.

If you do not qualify under the above criteria to be considered independent, the Financial Aid Services Office may consider exceptional circumstances to allow an otherwise dependent student to apply for aid without parental financial information. Only extreme, documentable cases in which parents' information cannot reasonably be obtained will warrant a change in the student's status by the Financial Aid Services' Appeal Committee. Parental refusal to assist you with educational costs, your decision to be independent, or living separately from your parents are not, by themselves, considered valid reasons for a dependency override by the Financial Aid Services office.

**Any decision rendered from UMass Dartmouth applies to the current award year and only to this University. The federal government has given financial aid administrators the option to use professional judgement for extenuating circumstances, and their decision is considered final by the U.S. Department of Education.**

**All documentation must accompany this request before your appeal will be reviewed. Failure to submit required information will result in automatic denial of your request.**

**Procedure:**

1. Attach a written statement of your unique family circumstances which explains why you should not be required to submit your parents' financial information. You should include a complete history of where you have lived, your sources of income, and how you have supported yourself since not living with your parents.
2. Complete and sign a *2008-2009 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* leaving the parental section information blank and enclose it with your appeal.
3. Complete this form and attach **three** letters of support documenting your situation. Third parties such as foster parents, social workers, counselor, clergy, etc. should write these letters. Letters are attached from the following people:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

I understand that I do not meet any of the standard criteria for independent status, but my family situation is so extreme that neither of my parents should be considered as a resource for my education.

I understand this is a request that is subject to the professional judgement of the Financial Aid Services' office and I authorize the office to contact any person whom I have asked to document my situation. Further documentation may be requested and any decision rendered is final.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_