DETERMINATION OF DEPENDENT OR INDEPENDENT STUDENTS

Independent Student. A student who meets any one of the following criteria shall be classified as an independent student for the determination of residency for tuition purposes:

1. The student is 24 years of age or older by the first day of classes of the term for which residency status is sought at a Florida institution;
2. The student is married;
3. The student has children who receive more than half of their support from the student;
4. The student has other dependents who live with and receive more than half of their support from the student;
5. The student is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces or is currently serving on active duty in the United States Armed Forces for purposes other than training; or
6. Both of the student’s parents are deceased or the student is or was (until age 18) a ward/dependent of the court.
7. The student is working on a master’s or doctoral degree during the term for which residency status is sought at a Florida institution.
8. The student is classified as an independent by the financial aid office at the institution.

Evidence that the student meets one of these criteria will be requested by the higher education institution.

A student who does not meet one of the criteria outlined above may be classified as an independent student only if he or she submits documentation that he or she provides fifty (50) percent or more of the cost of attendance for independent, in-state students as defined by the financial aid office at the institution (exclusive of federal, state, and institutional aid or scholarships).

Dependent Student. All other students who do not meet the above definition of an independent student shall be classified as dependent students for the determination of residency for tuition purposes.

Process/Standards for Proving Independent Status

Dependent or independent status will be based on a copy of a student’s or his/her parent’s most recent tax return or other documentation as appropriate. This other documentation includes information submitted on or in conjunction with the Admissions Application, on the Residency Statement, or on other supporting evidence collected by the higher education institution. The college or university is not required to collect tax returns for those students who are under the age of 24 and claim to be dependent on the Residency Statement.

The following documents are examples of evidence that must be provided to the higher education institution to prove the student’s status as an independent if the student is under the age of 24 by the first day of classes of the term:

- Marriage certificate, insurance information showing marital status, most recent tax return showing marital status;
- Tax returns showing support of children or other dependents who live with and receive more than half of their support from the student;
- Military discharge documents;
- Legal documents showing student is a ward/dependent of the courts; or
- Documentation showing that the student provides fifty (50) percent or more of the cost of attendance as defined by the financial aid office at the institution (examples may include: tax return, W-2 form, pay stubs, employer earnings verification).