2027-2028 Unusual Circumstance Application

Student Name: _____ GCU Student Number: _____

Current address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Date: _____

Dependency status change due to unusual circumstances

According to Federal regulations for Federal Title IV funding, a student is independent if he meets any one of the following criteria:

- The student was born before January 1, 2004
- The student is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces

  A veteran is defined as a person who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable and engaged in active duty (excluding basic training).
- At the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year, the student is a graduate/professional student
- The student is currently or was in legal guardianship by someone other than parent or stepparent as determined by the court
- The student has children or other people (excluding their spouse) who live with the student and receive more than half of their support from the student now and between July 1, 2027, and June 30, 2028
- The student is currently or was an emancipated minor as determined by the court
- The student is married on the date he submitted his FAFSA
- At any time since the age of 13, both parents were deceased, student was in foster care, or was a dependent/ward of the court
- The student was determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless by the student's high school or school district homeless liaison or designee at any point in 2026 or after
- The student was determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless by the director or designee of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving those experiencing homelessness at any point in 2026 or after
- The student was determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless by the director or designee of a project supported by a federal TRIO or GEAR UP program grant at any point in 2026 or after
- The student is on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training

If a student does not meet any one of the above requirements to automatically qualify as an independent student for financial aid purposes but feels he should be considered as an independent student because of Unusual Circumstances[1], the student may complete and submit this form to his GCU Student Services Counselor.

[1]*Unusual circumstances include an abusive family environment, abandonment by parents, refugee or asylee status and separation from parents or parents who are displaced in a foreign country, victims of human trafficking, incarceration, incarceration of parents where contact poses a risk to the student, or a student is otherwise unable to contact or locate his parents.*

The following conditions **DO NOT** qualify as reasons for an unusual circumstance:

- Parents refuse to contribute to the student's education
- Parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency

By law, the Office of Financial Aid is allowed to use "professional judgment" on a case-by-case basis to determine if a student would meet the criteria to be considered independent. The student must provide documentation to support this request. The documentation must be consistent and relate to the student's unusual circumstances that differentiate the student from the conditions of other students.

Generally, the documentation of unusual circumstances should come from two third-parties who know the student's situation (such as a teacher or member of the clergy), but in cases where this is not available, the school can accept a signed and dated statement from the student or a family member detailing the unusual circumstances.

The student can only be a dependent of a biological/adoptive parent; a foster parent or legal guardian is <u>not</u> treated as a parent for Financial Aid purposes.

According to Federal Regulations, all information provided by the student must support the final decision of the Office of Financial Aid and the decision cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education.

Please describe the unusual circumstances that would merit the change to "independent" status (or submit a signed and dated statement) and provide documentation that will substantiate this claim:

I certify that the information I have submitted herein is correct and true to the best of my knowledge, and I attest that I will notify GCU of any changes to my circumstances during my enrollment.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature options: 1) Original mailed or delivered to GCU, 2) Original uploaded to Student Portal, or 3) Signed by finger or stylus and uploaded to Student Portal. A signature cannot be typed even if typed in a cursive font.