



# Third Party Documentation Policy

This policy applies to third party documentation requirements necessary for financial aid eligibility purposes. When third party documentation is required, the documents must meet the criteria outlined below to be considered acceptable.

## Documentation Requirements

- Provided by an impartial, 3<sup>rd</sup> party professional. (Please see Impartial 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Professionals section below)
- Examples of typically acceptable official documentation can include but not limited to a signed letter on letterhead from an official 3<sup>rd</sup> party individual or, a medical bill, progress notes from a therapy session, medical chart, x-ray, discharge paperwork, pay stub, death certificate, obituary, funeral program, newspaper article, certificate of separation, divorce decree, insurance statement, moving documents, lease agreement, legal documents, military orders, summons, arrest warrant, police report, or court documents.
- If a student has already submitted documentation to Disability Services that speaks to the specific situation that must be documented, a letter from Disability Services can suffice as long as it specifically references the time frame for the extenuating circumstances.
- If documentation is provided that is not on letterhead or does not include a wet or digital signature, then a cover letter is required before the attached documentation can be considered. The cover letter must include an official letterhead, a date, the student's name, the name of the third-party professional, and reference the attached documentation for review.
- If a letter is being submitted, it must be on official letterhead and also include a wet or digital signature.
- If the statement is in email form, it must be sent directly from the 3<sup>rd</sup> party to the Student Financial Aid Office (forwarded emails are not acceptable).
- Clearly identify the student by name within the document. If the documentation outlines extenuating circumstances of a direct family member rather than the student individually, supporting documentation must be provided to demonstrate the relationship to the student.
- Support both the circumstances and time period outlined by the student within their appeal.

## Impartial 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Professionals

An impartial, 3<sup>rd</sup> party professional is an individual (or entity) qualified in an area of expertise associated with the student's circumstances. The individual cannot be a family member of the student, or otherwise in a position to benefit (financially or otherwise) from the outcome of the student's financial aid application. Examples of third-party professionals are included below for ease of reference. Note: This is not an exhaustive list, however we do hope the information will assist students in understanding where they may obtain appropriate documentation for circumstances cited.

- Physician
- Pastor/Clergy
- Lawyer
- Social Worker
- Psychologist
- Judge
- Parole Officer
- Law enforcement
- Human Resource Director
- Medical Secretary
- Obituary (student must be named in the document, or provide documentation of family relationship)
- Employer
- Counselor
- Religious Leader
- Teacher
- Psychiatrist
- Police Officer
- Court officials
- Funeral Director
- Military Clerk
- Physician's Assistant
- Medical Technician
- Nurse

## **Statement of Privacy**

Information provided for financial aid application purposes is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). More information regarding FERPA is available in the Regent University Student Confidentiality Policy [here](#). Additionally, third party documentation is frequently required in association with student appeals due to circumstances beyond their control that impacted their academic performance. The documentation primarily needs to support the extenuating nature of the circumstance and verify that it would reasonably have impacted academic performance for the time period in question.

The Student Financial Aid Office realizes that the details for some forms of extenuating circumstances are sensitive in nature, and it is not always necessary to provide full disclosure of a circumstance to meet the requirements of the appeal. For example, a student experiencing a medical condition may provide a doctor's note that affirms a condition existed during the period of the student's enrollment that would have impacted their academic performance, and that this condition is now managed. In this example the physician note would not need to include the details of the medical diagnosis itself.

## **Document Verification**

The Student Financial Aid Office will, at their discretion, select supporting documentation for authenticity verification. When a document is selected for authenticity verification, a request is sent to the original issuing entity to confirm the contents are a true and accurate reflection of the document in their records.

Document tampering or falsification of records submitted to obtain access to federal funds will be referred to the Department of Education's Office of the Inspector General, as required by law.

If you have any questions, please contact us at:

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