

Special Circumstances/Professional Judgment Process

The Office of Financial Aid recognizes that for some students a family's income reported on the FAFSA does not reflect the current financial situation of the family. In certain limited cases, the Department of Education allows a Financial Aid Administrator to substitute the reported income on the FAFSA with current or future income to calculate a student's eligibility for financial aid to more accurately reflect a family's circumstances. Per federal regulations, a financial aid administrator must perform professional judgment on a case by case basis according to institutional and federal mandates.

Examples of Special Circumstances:

- loss of employment reducing yearly income by at least 15%
- loss of earnings due to disability or natural disaster reducing yearly income by at least 15%
- loss of untaxed income or benefit reducing yearly income by at least 15%
- separation or divorce
- death
- one-time source of income
- extraordinary, necessary medical, dental or legal expenses paid in current year

If you feel that you meet at least one of the criteria above and can document your claim, please contact the Office of Financial Aid. We will discuss the process to determine whether we can address your concern at this time.

Circumstances we are not able to consider include (but are not limited to):

- Car payments
- Consumer debt
- High mortgage payments
- Elementary, secondary or post-secondary tuition expenses for other family members
- Weddings

An institution's decision concerning Professional Judgment is final and cannot be appealed to the Department of Education.