



Section 479A of the Higher Education Amendments of 1992 authorized the financial aid administrator to exercise Professional Judgement (PJ) on a case-by-case basis for special or unusual circumstances. The Financial Aid Office's decision to Professional Judgement is final and cannot be appealed. The Department of Education does not have the authority to override our decision. A student can only submit one request per circumstance per school year.

Students requesting an aid adjustment and have an SAI in the range of 0 through -1500 will be denied as they are already eligible for full Pell.

**Special Circumstances** is defined as financial situations that have changed causing the student to request adjusting data elements in the Cost of Attendance (COA) or Student Aid Index (SAI) calculation.

The FAFSA® and WASFA application collect income information from two years prior to current school year. The Financial Aid Office recognizes that financial circumstances can often change and impact a family's ability to pay for the cost of education. Students experiencing special circumstances impacting their income or household expenses may request an evaluation of the income used to establish their eligibility or adjustments to their cost of attendance by submitting the Aid Adjustment form available on our website or in person on either campus.

**Special Circumstances include, but not limited to the following:**

- Loss/reduction of income
- Death of parent or spouse
- Divorce/legal separation
- Extraordinary expenses

**Special Circumstances DOES NOT include the following:**

- Standard cost of living
- Consumer debt (bankruptcy, home or other loans, other personal debt)
- Discretionary expenses

**Unusual Circumstances** is defined as an adjustment to a student's dependency status based on a unique situation.

Unusual circumstances, more commonly referred to as dependency overrides, are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If a student is determined to be dependent by the FAFSA® believes they qualify for a dependency override due to extenuating circumstances, they can reach out to the Financial Aid Office to discuss submitting a Petition to File Without Parental Information requesting to be considered independent for financial aid purposes.

**Unusual circumstances include, but not limited to the following:**

- Parental abandonment
- Parental incarceration
- Abusive/unsafe family environment

- Parents location unknown
- Parents are incapacitated
- Human trafficking (as described in Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000)
- Legally granted refugee or asylee status

**Unusual Circumstances DOES NOT include the following:**

- Parents refuse to contribute financial support for higher education
- Parents do not claim student as a dependent on their tax return
- Parents refuse to provide information on the FAFSA or verification
- Student is no longer living with parents and demonstrates total self-sufficiency

A student may experience both circumstances that allow the Financial Aid Office to make appropriate adjustments and all required documentation was provided.

**Required Documentation**

The Financial Aid Office must receive all required documentation before determining a decision for the request. Required documentation is dependent on the circumstance and nature of the request. Required documents include, but not limited to the following:

- Aid adjustment form and statement from student
- Copy of termination or notification of reduction in hours from employer
- Signed and dated copy of one to two years prior to the current school year Tax Returns
- One to two years prior to the current school year All W-2s
- Letter of non-filing status
- Death certificate
- Divorce decree
- Child and/or Spousal support payment or receipt
- Medical/dental expenses not covered by insurance
- Other documentation deemed necessary to determine a decision

All submitted documentation will be kept with the student's file.

**Deadline**

ISIR verification, resolution of any inconsistent information and/or required forms attached to the student's FAFSA (example: verification form) must be resolved before processing a request.

Please allow up to 4 – 6 weeks after submitting *all requested* documentation for appeal results. Please note, this timeline may vary depending on the time of year and volume of requests the Financial Aid Office receives.

**Walla Walla Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Vice-President of Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator/Section 504 Compliance Officer; 500 Tausick Way, Walla Walla, WA 99362; 509.527.4382; [titleix@wwcc.edu](mailto:titleix@wwcc.edu).**