

Special Circumstances

If a student believes they have unusual circumstances that may justify an adjustment to their financial aid eligibility, they should contact the Financial Aid Office on their local campus. Two types of requests that may warrant a change to a student's financial aid file are described below.

Special Circumstance Request

May be used when a family's financial circumstances have changed due to death of a parent, divorce, separation, or loss of employment.

Circumstances may include:

- A 30% reduction in income due to changes in employment from last year to this year
- Excessive medical expenses not covered by insurance
- Change in marital status due to divorce or separation
- Death of a primary wage earner

You may be asked to provide:

- Base year income information, layoff or termination notice, projected income information for the current year, Verification Worksheet and other income information in support of your request
- Copies of medical bills and evidence that payment arrangements have been made
- Copies of divorce decrees, W-2's or other income information as required
- Death certificate of primary wage earner and W-2's or other income information as required
- The Special Circumstances Form

Dependency Override Request

Below are the dependency questions from the FAFSA. Answering "Yes" to any one of the following will result in a student being considered an independent student for federal student aid programs and the student will not need to contact the Financial Aid Office to make a request for a dependency override:

- Were you born before Jan. 1, 1994?
- As of today, are you married?
- At the beginning of the 2017–18 school year, will you be working on a master's or doctorate program?
- Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training?

- Are you a veteran of the U.S. armed forces?
- Do you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you?
- Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you?
- At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you a dependent or ward of the court?
- Has it been determined by a court in your state of legal residence that you are an emancipated minor or that you are in a legal guardianship?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2016, were you determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless, as determined by (a) your high school or district homeless liaison, (b) the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or (c) the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program?

Students who do not meet the criteria of an Independent Student by answering “Yes” to one of the dependency questions above may make a request for a dependency override by contacting the Financial Aid Office. The U.S. Department of Education feels that students under 24 years of age should be assisted by their parents in educational expenses. **You cannot live with your parents and request a dependency override.** The Financial Aid Office will review your documents and notify you of the decision. You will be asked to provide **ALL** of the following:

- Three letters. Letters must be on letterhead, from clergy, social worker or a counselor indicating why there is an estrangement from parents
- Verification Worksheet
- Tax return transcript