



WEST LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Office of Financial Aid
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WLU Professional Judgment Policy, Procedure and Timeline

A Professional Judgment refers to the authority of a school's financial aid administrator to adjust, on a case-by-case basis with adequate documentation, elements on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form.

Professional Judgments are categorized into two separate categories:

- Special Circumstances – These are financial situations leading to changes to data elements in either the COA or the EFC/SAI calculation.
 - Changes to family income or assets
 - Separation or Divorce
 - Death of parent/spouse
 - Recent unemployment of student, spouse or contributing parent
 - Medical, dental or nursing home expenses not covered by insurance
 - Tuition expenses at an elementary or secondary school or child/dependent care
 - Severe disability of the student or other member of the student's household
- Unusual Circumstances – Conditions leading to changes to a student's dependency status and are commonly known as a dependency override.
 - Human trafficking
 - Legally granted refugee or asylum status
 - Parental abuse, abandonment, estrangement, incarceration, etc.
 - Unable to contact parents
 - Contact with parents poses risk

Unusual circumstances that will not be considered include scenarios where the parent(s) is not willing to contribute to a student's education, parent(s) will not provide information for the FAFSA or verification, parent(s) does not claim the student on their federal income taxes or the student demonstrates total self-sufficiency. Unusual circumstances are tracked each year and will be moved forward for each subsequent year enrolled at WLU unless the student informs the Financial Aid Office that their circumstances have changed or WLU has conflicting information about the student's independence.

The Director of Financial Aid reviews all requests for both special circumstances and unusual circumstances. In order for the review to begin, the student must provide the applicable forms and documentation. Once all documentation is received it is reviewed as soon as possible but no later than 60 days after the student enrolls. If the student is selected for verification or has been identified as having conflicting data, those processes will happen before any professional adjustments are made. During the review, the Director will decide if the request is a COA adjustment, an adjustment to the data elements used to calculate the EFC/SAI or if it is a valid dependency override.

WLU does not use PJ's to waive general student eligibility requirements or to circumvent the intent of the law or regulations.

WLU's Financial Aid Office provides both the special circumstance form and the unusual circumstance form on their webpage, which can be found by [clicking here](#).