



PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT

Professional Judgment

Some students may have special or unusual circumstances which are not fully accounted for by the standardized federal need analysis formula used by the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA).

These special or unusual circumstances might allow the financial aid office to exercise professional judgment to determine a student's need more accurately by changing certain FAFSA data. This is done on a case-by-case basis upon receipt of proper documentation.

Special circumstances refer to the financial situations (loss of a job, etc.) that justify an aid administrator adjusting data elements in the COA or in the EFC calculation.

Unusual circumstances refer to the conditions that justify an aid administrator making an adjustment to a student's dependency status based on a unique situation (e.g., human trafficking, refugee or asylee status, parental abandonment, incarceration), more commonly referred to as a dependency override.

If you have completed a FAFSA and believe that your circumstances are special, unusual, or both, please contact the financial aid office for information on how to request a professional judgment.

(If you are applying for institutional aid you can also make note of special or unusual circumstances on your *Confidential Financial Aid Application* (CFAA) by completing section J- Parents' Special Circumstances and section K - Explanations/Special Circumstances.)

For questions related to professional judgment and for more information, please contact the financial aid office here:

<https://www.thomasaquinas.edu/admission/contact-financial-aid>