



Professional Judgment (PJ) Policy

Purpose

This policy explains how students can request a Professional Judgment (PJ) review if they have special or unusual circumstances that are not reflected on their FAFSA. A PJ allows the Financial Aid Office to review individual situations and make certain adjustments.

What Is Professional Judgment?

Professional Judgment is a process where the Financial Aid Office can review your situation and make adjustments to your FAFSA information when circumstances have changed or are different than what the FAFSA asks about.

Special Circumstances (financial changes)

Examples include:

- Loss or change in employment or income
- Loss of benefits (child support, Social Security, etc.)
- Death of a parent (dependent students) or spouse (independent students)
- Other financial changes that affect your ability to pay for school

Unusual Circumstances (dependency status changes)

Examples include:

- Human trafficking
- Refugee or asylee status
- Abuse, abandonment, or estrangement from parents
- Parental incarceration

Combination Circumstances

Some students may have both types of circumstances. We can review both at the same time.

Circumstances That Are *Not* Considered Special Circumstances

None of the conditions listed below, singly or in combination, qualify as a special circumstance:

- Bankruptcy, foreclosures or collection costs associated with outstanding debts
- Normal, recurring, or discretionary expenses (credit cards, car payments, vacations, etc.)
- Payments on back taxes owed to the IRS

Circumstances That Are *Not* Considered Unusual Circumstances

None of the conditions listed below, singly or in combination, qualify as an unusual circumstance:

- Parents refuse to contribute to the student's education.
- Parents will not provide information for the FAFSA or verification.
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes.
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency.

Please note that if you were selected for **FAFSA verification**, you must complete that process before we can finish your PJ request.



How to Request a Professional Judgment Review

1. Contact the Financial Aid Office

Ask to start a Professional Judgment request. We will give you the correct PJ Request Form for your situation and award year and tell you what documents you need to provide.

- studentsupport@nathanlayne.com
- (208) 345-6164 or (208) 733-7777

2. Submit Your Form and Documentation

You must submit:

- A completed PJ Request Form
- All required documents that support the reason for your request

Examples of documents may include:

- Pay stubs, termination letters, tax documents
- Court documents or legal records
- Medical bills or insurance statements
- Third-party statements
- Housing or shelter verification

If anything is missing, we will let you know.

3. Review and Decision

Once we have all required documents:

- We review your situation and determine whether a PJ adjustment is allowed
- If approved, update your FAFSA information and recalculate your financial aid eligibility
- If denied, we will explain why in writing

All PJ decisions are made **case by case** based on federal guidelines.

4. Notification

We will notify you in writing **within 14 calendar days** after receiving all required documents.

Your notification will include:

- Whether your request was approved or denied
- Any changes to your financial aid eligibility or awards

Important Information

- Professional Judgment cannot be used to give additional financial aid beyond what federal rules allow.
- All decisions require documentation. Without documents, we cannot process a PJ request.
- The Financial Aid Office may request additional documentation at any time.
- Once your request is reviewed and a decision has been made, that decision is final. You may submit a new Professional Judgment request in the future if your circumstances change or if you can provide additional supporting documentation.