Policy title	Category
Financial Aid - Special and Unusual Circumstances Review	Financial Aid
Owner	**Approved by**
Financial Aid	Ad Council

Policy statement

Financial Aid - Special and Unusual Circumstances Review

Nebraska Wesleyan University understands the investment involved in a college education. When circumstances arise that change the student's and/or family's ability to fund that investment, NWU is willing to review the situation for possible solutions. A student or parent who has experienced such a change should contact the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid by email (financialaid [at] nebrwesleyan.edu (financialaid[at]nebrwesleyan[dot]edu)) or by telephone (402-465-2167) to request a re-evaluation of their financial aid application and file. Each special circumstance is unique and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if additional aid eligibility is possible.

Adjustments to FAFSA Information

When special circumstances occur that are not reflected on your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), adjustments to certain data elements on your application may be warranted which could potentially increase your eligibility for federal, state, or institutional aid. Not every circumstance changes a student's eligibility. Examples of circumstances that could impact your eligibility include: a reduction or loss of employment; the separation/divorce of a parent whose information was provided on the FAFSA ; the death of a parent whose information is included on the FAFSA; incurring unusually high out-of-pocket medical/dental expenses not covered by insurance. If you experience one of these situations, or have another that you feel should be included as part of a re-evaluation, provide a letter of extenuating circumstances to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid along with supporting documentation. Additional documentation may be requested after the initial review for a final determination.

Adjustments to a student's Cost of Attendance (COA) Budget

Special circumstances may increase a student's costs to attend school beyond the average estimated costs determined by NWU. In these situations, an adjustment to the student's COA budget can be requested. Adjustments to COA may result in increased loan eligibility. Not all changes to COA will change aid eligibility. Examples of situations that may justify a COA budget adjustment include: study abroad expenses; the purchase of a computer for educational purposes; additional transportation or living expenses. To request an increase in your COA budget, provide a letter of extenuating circumstances to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid along with supporting documentation. Additional documentation may be requested after the initial review for a final determination.

Unusual Circumstances

There may be unusual circumstances that prevent the student from contacting a parent to file the FAFSA. Examples of unusual circumstances include: the student left home due to an abusive or threatening environment; the student was abandoned by or estranged from their parents, and has not been adopted; the student has refugee or asylee status and are separated from their parents, or their parents are displaced in a foreign country; the student is a victim of human trafficking; the student's parents are incarcerated and contact with the parents would pose a risk; the student is unable to contact or locate their parents, and have not been adopted. The student will need to answer "Yes" to the Unusual Circumstances question on the FAFSA before completing and submitting the application. The student should then submit a letter of extenuating circumstances to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. Additional documentation will be requested, which could include the following: a documented interview between the applicant and a NWU Financial Aid staff member, along with third-party written statements of support/substantiation; the submission of a court order or official Federal or State documentation showing the students' parents or legal guardian(s) are incarcerated; a documented phone call or written statement from an attorney, guardian ad litem, court-appointed special advocate, or representative of TRIO or GEAR UP confirming applicant's circumstances and person's relationship to the student; documented determination of independence made by a Financial Aid Administrator at another institution in the same or prior award year.

A review will be completed by the Director of Scholarships and Financial as soon as all documents requested are received, and a determination will be made within two weeks.

Last revised date
August 7, 2023