

What is a "Special Circumstance"?

When the school's Financial Aid Office decides to make adjustments to a student's reported information on the FAFSA, any changes made will be released ONLY to the school making the changes. If a student decides, after changes have been made at one school, to attend another school, the student must request the adjustments at the next school. Schools ARE NOT REQUIRED to make any adjustments to reported FAFSA information.

The most common "special circumstance" is when a 2020 wage-earner or family supporter's employment or financial situation changes through job changes, job loss, changes in benefit eligibility or the loss of benefits.

Unusual Expenses might be the costs of medical/dental/vision/disability insurance premiums, out-of-pocket medical expenses, co-pays, or costs not covered by insurance – the Pell Grant formula takes a certain amount (based on family size) and offsets that amount against a family's income, but often ACTUAL medical costs exceed the formula amount. Other "unusual expenses" might be the daily distance a student must travel to get to school or storm damages and losses not covered by insurance.

A change in a family's structure – marriage, separation, or a divorce which occurs AFTER the FAFSA was filed might be considered as a special circumstance.

Students requesting a Special Circumstance adjustment should be prepared to document their request. Depending upon the request, documentation may include tax forms, W-2's or pay stubs, unemployment statements, bills, medical bills or statements, and/or insurance statements.