

Professional Judgment Policy

The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as amended, provides the authority for financial aid administrators to exercise discretion in a number of areas when a student has special or unusual circumstances. This authority is known as Professional Judgment (PJ). It allows the financial aid administrator to treat a student individually when conditions exist that differentiate that student from a class of students. PJ decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis as the result of examining and documenting an individual student's unique circumstances.

Requests for review of your unique circumstances should be made to the Financial Aid Office at financialaid@wabash.edu. A member of the Financial Aid team will follow-up with additional questions and/or request additional documentation. The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to request any documentation deemed necessary to support consideration of your unique circumstances. Submission of documentation regarding unique circumstances does not guarantee that additional financial aid will be available. The approval or denial decision made by the Financial Aid Office is final and cannot be appealed to the College or the U.S. Department of Education.

Special Circumstances

• presence of extended family or a second household
• tuition or parochial school expenses paid for the Wabash student's younger siblings
• unreimbursed expenses paid for a parent enrolled at least half-time in a post-secondary program
• pursuit of a recognized educational credential at an eligible institution
• significant education debt
• receipt of one-time, non-recurring income (inheritance, gambling winnings, legal settlement, etc.)
• significant reduction or loss due to recent involuntary job change or unemployment
• significant increase in the cost of the first professional credential
• significant purchase of a computer
• significant dependent care expenses paid by the student
• significant additional costs for students with disabilities
• significant unforeseen life events

• A subsequent adjustment made for your special circumstance might result in:

• a decrease in your eligibility for need-based assistance, or
• an increase in your estimated cost of attendance, thereby increasing the amount of student loans you may borrow

• We cannot take into consideration expenses incurred by choice (e.g., vacations, tithing, etc.).

Unusual Circumstances (Dependency Status)

A student is considered to be independent if they can answer “yes” to any of the dependency questions on the FAFSA. Otherwise, the student is dependent and must provide parent information on the FAFSA.

Documentation of unusual circumstances may allow us to perform a “dependency override” to make the student independent for financial aid purposes. Examples of unusual circumstances include, but are not limited to:

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