

Professional Judgment Policy

1. **Regulatory Authority: HEA Sec. 479A(a)**
2. **Responsible Administrators:** Director of Financial Aid
4. **Applicability:** This policy applies to students with circumstances who qualify them to request a professional judgment adjustment to the data elements on their FAFSA impacting financial aid eligibility. This policy also applies to CBD College's employees with responsibility for documenting and making professional judgment adjustments.
5. **Related documents:** Professional Judgment Request Form
6. **Policy:**

A. Definitions:

Professional Judgment. Professional judgment occurs when a Financial Aid official of a postsecondary educational institution uses its authority to make adjustments to the data elements on a student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). These adjustments could recalculate a student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) or Student Aid Index (SAI). The EFC or SAI are index numbers used to determine if a student is eligible for need-based financial aid. The college can only make adjustments to the data elements on the FAFSA, which may change the EFC or SAI. The college cannot make a direct adjustment to the EFC or SAI. The college can also make adjustments to a student Cost of Attendance (COA). Adjustments to a student's COA do not change the amount of need-based aid a student may qualify for.

There are two types of adjustments that can be requested by a student. One is **Special Circumstances** and the other is **Unusual Circumstances**:

i. **Special Circumstances.** Financial situations (e.g., loss of employment, death of a spouse or parent, change in marital status, extensive medical bills, childcare expenses, etc.) that justify an aid administrator adjusting data elements in the COA or in the EFC calculation.

ii. **Unusual Circumstances.** 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 asylum status, parental abandonment, incarceration), more commonly referred to as a dependency override.

Note: These are not extensive lists; if the student has a situation that does not apply to the examples above, the student must request an appointment with the Assistant Director or Director of Financial Aid. To request an appointment students can email the Director of Financial Aid or the Assistant Director of Financial Aid.

B. Purpose and Scope:

CBD College will consider ALL professional judgment requests and will make its Professional Judgment policy publicly available on its website. To apply, students must complete the Professional Judgement DocuSign form, which will be provided by the Financial Aid Department once the student notifies the office of his/her intent to file for professional judgment. A student may have both a special circumstance and an unusual

circumstance. Supporting documentation pursuant to the request for a professional judgment are listed on the form. Once a student submits all required documentation, a final decision will be made within 14 business days. Students will be notified by email if their request for professional judgment is approved or denied. After processing the request, The Assistant Director or Director of Financial Aid reserves the right to deny a professional judgment request that does not increase a student's eligibility for aid. The decision of the Director of Financial Aid is final and cannot be appealed to the Department of Education.