

Sullivan University uses the FAFSA information submitted to prepare a student's financial aid offer. However, there may be certain situations where a student may need to appeal their situation. The appeals provide the student an opportunity to provide additional documentation about their specific circumstances, such as:

Special Circumstances – when there is a change to a students/parents financial situation

Special Circumstances refer to the financial situations (loss of a job, etc.) that allow the financial aid office to adjust in certain circumstances the Cost of Attendance or the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The FAFSA helps us evaluate your and your family's ability to pay for your education; however, there are some specific situations that may result in an inaccurate assessment of this ability.

To review these situations, we use the special circumstance appeal, which allows you and your family to document your individual financial situation. Our office will then determine if we are able to provide additional financial aid.

If you are facing one of the situations listed below, please consider submitting a Request for adjustment to Expected Family Contribution (EFC) appeal to the Financial Aid Office.

Special Circumstances include but not limited to:

- Loss or change of employment
- Reduction in income or assets
- Loss or change in amount of child support, Social Security, or other benefits
- Divorce or separation of parents
- Death of parent(s)
- Unusual medical expenses (not covered by insurance)
- One-time taxable income used for life-changing events (e.g. IRA, pension distribution, back-year Social Security payments)
- Tuition expenses at an elementary or secondary school for siblings of the student
- Child or dependent care expenses
- At the discretion of the Director, other circumstances may be considered if they are appropriate, reasonable adjustments to reflect a student's situation more accurately

Unusual Circumstances – when a situation allows for an adjustment to a student's dependency status.

We may grant a dependency override on a case-by-case basis for students with unusual circumstances. Federal regulations strictly prohibit a dependency override because of one or more of these factors:

1. your parent(s) refuse to contribute to your education,
2. your parent(s) are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification,
3. your parent(s) do not claim you as a dependent for income tax purposes, and/or
4. you demonstrate total self-sufficiency (i.e., you financially support yourself).

Unusual circumstances do include (and may cause any of the aforementioned conditions):

1. abandonment by your parents,
2. an abusive family environment that threatens your health or safety, and/or
3. your inability to locate your parent(s).

In such cases an override might be warranted.

If we determine that an override is appropriate, we must justify that determination and retain it along with your supporting documentation.

Documentation is critical to the dependency override process. The documentation, in almost all cases, should originate from a third party with knowledge of your unusual circumstances.

A third party that knows your situation (e.g., a teacher, counselor, medical professional, member of the clergy, corrections officer, social worker, or court liaison) should corroborate the unusual circumstances. Evidence can be a signed letter or an official document, such as a court order. If third party documentation is not available, we may accept a signed and dated statement from the student or a family member detailing the unusual circumstances.

Unless conflicting information is submitted on the FAFSA, the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships will reaffirm your Dependency status for subsequent years enrolled.

To apply for either of these appeals, please contact our financial aid office for details on filing an appeal.