

Guidelines for Professional Judgment

Office of Student Financial Aid

Old Dominion University

Policy: The Higher Amendments of 1965, as amended, or HEA identifies examples of unusual circumstances that will allow for adjustments to the cost of attendance, FAFSA data element adjustments, Dependency overrides, and changes to loan eligibility.

When appropriate, Old Dominion University Financial Aid administrators and Counselors may adjust the cost of attendance and or the FAFSA data elements to reflect a more accurate state of the student's unusual circumstance(s) on a case-by-case basis.

Procedures

Students requesting review in any of these areas will be required to submit a Financial Aid Professional Judgment form (PJ) or a written request, supported by documentation as required. In preliminary discussion, the financial aid administrator will explain the options available to the student and inform student of the specific documentation that will be required before a decision is made.

A reasonable time limit of 2 weeks will be established for the student to submit the PJ form with all documentation. Incomplete PJ forms will not be considered. The consequences of the student's decision not to pursue the process will be explained and no further action will be taken by financial aid staff.

Student and parents should allow up to 3 to 4 weeks for a decision after submitting all documents.

If adjustments are made, the student will be notified via revised award notification and via email.

Students/ parent Application and Review Process

- The initial award package does not meet their current unusual circumstances.
- Medical, dental or nursing home expenses not covered by insurance- must have paid statements and not already itemized on tax return. Medical expenses must exceed \$3,000.
- Changes in dependent parent or independent student's income
- Student needs an increase in cost of attendance for additional necessary expenses not included in budget.
- Other- see PJ form

Counselors and program administrators may exercise judgments concerning adjustments in the following areas:

- Determination of Dependency Status
- Determination of Cost of Attendance
- Expected Family Contribution- Dependent student parents and Independent student and spouse
- Satisfactory Academic Progress-

Fall 2014 Term Only: Due to administrative error (Programming error in Banner):

SAP appeal deadlines have been extended, for students who were identified via reports due to Banner system errors (students not flagged as not meeting SAP,). Students meeting the criteria was identified on a SAP report, contacted and noted on RHACOMM. These records will be processed upon receipt of documents. For fall 2014, Associate Director for FPB students review found it necessary to continue reviewing credit hours on Shaterm instead of academic plan. Advisors were not fully aware of new policy that SAP form must match academic plan. The new policy wasn't fully properly implemented.

- The Resolution of Overawards
- Remedies for Institutional Error
- Adjustments to Standard (Institutionally Determined) Packaging
- Others

Dependency Status- Students must complete and submit the appeal for review of dependency status form along with supporting documentation described on the form.

Students may initiate review if they have the following circumstances:

Student had been in custody of someone other than biological parent. When court document states joint custody is with biological parent and another person- student cannot be considered independent.

Student demonstrates estranged relationship with both parents.

Change in marital status (previously married, now divorced/separated).

Termination of guardianship during the award year.

Death of a single or widowed parent or death of a divorced parent as long as documentation is presented to show that the non-custodial parent does not support the student.

Emancipation of the student by court order due to abuse of the student or other unusual circumstances.

Note: Refusal or Inability to contribute to the educational expenses of a student by parent or step-parent who claims student as an income tax exemption does not constitute an “**unusual**” circumstance, and is not grounds for exception by Old Dominion University staff.

Cost of Attendance

Increased cost of attendance (specific components) to include special supplies (i.e. lab coats, dental instruments) as required by an instructor for all students enrolled in the course or program of study.

- Actual Cost of Credit Hours enrolled.
- Books and Supplies above component allowed in standard budget.
- Child Care/Elder Care (not to exceed \$800 per month)
- Transportation at .58 per mile.
- Allowances for two round-trips home per year for students whose permanent resident is outside of Tidewater area.
- Computer cost up to \$3000- student may submit receipts or Counselor may use cost of computer to clear over awards. In extenuating circumstances; for example, if computer stolen, student may submit police report or other proof with receipts and financial aid will allow a second computer increase.
- Insurance Premium- Life insurance premiums are permitted if payments of the premiums are a condition of court action in marital separations cases; or if policy was in effect prior to admission of the client to the University; or if the client is a parent with custody of children.
- Car Insurance/ Repairs
- Parking decal
- Fees, other than the standard included in the COA. (Ex. Mandatory preview fees, graduation fees, lab fees, etc.)
- Required supplies, equipment, uniforms. Musical or technical instruments, art supplies, drafting tools.
- Increased cost of attendance to include special supplies (i.e. lab coats if required by an instructor for all class members.
- Required research cost: photocopying, travel and lodging for field research etc.
- Other

Circumstances meriting considerations for EFC adjustments:

- 1) Independent Student or spouse or the dependent student's parent(s) (or stepparent) earned money in the base year, but has lost or had reduced income in the current year.
- 2) Independent student or dependent student has already applied for aid, but since that time, student's spouse or parent has divorced, separated or died. The administrator/ Counselor must account for any support the student/family receives from the non-custodial parent or from the estate.
- 3) A student or parent may request adjustments if base year income included non-recurring payments or income, (i.e. pension fund refund, inheritance, bonus, proceeds from sale of an asset) which either the family could not reasonably be expected to use for educational expenses because of non-discretionary unusual expenses, and/or this portion of base income is also being reported as an asset. Examples of allowable unusual non-discretionary expenses are funeral expenses, and court-ordered payments (judgments, child support).
- 4) **The student or parent(s) no longer receives benefits such as child support, taxable social security, or other sources of incomes.**
- 5) **Medical and Dental- exorbitant medical bills paid out of pocket not covered by insurance by parents. Also, medical bills may not be counted if itemized on student's or parent's federal tax returns. Medical expenses must exceed \$3,000**
- 6) Recalculation of EFC due to valid changes in number of household. Number in post-secondary education.
- 7) Natural Disasters
- 8) Other extenuating circumstances not listed.

Parent Attending College

- 1) From the institution the parent is attending – (a) proof of at least half-time registration, dated after the other institution's withdrawal date for the semester, and (b) proof that the parent is enrolled in a program that leads to a college degree or certificate.
- 2) From the enrolled parent – a statement that he/she will not receive educational benefits from another (such as employer, sponsored programs).

Note- If selected for verification, first must complete verification and must allow the correction to load before completing the PJ. Once complete PJ, on last page of ISIR select yes for Professional judgment used.

Resolve any conflicting information before making any professional judgment changes.

Old Dominion University financial aid will not need to take in consideration the Income Protection Allowance (IPA) as all PJ's will be well documented and complexities of IPA will not be necessary.



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There will be no appeals for students/parents who voluntarily quit their jobs (unless students/parents are forced to quit by given a choice to quit or be fired).

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