

NEOMED ACADEMIC POLICY	POLICY NO: 3349-AC-254
ACADEMIC POLICY TITLE: Financial Aid Special Circumstance Adjustment Policy	EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2020 REVISED AND UPDATED: April 1, 2021
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: Office of Financial Aid	

(A) PURPOSE

This policy outlines the conditions that the Office of Financial Aid may consider when adjusting data provided on the student’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or adjust a student’s Cost of Attendance to reflect extraordinary circumstances that are not easily documented on the FAFSA application.

(B) SCOPE

This policy applies to all NEOMED students. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, provides school financial aid administrators the ability to adjust a student’s cost of attendance or the data used to calculate the Expected Family Contribution on a case-by-case basis. The circumstance must be documented and demonstrate the special circumstance that differentiates the student from others.

(C) DEFINITIONS

- (1) “Cost of Attendance” or “COA” refers to an estimate of a student’s educational expenses for the academic year, including tuition and fees, textbooks and supplies, room and board, and other related educational expenses.
- (2) “Expected Family Contribution” or “EFC”, also known as Estimated Family Contribution or Student Aid Index (SAI), is an anticipation of what a family may be able to contribute (not expected to pay) towards education costs, based on income, asset and household size data reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

(D) POLICY STATEMENT

- (1) The following circumstances make a student eligible for an adjustment to a FAFSA, which could result in the lowering of a student’s EFC, to gain access to additional need-based financial aid funds:

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- (a) permanent loss or reduction of income;
 - (b) one-time income (e.g., withdrawal of retirement funds for emergency purposes);
 - (c) change in marital status of parent or student;
 - (d) change in family size or number of family members in college;
 - (e) death of a parent or student’s spouse; or
 - (f) loss of benefits such as child support, unemployment, alimony, social security/disability or worker’s compensation.
- (2) The following circumstances would make a student eligible for an adjustment to the cost of attendance and to gain access to additional financial aid funds:
- (a) extraneous one-time occurrence expense that threatens the livelihood of the student or members of their household; or
 - (b) disability accommodations.
- (3) Method of Requesting a Special Circumstance
- (a) Students must formally appeal to the Office of Financial Aid to be considered for a special circumstance with the following process:
 - (i) The student must have completed a FAFSA application for the academic year they are requesting a special circumstance.
 - (ii) The student must complete an [Request for Special Circumstance](#) and provide supporting documentation (from an authorized vendor whenever possible) that supports their claim. Students

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should thoroughly review the request form for specific items needed and the time frame for making a request based on the special circumstance.

- (iii) The Office of Financial Aid will review the special circumstance and supporting documentation and will make a final judgment on the student’s request within two (2) business weeks of submission.

(4) Decisions on Special Circumstances

- (a) The decision of the Office of Financial Aid is considered final.

- (i) The Office of Financial Aid will make necessary updates to a student’s FAFSA application when approved for allowable circumstances that warrant a change in FAFSA data.

- (ii) The Office of Financial Aid will notify the student of additional financial aid eligibility if their extraneous, one-time circumstance expense warrants an increase in their Cost of Attendance.

- (iii) The Office of Financial Aid reserves the right to postpone review until an appropriate amount of time has passed for certain circumstances, such as the reduction of income due to a job loss.

(5) Misrepresentation of Special Circumstances

- (a) In the event it has been discovered that a student has misrepresented information or altered documentation to fraudulently obtain federal funds, NEOMED is responsible for reporting the student to the Office of the Inspector General for review. The student may also face criminal liability and may be referred to the respective college’s Committee on Academic and Professional Progress (CAPP) for professionalism concerns.