

<b>NEOMED ACADEMIC POLICY</b>	<b>POLICY NO:</b> 3349-AC-254
<b>ACADEMIC POLICY TITLE:</b> Financial Aid Special Circumstance Adjustment Policy	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> July 1, 2020 <b>REVISED AND UPDATED:</b> March 25, 2024
<b>RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:</b> Office of Financial Aid	<b>APPROVAL AUTHORITY:</b> Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

**(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, food and housing, books, course materials, supplies and equipment, and other related educational expenses.
- (2) "Student Aid Index" (SAI), also known as Expected/Estimated Family Contribution" ("EFC"), refers to a calculation of what the family of a student may be able to contribute (though not expected to pay) toward 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 could make a student eligible for an adjustment to a FAFSA, which could result in the lowering of a student’s SAI, 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 could 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 (this does not include pets unless the student can provide documentation that the pet is a designated service animal);
  - (b) disability accommodations;
  - (c) non-elective out of pocket medical expenses;
  - (d) adding dependents to NEOMED health care coverage;
  - (e) licensed daycare or adult dependent care;
  - (f) criminal background check;

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- (g) residency interview expenses;
  - (h) away rotations;
  - (i) transportation expenses exceeding the COA allowance;
  - (j) additional required books and supplies; or
  - (k) non-deferrable education debt.
- (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 either a [Request for Special Circumstance](#) or a [Request for a Budget Adjustment](#) and provide supporting documentation (from an authorized vendor whenever possible) as detailed on the forms. Students 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 Director of the Office of Financial Aid or their designee 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.

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- (iv) The deadline for appealing judgment on a Request for Special Circumstances is one week prior to the end of the academic year.
- (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.