

Cornell College

Special Circumstance Information

Cornell understands that families and students may find the need to tell us about special circumstances regarding their financial situation that cannot be reported on the FAFSA. When appropriate, the Financial Assistance Office will make adjustments to the FAFSA for special circumstances. Special circumstances do not guarantee that an increase in financial aid will be available. Information regarding special circumstances should be submitted directly to the financial assistance office for review. **Do not send the information with the FAFSA; the processor will destroy it.**

Special circumstances are seen as circumstances imposed on the family, or student, that is out of their control. They do not include consumer debt, home debt, car debt, prior school debt or expenses related to personal choice. In addition, decreases in assets due to changes in the stock market are not considered a special circumstance. The value of a family's assets is reported as of the day the FAFSA is completed and is usually not adjusted.

Federal guidelines require the financial assistance office to complete a process called "Verification" for any student who requests a special circumstance. Verification is a process in which we compare information reported on your FAFSA application with signed copies of the documents listed below. The following documents are required before any special circumstance can be considered:

1. 2008, signed, federal tax returns from parent[s] and student.
2. 2008 W-2 forms from parent[s] and student.
3. Federal Verification Worksheet.

http://www.cornellcollege.edu/financial-assistance/pdfs/Dependent_Verification_Worksheet_09_10.pdf

The following circumstances can be considered for adjustments.

- Loss of income** due to job loss, retirement, change in employment, decrease in pay or life change. (Income loss due to lost overtime is not considered a special circumstance.) If you anticipate a loss of income, please submit a letter of explanation along with the following documents **AFTER a ten week period of unemployment has expired**:
 - A letter explaining the employment change that includes:
 - a. Date of employment change.
 - b. Reason for employment change.
 - c. Expected projected 2009 income. **Please outline how you arrived at the estimated projected 2009 income figure.** Include income from work, unemployment, social security, retirement, severance pay, and/or child support.
- Medical and dental** expenses that are not covered by health insurance and that exceed 7.5% of the family's or student's Adjusted Gross Income. Please submit proof of the expenses not covered by insurance and Schedule A of your 2008 federal tax return.
- Private tuition costs for elementary or secondary schools** paid for other dependents in the student's household. Submit a statement from the private school, on school letterhead; indicate the amount the family will have to pay for the coming academic year. The costs should exclude any scholarships or discounts the family receives.
- A parent attending an institution for higher learning** can be considered a financial burden if it is determined that the attendance is necessary for employment or retraining. The parent must be working toward a degree or certificate. Submit a written statement explaining the circumstances and proof of the college expenses.
- Other** if you have special circumstances not mentioned above, please feel free to write a statement regarding your situation or give us a call.

We do our best to assist families and students with special circumstances. A financial assistance staff member is available to discuss your situation. Please feel free to call us for assistance at 877-579-4049 or 319-895-4216.