Texas County
Technical
College

Professional Judgment Policy

A Financial Aid Officer (FAO) may use Professional Judgement (PJ) on a case-by-case basis to adjust the components of a student's cost of attendance (COA) or the data used to calculate their Student Aid Index (SAI). This adjustment is valid only at the school making the change. The PJ changes for SAI changes are submitted electronically, via the FAFSA Partner Portal, by selecting "SAI Adjustment Requested" for the Professional Judgment field. The next ISIR will indicate "Professional Judgment Processed."

TCTC requires the reason for the adjustment and must be explained and documented. The student must explain the special circumstances that differentiate the student, not to conditions that exist for a whole class of students. A signed statement from the student detailing the situation along with documentation that substantiates what the statement says are required as part of the Professional Judgment submission. Examples of documentation include, but are not limited to, pay stubs, tax returns, unemployment notifications, etc.

Additionally, a student must provide a written explanation and supporting documentation for any element of the cost of attendance that he/she is seeking to have adjusted through the PJ process. A FAO must resolve any inconsistent or conflicting information shown on the output document before making any adjustments. An FAO's decision regarding adjustments is final and cannot be appealed to the US Department of Education as the statute states that nothing within it shall be construed as limiting the authority of aid administrators to make data adjustments for some situations. Professional Judgments cannot be used to waive general student eligibility requirements or to circumvent the intent of the law or regulations. The resulting SAI after a PJ must be used consistently for all FSA funds awarded to that student. In addition, verification must be completed before a Professional Judgment adjustment to any values used to calculate the SAI is applied. TCTC is not permitted to make a Professional Judgment for a student after that student has ceased to be eligible.

When PJ is completed, the student's financial aid award package will be recalculated to include the updated awards. All documentation collected in the PJ process will be retained. The student must reapply for PJ each award year even if the student's situation has not changed.

Dependency Override Policy

TCTC may adjust elements of the student's FAFSA data to make a determination that a dependent student is independent. The dependency override changes are submitted electronically, via the FAFSA Partner Portal, by selecting "FAA override from dependent to independent" for the dependency override field. The next ISIR will indicate "Dependency Override Processed."

TCTC requires the reason for the adjustment to be explained and documented. The student must explain the unusual circumstances that differentiate the student, not to conditions that exist for a whole class of students. A signed statement from the student detailing the situation along

with documentation that substantiates what the statement says is required as part of the dependency override submission. Examples of documentation include, but are not limited to, statements from professionals who may know of the situation such as a counselor, clergy, teacher etc., statements from family members, close friends, or others who are apprised of the situation.

An FAO's decision regarding adjustments is final and cannot be appealed to the US Department of Education as the statute states that nothing within it shall be construed as limiting the authority of aid administrators to make data adjustments for some situations. Dependency overrides cannot be used to waive general student eligibility requirements or to circumvent the intent of the law or regulations. The resulting SAI after a dependency override must be used consistently for all FSA funds awarded to that student. TCTC is not permitted to make a dependency override for a student after that student has ceased to be eligible.

FAAs may use a dependency override made in a prior award year at the same institution. When the dependency override is completed, the school will provide the student with a final determination of their dependency status. In addition, the student's financial aid award package will be recalculated to include the updated awards. All documentation collected in the dependency override process will be retained. FAAs may use a dependency override made in a prior award year at the same institution.