CATAWBA COLLEGE
Established in 1851

Scholarship.
Character.
Culture.
Service.

2027-2028 SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE APPEAL FOR INDEPENDENT STUDENT

Student Name: _____ Student ID# _____

Email: _____ Home/Cell Phone_____

This appeal is a request for a review of special circumstances that you feel may change your financial aid eligibility. Professional Judgment refers to the school's authority to make adjustments to the data elements reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) so that the Department of Education can recalculate the Student Aid Index (SAI). The SAI is the number that the school uses to determine a student's eligibility for need-based financial aid. The school does not have the authority to make direct adjustments to the SAI and can only change data elements that may change the SAI. The Catawba College Financial Aid Office requires that you provide certain documents to support your claim of special circumstances. The Professional Judgment process is an extensive process that requires a thorough review by the Financial Aid Office staff to determine what, if any, changes may be appropriate based on your Appeal. It is a time-intensive process that includes the following steps:

1) The Financial Aid staff will determine if your appeal meets the basic criteria for further review.
2) If the basic eligibility requirements are met, the file will then be reviewed to determine if all required documentation has been submitted. If additional documentation is required, the student will be notified **via email**.
3) Once we have received all of the necessary documentation, we will first verify the accuracy of the information initially submitted on the FAFSA.
4) Once we have ensured the accuracy of the initial FAFSA information, we will then evaluate the appeal, make appropriate changes to the correct FAFSA file, and submit those changes to the Department of Education.
5) The Department of Education will then recalculate the Student Aid Index (SAI) and the student's eligibility for need-based aid.

PLEASE NOTE:

If we verify the current FAFSA, and there is information that was estimated or reported incorrectly ***the corrections may result in a SAI that is actually higher than what your current records indicate.*** *Therefore, the student may have received aid they never would have qualified for had the FAFSA information and the EFC been correct prior to the appeal. The student will lose any financial aid they weren't actually eligible for unless they demonstrate eligibility after a professional judgment is approved and then applied.*

ALSO KEEP IN MIND:
Even if the Professional Judgment process results in a lower SAI, the change may NOT be enough to generate eligibility for need based financial aid and an increase in the financial aid award.

IMPORTANT POINTS AND DATES

- **We recommend you complete your current award requirements & accept any current financial aid that you need to use to satisfy your bill.** Due to the nature of the Professional Judgment process your request may not be completed before the payment deadline. You must satisfy your semester bill even if your Professional Judgment application has not been reviewed or finalized or a Hold may be placed on your registration.

STEP 1- Letter of Explanation

Provide a detailed letter of explanation regarding your current situation that you are asking us to consider. Please remember to include applicable dates and any documentation supporting your circumstance.

STEP 2- Required Documents

Complete the section below that corresponds to your circumstance. **NOTE. Appeals will not be reviewed until all required documents are provided by the student for each situation.**

SITUATION (Check the box for your situation)	**REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION** (check if included)
☐ You and/or your spouse had a **total loss of full-time employment for at least 3 months in 2026/2027.** Name of person unemployed:_____ Their relationship to Student:_____ Number of weeks unemployed in 2026/2027 to date:_____	___ Copy of 2025 IRS Tax Return Transcript and W-2's * ___ Employer's written notice of termination of employment ___ Copy of 2026 Tax Return Transcript ___ Copies of 2026 W-2's for all employment ___ Copies of 2027 pay stubs for all employment ___ Document unemployment benefits & amount received ___ Document all other sources of income (taxed & untaxed) ___ Attending doctor's statement of disability ___ Document date disability/disaster caused unemployment ___ Documentation of employer disability payments ___ Documentation of Worker's Compensation ___ Document Official Declaration of Natural Disaster status __ **IRS Letter of Non-Filing for student *if* they did not file taxes***
☐ You and/or your spouse had a **total loss of untaxed income or benefit.** Benefit Lost: _____Unemployment _____Social Security _____Child Support ☐ Other: _____ Last date benefit received _____	____ Copy of 2025 IRS Tax Return Transcript and W-2's* ___ Benefit provider's notification of loss of benefit ___ Copy of 2026 Tax Return Transcript ___ Copies of 2026 W-2's for all employment ___ Document amount of benefits received in both 2026 and 2027 ___ Copies of most recent pay stubs for all 2025 employment ___ Document all other sources income (taxed & untaxed) in addition (as it applies) ___ Document unemployment benefits & amount received in 2026 and 2027 ___ Court documents verifying date of loss of child support __ **IRS Letter of Non-Filing for student *if* they did not file taxes***
☐ You and/or your spouse had an **unusual one-time income reported on your 2025 IRS Tax Return.** ***Note:** Income used towards discretionary expenses *may not* be taken into consideration as a reason to adjust aid eligibility.	____ Copy of 2025 IRS Tax Return Transcript and W-2's* ____ Copy of original 2025 1040 IRS Tax Return including all schedules/forms and any 1099's. ___ Copy of 2025 Tax Return Transcript ___ Copies of 2026 W-2's for all employment ____ Documentation of source of income ____ Signed and dated statement indicating how the one time income was used along with supporting documentation. __ **IRS Letter of Non-Filing for student *if* they did not file taxes***
☐ You have already filed your FAFSA and since that time: ☐ **You separated/divorced.** ☐ **Your spouse has passed away.** **Date of occurrence _____**	____ Copy of 2025 IRS Tax Return Transcript and W-2's* ___ Copy of 2026 Tax Return Transcript ___ Copies of 2026 W-2's for all employment ___ Copy of court documented separation/divorce decree and/or Documentation of separate residences. ___ Copy of spouse's death certificate or obituary __ **IRS Letter of Non-Filing for student *if* they did not file taxes***
☐ **Other:** ***Note:** The Financial Aid staff will review your circumstance to determine if it is a viable situation for a professional judgment.	____ Copy of 2025 IRS Tax Return Transcript and W-2's* ___ Copy of 2026 Tax Return Transcript ___ Copies of 2026 W-2's for all employment ___ All applicable documentation to support your circumstance. __ **IRS Letter of Non-Filing for student *if* they did not file taxes***

**** How to Obtain an IRS Tax Return Transcript From the IRS *or* Letter of Non-Filing****

Be sure to request a **Tax Return Transcript**.

We ***cannot*** accept a Tax Account Transcript or copies of your 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ.

- Online request at https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript
- Automated Telephone Request: 1-800-908-9946.
- Paper Request: IRS Form 4506T – Must be used if you have moved since filing your taxes. Can be downloaded at www.irs.gov, or obtained from the Financial Aid Office.
- Visit your local IRS Office.

STEP 3- 2027 Income Information

Complete this section to the best of your ability.	Student	Spouse (If Applicable)
Estimated 2027 income earned from work		
Estimated 2027 US income tax paid		
Estimated 2027 unemployment benefits		
Estimated 2027 other taxable income and benefits		
Estimated 2027 untaxed income and benefits		

STEP 4- Complete Verification Worksheet & Requirements

Complete the attached Independent Verification Worksheet and attach all verification requirements listed on form. This includes you and your spouse's (if applicable) 2025 IRS Tax Return Transcript and 2025 W-2's. Complete the form and return it with this appeal and your documentation to the Catawba College Financial Aid Office.

Signatures

Each person signing below certifies that all of the information reported is complete and correct. The student and one parent whose information was reported on the FAFSA must sign and date.

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

SPOUSE SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
(If Applicable)

WARNING: If you purposely give false or misleading information in an attempt to obtain federal financial aid, you may be fined up to $20,000 and/or incarcerated.

All forms & documentations should be submitted to the Financial Aid Office at Catawba College, 2300 West Innes Street Salisbury, NC 28144. To securely upload documents, log into My Catawba Portal, and use the **Financial Aid Document Upload**. **The Financial Aid Document Upload** can be found on the left-hand side of the screen under **Systems.** Due to Federal Regulations, no personally identifiable (Tax Return Transcripts and W2 information) can be scanned to email.

2027-2028 INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION WORKSHEET

Student Name: _____ Student ID# _____

Email: _____ Home/Cell Phone_____

Your 2027-2028 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) was selected for review in a process called verification. This process is mandated by the US Department of Education, requiring schools to verify the data provided on the FAFSA to ensure its accuracy. We must ask you to confirm the information you reported on your FAFSA. To verify that you provided correct information, we will compare your FAFSA with the information on this worksheet and with any other required document(s). If there are differences, your FAFSA information may need to be corrected. You must complete and sign this worksheet and submit it to the Financial Aid Office.

NOTE: *Additional documentation may be requested for clarification.*

A. Student's Household Information

List below the people in your household. **Include**:

- **You:** the student
- **Your spouse:** if you are married. Exclude a spouse who has died or is not living in the household because of separation or divorce. Include a spouse who is on active duty in the U.S Armed Forces.
- **Your and/or your spouse's children:** if any, you will provide more than half of their support from July 1, 2027–June 30, 2028, or if the child would be required to provide your information if they were completing a FAFSA for 2027–2028. Include children who meet either of these standards, even if they do not live with you.
- **Other people:** if you will provide more than half of their support and will continue to provide more than half of their support from July 1, 2027, through June 30, 2028.

The provided criteria for "dependent children" or "other people" align with the requirement that family size align with whom you can claim as a dependent on a U.S. tax return if you were to file a U.S. tax return at the time of completing any the 2027-2028 FAFSA. As a result, you should not include any unborn children in the family size.

FULL NAME	AGE	RELATIONSHIP
Marty Jones(example)	*18*	*Brother*
		Self

B. Income Tax Information

Check ONE box that applies to you, and ONE box that applies to your spouse (if applicable).

STUDENT	SPOUSE
☐ I **filed** a 2025 Federal Tax Return. Did you use the IRS Direct Data Exchange to transfer 2025 IRS income tax return information? ☐ Yes ☐ No: Update your FAFSA and use the **IRS Direct Data Exchange *OR** submit a copy of your signed 2025 federal income tax return. (Form 1040 & any Schedules filed) *(See information below)*	☐ I **filed** a 2025 Federal Tax Return. Did you use the IRS Direct Data Exchange to transfer 2025 IRS income tax return information? ☐ Yes ☐ No: Update your FAFSA and use the **IRS Direct Data Exchange *OR** submit a copy of your signed 2025 federal income tax return. (Form 1040 & any Schedules filed) *(See information below)*
☐ I **did NOT file** a 2025 Federal Tax Return ***BUT*** did earn income in 2025; however, I was not required to file taxes. **List the employer and amount earned for 2025:** Employer:_____ Earned: $_____ Employer:_____ Earned: $_____ Employer:_____ Earned: $_____	☐ I **did NOT file** a 2025 Federal Tax Return ***BUT*** did earn income in 2025; however, I was not required to file taxes. **List the employer and amount earned for 2025:** Employer:_____ Earned: $_____ Employer:_____ Earned: $_____ Employer:_____ Earned: $_____
☐ I was **NOT employed** and had **NO INCOME earned** from work in 2025. *****IRS Letter of Non-Filing is required for the student if they did NOT file 2025 taxes**** *(See information below)*	☐ I was **NOT employed** and had **NO INCOME earned** from work in 2025. *****IRS Letter of Non-Filing is required for the spouse if they did NOT file 2025 taxes**** *(See information below)*

**** How to Obtain an IRS Tax Return Transcript From the IRS**

Be sure to request a **Tax Return Transcript**.

We ***cannot*** accept a Tax Account Transcript or copies of your 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ.

- Online request at https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript
- Automated Telephone Request: 1-800-908-9946.
- Paper Request: IRS Form 4506T – Must be used if you have moved since filing your taxes. Can be downloaded at www.irs.gov, or obtained from the Financial Aid Office.
- Visit your local IRS Office.

C. Submit Copies of all Earnings, Other Income, & Resources:

The sources and amounts of earnings, other income, and resources that supported the individuals for the 2025 tax year.

Copies of W-2s or an equivalent document for each source of 2025 employment income.

All copies are to be submitted to the Catawba College Financial Aid Office. Please attach copies to this form.

- If you have lost any W-2's, you may order a **Wage and Income Transcript** from the IRS to satisfy the requirement. You can obtain this Transcript from the same website that you request a Tax Return Transcript.

Signatures

Each person signing below certifies that all the information reported is complete and correct. The student and one parent whose information was reported on the FAFSA must sign and date.

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

SPOUSE SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
(If Applicable)

WARNING: If you purposely give false or misleading information in an attempt to obtain federal financial aid, you may be fined up to $20,000 and/or incarcerated.

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