

STUDENT FEES AND DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy sets out the University's approach to the setting, charging and payment of fees, and the management and recovery of student debt.
- 1.2 The guiding principles are that the University will act lawfully and in a fair and transparent manner in relation to the setting and collection of fees, and in relation to any action to recover debt from students. Further, the policy aims to:
- Ensure that students understand their financial obligations and are provided with clear and timely information, including prior to accepting an offer of study;
 - Support students in meeting their financial commitments;
 - Ensure that any action taken is fair and proportionate; and
 - Protect the financial sustainability of the University.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all University students, both current and former students, and includes students undertaking any taught courses, postgraduate research courses, and postgraduate diploma and certificate programmes.
- 2.2 The policy relates to fees that are payable by students to the University. This includes, but is not limited to, tuition fees, additional costs related to courses, accommodation fees, library charges and other costs and charges.
- 2.3 For the purpose of the policy, the following terms are used:
- 2.3.1 'Fees' means any monies for which a student is liable or that are due to the University for services or goods provided.
- 2.3.2 'Debt' means any monies owed by a student to the University. Debt is categorised as follows:
- 'Academic debt' means debt relating to tuition fees and continuation fees.
 - 'Academic related debt' means monies owed that are related to academic studies, other than academic debt. Academic related debt includes, but is not limited to, library charges and additional costs relating to study such as the cost of specialist equipment or materials, fees for field trips, and laboratory bench fees.
 - 'Non-academic debt' means debt for non-academic related services and goods, such as University accommodation fees and welfare loans.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Any division or other administrative or academic unit of the University that sets, charges or recovers fees from students, should ensure that appropriate terms and conditions, procedural documents and guidance (as necessary) are available to students and that such information is clear, accurate and accessible to students. Such information must be published in a timely manner and, where required, in advance of acceptance of an offer.
- 3.2 Students are responsible for ensuring that any fees due to the University are paid within required timescales and paid in the correct manner. Students must keep up to date with information about their fee liability, as provided in their Sussex Direct account or as otherwise provided by University teams.

4 POLICY

- 4.1 Tuition fees will be set and approved by Council and published ahead of each academic year. Liability for tuition fees will be in accordance with published Tuition Fee Liability procedures, which detail how fee liability is calculated, when fee liability arises, and fee liability in the circumstances of student withdrawal.
- 4.2 Students are expected to register promptly at the start of their course of study and a student's delay in completing registration on their course will not reduce their tuition fee liability. Further, registered students are liable for tuition fees irrespective of whether or not they engage in or attend teaching or other academic related activities. Tuition fee liability will continue to accrue until a student withdraws from their studies, or is withdrawn by the University.
- 4.3 In some circumstances, the University may require payment of a tuition fee deposit. Where that is the case, the deposit will be deducted from the total tuition fee payable. Deposits are usually non-refundable and non-transferable, other than in limited, specified circumstances, as set out in the Tuition Fee Deposit Refunds information published by the University.
- 4.4 Students may also be required to make advance payments of other fees, such as advance payment of pre-sessional English courses or housing pre-payments.
- 4.5 Some courses will have additional costs for which the student is liable. These are charges relating to the course, such as bench fees for research students, or the cost of course related field trips. Students may also incur other fees, such as University accommodation fees, accommodation key costs, Library charges, and repayment of welfare loans. Information on any fees for which students may be liable will be clear and accessible to students.
- 4.6 Students are personally responsible for ensuring that all fees are paid, including in circumstances where they are sponsored or where students register in expectation that a third party will be paying some or all of their fees directly to the University.
- 4.7 All fees must be paid within the specified timescales. To successfully meet a payment deadline, students must ensure that the required amount is paid through an approved method and the funds must be received by the University on or before the deadline.
- 4.8 Circumstances may arise during a student's studies that impact their ability to pay their fees. This may include financial hardship, wellbeing challenges, or where a student is in receipt of funding arrangements where payments do not align with the University payment dates. In such circumstances, students are expected to contact relevant University services for advice and support.

- 4.9 Where fees remain outstanding, the University may apply sanctions and may take steps to recover monies due. Students will be given appropriate notice and a reasonable opportunity to remedy non-payment before further action is taken. Any action taken will be fair, timely and proportionate, and will take account of relevant circumstances.
- 4.10 Action will be in accordance with published debt recovery procedures and will be determined by the type of debt (academic debt, academic related debt, or non-academic debt) and whether the student is continuing their studies or has left the University. Action will not be taken where:
- the debt is subject to a relevant formal dispute (i.e. where the dispute, once resolved, might result in removal or retiming of debt such that the action would not be applicable), which is being pursued in good faith by the student; or
 - there has been an administrative error by the University which has not been rectified by the payment due date.
- 4.11 Sanctions that may be applied are detailed in debt recovery procedures and can include the removal of access to IT and Library services, termination of an accommodation license and removal from accommodation, and withholding of the award of a degree, diploma, or certificate. Academic sanctions, though, will only be applied to academic debt. Action may also include referral to an external debt recovery agency and / or the instigation of legal proceedings to recover the debt.
- 4.12 Where appropriate, terms and conditions, procedural documents and guidance will be published alongside this policy and be easily accessible to prospective students and students. In particular, such documents should clearly explain how and when action may be taken by the University, including any sanctions, escalation steps and available support. Where separate procedures do not apply to a particular type of fee, the relevant terms governing payment, consequences of non-payment and any recovery action will be set out in the applicable contractual terms and conditions. These will be clearly identified and made accessible to students in advance.

5. LEGISLATION AND GOOD PRACTICE

- 5.1 UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64771faeb32b9e0012a95f30/Consumer_law_advice_for_higher_education_providers_.pdf

Review / Contacts / References

Policy title:	Student Fees and Debt Recovery policy
Date approved:	June 2026
Approving body:	Vice-Chancellor
Last review date:	N/A
Revision history:	Version 1 – June 2026
Next review date:	June 2029
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	Tuition fee liability procedures (will be published July 2026 and updated annually) Tuition fee information and Tuition fee deposits and Tuition Fee Deposit Refunds information Debt recovery procedures (will be published July 2026 and updated annually) University fees guidance for students Withdrawing from Sussex – fees and funding
Division:	Finance Division
Policy Owner:	Jacinda Humphry, Chief Financial Officer
Point of Contact:	Sian Thomas, Deputy Director of Finance