

# Student Fees Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) The University of Western Sydney (UWS) receives a large proportion of its funding from student fees either directly as tuition fees or indirectly as part of Commonwealth Government student funding and loan arrangements.

(2) This policy applies to both commencing and continuing fee paying students.

(3) This policy only relates to student tuition fees and the student services and amenities fee (SSAF) and identifies the requirements and arrangements for:

- a. the University to administer these fees;
- b. students to pay these fees; and
- c. the University to issue refunds.

(4) Student fees are calculated on the basis of students' enrolment in a unit or units of study. Fees are usually assessed per unit although the University may set fees per course or session of study. Refer to the [Enrolment Policy](#) for the conditions of students' enrolment.

## Section 2 - Definitions

(5) For the purpose of this policy:

- a. Commonwealth Assistance Form (CAF) - refers to a legal document that the Government requires students to complete at enrolment. It requires the student to declare that they have read all relevant information relating to being a Commonwealth supported student and that they are aware of their obligations as a Commonwealth supported student.
- b. Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN) - refers to the student's official record of fees charged, amounts paid, fees deferred and enrolment.
- c. Commonwealth assisted student — means a domestic student who receives the discount rate for paying their student contribution amount, or opts to defer part or all of their tuition fees (if in a full-fee paying course) or student contribution amount (if in a course that is Commonwealth supported). The government pays the amount outstanding as at the approved census date and the student then repays the amount through the taxation system.
- d. Commonwealth supported student — means a domestic student who is enrolled in a course deemed by the University to be Commonwealth supported, i.e. the Government is subsidising the cost of the tuition fees for the student in that course.
- e. Domestic student - means a student who is an Australian Citizen, a New Zealand Citizen, holder of an Australian Permanent Resident Visa, or holder of a Humanitarian Visa (Refugee).
- f. EFTSL (Equivalent Full Time Study Load) - how study load for students is measured. One EFTSL is the study load, for a year, of a student undertaking a course on a full-time basis.
- g. Grandparenting — refers to a legal mechanism used by the Commonwealth Government to ensure that the

funding and fee charging conditions that students had at the commencement of their program are maintained during the period of their enrolment.

- h. Higher degree research student — means a student enrolled in a:
  - i. Masters (Honours) Degree;
  - ii. Professional Doctorate;
  - iii. Doctor of Letters or Doctor of Science; or
  - iv. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).
- i. Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) — refers to a range of loans offered by the Commonwealth Government to provide fee payment assistance to eligible students. Loans are for Australian citizens studying in Australia or overseas. Permanent residents studying in Australia who hold a humanitarian visa are also eligible. The current loans schemes are HECS-HELP (to defer HECS), FEE- HELP (to defer tuition fees), SA-HELP to defer SSAF, and OS-HELP (a loan to travel overseas on exchange).
- j. International student — means a student who is not:
  - i. an Australian Citizen;
  - ii. a New Zealand Citizen;
  - iii. the holder of an Australian Permanent Resident Visa; or
  - iv. the holder of a Humanitarian Visa (Refugee).
- k. MyStudentRecords (MySR) — means the on line student system that allows students to self manage their enrolment at the University.
- l. Non-award student — means a student who is enrolled in a unit or units in one of the following:
  - i. Unitrack; non-award undergraduate; non-award postgraduate; post census miscellaneous; or
  - ii. Cross institutional - studying one or more units as part of their award course at a higher education provider other than their home provider.
- m. Postgraduate coursework student — means a student enrolled in a:
  - i. Graduate Certificate;
  - ii. Graduate Diploma;
  - iii. Postgraduate Certificate;
  - iv. Postgraduate Diploma; or
  - v. Masters (Coursework) Degree.
- n. Student contribution amount - means the amount a student is charged if they are an eligible Commonwealth supported student.
- o. Student services and amenities fee (SSAF) — refers to a compulsory fee charged to all students of the University. The fee is to support student services and amenities related to sporting and recreational activities, employment and career advice, health and welfare, study skills programs, orientation, child care, financial advice, overseas student services and food services.
- p. Undergraduate student — means a student enrolled in a:
  - i. Diploma;
  - ii. Associate Degree;
  - iii. Bachelor Degree; or
  - iv. Bachelor (Honours) Degree.
- q. Unit set — means the specialisations that students can select to make up part of their formal course structure. The most common unit sets that students select are Key Programs, Majors and Sub-majors.

# Section 3 - Policy Statement

## Fees - General

- (6) The University sets student tuition fees and receives student fee payments within the parameters of Commonwealth legislation for both domestic and international students in research degrees, coursework award courses and non-award programs.
- (7) Different financial arrangements may apply to Commonwealth supported students, domestic fee paying students, international fee paying students and sponsored students.
- (8) Fees are adjusted annually except if grandparenting arrangements apply or government legislation is changed.
- (9) All student fee liabilities are recorded on the student management system.
- (10) Service, miscellaneous and penalty fees may apply to students.
- (11) Students will be advised of their tuition fees each teaching session.
- (12) Tuition fees are payable by the advised due date for each teaching session, being the approved census date, unless otherwise notified.
- (13) The University reviews tuition fees on an annual basis for all fee paying courses and may increase these fees over the period of enrolment.
- (14) Any fee increases approved by the Vice-Chancellor will be effective from 1 January of each calendar year and will apply to all domestic and non-award fee paying students irrespective of the date of enrolment in that calendar year.
- (15) If students are enrolled in a fee paying course that is subject to an organisation sponsored contractual arrangement, this may prohibit annual tuition fee increases, and in such circumstances could be exempt from the fee policy stated above.
- (16) No tuition fees are to be published unless they have been approved by the Vice-Chancellor.

## Grandparenting or Transition of Funding Arrangements

- (17) From time to time, the Commonwealth government introduces changes to the legislation that impact on student funding arrangements. In most cases, the government will legislate that all eligible continuing students are provided with grandparented arrangements and conditions for their enrolment until a stipulated end date. The University will ensure that students who meet the criteria will be grandparented as per the Commonwealth government legislation (refer to definition of grandparenting).
- (18) From time to time, the University may decide that fees changes will not apply for specified cohorts of students and will ensure that students who meet the criteria will be grandparented subject to any overriding government requirement.

## Approved Census Dates

- (19) Each unit has an approved census date which is published on the University's Student Administration web pages.
- (20) Students must ensure that their enrolment is finalised by the approved census date for the teaching session as this forms the basis for determining final tuition fees/student contribution liability.
- (21) Census dates for the Student services and amenities fee (SSAF) are set by the University and may differ from

those for teaching sessions.

## **Advice of Enrolment and Tuition Fees/Student Contribution Liability**

(22) Students will receive confirmation of their enrolment and student contribution liability/ tuition fees prior to the approved census date for the teaching session.

(23) It is the student's personal responsibility to check this information and notify the Academic Registrar's Office of any errors or omissions.

## **Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)**

(24) The SSAF applies to all students, including UWSCollege students and international students. Only the following students are exempt from paying the fee:

- a. students undertaking their entire course by distance education; and
- b. students undertaking their entire course off-shore at an overseas non-UWS university campus.

(25) Students will receive advice of their SSAF liability twice per year. The SSAF will be calculated on the basis of the EFTSL as follows:

- a. above 0.374: will be charged the full-time study load rate for that half year period;
- b. from 0.250 to 0.374: will be charged the part-time study load rate for that half year period; or
- c. less than 0.250: will be charged a further discounted rate for that half year period.

(26) The SSAF is indexed annually.

(27) Students who pay the SSAF based on a part-time study load in a half year and subsequently vary their attendance pattern to full-time are required to pay the balance owing by the approved SSAF census date.

(28) Students who pay the SSAF based on a full-time study load in a half year and subsequently vary their attendance pattern to part-time will be refunded automatically after the approved SSAF census date.

## **Fees for Commonwealth Supported Students Exceeding Award Requirements**

(29) Commonwealth supported students will be charged full tuition fees for units not contributing to the degree in which they are enrolled, or units in excess of requirements to complete the degree.

(30) Students wishing to enrol in such additional units will need to enrol on a non-award (full fee paying) basis.

(31) Checks will occur to monitor students deemed to be in excess of units and credit points required to complete their course. In cases where students have exceeded award requirements the University will charge full fees retrospectively for excess units studied. Refer to [Enrolment Policy](#).

## **Payment of Fees/Liabilities**

(32) Where a fee or charge is payable by a student to the University, the amount must be paid by the date stipulated for the particular item, which is normally the approved census date of the enrolled session unless otherwise notified.

(33) Payments will be allocated sequentially from the oldest fee liability to the most recent liability.

## **Extension of Time for Payment**

(34) The University does not grant extended time for payment of compulsory fees.

(35) Domestic Commonwealth supported students who are experiencing financial hardship are advised to apply to defer their student contribution payment and SSAF before the approved census date for the teaching session.

(36) Domestic students in fee paying courses who are experiencing financial difficulties are advised to apply for FEE-HELP assistance before the approved census date of the teaching session to defer their tuition liability and their SSAF.

(37) International students are required to pay compulsory fees by the due dates as part of their visa and Commonwealth government requirements.

### **Sanctions for Non-payment of Compulsory Fees**

(38) The University reserves the right to apply sanctions to students with debts to the University including the following:

- a. examination results will not be issued;
- b. academic documents or records will not be provided;
- c. enrolment in the course may be cancelled;
- d. graduation will not be finalised;
- e. access to University facilities and services including vUWS, the Library and information technology resources will be withheld.

(39) International students whose enrolment is cancelled will be reported to the Commonwealth Government as required by legislation.

### **Sponsored Students**

(40) If a sponsor is unable to meet the student's liability, the University will provide the student with the option of becoming a self-funded student and change the status of the student from sponsored to self-funded. If neither the student nor the sponsor is able to pay the outstanding liability by the due date, the University will apply the following sanctions:

- a. examination results will not be issued;
- b. academic documents or records will not be provided;
- c. enrolment in the current course may be cancelled;
- d. enrolment for the following session will not be permitted; and
- e. graduation will not be finalised.

### **Refund of Fees**

(41) Prior to the census date, all or part of a fee may be refunded. (Refer to the relevant student funding category in Section 4 for details).

(42) Tuition fees will only be refunded after the census date if extenuating circumstances apply (refer to Section 5 for details of criteria).

(43) The SSAF will not be refunded after the relevant census date under any circumstances.

(44) International students may be entitled to a full or partial refund of tuition fees in certain circumstances as described in the UWS [International Student Fees and Refund Agreement](#).

# Section 4 - Procedures

(45) This section provides detailed fee administration requirements for various student funding categories.

## Part A - Commonwealth Supported Students

### Eligibility for Commonwealth Support

(46) Australian citizens, holders of Humanitarian Visas, New Zealand citizens and holders of Australian Permanent Resident Visas who are enrolled in courses deemed by the University to be Commonwealth supported at the University are eligible to study as domestic students in Commonwealth supported places.

(47) International students, domestic students enrolled in full fee paying courses and students enrolled in non-award courses are not eligible for Commonwealth supported places.

### Student Contribution Amounts

(48) Student contribution amounts are levied at rates prescribed for the calendar year and are subject to review on an annual basis. The amounts are published in the booklet HECS-HELP which is available at all Student Central locations and online. A student contribution liability will be incurred in each teaching session, based on the student contribution amount and load (credit points) of the units in which the student is enrolled.

### Commonwealth Assistance Forms (CAF)

(49) Students enrolling in a Commonwealth supported course of study must submit a completed CAF when they enrol in a course for the first time. Students who have not submitted a CAF will not be enrolled.

(50) Students must include their Tax File Number (TFN) on the CAF if they are planning to defer their student contribution liability. This must be lodged by the approved census date for the teaching session.

(51) Commonwealth supported students who wish to defer their SSAF payment must complete a separate CAF by the prescribed date advertised on the University [website](#) to be eligible for the loan (called SA-HELP).

### CAF and Changing Courses

(52) All students changing course, either through an internal course transfer or via UAC, must complete and lodge a new CAF. A change of key program or specialisation is not regarded as a change of course.

(53) The CAF will not be accepted after the approved census date for the teaching session in which the transferring student will commence. Refer to the [Course Transfer Policy](#) for details of transfers.

### CAF and Change of Payment Options

(54) Students may change their payment options for future teaching sessions by submitting a new CAF with their TFN by the approved census date for the teaching session.

(55) Students do not need to lodge a new form if they decide to make upfront payments.

### Non-compliance with Commonwealth Support Requirements

(56) Commonwealth supported students will be provided with a copy of the booklet "Information for Commonwealth Supported Students" during the online enrolment process. Continuing students can obtain this booklet at a Student Central location or via the government's ["My Uni Assist" website](#).

(57) It is the student's responsibility to ensure the requirements of being a Commonwealth supported student are understood and fulfilled.

(58) Students must have finalised enrolment by the approved census date, as stipulated in the [Enrolment Policy](#).

(59) Students who have not met Commonwealth support requirements, including the non-provision of a CAF and proof of Australian Citizenship by the approved census date, will have their enrolment cancelled. Note that it is not necessary for students to submit a new CAF each session unless they have changed to a different course or wish to provide their TFN.

(60) Students who have not supplied a valid TFN and have not made their student contribution payment in full by the approved census date will have their enrolment cancelled.

(61) Students who have not complied with Commonwealth support requirements by the approved census date, but who wish to continue studies in the current teaching session, may seek approval from the Manager, Enrolments to enrol as non-award students (100% student contribution liability payable upfront).

(62) Students wishing to continue studies in future sessions may apply to reinstate their enrolment in an award course only after all Commonwealth support requirements have been met.

### **Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN)**

(63) Within four weeks after the approved census date, Commonwealth supported students and students who have opted for HECS-HELP will be issued a CAN confirming their enrolment and student status as at the approved census date.

(64) Commonwealth supported students who have nominated for an SA-HELP loan to cover their SSAF liability will receive a separate CAN confirming their liability for the loan within four weeks of the due date.

(65) Students must notify the Enrolments Unit in writing of any errors or omissions within 14 calendar days of the date of the CAN being sent.

### **Refund of Student Contribution Payments/SSAF**

(66) Commonwealth supported students who withdraw from a course prior to midnight on the approved census date will not incur a student contribution liability. If they have paid the student contribution liability for a unit or units prior to withdrawing, a full refund will be made after the approved census date.

(67) Commonwealth supported students who withdraw from a unit/s prior to midnight on the approved census date will not incur a student contribution liability for those units. If a student has paid their student contribution liability for a unit/s prior to withdrawing, a full refund for those units will be made after the approved census date.

(68) Following withdrawal of units before midnight on the approved census date, the SSAF will be recalculated and any overpayment will be refunded.

### **Remission of HECS-HELP and SA-HELP Debts Following Withdrawal after the Approved Census Date**

(69) Commonwealth supported students who withdraw from their course or unit/s after the approved census date will only receive a refund for paid student contribution fees if they have withdrawn due to extenuating circumstances.

(70) Applications for refunds in exceptional circumstances must be made within 12 months of the last day of the teaching session in which the misadventure occurred (refer to clause 52 of the [Enrolment Policy](#)).

(71) Commonwealth assisted students who have deferred their student contribution liability and subsequently withdraw after the approved census date due to extenuating circumstances may apply for a remission of their student contribution liability. Applications should be made direct to the University after the withdrawal has been processed. Refer to the section Withdrawing from Units after the Approved Census Date in the [Enrolment Policy](#).

(72) A SSAF liability will not be refunded under any circumstances if the student withdraws after the approved census date.

(73) Refer to the University [Fees website](#) for further details of remission of debt and the appeals process.

## **Part B - Domestic Tuition Fee Students**

(74) Non award enrolment, including Unitrack, non-award and miscellaneous post census enrolment, is only offered on a full-fee paying basis.

(75) Students enrolling in Unitrack or non-award study will not have their enrolment confirmed until all tuition fees have been paid in full.

### **Financial Assistance - Commonwealth Assistance (FEE-HELP and SA-HELP)**

(76) Domestic fee paying students enrolled in award courses are eligible for Commonwealth assistance (FEE-HELP and SA-HELP) provided they are Australian citizens or holders of a Humanitarian Visa. Eligibility for FEE-HELP is based solely on the [Higher Education Support Act](#) (HESA) FEE-HELP guidelines. There is no requirement to advise any personal criteria in addition to the Commonwealth Assistance FEE-HELP application.

(77) The FEE-HELP form must be lodged prior to the approved census date for the teaching session for which the loan is being sought.

(78) The SA-HELP form (for deferment of the SSAF liability) must be lodged prior to the specified due date for which the loan is being sought.

(79) Students who gain Australian Citizenship during the period of their enrolment will be deemed eligible for Commonwealth assistance (HECS-HELP) by providing originals or certified copies of their Australian Citizenship Certificate.

(80) After a student has been confirmed as a FEE-HELP student, they will have the option of deferring part or all of their payment, according to the guidelines, for the duration of their study in the course specified on the original form.

(81) A debt will only be incurred for the amount of tuition fees unpaid by the student at the approved census date.

(82) A SSAF debt will only be incurred for the amount of the SSAF unpaid by the student at the advertised due date, as determined by the University.

(83) Non-award students are not eligible for Commonwealth assistance (FEE-HELP or SA-HELP).

### **Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN)**

(84) Within four weeks of the approved census date, eligible students who have opted for FEE-HELP will be issued a CAN confirming their enrolment and deferred fee liability.

(85) Within four weeks of the due date, eligible students who have opted for an SA-HELP loan to cover their SSAF liability will receive a separate CAN confirming their liability for this loan.

(86) Students must notify the Enrolments Unit in writing of any errors or omissions within 14 calendar days of the date



of the notice being sent.

## **Non-payment of Fees**

(87) Students who have not completed payment of their tuition fees by the approved census date will have their enrolment cancelled.

(88) A student whose enrolment is cancelled for non-payment of compulsory fees may apply for re-instatement of their enrolment at the discretion of the Manager, Enrolments.

(89) A student who has not paid their SSAF by the due date will not have their enrolment cancelled, but will have sanctions imposed on them in accordance with clause 38 of this policy.

## **Refund of Fees**

(90) Domestic students who defer, withdraw or take an approved leave of absence from their course prior to the approved census date will automatically receive a refund for 100% of any tuition fees they have paid for the teaching session prior to withdrawing.

(91) Domestic students who withdraw units from their program prior to the approved census date will be automatically refunded for any overpayment of tuition fees following the approved census date for the teaching session.

(92) Domestic non-award students who withdraw from their non-award unit/s prior to the approved census date will be automatically refunded for any overpayment of tuition fees following the approved census date for the teaching session. They will not receive any refund for paid application fees as these are non-refundable.

(93) Following withdrawal of units before midnight on the approved census date, the SSAF will be recalculated and any overpayment will be refunded.

(94) Domestic students who withdraw after the approved census date will not receive a refund of their tuition fees unless they are able to prove they have endured extenuating circumstances.

(95) Applications for refunds in extenuating circumstances must be made within 12 months of the last day of the teaching session in which the misadventure occurred (refer to Section 5).

## **Remission of FEE-HELP and SA-HELP Debts following Withdrawal after the Approved Census Date**

(96) Commonwealth assisted students who withdraw from their course or unit/s after the approved census date can only be refunded for upfront FEE-HELP payments if they have withdrawn due to extenuating circumstances.

(97) Applications for refunds in extenuating circumstances must be made within 12 months of the last day of the teaching session in which the misadventure occurred (refer to Section 5).

(98) Commonwealth assisted students who have deferred their student contribution liability and subsequently withdraw after the approved census date due to extenuating circumstances may apply for a remission of their student contribution liability. Applications should be made direct to the University after the withdrawal has been processed. Refer to the section Withdrawing from Units after the Approved Census Date in the [Enrolment Policy](#).

(99) A SSAF liability will not be refunded under any circumstances if the student withdraws after the approved census date for the teaching session.

(100) Refer to the University [Fees website](#) for more details of remission of debt and the appeals process.

## Part C - International Fee Students

(101) The fee conditions for UWS International students are covered by the terms of the UWS [International Student Fees and Refund Agreement](#) provided as part of the UWS International Offer Pack. These conditions are therefore part of the written agreement between each international student and the University.

(102) Tuition fees for international students will be reviewed annually and may be increased during the period of an international student's enrolment in a course. Such increases can be expected to conform with the estimated total course fee provided to the student prior to accepting the offer of enrolment.

### Non-payment of Tuition Fees - International Students

(103) International students who have not completed payment of their tuition fees by the approved census date will have their enrolment cancelled.

(104) International students whose enrolment has been cancelled but have satisfied the Commonwealth government that they should be permitted to continue studying may apply for reinstatement of their enrolment in the current teaching period, provided that all outstanding fees are paid prior to reinstatement.

(105) Discontinued students who are visa holders have the right to appeal against discontinuation and consequent reporting to the Commonwealth. Appeals must be lodged within 20 working days of discontinuation. If a student does not appeal, their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) is cancelled and this may lead to the cancellation of their student visa.

(106) Students who are reinstated after a period of discontinuation must ensure that they still have a valid CoE.

## Part D - International Students who Obtain Permanent Resident Status

(107) A student's change in status from temporary resident to permanent resident is recognised from the date the new visa is stamped in the student's passport, not the date on which application for permanent residency was lodged.

(108) Under Commonwealth government legislation, permanent residents are not eligible to obtain FEE-HELP or SA-HELP loans. All fees must be paid in full by the approved census date or enrolment will be cancelled.

(109) If the status of an International student changes from temporary resident to permanent resident, they must advise the University by the census date in order for their change in status to be recognised. They must:

- a. provide a completed CAF (if relevant to the course);
- b. provide proof of the change to permanent residency; and
- c. pay any domestic tuition fees, as required.

(110) If a student has already paid tuition fees as an international student for a teaching session, a full refund of fees paid will be given provided the student has:

- a. obtained permanent resident status not later than the approved census date for the teaching session, and submitted a completed CAF by the approved census date for the teaching session; or
- b. made arrangements to pay tuition fees as a local student and/or submitted a completed Commonwealth Assistance FEE-HELP Form by the approved census date.

(111) If a student obtains permanent resident status after the approved census date for the teaching session, the student will continue to be regarded as an international student for the remainder of the teaching session. The student

will be entitled to enrol as a domestic student and be liable for payment of tuition fees from the commencement of the next teaching session.

## Section 5 - Guidelines

### **Withdrawal without Financial Penalty: Guidelines on what Constitutes Extenuating Circumstances**

(112) Extenuating circumstances are defined in Commonwealth Government guidelines to be events or circumstances which:

- a. are beyond the person's control, i.e. the person is not responsible, directly or indirectly, for the situation. These events or circumstances must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal; and
- b. must not make the full impact on the person until on or after the census date where the situation occurred:
  - i. before the census date, but worsened after that day; or
  - ii. before the census date, but the full effect or magnitude does not become apparent on or before that day; or
  - iii. on or after the census date; and
- c. where the outcome has made it impracticable for the student to complete the course requirements; and they were unable to:
  - i. undertake the necessary private study required, or attend sufficient lectures or tutorials or meet other attendance requirements in order to meet the compulsory requirements; or
  - ii. complete the required assessable work; or
  - iii. sit the required examinations, or complete other course requirements because of their inability to meet the above.

(113) Students will need to prove their claim for extenuating circumstances by providing appropriate independent supporting documentation. The University will not approach doctors, hospitals, police, etc to obtain documentation on behalf of the student. The University may seek verification from these agencies that the certificate has been issued to the student.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	27th June 2012
<b>Review Date</b>	27th February 2015
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Senate
<b>Approval Date</b>	27th June 2012
<b>Expiry Date</b>	16th December 2013
<b>Unit Head</b>	Jess Gleeson Director, Data Integrity, Quality and Operations j.gleeson@westernsydney.edu.au
<b>Author</b>	Deirdre Lee 96787477
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Jennifer Kensey Student Finance Manager j.kensey@westernsydney.edu.au