

Student debtor policy

Income team

Version: 1.0

MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT FEES AND CHARGES

1. BACKGROUND

This policy has been produced to help Southampton Solent University students understand the financial requirements of the University. The policy relates to all fees and charges payable by students to the University, including tuition fees, and for the use of its facilities and the provision of any other services.

2. SCOPE AND TYPES OF FEES

The scope of this policy covers both on-campus students and off-campus students

The following types of fees are covered by this policy:-

- (i) Tuition Fees
- (ii) Accommodation Fees and Charges
- (iii) Other Fees and Charges

(i) Tuition Fees

Tuition Fees cover the provision of tuition which students receive and the cost of University facilities, including the libraries and computers. Fees do not cover, for example, the cost of reference books, stationery needed for study, or any University goods or services used which are not necessary parts of the course. Such additional costs vary from course to course.

(ii) Accommodation Fees and Charges

A range of University-provided accommodation is available for students, including just over 2300 residential places available near the Southampton Campus and a further 200 residential places at the Warsash Campus. All University accommodation options are subject to this policy.

For details of current accommodation fees see:

http://www.solent.ac.uk/accommodation/fees_essentialinfo/fees.aspx

(iii) Other Fees and Charges

This includes all other charges applied by the University, such as payment for replacement documents, charges for using sporting facilities, and purchase of equipment. There may also be other charges, such as field trips, associated with a course.

Where a sponsor agrees to meet any of the above fees and charges, the student remains personally responsible until such time as the sponsor discharges the liability.

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR PAYMENT

Tuition fees, accommodation fees, and charges are raised for students as appropriate during the year, and are due for payment as follows:-

- Tuition fees: are due on the date of enrolment.
- Accommodation fees and charges: are due on the date of invoice.

Payment for all other fees and charges fall due within 30 days of the invoice date.

Payment Options

Payment is due in full by the specified date. However, students may opt to take advantage of special terms offered by the University for the payment of tuition fees, accommodation fees and charges. Details can be found in the tuition fees booklet and on the accommodation website noted above.

Early Withdrawal

If a student leaves a programme of study early, he/she may still be expected to pay for tuition fees for the full academic year. In some circumstances, refunds may be claimed - advice is available from the student's Faculty. Students must inform the Faculty Registrar in writing when they withdraw from their studies. If a student is staying in halls of residences they must also notify the Accommodation Office that they are withdrawing from their course.

If a student leaves University accommodation early, he/she may still be expected to pay the accommodation fees and charges for the remainder of the contracted period. In the event that a student withdraws from their course of study, refunds may be due but a notice period charge may also be levied. Students are advised to contact the Accommodation Office for advice and information.

4. LATE PAYMENT

The following procedures apply to outstanding fees and charges due to the University from students:-

4.1 Tuition Fees

Failure to pay tuition fees in accordance with the student's chosen payment option will result in the full amount of annual fee becoming due immediately. In all instances of non-payment, early communication with the Finance Office is strongly advised.

For students identified as being overdue for payment of tuition fees and who have not contacted the University by the due date, reminder letters will be issued on a timetable determined by the Director of Finance. The process from non payment to sanctions being imposed will be no longer than 2 months.

4.2 Accommodation Fees and Charges

Failure to pay accommodation charges in accordance with the student's chosen payment option will result in the full fees and charges becoming due immediately. The University also reserves the right to charge a late payment fee to cover associated administrative costs of non payment of accommodation fees. Late payment fees are published in the Terms of Residency. In all instances of non- payment early communication with the Accommodation office is strongly advised.

For students identified as being overdue for payment of accommodation charges and who have not contacted the University by the due date, reminder letters will be issued on a timetable determined by the Director of Finance. The process from non payment to sanctions being imposed will be no longer than 2 months.

4.3 Other Fees and Charges.

For students identified as being overdue for payment of other fees and charges and who have not contacted the University by the due date, reminder letters will be issued on a timetable determined by the Director of Finance. The process from non payment to sanctions will be no longer than 2 months.

4.4 Sanctions

The following sanctions may be applied to students who are overdue with payments for tuition fees and other related fees and charges:-

- A student who has not paid outstanding tuition fees and has not made contact with the Finance Office will have access to the library denied and IT access removed (includes access to e-mail and myCourse).
- Students will not be allowed to transfer programmes whilst owing money to the University for tuition fees, library fees or fines. This applies to internal transfers and new applications.
- Students may be asked to withdraw from their course during the academic session if they fail to pay the University for tuition fees, library fees or fines.
- Students will not be allowed to enrol for the next year of their study programme whilst owing money to the University for tuition fees, library fees or fines.
- Students who have not paid outstanding tuition fees will not be issued with award certificates, or diploma supplements, or provided with a reference.
- At the discretion of the Director of Finance, debts may be passed to a debt collection agency. Any additional administrative costs incurred by the University from this process will be re-charged to the student.
- A late payment charge may be levied.

The following sanctions may be applied to students who are overdue with payments for accommodation fees or related fees and charges:-

- A late payment charge may be levied.
- A student will be prevented from applying to return to live in halls of residence for another academic year.
- A student who is in significant arrears or debt for accommodation fees may have their contract for accommodation terminated, be issued with a Notice to Quit, and required to vacate the premises. In such circumstances, the University may choose to pursue recovery of fees in accordance with the contracted period.
- At the discretion of the Director of Finance debts may be passed to a debt collection agency. Any additional administrative costs incurred by the University from this process will be re-charged to the student.

The following sanctions may be applied to students who are overdue with payments for any fees and charges:-

- Students with any debt will not be issued with an invitation to the Graduation Ceremony.
- A late payment charge may be levied.
- At the discretion of the Director of Finance debts may be passed to a debt collection agency. Any additional administrative costs incurred by the University from this process will be re-charged to the student.

5. APPEAL PROCESS

If a student has any query about payment of fees they should contact the Finance Office. Where a student is not satisfied with the way a decision concerning payment of fees has been handled, including a requirement that he/she withdraws from the University, he/she may contact the Student Affairs Manager at Student 1st Office for advice.

The student remains responsible for payment of fees until any appeal is completed and upheld.

The University reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time in the light of prevailing circumstances.

6. HELP AND SUPPORT

Students who are experiencing financial difficulties in paying fees should inform the Finance Office at the earliest opportunity. Advice and help can also be sought from Student 1st Office where trained staff are available to assist.