
Guidelines for Setting Domestic and International Fee Levels, Student Contribution Amounts for Commonwealth Supported Students and Other Student Charges

Establishment:	Vice-Chancellor, 15 August 2013
Last Amended:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students), 8 April 2023
Nature of Amendment:	Change to policy Responsible Officer
Date Last Reviewed:	2022
Responsible Officer:	Director, Student Administration Services

Purpose

1. These Guidelines have been established to provide guidance to the Fee Advisory Committee on the legislative requirements and principles that inform the annual review of domestic and international tuition fees, the setting of student contribution amounts for Commonwealth supported students, and the setting of other student fees and charges.

Legislative requirements

2. Fees must be established in compliance with relevant legislation and guidelines issued by the Commonwealth.
3. In accordance with the *Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003*, domestic fee paying students in a topic must be charged an amount no less than the amount charged to Commonwealth supported students enrolled in the topic. The only exception to this is where a student is enrolled in an employer reserved place. Where there are no Commonwealth supported students enrolled in a topic, HESA does not set a minimum or maximum amount for tuition fees for domestic students.[1](#)
4. Under the Commonwealth's *Higher Education Provider Guidelines*, the University must charge in respect to an international student a fee sufficient to recover the full cost of providing a course to an international student, including full operating costs. The fee for an international student must be no less than the relevant minimum indicative course fee specified in the *Higher Education Provider Guidelines* except where:
- i. a course is provided wholly offshore and students will not at any stage enter Australia for study, or
 - ii. approval has been given by the relevant Commonwealth department to charge less than the minimum indicative fee for a course. [2](#)

Principles

The following principles will apply to the review, modelling and setting of tuition fees:

5. Domestic tuition fees for postgraduate coursework will be determined on the basis of the fees charged for the topics comprising the courses. Topics will be grouped into fee bands. A standard fee per unit will be set for each band and will apply to all topics in each band.

6. Where postgraduate coursework courses are offered in partnership with one or more institutions and where a single fee level for such courses is to apply across institutions, the domestic student fee level for Flinders topics in these courses will be determined in negotiation with the participating institutions. Such fee levels will be subject to the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) who will report the fee level approved to the Vice-Chancellor.

7. Tuition fees for international fees will be set as a course fee and based on a normal full-time enrolment load of 36 units per year or 18 units per semester.

8. In establishing both domestic postgraduate and international student fee levels consideration will be given to:

- fees charged for other equivalent courses offered by Flinders and by other Australian universities, with particular reference to other members of the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) network and other South Australian universities
- the nature and size of the potential market for courses, and expected competition for students from similar courses.

Unless approved otherwise, the full average cost of each course is expected to be recovered, taking account of:

- an estimate of costs, including academic and other staff time, services, materials, equipment and facilities, calculated as the apportioned rather than marginal costs
- modes of delivery
- expected enrolments in courses.

A surplus over full cost recovery is also expected.

9. In setting international student tuition fees and domestic postgraduate fee levels, the following parameters will apply:

- i. the international student tuition fee for a course must be greater than the fee that would apply to a domestic fee-paying postgraduate student undertaking a comparable course
- ii. the domestic postgraduate fee for a topic must be greater than the full student contribution amount for the relevant field of education for that topic, as a minimum. The only exception to this parameter being instances where a lower fee is approved on the grounds of price competitiveness in relation to a strategically significant course and, in accordance with clause 3 above, there are no Commonwealth supported students enrolled in a topic assigned to that fee band and there is no intention to enrol them. [3](#)

Student contribution amounts for Commonwealth supported students

10. The student contribution amount for a Commonwealth supported place in a topic will be the maximum student contribution amount determined by the Commonwealth for the funding cluster, or part of a funding cluster, in which the topic is classified. [4](#) Where the topic is part of an enabling course, the student contribution amount for a place will be nil. [5](#)

International students who are granted permanent resident visas during their course of study

11. In accordance with Clause 3.1.1 of the [Policy on Continuity of Study](#), an international student who has been granted permanent resident status during their course of study will be charged the full student

contribution amount where a Commonwealth supported place is available. In the event that there is no Commonwealth supported place, the student will be charged:

- i. in the case of undergraduate courses, a tuition fee not less than the full student contribution amount but not more than the tuition fees applying to international students. Such fee to be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) on the recommendation of the relevant College
- ii. in the case of postgraduate coursework courses, the domestic student tuition fee
- iii. in the case of a higher degree by research, the equivalent fee to that charged for domestic research higher degree students who have exceeded their Research Training Program (RTP) entitlement.

Fees for single topics undertaken on a non-award basis

12. Tuition fees for single topics undertaken on a non-award basis will be as follows:

- i. international students will be charged a tuition fee equivalent to a Flinders international student studying the same topic and having commenced their program in the current year
- ii. domestic students will be charged the applicable full-fee paying rate for postgraduate topics, or the applicable combined Commonwealth Government and student contribution amount for undergraduate topics.

Student Services and Amenities Fee

13. The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) schedule will be based on the following general principles:

- i. that the maximum fee level be set at the upper limit permissible under Commonwealth legislation
- ii. that students with an enrolment load of less than 100% load (i.e. 1 EFTSL or 36 units) per annum would be charged a pro-rata fee based on their enrolment load
- iii. that all students would be required to pay the SSAF, which recognised that all students, irrespective of course and course level, have the opportunity to avail themselves of student services and facilities
- iv. that a 50 per cent discount would apply to the SSAF for external topics, online topics or topics taken in regional locations to take into account the location of topic delivery (and the availability of service provision for students enrolled in these topics)
- v. that the following cohorts of students would be exempted from the SSAF:
 - off-shore students in recognition that these students are enrolled in courses delivered in partnership with the University's offshore partners
 - onshore international students. The University allocates from the fee revenue collected from fee paying international students an amount equivalent to the full-time SSAF rate for all international students who commenced in 2014 or thereafter
 - students enrolled in one of the University's Foundations Studies Programs in recognition that these are enabling courses designed to provide an access pathway for students, particularly for students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, and
 - any other cohort of students or specific course(s) exempted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) for strategic or business reasons. Any such exemptions will be noted on a register maintained by Student Finance and Scholarships.

Procedure for approving fees

14. The Fee Advisory Committee will review the schedules for the domestic postgraduate fee bands and international student tuition fees on an annual basis. As part of this process, advice will be sought from the Faculties and relevant central units on the fees and any annual increase to the fees.

15. Following the review process, the Fee Advisory Committee will recommend to the Vice-Chancellor for approval:

- i. the schedule of standard fees for each domestic postgraduate fee band and any variation to the standard fee for particular topics that will apply in the next calendar year, and
- ii. the schedule of international student tuition fees that will apply in the year following the next calendar year.

16. Following publication, by the Commonwealth, of the maximum permissible rate for the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) will develop a draft SSAF schedule based on the principles set out in Clause 13 above, taking into account the views of the Flinders University Student Association and Flinders Campus Community Services on the maximum rate for the Student Services and Amenities Fee. The SSAF schedule for the next calendar year will be recommended to the Vice-Chancellor for approval.

1. Commonwealth Department of Education, Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers: Student Support, 2015, p.70

2. [Commonwealth Higher Education Provider Guidelines](#)

3. The only approved exception to this parameter is the domestic fee band for LLAW83xx topics. The price point for this fee band has been determined to ensure the Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice is competitive in price with corresponding courses offered in Adelaide.

4. Refer to the Minutes of Council Meeting 3/04, held on 10 June 2004, and Doc C 48/04 for the original decision to charge the maximum student contribution amount in 2005. The funding clusters are determined in accordance with Chapter 9 of the Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines.

5. Commonwealth Department of Education, Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers: Student Support, 2015, p. 65

Related Links

[Higher Education Support Act \(HESA\) 2003](#)

[Commonwealth Higher Education Provider Guidelines](#)

[Commonwealth Department of Education, Administrative Information for Higher Education Providers](#)

[Policy on Payment of Student Contribution Amounts and Tuition Fees by Domestic Students](#)

[Policy and Procedures for the Refund of Student Contribution Amounts and Tuition Fees, and Remission of Higher Education Loan Program \(HELP\) Debts](#)

[International Student Tuition Fees Procedures](#)

[Policy on Continuity of Study](#)

[Charging of Incidental Fees Policy](#)

