

# Student User Charging Policy

## Section 1 - Student User Charging

(1) The Vice-President (Finance) and Chief Financial Officer, is responsible for recommending to the Vice-Chancellor and President any proposals for student charging. Such recommendation will be contingent upon the proper process for establishment of new or revised student charges being undertaken by the responsible organisational area, according to the procedures in [User Charging Policy](#).

(2) At the completion of the annual review of user charges, a revised Register of User Charges is submitted via the Vice-President (Finance) and Chief Financial Officer, to the Vice-Chancellor and President for approval, after consideration by University Executive Committee.

(3) A proposed student charge which is not approved and registered may not be levied.

## Section 2 - Definitions

(4) A Student User Charge is raised when:

- a. a Faculty/Division or School/Department charges an internal, external or off-campus student of the University for a good or service either provided internally, or procured from an external organisation; and
- b. the charge is not regarded as the normal course enrolment fee, student union fee, or administrative services charge, all of which are levied at the commencement of study within a year.

(5) A student, for the purposes of this Policy, is defined as:

- a. a person currently enrolled in an award course offered by the University.

(6) Students currently enrolled in a non-award course are considered under [External User Charging Policy](#).

## Section 3 - Principles for Student User Charging

(7) Consistent with Australian Government legislation and guidelines, Commonwealth supported and domestic fee-paying students must be able to complete the requirements of their courses without facing charges for those courses. This precludes the imposition of charges for compulsory or essential components of the course or its assessment and award.

(8) QUT students should have equitable access to classrooms, study facilities provided by faculties, central facilities, Library borrowing, computer laboratory usage, etc without charge.

(9) The University may however charge a fee for goods and services that are incidental to a student's course of study. The government's [Guidelines for Commonwealth Grant Scheme](#) outline the criteria under which a fee may be charged. These include where the fee is for:

- a. a good or service that is not essential to a course of study;

- b. an alternative form or alternative forms of, access to a good or service that is an essential component of a course but is otherwise made readily available at no additional charge by the University;
- c. an essential good or service that the student has the choice of acquiring from a supplier other than the University and is for:
  - i. equipment or items which become the physical property of the student and are not consumed during the course of study;
  - ii. food, transport and accommodation costs associated with the provision of field trips;
- d. a fine or penalty, provided that the charge is levied principally as a disincentive and not in order to raise revenue or cover administrative costs.

(10) Examples of the types of fees that may be charged are outlined in the [Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers](#) (Section 19).

(11) Student charges should not be raised where:

- a. The good or service is required for a course of study unless that good or service, or an alternative to it, is also available to students at no additional charge.
- b. The good or service provided is non-routine and immaterial in amount.
- c. The ongoing administrative costs of user charging and revenue collection exceeds the expected long term efficiency gains.
- d. Goods and services provided by an organisational area are funded in the area's base Operating Funds budget allocation.

(12) In courses where additional course-related costs are involved, the faculty should ensure access to necessary services (eg reasonable access to computers, library books, scientific equipment).

(13) Furthermore, under State and Federal anti-discrimination legislation, the University may not discriminate against students with disabilities by charging extra fees for services provided as reasonable accommodation to enable access to and progress in their education.

(14) The Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009 requires that in determining the appropriate level of charges, the following should be considered by the organisational area providing the good or service.

- a. The users have the capacity to pay for the goods or services.
- b. The users have a choice whether to accept the goods or services.
- c. The goods or services are available from a supplier other than the department or statutory body.
- d. Supplying the goods or services is required or permitted by legislation.
- e. The goods or services are supplied for the benefit of the general public or for the benefit only of users who do not have the capacity to pay.
- f. The administrative costs of charging and collecting the charges are more than, or may be more than the revenue collected.
- g. An agreement exists between the department or statutory body and users about charging for the goods or services.
- h. Charging for the goods or services improves, or may improve, resource allocation through more economical use of the goods or services.
- i. Other factors exist that the accountable officer or statutory body considers relevant.

(15) In deciding charges for the goods or services, that accountable officer can structure user charges to either cover full cost or decide to charge less than full cost if it is satisfied as appropriate.

(16) Further information in relation to these pricing requirements, including definitions of direct and indirect costs is provided in the [User Charging Policy](#), Section 5. Information about methods of charge calculation for student charges (including Category A, Category B, Category C, penalties and fines, and donations and contributions) is available in the [User Charging Policy](#), Section 4.

(17) All pricing options are appropriate for the calculation of student user charges. GST should be included in the price calculation for all student user charges unless deemed to be GST exempt ([User Charging Policy](#), Sections 4 and 5).

(18) QUT is required to adhere to the requirements and principles of the [National Competition Policy](#) in terms of competitive neutrality through full cost pricing of the good/service offered on a competitive basis. Inclusion of all costs will ensure the price is comparable to external providers of a similar good/service.

(19) The University may charge fines or penalties provided the charge is levied principally as a disincentive and not in order to raise revenue or cover administrative costs.

(20) Any fees charged for non-essential or non-compulsory course materials, field trips, equipment or services should not exceed the total costs of these materials.

(21) Government legislation allows the University to charge fees to students undertaking units of study during a summer school period provided the unit is also available as part of a course of study within normal semester periods to Commonwealth supported students.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	4th February 2011
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<b>Approval Date</b>	4th February 2011
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<b>Policy Owner</b>	Cynthia Hanley Director, Finance Strategy and Planning
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