

# Student Fees Policy

## Section 1 - Policy Statement

(1) This Policy outlines the basis on which Australian Catholic University (ACU) manages student fees. It sets out the principles for fee setting, defines the types of fees and charges levied, details fee collection and refund processes and the penalties for non-payment.

## Section 2 - Policy Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all staff and students of ACU excluding Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Students.

## Section 3 - Definitions

(3) Terms used in this Policy and associated procedures are consistent with the [Glossary of Student and Course Terms](#). The following specific definitions also apply:

| Term                                    | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Commonwealth Assistance Form (CAF/eCAF) | refers to a series of legal documents that students are required to complete in order to obtain certain kinds of government support in relation to their fees. Forms are required for students accepting a Commonwealth Supported Place, and for students requesting to utilise a HELP loan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Domestic student                        | means a student who is an Australian Citizen, a New Zealand Citizen, holder of an Australian Permanent Resident Visa, holder of a Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV) or holder of a Humanitarian Visa (Refugee).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Grandparenting                          | refers to a legal mechanism used to ensure that the funding and fee charging conditions that students had at the commencement of their course are maintained for the duration.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)    | <p>refers to a range of loans offered by the Commonwealth Government to provide fee payment assistance to eligible students.</p> <p>Loans are available to Australian citizens studying at least one unit of their course onshore. Permanent humanitarian visa holders and New Zealand Special category visa holders who meet the long-term residency requirements are also eligible, providing they reside in Australia for the duration of their course (with the exception of travel for the purpose of the course).</p> <p>The current loans schemes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HECS-HELP - used to defer student Contribution amounts;</li> <li>• FEE- HELP - used to defer domestic tuition fees;</li> <li>• SA-HELP - used to defer Student Services and Amenities fees; and</li> <li>• OS-HELP - this loan provides funds to travel overseas for approved study.</li> </ul> |
| Student contribution amount             | means the amount a student is charged if they are an eligible Commonwealth Supported student.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| International student                   | means a student who holds a citizenship other than Australian or New Zealand and does not hold an Australian Permanent Resident Visa or a Humanitarian Visa (Refugee).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

| Term        | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sponsorship | payment made by the University, a Faculty or other organisational unit of ACU or an external organisation towards a student's fees. A sponsorship may cover all or part of a student's tuition fees. It may also cover other fees and charges, such as the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF). |

## Section 4 - Principles for Setting Fees

(4) Tuition fees will be:

- set in accordance with the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#) and [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 \(Cth\)](#);
- aligned with ACUs [Vision 2033](#) and Mission as well as and operational priorities, including product, volume, marketing and recruitment strategies;
- considered in combination with student, staff and revenue forecasts to factor in changes in ACU's operating environment; and
- set with consideration to market forces, including demand trends and elasticity.

(5) Fees for Commonwealth supported students, domestic fee-paying students and international students will be differentiated as required by legislation.

(6) Fees will be set nationally, to provide equity to students.

(7) Fees will be standardised to minimise the number of fee bands to ensure consistency and ease of communication to students.

(8) Fees will be reviewed annually and may increase each calendar year.

(9) The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) will be set each year at the discretion of ACU within the threshold advised by the Australian Government.

(10) The tuition fee setting process will be undertaken in a consultative and transparent manner to ensure engagement with all stakeholders within Faculties, departments and offices, and that insights from the market, sectors, accreditation bodies and strategic partners are considered.

## Section 5 - Authority to Approve Fees

(11) The Vice-Chancellor and President, on recommendation of the Fees and Scholarships Steering Committee, has the authority to approve the annual schedule of tuition fees and associated tuition charges.

## Section 6 - Tuition Fee Types

### Commonwealth Supported

(12) ACU will identify the courses in which Commonwealth supported places are available, in accordance with the funding agreement with the Australian Government.

(13) In order to be eligible for study as a domestic student in a Commonwealth supported place, a student must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#) which includes, but is not limited to:

- a. being one of the following:
  - i. An Australian citizen; or
  - ii. An Australian permanent resident; or
  - iii. A holder of an Australian permanent humanitarian visa;
  - iv. A holder of a Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV); or
  - v. A New Zealand citizen.

and

- b. at census date for an enrolled unit, have:
  - i. sufficient Student Learning Entitlement balance available
  - ii. provided their verified Unique Student Identifier Number to ACU

(14) Student contributions will be set annually in accordance with the Australian Government funding clusters.

(15) The following types of students are not eligible for Commonwealth supported places:

- a. International students;
- b. Domestic students who are enrolled as domestic fee-paying students;
- c. Students enrolled in non-award study;
- d. Students enrolled in auditing units.

(16) Domestic fees will be charged for the following student types:

- a. Students enrolled in postgraduate fee-paying courses;
- b. Students enrolled in non-award study;
- c. Students studying offshore online (including international students).

## **International**

(17) All onshore international students will be charged International tuition fees.

(18) All offshore international students who are studying online will be charged full domestic tuition fees.

(19) All other offshore international students will be charged at a rate determined in the business plan for that offshore delivery.

## **Audit**

(20) Students studying on an audit basis will be charged the relevant audit fee.

## **Student Services and Amenities Fee**

(21) All domestic students will be required to pay a separate Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) except for those listed in Section 15, Schedule 1 of this Policy.

(22) The SSAF for onshore International students will be included in their overall tuition fee.

## **Other Fees and Charges**

(23) Other fees and charges that may be levied include, but are not limited to:

- a. Application fees;

- b. Late fees;
- c. Fines;
- d. Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment fee;
- e. Graduation fees/charges as per the [Conferral and Graduation Policy](#);
- f. Academic documents as per the [Academic Documents Policy](#);
- g. Examination fees set in accordance with the [Examination Policy](#);
- h. Reinstatement fees; and
- i. Incidental fees which are compliant with the provisions of the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#).

## Section 7 - Invoicing and Payment of Fees

### Domestic Students

(24) Students will normally be invoiced four weeks prior to commencement of the relevant study period.

(25) The due date for payment of fees will be:

- a. Monday of week three for Semester 1 and 2;
- b. Monday of week two for all other study periods.

(26) Payment must be made by the due date, unless the student is eligible and has elected to defer fees using a HELP loan.

### International Students

(27) International students will be invoiced for their first semester's fees by Global at time of offer, and these fees will be payable upon acceptance of offer.

(28) Fees for subsequent study periods will be invoiced by the Academic Progression and Fees Section as per clause (25), and the due date will be as per clause (26) of this policy.

### Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)

(29) The SSAF will be charged to all students excluding those categories listed in Schedule 1.

(30) The SSAF will be calculated on a student's half-year enrolment, providing the student has enrolment in Semester 1 or 2.

(31) The SSAF charge for enrolments with a census date between 1 January and 30 June will display on the Semester 1 invoice. The SSAF charge for enrolments with a census date between 1 July and 31 December will display on the Semester 2 invoice.

(32) Students enrolled in a course through ACU Online will be charged SSAF per term enrolled. The relevant SSAF charge will display on the invoice for each enrolled study period.

### Allocation of payments received

(33) Payment received will be allocated to the student's outstanding account in the following order:

- a. Tuition fees;
- b. SSAF;

- c. Penalty fees.

## **Overpayment of Fees and Charges**

(34) Any overpayment of fees and charges will be applied to the student's account as a credit towards future study, unless the student requests a refund.

(35) Overpayment of tuition fees by international students will be managed in accordance with the provisions of the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 \(Cth\)](#).

## **Financial Holds**

(36) Financial holds may be placed on a student's record for non-payment of fees, charges and fines by the due date.

(37) A financial hold will prevent a student from enrolling into further units, receiving results or a transcript and graduating.

(38) A financial hold will be lifted once a student pays the overdue fee and any associated late payment charge.

## **Grandparenting or Transition of Funding Arrangements**

(39) Eligible international students will have their tuition fees set for the minimum duration of their course, at the year of commencement.

(40) Student funding arrangements may be impacted by changes to legislation by the Australian Government.

(41) ACU will ensure that students who meet the criteria will be grandparented as per Australian Government legislation.

## **Late Fees and Cancellation of Enrolment**

(42) Payments must be made by the due date indicated on the invoice.

(43) If tuition fees are not paid by the due date a late fee will be applied to the student's record.

(44) If fees are not paid by the relevant census date, the student's enrolment will normally be cancelled.

(45) If a student in a Commonwealth supported place, or in receipt of a HELP loan, has not provided their verified Unique Student Identifier number by the relevant census date, their enrolment may be cancelled.

(46) To be considered for reinstatement, a student must pay the overdue fee and any associated late payment charge and reinstatement fee within 10 working days of the cancellation date.

(47) The university reserves the right to trigger debt recovery processes.

## **Compelling Circumstances**

(48) In exceptional and compelling circumstances, a student may be granted an extension or payment plan at the discretion of the University.

# **Section 8 - Refund of Fees: Domestic Students**

## **Refund of Credit Balances**

(49) Credit balances within a student's individual account will not be refunded automatically.

(50) Where there is a credit balance, a student may apply for a refund, or the credit may be used against a future university fee or charge.

(51) Students seeking a refund of their credit balance must do so by submitting the relevant form.

(52) If a student has made a payment with a credit card, any refund must be refunded to the original card.

(53) If a student has made a payment via Flywire, any refund must be refunded via Flywire.

### **Refunds for Domestic Students**

(54) The refund of a credit balance on a student account is initiated by the student submitting a Request for Refund form to the Academic Progress and Fees Section.

(55) Where a student withdraws from a course, or units, prior to the census date, any upfront Student Contribution Amount (SCA) for the relevant study period already paid to the University will be refunded in full.

(56) Where a student withdraws from a course, or units, after the census date any upfront SCA paid will only be refunded in special circumstances as defined in the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#).

### **Tuition Fees - HECS-HELP Deferred and FEE-HELP**

(57) Where a student withdraws from a course, or units, prior to the census date, their deferred HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP liability for the relevant study period will be cancelled in full.

(58) Where a student withdraws from a course, or units, after the census date, their deferred HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP liability remains unless cancelled in special circumstances as defined in the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#).

### **Tuition Fees - Domestic Fee-Paying Students**

(59) Where a student withdraws from a course, or units, prior to the census date, tuition fees for the relevant study period, already paid to the University will be refunded in full.

(60) Where a student withdraws from a course or units after the census date, their fee liability remains. Tuition fees will only be refunded in special circumstances as defined in the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#).

### **Student Services and Amenities Fee**

(61) Students who formally withdraw from their course, or a unit prior to the census date for a study period may be eligible for a partial or full refund of the Student Services and Amenities Fee if the withdrawal reduces their load to part time or zero.

(62) Students enrolled in a course that is cancelled by the University will be eligible for a full refund of the Student Services and Amenities fee.

## **Section 9 - Refund of Fees: International Students**

### **Refunds for Commencing International Students**

(63) Refunds for Commencing International Students will be managed in accordance with the [Commencing International Student Refunds Policy](#).

## Refund of Credit Balances for Continuing International Students

- (64) Credit balances within a student's individual account will not be refunded automatically.
- (65) Where there is a credit balance, a student may apply for a refund, or the credit may be used against a future university fee or charge.
- (66) Students seeking a refund of their credit balance must do so by submitting the relevant form.
- (67) If a student has made a payment with a credit card, any refund must be refunded to the original card.
- (68) If a student has made a payment via Flywire, any refund must be refunded via Flywire.
- (69) Where a student withdraws from a course, or units, prior to the census date, tuition fees for the relevant study period, already paid to the University will be refunded in full.
- (70) Where a student withdraws from a course or units after the census date, their fee liability remains. Tuition fees will only be refunded in special circumstances as defined in the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#).

## Section 10 - Sponsorship

### Sponsorship Types

- (71) University sponsorships are funded by ACU and must be approved in accordance with the Delegations of Authority.
- (72) Faculty/organisational unit sponsorship are funded by an ACU Faculty or organisational unit. These must be approved by the relevant Executive Dean or Director in consultation with the Academic Progress and Fees Section.
- (73) Third Party Sponsorships are funded by an external organisation and are subject to an agreement between the University and a third party approved in line with the Delegation of Authority and in consultation with the Academic Progress and Fees section in advance of creating the agreement.
- (74) A combination of these sponsorship types can apply.
- (75) A sponsorship may cover all or part of a student's tuition fees. It may also cover other fees and charges, such as the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF).

### Sponsorship Agreements

- (76) A sponsorship agreement must be established following the prescribed University processes.
- (77) Sponsorship agreements may be valid for up to three years. Application for renewal must follow the same prescribed processes as when establishing an agreement.
- (78) Any variation to an existing agreement will require approval from the relevant approver and the Academic Progression and Fees Section.
- (79) The agreement can be terminated at any time by either party, with 30 days written notice.
- (80) Upon notification in writing of termination, the sponsor bears responsibility for the payment of fees for study periods with a census date prior to the date of termination.
- (81) Sponsors may add and remove students within the duration of the agreement. In such cases, sponsors must

advise the Academic Progression and Fees Section prior to the commencement of the next study period.

## **Invoicing and Payment of Sponsorship Fees**

(82) Sponsors will be invoiced bi-annually in April and October. The due date for payment will be 28 days from the date of issue of the invoice.

(83) The sponsor is liable for payment of the full invoiced amount as defined in the sponsorship agreement.

(84) Where payment in full is not received by the due date, a financial hold may be placed on each outstanding student record affecting the student's academic progression.

(85) Unpaid sponsorship amounts may lead to the termination of the sponsorship agreement by the University and cancellation of the student's enrolment.

(86) The University reserves the right to trigger debt recovery processes.

## **Section 11 - Publication**

(87) Information regarding ACU fees will be published on the ACU website.

(88) Information regarding Australian Government schemes, including e-CAF, HECS-HELP; and FEE-HELP will be published on the ACU website.

## **Section 12 - Appeals**

(89) A student who wishes to apply for review or to appeal a decision relating to fees may do so in accordance with the [Student Appeals Policy](#) and [Student Appeals Procedure](#).

## **Section 13 - Recordkeeping**

(90) Records related to Student fees will be maintained in accordance with the [Records and Archive Management Policy](#) and [Records Retention and Disposal Schedule](#) of the University.

## **Section 14 - Roles and Responsibilities**

(91) Responsibilities for fees setting are set out in the [Student Fee Setting Procedure](#).

### **Student**

(92) Students are responsible for the following:

- a. Paying fees by the due date; and
- b. Finalising all relevant Government loan scheme requests by the due date.
- c. In the case of a student in a Commonwealth supported place, ensuring sufficient Student Learning Entitlement balance is available for enrolled course/s and unit/s and notifying ACU when there isn't.
- d. In the case where a student has elected to access a HELP loan, ensuring sufficient HELP loan balance is available for enrolled unit/s and notifying ACU when there isn't.
- e. Ensuring they have provided their verified Unique Student Identifier number prior to:



- i. In the case of Commonwealth supported students, or students accessing a HELP loan, their first census date.
- ii. In the case of domestic fee-paying (award) students and international onshore students, prior to becoming course complete.

## **Academic Progress and Fees Section**

(93) The Academic Progress and Fees Section are responsible for the following:

- a. Preparation and publication of fees for domestic students;
- b. Setting the due date for payment of fees for domestic students and continuing International students;
- c. Invoicing of student fees;
- d. Receipt and allocation of fees;
- e. Setting and lifting of financial holds;
- f. Processing refunds;
- g. Configuration of relevant sponsorship agreements in the student system.

## **Global and Education Pathways**

(94) Global are responsible for the following:

- a. Publication of fees for onshore international students;
- b. Setting the due date for commencing onshore international students;
- c. Invoicing commencing onshore international students;
- d. Receipt and allocation of commencing international student fees; and
- e. Processing refunds of commencing international student fees.

## **Student Data and Reporting Section**

(95) The Student Data and Reporting Section are responsible for Government reporting for student fees.

# **Section 15 - Schedules**

## **Schedule 1 SSAF Fees Exempt**

(96) The following student types are excluded from the SSAF:

- a. Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students;
- b. students not enrolled in Semester 1 or 2 who are not enrolled in an ACU Online course;
- c. students enrolled in the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education;
- d. students enrolled as non-award or audit;
- e. students enrolled in ACU units on a Cross-Institutional basis;
- f. inbound students enrolled in a Study Abroad course;
- g. students enrolled in an Exchange Program;
- h. students enrolled through Open Universities Australia; and
- i. students undertaking their entire course offshore.

## Section 16 - Associated Information

(97) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

## Status and Details

|                              |                                                                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Status</b>                | Current                                                                          |
| <b>Effective Date</b>        | 24th November 2025                                                               |
| <b>Review Date</b>           | 1st January 2030                                                                 |
| <b>Approval Authority</b>    | Vice-Chancellor and President                                                    |
| <b>Approval Date</b>         | 24th November 2025                                                               |
| <b>Expiry Date</b>           | Not Applicable                                                                   |
| <b>Responsible Executive</b> | Helen Murnane<br>Academic Registrar                                              |
| <b>Responsible Manager</b>   | Mitchell Fairclough<br>National Manager, Academic Progress and Fees              |
| <b>Enquiries Contact</b>     | Catherine McKiver<br>Policy and Projects Officer<br><hr/> Student Administration |