

Student Fee Waivers and Discounts Procedure

Version 1 – Approved 11 July 2022

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Purpose

This procedure describes how fee waivers and discounts for domestic and international students are administered and managed in accordance with legislative requirements, including how they are:

- established and approved
- promoted and advertised
- assessed and processed
- monitored and reviewed.

Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
<i>Student Fees Policy</i>	<i>Section 1: Student Fees</i> <i>Section 4: Student Loans</i>	1.1-1.3 4.1
<i>General Delegations Ordinance</i>	<i>Section 6: Financial contracts, borrowings and expenditure delegations</i> <i>Section 9: Risk delegations</i>	6.4 - Table 1: financial delegations 9.1-9.2
<i>Higher Education Support (HES) Act 2003</i>	<i>Part 2-2 (Commonwealth Grant Scheme)</i> <i>Part 5-2 (Administrative Requirements for Higher Education Providers)</i>	<i>Refer to DESE guidance notes, sections 11-12, 20-22, 26.</i>
<i>Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000</i>	<i>Division 2 - Tuition Fees</i>	
<i>Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) (Threshold Standards) Section 7: Transparency</i>	<i>Domain 7: Representation, information and information management</i>	<i>Section 7.1-7.3</i>

Procedure

1. Introduction

Tuition fees for domestic and international students are set in accordance with the *Domestic Student Fees and International Student Fees Procedure*. All students must pay their fees in full upfront, or apply to defer their fees, unless all or part of the tuition fee is waived or discounted in accordance with this procedure.

For the purpose of this procedure, waivers and discounts are defined as follows:

- **Waiver** – a waiver is a reduction of the fees payable by a domestic student in a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP). The Australian government pays a portion of the tuition fees for these students and the remaining amount is payable by the student and is known as the Student Contribution Amount (or HECS under the Higher Education Contribution Scheme). This Student Contribution Amount can be waived partially or fully.
- **Discount** – a discount is a reduction of fees payable by an international or domestic student in a Full Fee Paying (FFP) course. Discounts are only partial.

Fee waivers and discounts are a valuable component of the University's pricing strategy – they provide the opportunity to widen participation through:

- Removing/reducing financial barriers - enabling access to study at university for financially disadvantaged students.
- Attracting a diverse range of students – from Tasmania, interstate and overseas.
- Fostering community/industry partnerships - with key external partners, or as part of an education proposal or tender.

This procedure aims to ensure fee waivers and discounts are:

- awarded to students in an ethical, open and transparent manner
- applied to students' records in a timely and consistent manner
- reviewed regularly to remain fit-for-purpose
- monitored as part of internal review processes, including the review of educational tenures and students' ongoing eligibility.

This procedure does not apply to Student Services and Amenities Fee waivers or discounts (refer to the *Student Services and Amenities Fees Procedure*).

2. Categories of fee waivers and discounts

- 2.1. Fee waivers and discounts can be applied under a number of circumstances (course, individual student, or cohort of students).

For Domestic Students, under the *Higher Education Support Act* (HESA) section 169-15, the University is not permitted to waive/discount fees at a unit level for Domestic students who are not exempt students.

For International students, overseas students must be charged as a minimum, a fee sufficient to recover the full cost of providing a course. The fee must be no less than those shown for the relevant category of courses in the schedule of minimum indicative course fees (published indexed rates) unless:

- the course is provided wholly offshore and students will not at any stage enter Australia for study; or

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- approval has been given by the department to charge less than the minimum indicative fee for a course; or
- overseas students undertaking study in Australia as part of a formal exchange program; or
- overseas students undertaking study in Australia towards a research master's degree or a research doctoral degree who have been awarded a scholarship for that study on the basis of merit following a competitive application process.

a) **Course level fee waivers and discounts**

The waiver or discount is applied at a course level for all students enrolled in a specified course or courses. (For example, a partial waiver for CSPs could be a 50% reduction of the Student Contribution Amount for all units within an undergraduate course).

b) **Individual Student fee waivers and discounts**

The waiver or discount is applied to an individual student's enrolment, either for the duration of their degree, or part of their degree. Individual student fee waivers or discounts can be applied on a number of grounds, including but not limited to, ad hoc cases where students may be disadvantaged unintentionally (i.e provider default), fee discrepancies, individual cases of student hardship or academic merit. These should be applied in accordance with the fairness provisions set out under Section 19-30 of HESA.

c) **Student Group fee waivers and discounts**

The waiver or discount is applied to a group of students, either for the duration of a degree, or part of a degree. Student group fee waivers or discounts can be applied under a variety of circumstances, for example, where the university has arrangements in place with employers to pay the tuition fees on behalf of their employees. These should be applied in accordance with the fairness provisions set out under Section 19-30 of HESA.

2.2. Fee waivers/discounts as a result of an educational partnership and/or tender

Fee waivers and discounts can be established as part of an arrangement with an external partner (for example an arrangement with another provider for cross-institutional studies or an educational tender). These are managed in accordance with legislative requirements and exclude courses available only under Employer Reserved Places (refer to HESA for more information and the University's Legal Services for advice regarding Employer Reserved Places). For the purposes of this procedure, fee waivers and discounts applicable for educational partnerships and tenders are managed in a similar way to all other fee waivers and discounts.

All other aspects of student fees (including student loans, Student Services & Amenities Fees, and completion of the mandatory eCAF) are managed in accordance with standard University policies and procedures.

3. Establishing new fee waivers or discounts

- 3.1. Fee waivers and discounts are approved annually (usually between May or June) by the Markets & Revenue Working Group for the following calendar year, once the tuition fees have been set in accordance with the *Domestic Fees Procedure* and *International Fee Procedure*.
- 3.2. Fee waivers and discounts are proposed by the relevant Colleges or Divisional areas. The teaching College or divisional area must prepare a business case which demonstrates that there is a strong need to apply the waiver or discount. Before preparing the business case, the proposing college/division should consult the Fees Team to ensure configuration is possible in the Student

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Management System and that the proposed fee arrangement complies with relevant legislation.

The business case must specify:

- a) the *duration* of the fee waiver or discount – including whether the fee waiver or discount is to be applied for a calendar year or for the duration of the degree (for individual students or group of students).
- b) the *indicative* value of the proposed fee waiver or discount – for example, a specified amount reviewed annually, or a total percentage (%) of a student's fees for the duration of a degree.

The business case should also include the following, as relevant:

- c) Evidence of *student success* – for example, data as to the number of students attracted and retained because of the fee waiver/discount, and how many students have been lost.
 - d) Modelling of the *price sensitivity* for students - for example, whether the waiver/discount is required to attract students, or whether there is strong evidence that a discount is required in order to be competitive.
 - e) Analysis of likely *student demand* – the number of students likely to undertake the course if the fee waiver/discount is offered.
- 3.3. If the waiver or discount relates to an individual student, the proposal is reviewed and approved by the relevant Head of School or Executive Dean.
 - 3.4. If the waiver or discount applies to a course, or group of students, the proposal is reviewed and approved by the Markets and Revenue Working Group (MRWG) or as delegated by MRWG or the Vice-Chancellor.
 - 3.5. Internal requests for fee waivers and discounts should be submitted to MRWG via the relevant teaching college or Divisional area, using the template available upon request from markets.revenue@utas.edu.au, following consultation with the Fees team.
 - 3.6. Once approved, the Markets and Revenue Working Group will notify the Fees team of the new waiver or discount arrangements. The Fees Team will create a new waiver code/update an existing waiver code in the Student Management System and notify the relevant College/area and Marketing once complete.
 - 3.7. All information relating to fee waivers or discounts must be documented and stored in accordance with the University's record management keeping processes.

4. Advertising and promotion of fee waivers and discounts

- 4.1. Once the new waiver or discount has been created in the system by the Fees Team, the course will be required to clearly articulate the waivers and discounts available.
- 4.2. The Marketing Office is responsible for the promotion of all courses and fee waivers and discounts. All promotional material and marketing of discounts and waivers are required to be approved by the Marketing Office for compliance purposes.
- 4.3. The marketing of the course will use clear and concise language to ensure understanding by students. The following details will be published and available on the University's [Scholarships, Fees and Costs webpage](#):
 - How students are eligible for the fee waiver or discount (including any eligibility criteria).
 - Details of the duration of the fee waiver or discount (including any applicable enrolment or

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application cut-off dates).

- How students can apply for the fee waiver or discount (including any supporting documentation required from students).

4.4. The University's professional staff and academics may explain the fee waivers and discounts available to students using the same information available on the University's website.

5. Applying, Assessing and processing of fee waivers and discounts

5.1. Students are considered for a fee waiver or discount via the following methods:

- Online application portal (these require assessment by the Fees Team as supporting documentation is needed).
- Automatic assessment (as identified by the Student Journey Admissions Team, Fees Team or College).

Online application portal

5.2. Students who apply for a waiver via the online application portal must read the eligibility criteria and application process carefully and ensure that supporting documentation is provided, if relevant.

5.3. The Fees Team will acknowledge receipt and will assess the application normally within 7-10 business days.

5.4. When assessing the waiver application, the Fees Team may ask the student to provide additional information or supportive evidence (for example letter from their employer).

5.5. Once the waiver has been assessed, the Fees Team will notify the student of the outcome of their application.

Automatic assessment

5.6. Students will automatically be assessed for some waivers or discounts when they apply to study at the University.

International students will automatically be assessed by the Student Journey Admissions Team for a discount. These discounts are assessed on the basis of:

- a) academic merit (e.g Dean's Merit Scholarship 50% or Tasmanian International Scholarship 25%);
- b) targeted eligibility criteria including citizenship (ASEAN scholarship 15%); or
- c) alumni arrangements (Postgraduate Alumni Scholarship 10%).

Domestic students enrolling in courses which attract waivers will be identified either by the Fees Team through system generated reports or by the Colleges. Colleges who identify students eligible for waivers must submit a request to the Fees Team via Service Now identifying the eligible students.

Processing waivers and discounts

5.7. Once a student has been identified as being eligible for a waiver or a discount, the Fees Team will apply the waiver to the student's record in the Student Management System. This process will include a start date, end date (if applicable), and the percentage or value (in dollar amount) of student fees being reduced.

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- 5.8. Once applied, the student will be able to see the reduced fees in eStudent and pay the balance (if applicable) by the Fees due date outlined in the University’s Key Dates page.

6. Monitoring and reviewing of fee waivers and discounts

- 6.1. With the exception of individual student fee waivers and discounts, all other fee waivers/discounts are reviewed and approved annually by the University’s Markets and Revenue Working Group (MRWG). Timing for re-approval can vary throughout the year, depending on the nature of the fee waiver/discount, with most approvals processed in June or July. Courses with fee waivers will not be promoted until appropriate approvals are obtained in accordance with this procedure.
- 6.2. Approved fee waivers and discounts are administered and managed by the Fees Team in collaboration with the relevant college/owning area.
- 6.3. The Fees Team will maintain a central repository of waivers and will review these annually.
- 6.4. Students in receipt of waivers or discounts which include ongoing eligibility requirements will be reviewed regularly either by the Scholarships Office (in the case of academic merit), Fees Team or College. Students who are no longer eligible to maintain their waiver, will be notified in writing by the relevant area, and the waiver or discount will be ended in the Student Management system.

7. Conflicts of Interest

- 7.1. When establishing, advertising, assessing and managing fee waivers and discounts, all conflicts must be identified, disclosed, monitored and effectively managed. The University’s *Conflict of Interest Policy* applies.
- 7.2. If a person involved in the establishment, advertisement, assessment, approval or tenure management of a fee waiver or discount has an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, that person must declare the interest, whether actual or perceived, and an appropriate management plan approved by their supervisor must be put in place.

Related Procedures

Domestic Student Fees Procedure

International Student Fees Procedure

Versioning

Version	Action	Approved By	Business Owner/s	Approval Date
Version 1	Approved	Vice President, Strategy, Marketing, Finance	Director Student Systems and Administration	11 July 2022

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