

## Charges for Learning Resources and Other Items for Students

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<b>TRIM document</b>	2015/6008034
<b>Description</b>	<p>Commonwealth supported students and domestic fee-paying students generally must be able to complete the requirements of their program without the imposition of fees that are additional to student contribution amounts or tuition fees.</p> <p>Only certain incidental fees are allowed under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) and the Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2012. The Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2012 identify these circumstances.</p>

### Related documents

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

[Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2012](#)

[\[Fees for Goods and Services Incidental to Studies\]](#) [\[Circumstances in which higher education providers must not levy charges\]](#) [\[Charges which may be levied by Higher Educational Institutions\]](#) [\[Advice to Griffith University staff\]](#)

## 1. FEES FOR GOODS AND SERVICES INCIDENTAL TO STUDIES

According to the Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2012 a fee is considered incidental to studies if it falls into any one or more of the following categories:

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

## **2. CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS MUST NOT LEVY CHARGES**

Under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) the Australian Government has issued a set of guidelines to institutions to provide guidance on the matter of fees for ancillary services.

The following examples are the kinds of goods and services for which fees should not be charged as the costs incurred would be expected to be covered in the standard tuition fee for the program or alternatives to them are available to students at no additional charge. Examples include:

- program materials such as course profiles, reading lists, tutorial or seminar topics and problems, assignment and essay questions and requirements and guidelines for the presentation of work;
- access to library books, periodicals and manuals;
- clinic, laboratory or workshop materials such as anaesthetics, chemicals, filters, fuel, fertilisers, animal feed or crops used in practical sessions or research;
- access to computers or other on-line resources;
- equipment and manuals which a professional in the field would not be required to own such as fixtures in a clinic, laboratory or workshop or large items of equipment and relevant workshop manuals required for their use;
- admissions services including application fees or enrolment fees, except for special admission tests;
- examination or assessment costs including those for practical assessment, for example, which requires the services of musical accompanists, and re-assessment of results where a student has failed an assessment and thereby failed a program or course.
- mailing charges associated with distance education
- program notes provided as part of distance education.

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## **3. CHARGES WHICH MAY BE LEVIED BY HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Chapter 7 of the Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2012 (HEP) identifies circumstances in which institutions may levy fees on students for goods or services that are incidental to their studies. Elements within the University are reminded that Council approval is required for any charges which the University wishes to impose on students, whether the charge is applicable to Commonwealth supported students or domestic fee paying students. Therefore any requests for such charges should come through the Registrar's office and they will be checked for legitimacy against the Government guidelines. It is not uncommon for students to challenge a fee or charge which they feel is not consistent with the guidelines. These guidelines are enforced through the Higher Education Support Act 2003, so a breach may possibly jeopardise the University's funding. Where Council has given approval for an incidental fee to be charged within a program and/or course students are to be clearly advised of this requirement in all relevant documentation prior to enrolment.

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The following are examples of goods or services which are ancillary or additional to students' program of study for which a fee may be charged.

### **Categories of Incidental Fees and Charges**

A charge for a good or service that is not essential to the program of study

A charge for an alternative form, or alternative forms, of access to a good or service that is an essential component of the program of study but is otherwise made readily available at no additional fee by the higher education provider.

A charge for an essential good or service that the student has the choice of acquiring from a supplier other than the higher education provider and is for:

- (i) equipment or items which become the physical property of the student and are not consumed during the program of study; or
- (ii) food, transport and accommodation costs associated with the provision of field trips that form part of the program of study.

A fine or a penalty, provided it is imposed by the higher education provider principally as a disincentive and not in order to raise revenue or cover administrative costs.

### **Example**

- access to Internet and IT services except where these are required as part of a program
- printing of hard copy notes from digital media
- graduation ceremonies provided that the student does not need to attend the ceremony to graduate
- lecture notes or recordings, provided that the lectures are available to students at no additional charge
- electronic provision of essential information if the information is also readily available at no additional charge in another form
- anthologies of required readings provided that these texts are also available at no additional charge
- additional materials which may be helpful but not critical to the course
- artwork supplies
- fabric for sewing course
- protective clothing or footwear
- tool kits
- stethoscopes
- musical instruments
- dance shoes
- reference texts
- badged clothing required for placements
- meals, snacks, beverages
- bus tickets, airfares
- hotels, camping
- fines or penalties for late enrolments
- late variations to enrolments
- late withdrawals from a program
- late payments of charges, student contribution amounts and tuition fees
- an assessment of prior learning only in circumstances in which a person has not applied for entry to Griffith University
- A bond for equipment that be forfeited if the equipment is not returned or damaged

Special admission test conducted by the Higher Education Provider for judging the suitability of person seeking admission into a specialist program

- specialist auditions and interviews such as those conducted by performing arts institutions/faculties; or
  - tests where special expertise is required to conduct interviews and make recommendations on the suitability of applicants for admission
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#### **4. ADVICE TO GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY STAFF**

In accordance with these guidelines and the relevant legislation students, whether internal or external, may not be charged for learning resources which are essential for undertaking the course. They may, however, be given the opportunity to purchase additional resources which may be helpful but not critical to the course, particularly when this additional material is available by several modes, such as available through the library, or by downloading from the Internet. This provision allows for anthologies of additional readings to be sold through the bookshop, for example. Lecture notes may be sold through the bookshop providing that the lectures are delivered. Online/External learning resources may not be sold to students except where they are additional to the core material for the course, analogous to anthologies of readings, or duplicates of the material that is available without charge by other means.

Laboratory materials such as art or photographic supplies can only be charged for when the items produced remain the property of the student, and even in these circumstances, the student should have the option of obtaining the necessary materials from other suppliers.

University elements are reminded that any plans to charge students for goods or services, other than via a commercial outlet, such as the Bookshop, must be discussed with the Office of Finance to arrange the necessary cashier procedures.