

Tuition Fee Debt Collection Process

Tuition Fee Debt Collection

1. Fee Overview and Student Responsibility

- 1.1. By the act of enrolment, a student accepts liability to pay the full tuition fee for the year of study. By signing an enrolment form they are agreeing to abide by the current SGUL General Regulations which includes acting in accordance with the SGUL Tuition Fee Policy.
- 1.2. Tuition fees for each year become due in full on the first day of each academic year of the course. Payment can be made on line, by debit/credit card or by bank transfer. Payment for fees in cash or by cheque is discouraged and will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. All students should ensure that their student number and name accompanies each payment. Any bank charges incurred by payment by credit card will be passed onto the student.
- 1.3. Students who miss an expected payment date may be subject to late fees of 3%, penalties, suspension of support facilities, including IT and library access, and ultimately termination of registration.
- 1.4. Students who have not paid their full fees by the end of the academic year will not be permitted to re-enrol for the following academic year.
- 1.5. Final year students with a tuition fee debt will not be permitted to receive examination results, a degree certificate or be able to graduate.

2. Self-funding Students

- 2.1. All students who miss an expected payment date will be sent reminders by email to all email addresses held on file.
- 2.2. The following process will be followed for any students who fail to pay part or all of the tuition fee for which they are personally liable.
- 2.3. A minimum of 7 days will be allowed between each stage of the process.
- 2.4. This process will occur at least once each term, with Stage 3 being completed before the end of term.

Stage 1 – Polite reminder Letter

The student is advised to pay the proportion of fees due or to contact the Student Centre team explaining, with supporting evidence, why they have failed to pay the monies due.

Stage 2 – Strong reminder letter and warning that sanctions may be applied in 7 days

The student is advised to pay or submit reasons in writing, with supporting evidence, to the Academic Registrar explaining why they have failed to pay the monies due. If full payment of due amount is not received at this stage, some or all of the following sanctions may be applied

- 3% late fee charge based on the amount outstanding
- removal of access to the network, email, Moodle, student systems etc
- removal of library access
- removal of access to areas of the estate requiring a swipe card

Stage 3 – Debtor's Panel chaired by the Academic Registrar

The debtor's panel consists of the Academic Registrar, Assistant Registrar (Student Services) and the Director of Finance or their nominees. The following will be considered when deciding the outcome of the case

- has the student paid anything towards their tuition fee
- what is the student's past payment history

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- have they presented a viable payment plan as part of their written submission
- are there any extenuating circumstances
- have they produced evidence of a clear intention to pay their debt
- how likely is it that the student will make a payment

The panel may approve some or all of the sanctions mentioned above being put in place.

It may also recommend to the Principal that registration be terminated. If this is the outcome, then written assessments/examinations already sat/submitted will be put forward for marking, but results will be withheld and any assessments due to be sat/submitted will not be permitted.

On termination of registration the student is no longer a student of SGUL or INTO St George's.

The student will be informed of this outcome.

Stage 4 – Appeal of Debtor Panel Decision

An appeal must be made by the student within 7 working days of the letter informing them of the panel outcome. This process will then be put on hold until the outcome of the appeal is known.

Stage 5 – Referral to Debt Collection Agency

If the student does not appeal the outcome of the panel, then the case is passed to a Debt Collection Agency.

3. Sponsors

- 3.1. External sponsors should pay within 30 days of the invoice date. Those that do not pay on time will be issued with letter in line with stages 1 & 2 documented above,
- 3.2. Students whose sponsors fail to pay after stage 2 of the process will then be considered to be self-funded students and follow the process above if their fees remain unpaid.

4. Appeals procedure

- 4.1. A student whose registration is terminated may request the Chair of Council to review the case and establish an Appeals Committee, on one or more of the following grounds
 - there is new relevant and substantial evidence available which could not reasonably have been brought to the attention of the Panel
 - there has been a procedural irregularity
 - the decision of the Panel was manifestly unreasonable
- 4.2. Notice of appeal must be lodged in writing with the Head of Governance, Legal and Assurance Services (GLAS) within 10 working days from the date of the letter terminating registration. The Head of GLAS or their nominee will act as Clerk to Council.
- 4.3. Students requesting an appeal under this procedure should write a short focused statement setting out the grounds for the appeal and should only include any new evidence that has not been previously presented and which supports the written statement.
- 4.4. If an Appeals Committee is to be established the student shall not be permitted to return to his or her studies pending the Appeals Committee hearing, save in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Chair of Council.

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- 4.5. The procedure for the appointment and conduct of an Appeals Committee shall be specified in the document 'Student Appeals Committee Procedure' approved by Council.
- 4.6. The decision of the Chair of Council and/or the Appeals Committee on behalf of the Council, shall be final and shall conclude SGUL's Internal Complaints Procedure. The Academic Registrar shall be notified of this decision by the Clerk to Council and the Academic Registrar or their nominee shall inform the student in writing of the Completion of Appeals within 10 working days of this decision being taken.

5. Use of Debt Collection Agencies for the recovery of Tuition Fee Debt

- 5.1. At the end of each financial year, a further review of outstanding debts will be carried out by the Receivables Manager and a list of recommendations for referral prepared, to be progressed in accordance with the process noted above.
- 5.2. Debts referred to a debt collection agency in previous years will be reviewed and discussed with the Director of Finance or their nominee in January and July.

Nicola Arnold
Director of Finance
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