

Tuition Fees Charging Policy 2016/17

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1. Purpose and Scope

This document sets out when students will be charged for tuition fees and their liability at each stage of the academic year if they withdraw or take leave of absence.

2. Undergraduate Programmes

2.1 Home/EU students

These provisions apply to all years of the programme including a placement/sandwich year.

Students commencing or continuing programmes in September/October 2016

A student will **not** be liable to pay tuition fees if an application for a withdrawal or leave of absence has been formally approved by their School on or before **midnight on Friday 7th October 2016**. It can normally take up to five working days for leave of absence and withdrawal requests to be processed and students should make sure they submit requests in time for them to be processed before this deadline.

In all other cases students will be liable to pay tuition fees as follows:

Where a student's application to be withdrawn from their programme or take leave of absence has been formally approved by their School between **midnight on Friday 7th October 2016** and before **midnight on Friday 13th January 2017**, the student will be charged **twenty five per cent** of the full tuition fee for that academic year.

Where a student's application to be withdrawn from their programme or take leave of absence has been formally approved by their School between **midnight on Friday 13th January 2017** and before **midnight on Friday 5th May 2017**, the student will be charged **fifty per cent** of the full tuition fee for that academic year.

Where a student's application to be withdrawn from their programme or take a leave of absence has been formally approved by their School after **midnight on Friday 5th May 2017**, the student will be charged **one hundred per cent** of the full tuition fee for that academic year.

Student Loan Company Information

If the student has taken a tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company to pay their tuition fees, then Aston University will notify the Student Loans Company of any change in the student's circumstances and their revised tuition fee liability for that academic cycle. Students must also contact the Student Loans Company themselves to confirm this information.

Students who have been assessed to receive a maintenance grant (or special support grant) for living costs and/or supplementary grants may be asked to repay part of these grants if they withdraw or take leave of absence. The Student Loans Company will calculate on a pro rata basis how much grant a student is entitled to receive. Students do not normally receive any grant payments for the terms that they are not attending - unless there are extenuating circumstances which are assessed and approved by the Student Loans Company.

Students commencing or continuing programmes in January 2017

A student will **not** be liable to pay tuition fees if an application for a withdrawal or leave of absence has been formally approved by their School before **midnight on Friday 13th January 2017**. It can normally take up to five working days for leave of absence of studies and withdrawal requests to be processed and students should make sure they submit requests in time for them to be processed before this deadline.

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Students commencing or continuing programmes in April 2017

A student will **not** be liable to pay tuition fees if an application for a withdrawal or leave of absence has been formally approved by their School before **midnight Friday 12th May 2017**. It would normally take around five working days for leave of absence and withdrawal requests to be processed and students should make sure they submit requests in time for them to be processed before this deadline.

In all other cases students will be liable to pay tuition fees as follows:

Where a student's application to be withdrawn from their programme or take a leave of absence has been formally approved by their School between **midnight on Friday 12th May 2017** and before **midnight on Friday 6th October 2017**, the student will be charged **twenty five per cent** of the full tuition fee for that academic cycle.

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Students commencing or continuing programmes in July 2017

Where a student's application to be withdrawn from their programme or take a leave of absence has been formally approved by their School before **midnight on Friday 7th July 2017**. It would normally take around five working days for leave of absence and withdrawal requests to be processed and students should make sure they submit requests in time for them to be processed before this deadline.

In all other cases students will be liable to pay tuition fees as follows:

Where a student's application to be withdrawn from their programme or take a leave of absence has been formally approved by their School between **midnight on Friday 7th July 2017** and before **midnight on Friday 6th October 2017**, the student will be charged **twenty five per cent** of the full tuition fee for that academic cycle.

Where a student's application to be withdrawn from their programme or take a leave of absence has been formally approved by their School between **midnight on Friday 6th October 2017** and before **midnight on Friday 5th January 2018**, the student will be charged **fifty per cent** of the full tuition fee for that academic cycle.

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2.2 Overseas students and Home/EU students studying for an Equivalent or Lower Qualification

These provisions apply to all years of the programme including a placement/sandwich year.

Students commencing or continuing programmes in September/October 2016

A student will **not** be liable to pay tuition fees if an application for a withdrawal or leave of absence has been formally approved by their School before **midnight on Friday 7th October 2016**. It can normally take up to five working days for leave of absence and withdrawal requests to be processed and students should make sure they submit requests in time for them to be processed before this deadline.

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A student will **not** be liable to pay tuition fees if an application for a withdrawal or leave of absence has been formally approved by their School before **midnight on Friday 13th January 2017**. It can normally take up to five working days for leave of absence of studies and withdrawal requests to be processed and students should make sure they submit requests in time for them to be processed before this deadline.

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Students commencing or continuing programmes in April 2017

A student will **not** be liable to pay tuition fees if an application for a withdrawal or leave of absence has been formally approved by their School on or before **midnight Friday 12th May 2017**. It would normally take around five working days for leave of absence and withdrawal requests to be processed and students should make sure they submit requests in time for them to be processed before this deadline.

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Where a student's application to be withdrawn from their programme or take a leave of absence has been formally approved by their School after **midnight on Friday 5th January 2018**, the student will be charged **one hundred per cent** of the full tuition fee for that academic cycle.

3. Postgraduate Taught students

Where a student's application to be withdrawn from their programme or take leave of absence part way through an academic year has been formally approved by the School, their tuition fee liability will be recalculated. The student will be liable to pay tuition fees for the number of full standard terms that they have completed and any standard terms that they have partially completed. For example, the recalculated fee is the full fee divided by three standard terms multiplied by the number of full standard terms and part standard terms completed on the programme.

4. Postgraduate Research and Distance Learning students

Where a student's application to be withdrawn from their programme or take leave of absence part way through an academic year has been formally approved by the School, their tuition fee liability will be recalculated. The student will be liable to pay tuition fees for the number of full calendar months that they have completed and any calendar months that they have partially completed. For example, the recalculated fee is the full fee divided by 12 calendar months multiplied by the number of full calendar months and part calendar months completed on the programme.

Where a writing-up student withdraws from their programme or takes leave of absence, the writing-up fee will not be adjusted and the student will continue to be liable to pay the full writing-up fee.

Where a continuation fee is charged and a student withdraws from their programme or takes leave of absence, the continuation fee will not be adjusted and the student will continue to be liable to pay the full continuation fee. Where a student submits prior to their expected end date they will continue to be liable to pay the full continuation fee.

5. Pre-sessional English Programmes

Where a student withdraws from their programme or takes leave of absence part way through their programme, their tuition fee liability will be recalculated.

The student will be liable to pay tuition fees for the number of weeks that they have completed and any weeks that they have partially completed. For example, the recalculated fee is the full fee divided by the number of weeks in the programme multiplied by the number of weeks completed/partially completed on the programme. The exception to this rule will be the four week pre-sessional programme, where the student will be liable to pay the full programme fee.

6. Withdrawal and Leave of Absence

Students who take leave of absence are, by definition, expected to return. The fee to be paid for the year in which a student withdraws will be calculated according to the applicable mechanism set out in this document. Refunds will not be issued for leave of absence and any resulting credit will remain on the student's account and be carried forward to the following year.

Where a student takes leave of absence part way through a term, and re-enrols at the same point, they will be charged at the tuition fee rate of the academic year when their leave of absence was first approved when they return to their studies.

If a student chooses to re-enrol earlier than the term of the following year to which they withdrew, the University will charge for the additional term(s) of study at the new rate. If the School decides that a student must repeat any terms of study due to changes to the programme, the University will not charge over 100% of the annual fee for the two years.

Before returning to the programme, it is the student's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements with the relevant Associate Dean or their nominee including confirming their intended return date. The School Support Office will then communicate with the Registry Student Records team to ensure that the correct fee is charged for the student when returning to study.

Students who take leave of absence remain liable to pay any outstanding fees due to the University in accordance with this document and re-enrolment will not be permitted until outstanding fees have been paid. Student debt is covered by the University Sanctions Policy

and can be found: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/a-to-z-of-registry-services/sanctions-policy-for-student-debt/>

7. Tuition Fee Deposit

Where an applicant is required to pay a deposit to secure a place on their programme, the value will be deducted from the total tuition fee invoiced amount payable for the year. Invoices are raised after enrolment.

7.1 Cancellation within 14 day period

On cancellation of the acceptance of a place by the applicant within fourteen days for whatever reasons the University will refund the deposit.

7.2 Cancellation after 14 day period

On cancellation of the acceptance of a place by the applicant after fourteen days for whatever reasons the University will not normally refund the deposit except in these circumstances:

- the requirements for the conditional offer have not been met by the applicant. Evidence will be required to prove that a genuine attempt had been made to meet the conditional offer;
- where the applicant is an overseas student and the application for entry clearance is refused (documentary evidence of refusal will be required). No refund will apply where entry clearance refused due to submission of fraudulent documents/deception or any act of omission by the applicant in connection with such visa application; and
- in cases of exceptional mitigating circumstances (documentary evidence will be required).

The University will retain an administration fee of £50.00 on cancellations received after fourteen days.

8. Payment of Refunds

8.1 Deposit Refund

The University will refund the applicant the amount of the deposit without undue delay, and not later than 14 days after the day on which the University is informed of the applicant's decision to cancel acceptance of their place on the programme. The University will usually refund using the same means of payment as the applicant used for the initial transaction, unless the applicant has expressly agreed otherwise. In any event, the University is not responsible for any bank charges incurred by the applicant as a result of the refund.

8.2 Tuition Fee Refund

Where a student has paid their fees in advance and subsequently withdraws or takes leave of absence, the University will refund according to the applicable mechanism set out in this document. Payment will be made into the designated bank account submitted by the student on MAP (My Aston Portal) within 14 days of the request, subject to full approval by their School of study.

8.3 Agency Fee Refund

Any refunds made will not include a refund of any agency fee paid by the applicant to an agent.

9. Mitigating Circumstances

The University shall consider each case of mitigating circumstances on a case by case basis, however, please be aware that academic and financial difficulties are not normally regarded as acceptable reasons for any refund. Please refer to table below for an indicative and non-exhaustive list of acceptable and non-acceptable mitigating circumstances.

Such cases must be submitted to Director of Registry and Student Services who will liaise with the appropriate School.

Mitigating Circumstances	
Usually accepted by the University	
	Notes
1. Recent (< 1 month) death or serious illness of a close relative	"Close" means parents (& guardians), children and siblings, and a spouse/partner. It may include in-laws, grandparents and grandchildren if it can be shown that the relationship was very close, but not usually aunts, uncles or cousins.
2. Recent (< 1 month) diagnosed illness or serious accident of the student	Illness or accident affecting study that is an incapacitating illness or an unexpected deterioration in an ongoing illness or medical condition which includes bone fractures and serious sprains. Medical certification must be obtained and medical evidence must bear the GP's practice stamp and/or be on appropriate headed paper.
3. Recent (< 1 month) Change of employment circumstances	Unforeseen changes in employment for example; a. withdrawal of sponsorship by an employer (letter from employer must be provided). b. loss of employment removing the ability to progress with the course financially (letter from employer must be provided).
4. Recent (< 1 month) other unforeseen significant circumstances	Political unrest, natural disaster, national emergency situation.
Visa related	Overseas Students must refer to sections 7 and 8.1

Not accepted by the University	
	Notes
Minor ailments and other conditions	Minor ailments where symptoms may be relieved by over the counter medication, sprains, long-standing medical conditions for which special arrangements could have been made or treatment anticipated and taken. Accidents/illness affecting relatives or friends (unless serious or the student is the sole carer).
Social	Difficulty integrating to University life or home sickness or a decision to commence with employment rather than academia.
Non-serious domestic or personal disruptions which could have been anticipated or planned	Moving house, holidays, weddings, religious festivals or other events where the student either has control over the date or may choose not to participate. Change of job or "normal" job pressure (exceptional crises at work might be acceptable), illness or death of pets.
Study-related	Decision to transfer to an alternative institution, computer difficulties, late distribution of materials by the School, delays in printing, photocopying and issues with predefined timetabling of modules.

10. Glossary

10.1 Home student

This is a student who qualifies to be considered for a tuition fee loan and grants and loans for living costs from the UK government. These students cannot be charged more than £9,000 for their tuition fees or £1,000 in the placement year. The rules about qualifying as a home student depend on nationality, the immigration status of you and your family members and where you have all been living.

10.2 EU student

This is a student who is an EU national (or the relevant family member of an EU national) and who qualifies to be considered for a tuition fee loan from the UK government. These students cannot be charged more than £9,000 for their tuition fees or £1,000 in the placement year. The rules about qualifying as an EU student depend on the immigration status of you and your family members and where you have all been living.

10.3 Leave of absence

This is when a student stops their studies for a period (normally longer than 60 days) for reasons such as illness. Requests to take leave of absence should normally be made through MAP. A request to take leave of absence has been formally approved when it has been considered by the relevant school of study and a final decision has been made. The status of the request in the MAP task at this stage will normally show as "Request approved and processed by academic school."

10.4 Withdrawal

A student may ask to withdraw from their programme at any time and requests to do so should normally be made through MAP. A request to withdraw from a programme of study has been formally approved when it has been considered by the relevant school of study and a final decision has been made. The status of the request in the MAP task at this stage will normally show as “Request approved and processed by academic school.”

10.5 Academic Year

The University academic year is the 12 months period which begins on 1st September.

10.6 Academic cycle

The anniversary of the commencement of the programme studied.

10.7 Equivalent or Lower Qualification.

A student is studying an Equivalent or Lower Qualification if they already hold an awarded qualification which is at the same level as or is higher than the programme they will be studying at Aston University.

10.8 Standard undergraduate week

There are normally 31 standard undergraduate weeks in an academic year which are arranged into standard terms.

10.9 Standard term

This is defined in the University calendar. In the academic year 2016/17 the standard term dates are as follows:

First Term	25 th September to 17 th December 2016
Second Term	8 th January to 8 th April 2017
Third Term	30 th April to 10 th June 2017

Appendix One

Tables indicating tuition fee charging policy for 2016/17

**ALL Undergraduate Programmes Home/EU students
Overseas students and students with an (Equivalent or Lower Qualification)
Placement Year Fees**

Students commencing in September/October 2016

<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>	<u>Liability Amount</u>
Midnight Sunday 25 Sep 16	Midnight Friday 7 Oct 16	0%
Midnight Friday 7 Oct 16	Midnight Friday 13 Jan 17	25%
Midnight Friday 13 Jan 17	Midnight Friday 5 May 17	50%
Midnight Friday 5 May 17	-	100%

Students commencing in January 2017

<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>	<u>Liability Amount</u>
Midnight Sunday 8 Jan 17	Midnight Friday 13 Jan 17	0%
Midnight Friday 13 Jan 17	Midnight Friday 5 May 17	25%
Midnight Friday 5 May 17	Midnight Friday 6 Oct 17	50%
Midnight Friday 6 Oct 17	-	100%

Students commencing in April 2017

<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>	<u>Liability Amount</u>
Midnight Sunday 30 Apr 17	Midnight Friday 12 May 17	0%
Midnight Friday 12 May 17	Midnight Friday 6 Oct 17	25%
Midnight Friday 6 Oct 17	Midnight Friday 5 Jan 18	50%
Midnight Friday 5 Jan 18	-	100%

Students commencing in July 2017

<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>	<u>Liability Amount</u>
Midnight Sunday 2 Jul 17	Midnight Friday 7 Jul 17	0%
Midnight Friday 7 Jul 17	Midnight Friday 6 Oct 17	25%
Midnight Friday 6 Oct 17	Midnight Friday 5 Jan 18	50%
Midnight Friday 5 Jan 18	-	100%

Postgraduate Taught students

<u>Period</u>	<u>Status of Completion</u>	<u>Liability Amount</u>
Full Standard Terms	Completed	3 rd of the Annual Fee
Full Standard Terms	Partially Completed	3 rd of the Annual Fee

Postgraduate Research students

<u>Period</u>	<u>Status of Completion</u>	<u>Liability Amount</u>
Full Calendar Months	Completed	100% full completed months
Full Calendar Months	Partially Completed	Plus 100% of partial month
Writing-Up Fee	-	100% Full Fees Payable
