

# Incidental Student Fees and Charges Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) This Procedure is for use by organisational units in determining whether a proposed student charge complies with legislative requirements and university policy. This Procedure also outlines the processes to be followed to have an incidental fee approved.

## Section 2 - Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

Term	Definition
Course	means a discrete portion of a program that has a distinct name, code and unit value.
HESA	means <a href="#">Higher Education Support Act 2003</a> (Cth).
Incidental fee	means a fee for a good or service related to the provision of a course or program that is additional to a student contribution amount or tuition fee and which meets one of the criteria set out in chapter 7 of the <a href="#">Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023</a> and HESA [HESA paragraph 19-102(3)(f)].
Program	means a program of study offered by the University, the completion of which entitles a person to an award conferred by the Senate.

## Section 3 - Procedure Scope/Coverage

(2) This Procedure applies to all students and staff at The University of Queensland.

## Section 4 - Procedure Statement

(3) Students must be able to complete the requirements of their course or program without the imposition of fees that are additional to student contribution amounts or tuition fees – however, certain incidental fees are allowed. This Procedure is for use by organisational units in determining whether or not a proposed fee meets HESA requirements, Higher Education Provider Guidelines, and complies with University policy.

(4) The [Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023](#) allows a provider to charge a student a fee for a good or service if one of the following criteria applies:

- a. the fee is for a good or service that is not compulsory or essential to a course or program;
- b. the fee is for an alternative form or alternative forms of access to a good or service that is an essential component of a course or program but is otherwise made readily available at no additional charge by the University;
- c. the fee is for an essential good or service that the student has a choice of acquiring from a supplier other than the University 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 or program; or

- d. the fee is a fine or penalty imposed principally as a disincentive and not in order to raise revenue or cover administrative costs (e.g. late enrolment fees).

(5) A fee payable to the University which covers compulsory components of a course or program and which does not meet the Higher Education Provider Guidelines is contrary to the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) (i.e. the non payment of such a fee by the student would prevent the student from being able to fulfil a requirement of a course) and cannot be charged to a student.

(6) The following fees may be charged to students by the University:

- a. student contribution amounts for Commonwealth supported students;
- b. tuition fees for international students, domestic undergraduate full fee-paying students, domestic postgraduate students who do not have a Commonwealth supported place, non-award and cross-institutional students;
- c. student services and amenities fees (SSAF);
- d. fees for non-enrolled students who attend or participate in award courses;
- e. residential accommodation charges;
- f. fees that are incidental to study as determined and notified by the Minister;
- g. commercially available textbooks as required reading;
- h. voluntary charges;
- i. special admissions test charges;
- j. application fees for international students;
- k. tuition fee deposits for international students accepting a place at the University; and
- l. fees for continuing professional development courses.

(7) If UQ is providing a good or service to a student enrolled at another institution, but the student is not enrolled at UQ, UQ is not levying an incidental fee.

## Section 5 - Determining Whether Goods or Services are Essential or Nonessential

(8) Refer to the following definitions to determine if materials or services are essential or nonessential (Note: whether or not a course is compulsory or elective to a program has no relevancy to whether or not an item in a course is essential).

- a. Essential – refers to those components of a course or program which are necessary to permit assessment and award i.e. those to which a student must have ready access (either provided by the school/centre/faculty or available in the Library in hard copy or electronically) to complete their course or program. Details of where a higher education provider cannot levy additional charges are set out in the table in Section 7 below.
- b. Nonessential – refers to those components of a course or program which are optional and not necessary for students to complete their course or program. The purchase is a voluntary charge for alternative access or alternative form.

(9) In all cases, the following principles are applied:

- a. If there is any doubt as to whether an item is essential or not, a charge should not be made.
- b. If the material or services is deemed to be "nonessential", the cost of the material cannot exceed cost recovery and therefore the material or services cannot be sold for profit.

- c. Where any essential item is included with nonessential material, the essential item must be available separately free of charge.
- d. For external courses, the complete package of the course profile, lecture notes/readings, study guides and other material including mailing costs is deemed to be essential.

## Section 6 - Procedures

(10) All charges for material, equipment or services must be authorised by the relevant Head of School or Director of Centre in accordance with this Procedure, with reference to the [Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023](#) and the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#).

(11) The Head of School or Director of Centre must ensure that details of all approved charges are included in the Course Profile and in the relevant field in the Programs Database.

(12) In accordance with the [Student Grievance Resolution Policy](#) and [Procedure](#), students who consider that they have been charged a fee contrary to the University policy should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the Head of School or Director of Centre. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at that level, a student may provide documentary evidence to the Executive Dean for resolution. An appeal against the decision of the Executive Dean or nominee may be made to the Academic Registrar via the [complaints management system](#).

## Section 7 - Guide to Determine if a Fee may be Levied

(13) The table below lists commonly used course materials and services and should be used as a guide to determine if fees may be levied.

(14) Fees that fall into the category of incidental to study, as defined in the legislative guidelines, cannot be included in student contribution amounts and deferred to HECS-HELP or tuition fees and deferred to FEE HELP or VET Student Loans.

Item	Essential (attracts no additional charge)	Nonessential (may attract an additional charge)
Course Profile (defined in <a href="#">Course Design Policy</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Made available to all students.</li> </ul>	
Lecture notes/Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the material is needed in the classroom (i.e. forms part of the lecture/tutorial material) and it is not available elsewhere.</li> <li>Access to library books, periodicals and manuals.</li> </ul>	If the material can be readily obtained elsewhere free of charge (e.g. multiple copies in library or school/centre/faculty office or available online)
Distance Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mailing charges associated with distance education.</li> <li>Course notes provided as part of distance education.</li> </ul>	
Practical/laboratory manuals or workbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If needed for assessment (e.g. foreign language dialogues, laboratory manuals/practical workbooks)</li> </ul>	If the material can be readily obtained elsewhere free of charge (e.g. instructions for a practical which are available to share at a laboratory bench or language handbooks which are held in the high use section of the library).

Item	Essential (attracts no additional charge)	Nonessential (may attract an additional charge)
Consumables (a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinic, laboratory or workshop materials such as chemicals, filters, fuels, fertilisers, animal feed or crops used in practical sessions or research.</li> </ul>	
Consumables (b)  Goods and services that are necessary to produce items that become the physical property of the student.		If the material can be acquired from a supplier other than the University (e.g. stationery, computer printing, lab coats, construction materials)
Personal Professional Equipment  "Tools of the trade" normally owned by practicing professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment and manuals which a professional in the field would not be required to own including fixtures in a clinic, laboratory or workshop; large items of equipment and relevant workshop manuals required for their use.</li> </ul>	If the material can be acquired from a supplier other than the University (e.g. architectural equipment, occupational health & safety equipment and attire, musical instruments, stethoscope, first aid courses)
Field Trips, Residential Units of Study; Study Tours  Camps, excursions and similar course-related off-campus activities (but not clinical placements or work experience programs) which are essential components of a course and/or registration requirements in a professional area (e.g. trips to Heron Island and the University Mine).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An extra charge cannot be levied if students do not have a reasonable choice of acquiring the goods and services from suppliers other than the University (e.g. food, transportation, and/or accommodation costs).</li> </ul>	<p>An itemised fee may be charged if students have a reasonable choice of acquiring the goods and services from suppliers other than the University (e.g. food, transportation, and/or accommodation costs).</p> <p>A school/centre/faculty may subsidise the cost of field trips; however the costs for food, transport (including flights), accommodation, cannot be included in tuition fees.</p>
Physical access to computing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to computers or other online resources essential for study.</li> </ul>	A refundable charge (bond), based on replacement cost, may be charged for keys or swipe cards for access to facilities.
Admission/Enrolment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admission services (including auditions).</li> <li>• Credit or RPL assessment if the student is enrolled with the provider or the student is applying for enrolment.</li> </ul>	Special admissions test
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examinations or assessment, including practical assessment, for example, which requires the services of musical accompanists.</li> <li>• Reassessment of results where a student has failed an assignment and thereby failed the course or unit.</li> </ul>	

(15) Further examples of fees that can be set as incidental fees and goods and services that can be incorporated into tuition fees can be found in Appendix L of the [Administrative Information for Providers](#).

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	28th January 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	31st December 2026
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Director, Academic Services Division and Academic Registrar
<b>Approval Date</b>	8th January 2025
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Kathryn Blyth Director, Academic Services Division and Academic Registrar
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Academic Services Division