Student Fees Procedures - Accounts Receivable

Approved by the: Chief Financial Officer on 13 December 2011.
Date of effect: 13 December 2011
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1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the accounting procedures relevant to processing of student enrolment fees.

1.2 Coverage

This procedure applies to all University staff involved in the generation, collection and maintenance of student fees and associated fee assessments.

This document is not the complete guide to fee administration within the University. However, it addresses the accounting requirements associated with student fees. For a detailed guide refer to the HECS-HELP and FEE-HELP handbooks produced annually by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). Information is also available on the University's Student Centre, FlexSIS and International Office websites respectively.

2. Procedures and Guidelines

2.1 General Information

(i) Once a student enrols in a course or unit(s) of study at the University they are liable to pay fees.

(ii) A summary of student fee types include:
- (a) Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS)
- (b) Tuition Fees either Undergraduate, Postgraduate (includes FEEHELP for both undergraduate and postgraduate domestic students)
- (c) International undergraduate and postgraduate.

(iii) The student's fee liability is calculated within FlexSIS and is based on the units of study chosen.

2.2 Delegations

Refer to the Delegations of Authority-Administrative Functions for details of delegations of authority, including part 6.9 relating to pricing decisions, part 6.10 relating to write-offs and part 13 relating to education and student management.

2.3 Invoicing for Student Enrolment and Re-enrolment Fees

(i) Once the student has advised the Faculty of the course and units they wish to undertake, the Faculty processes the enrolment data into FlexSIS. Pre-enrolling students enrol online by following the prompts at the MyUni website

(ii) Successfully pre-enrolled students who are required to or choose to pay their liability upfront will be issued with a Statement of Fees/Tax Invoice, together with

their Confirmation of Enrolment by the Student Centre. Students who have successfully pre-enrolled but are not required to pay their liability upfront or do not have a liability will receive their Confirmation of Enrolment only. Commencing students or failed pre-enrollers must enrol on a date set by their faculty and will receive a post-enrolment invoice mailed to their preferred correspondence address with the Confirmation of Enrolment on the first Sunday following their enrolment.

(iii) A student may at any time obtain an updated copy of their Statement of Fees from the MyUni website.

(iv) Financial liability calculated for each student enrolled at the University is transferred from FlexSIS to the Accounts Receivable system as an overnight batch interface.

2.4 Due dates for payment of fees

(i) The due date for payment of fees varies according to a student's method and date of enrolment. All continuing students are instructed to pre-enrol. In February Semester, a Statement of Fees/Tax Invoice (referred to as the pre-enrolment invoice) is issued to successful pre-enrollers in the middle of January and is due for payment within fourteen (14) days of the invoice issued date. In July Semester, a Statement of Fees/Tax Invoice (referred to as the July Bill) is issued to all domestic successful pre-enrollers in mid August and is due for payment within fourteen (14) days of the invoice issued date. Mid year commencing students must enrol in person at the University according to the published enrolment timetable. A post enrolment invoice is posted out to these in-person enrollers on the first Sunday following their enrolment and payment is due within fourteen (14) days of the invoice issued date.

(ii) Domestic Students may alter their enrolment without penalty (except for certain "intensive courses") until the census date of each semester (31st March for February Semester and 31st August for July Semester). Penalties relating to International Students may vary; refer to International Office Procedures for more information. Changes in enrolment may also result in a change to the amount of Fees due to be paid. Any change in liability is captured via the Student Financial Statements, which are issued in April for February Semester changes and September for July Semester changes, to all currently enrolled students following their final enrolment changes. Students are advised, via email, to view/print their Statement of Fees through the MyUni website.

(iii) **Multiple Student Payments by Third Parties**

(a) The Department/Unit enrols the students as required in FlexSIS.

(b) The Department/Unit informs Financial Control and Treasury via e-mail (fees.pay@sydney.edu.au) that the students have been enrolled and provide the following information:-

- Student Name
- Student Identification Number (SID)
- Amount to be underwritten for current semester for each student involved
- Account Classification Number, Responsibility Centre and Project Code to be used to underwrite the fee.

(Note: This should be done only after all students involved have been enrolled and only one advice forwarded to Financial Control and Treasury per Sponsor, per Faculty).

(c) When the student's invoice details are in PeopleSoft, Financial Control and Treasury will process a journal, debiting the department account number provided in (b) above. Subsequently, Financial Control and Treasury will apply the payment to the student account through PeopleSoft AR and an overnight job will process the payment into FlexSiS.

(d) Financial Control and Treasury will then advise the Department/Unit when the GL journal has been processed.

(e) The Department/Unit will prepare an Invoice Request form and forward it to the relevant Billing Specialist. The Billing Specialist will then raise a Trade Debtor Tax Invoice to the third party making the payment on behalf of the students. The invoice should be raised using the same account code provided for the journal process in (b) above. Please note that the journal and the invoice request should be processed within the same month to avoid accounting irregularities.

(f) The Department/Unit should follow the Trade Debtors Procedures – Debt Management until payment is received from the third party.

(g) It is the responsibility of the Department/Unit to inform Financial Control and Treasury via e-mail of any subsequent change to any of the listed student's enrolment details.

(iv) **Multiple Student Payments by Third Parties – International Students**

(a) The Faculty/Department must enrol the students and the International Office will link the Student to the corresponding Third Party account in Flexsis, as required.

(b) International Office Finance will produce invoices from Flexsis and issue them directly to the Third Party.

(c) The liability will appear in the Student's record in Flexsis under a column titled 'Liability (Third Parties)'. The liability will also appear in Peoplesoft against the Student AR account.

(d) International Office Finance is responsible for debt management of third party arrangements.

(e) Payments must be receipted through Onestop to the Third Party AR account.

(f) When a credit appears in the Third Party AR account in Peoplesoft, International Office Finance will create a worksheet in Peoplesoft to allocate the payment to the corresponding student invoices. An overnight job will process the payment into FlexSiS.

2.5 Methods of Payment

The following methods of payment are available for student course fees:

(i) Internet – pay by credit card in Australian Dollars at www.epay.usyd.edu.au

(ii) Internet –pay by credit card in Overseas Currency at www.pay24-7.com/sydneyuni

(iii) Phone – pay by credit card by calling 1300 732 076

(iv) Bpay – the payer must have access to the phone or internet banking system provided by their financial institution. The Bpay Customer Reference (noted on the student fee invoice) and our Biller Code: 252957 must be used.

(v) Mail – pay by cheque using the mail payment slip provided at the bottom of the student fee invoice.

(vi) In Person – pay by cheque, credit card or debit card at the Cashier's Office, Level 3, 160 City Road, Jane Foss Russel Building G02.

Further details on "Methods of Payment" are available through the Financial Services website.

2.6 Responsibilities of Electronic Payment Providers

(i) The bank is responsible for providing, on a daily basis, a file to the University which lists payments that have been made via the Bpay system individually. These files will be made available for download by an officer of the University of Sydney to enable the transactions to be processed into the University's Receipting and Accounts Receivable systems.

(ii) The IVR (Pay by Phone) Provider is responsible for providing a secure and reliable Interactive Voice Recognition Telephone payment service on behalf of the University of Sydney, which conforms to all Payment Card Industry standards for the security of Account Information Security.

(iii) The IVR Provider is also responsible for providing, on a daily basis, a file to the University which lists payments that have been made using Credit Cards using the IVR system individually. This file is to be in the format specified by the University of Sydney to enable the transactions to be processed into the University's Receipting and Accounts Receivable systems.

(iv) The IPG (Internet Payment Gateway) Provider is responsible for providing a secure and reliable Internet Payment Authorisation service on behalf of the University of Sydney, which conforms to all Payment Card Industry standards for the security of Account Information Security.

(v) The IPG Provider is also responsible for providing authorisation information to the University's Receipting System in the specified format.

2.7 Responsibility of Financial Control and Treasury in the Electronic Payment Process

Financial Control and Treasury is responsible for administering the electronic payment of invoices by students and interfaced into the Accounts Receivable system. Upon receipt of the transaction files from the bank, IVR and IPG systems the payments are applied against each student's account. A report is run daily listing all unapplied payments which are then identified and applied manually where possible.

2.8 Refunds of fees

(i) Refunds of Course fees are payable if a student withdraws from a course before the census date of the relevant semester (31st March and 31st August) or if a student makes an overpayment of their fees.

(ii) A student may request a refund of fees by completing a refund request form. All valid refunds will be issued within two weeks of receipt of this form by staff of Financial Control and Treasury. The Student Refund Request Form is available online or by attending the Cashier's Office in the Jane Foss Russell, Building G02. The form provides students with the option to nominate a payment method via EFT, cheque/draft or credit card.

EFT and cheque refund payments are initiated by a worksheet which is interfaced to the Accounts Payable system. A credit card refund is processed through the OneStop receipting system. A credit card refund will be issued if the student's original payment was made by credit card and if the payment was made within 12 months of the request for a refund. Where a payment was made to a Credit Card more than 12 months prior to the request for a refund then a refund to the Credit Card will be at the discretion of Financial Control and Treasury Manager, Financial Control and Treasury, or their nominee.

(iii) Financial Control and Treasury will send an email to all Domestic students (FlexSiS email address) with a credit balance. The email advises the student to log on to MyUni to view a Statement of Fees and the current credit balance, the students are also advised to complete and sign the Refund form, with the option to have the amount refunded to them or to have the credit rolled over to the following semester. The mail out will be done during the first week of April (February Semester) and during the first week of September (July Semester).

2.9 Debt Recovery Procedure

(i) Extensive follow up and verification will be conducted on each outstanding student account to ensure the validity of the debt.

(ii) The Student Centre will issue a second and final fee statement via the Student Financial Statement to those students who have varied their enrolment prior to the relevant census dates (31 March and 31 August). This notice will allow two weeks from the time of printing for the student to pay any fees outstanding. Small amounts, if unpaid, may be carried forward to the following semester at the discretion of the Student Centre.

(iii) Following email reminders and phone SMS's concerning outstanding debts, the Student Centre will also attempt to contact each student by telephone and liaise with the relevant Faculties prior to cancelling the enrolments of those students with outstanding liabilities. The cancellation process involves reversing the liability on a student's account and placing a bar on the student from taking exams or re-enrolling. To be reinstated, the student must pay a reinstatement fee and the outstanding balance within the semester of cancellation. Where the reinstatement fee is paid after the last teaching date for the semester of cancellation, then the student's enrolment will not be reinstated for the semester relating to the cancellation and they will not be required to pay any further fees other than the reinstatement fee. This will enable the student to enrol in any following semesters or obtain a transcript from the University.

(iv) Enrolment cancellations must be completed before 31st May (for February Semester) and 31st October (for July Semester) to meet DEEWR requirements.

(v) Outstanding balances will be reviewed at the end of each year and small amounts may be written off at the discretion of the Director, Financial Control and Treasury.

2.10 Distribution of Fee Income Collected

2.10.1 Distribution of Undergraduate Fees / Postgraduate Fees / Fee-Help / Non-Award Fees

(i) Fee income collected for Domestic fee paying undergraduate and postgraduate students are transacted against the student fee control and income clearing accounts within the General Ledger. These are subsequently distributed to faculties by the Senior Fee Payment Administrator, Financial Control and Treasury, at predetermined intervals for February Semester and July Semester of each academic year.

(ii) The preparation of journal transfers to distribute fee income to faculties is generated on the basis of disbursement reports run through FlexSiS. The amount allocated is based on amounts actually collected from students.

(iii) Faculties are provided with schedules and listing of students to substantiate these transfers as they occur. These reports are forwarded to the Finance Directors and approved nominees for each Faculty.

2.10.2 International Students

(i) International Student Tuition Fees are disbursed by the International Office.

(ii) The amounts collected for International Students are credited to a clearing account within the general ledger.

(iii) The disbursement of International Student fees to Faculties is facilitated by the Finance Manager, International Office.

2.11 Reconciliation of Student Fees

(i) The reconciliation of the Student Fees Control Accounts, including Clearing Accounts, in the finance system is the responsibility of Financial Control and Treasury. The reconciliations are to be prepared on a monthly basis and approved by Financial Control and Treasury Manager. A list of the control and clearing accounts are included in Appendix A and B.

(ii) An nVision report SUARV189 Student Fees/GL Reconciliation is run daily by Financial Systems and must be checked by the Senior Fee Payment Administrator. Variances are to be investigated daily. The report is found in the PeopleSoft directory Y:\PSNT\Audit\Sfis.

(iii) Ensure the interface process between OneStop/Ar Subledger/GL is successful and report any errors or variance to Financial Systems Team.

(iv) Monitor the interface process between the University's Student Administration Module (FlexSiS) and Finance System are successful, investigate any exception and liaise with systems.

3. Internal Controls

3.1 Responsibilities/Accountability

Officers	***Responsibilities***
Financial Control and Treasury	• Responsible for the receipting, refunds, reconciliation and disbursement of all course fees paid by students to the University.
Faculty Administration and Student Centre	• Enrolment of Students • Resolution of non paying student issues
Student Centre, Student Administration and Services, Community	• Issue of Statement of Fees/Tax Invoice • Ensure integrity of Student's enrolment status • Follow up of outstanding student debts
International Office	• Responsible for refunds and disbursement of all tuition fees paid by International students to the University.

4. Related Information

4.1 Resources and weblinks.

(i) Training Materials

(ii) References

- Delegations of Authority-Administrative Functions
  sydney.edu.au/policies/showdoc.aspx?recnum=PDOC2011/72&RendNum=0
- International Office
  sydney.edu.au/internationaloffice/
- Student Centre

sydney.edu.au/current_students/student_administration/

- Trade Debtors Procedures
  sydney.edu.au/policies/showdoc.aspx?recnum=PDOC2011/13&RendNum=0
- FlexSIS
  http://www.flexsis.usyd.edu.au/

(iii) Forms

- Invoice Request
  sydney.edu.au/finance/docs/AR_centralised_billing.xlsx
- Student Refund Request Form
  sydney.edu.au/finance/docs/applic_fees_refund.pdf

4.2 University procedures superseded or replaced by this procedure:

(i) Finance and Accounting Manual

- Student Fees Procedures – Accounts Receivable: 19 October 2010

5. Contact and Review

5.1 Contact

Unit: Financial Control and Treasury
Phone: 9351 3422
Fax: 9114 0556

5.2 Review

The Chief Financial Officer will approve changes to financial procedures and guidelines and will co-ordinate changes to financial policy, with the Vice-Chancellor delegated to approve University financial and infrastructure policy.

Amendments to forms, schedules and weblinks will be processed by Financial Services.

Amendments to the Finance and Accounting Manual procedures and forms are listed on the Financial Services website under:-

- FAM Amendments
- Amendments to Forms

Please forward suggestions and comments on the Finance and Accounting Manual via the Feedback Form.

Appendix A: Listing of Student Fee Control and Invoice/Credit Note Clearing Accounts

Name of Account	***Account Code***
Student Fees Control Account	0106 A0001 00000
HECS Clearing Account	2201 A0004 00000
Non-Award Clearing Account	3108 A0004 00000
Undergraduate Fee Clearing Account	3115 A0004 00000
Postgraduate Fee Clearing Account	3116 A0004 00000
OneStop receipt clearing account	1260 24406 00000
Admin Fee income account	3203 A0004 00000

Appendix B: Listing of Student Fee Clearing Accounts

Name of Account	***Account Code***
GL Suspense batch edit error	1104 24406 00000
Refund Clearing Account	1110 24406 00000
Faculty payment clearing account	1186 24406 00000
Auto maintenance clearing account	1232 24406 00000