

## Briefing for: All staff on our next steps in collection of tuition fees, February 2025

### Update to briefing issued January 2025

#### To be issued: February 2025

To be sent to: Executive Deans, Divisional Directors, Heads of Faculty Operations for cascade to relevant staff in their areas. Also to be saved on the Finance web page.

### Staff briefing regarding collection of student tuition fees and rental fees - February 2025

Following on from my [January update](#), this briefing sets out:

- what will be happening next in our cycle to collect outstanding termly tuition fee instalments which were due by 14 January 2025
- how to signpost students in need of support, and
- advice for students who are unable to meet their liabilities.

This briefing is intended to ensure that all staff working with students are fully informed and are able to support affected students appropriately.

#### What is happening now

In accordance with the published [Student fee collection cycle 2024/25](#) and our collection procedures described in previous briefings, students who had not paid their January tuition fee instalment by 4 February 2025 were at risk of removal of IT and Library services on or after that date.

We now anticipate that services will be removed week commencing 17 February 2025 where we have not received payment of tuition fee debt or have not agreed alternative arrangements with the student. Services will only be removed when we have confirmed that relevant student enquiries to Finance have been answered and all services across Finance, ITS, the Library, the Division for the Student Experience and professional services in schools are able to support affected students back into study as quickly as possible. Affected students will receive an email to their personal email address notifying them that their IT and Library access has been removed and detailing what they need to do next. They will no longer have access to University email accounts, campus Wi-Fi, Sussex Direct, Canvas or Library services.

As explained in previous briefings, sanctions are not applied to:

- students who have organised arrangements in line with the timing of their third-party funding (e.g. monthly bursaries) or to address similar funding timing issues outside of their control
- PGR students with teaching responsibility this term
- students awaiting the outcome of relevant complaints or appeals to the University
- students where the Director for the Student Experience has recommended a postponement of sanction application owing to known and significant wellbeing concerns.

At this point in the year, we will also not remove IT and library services from students who are away from campus on a study year abroad or professional placement, or to post graduate taught students, or to students who are in the final year of their undergraduate degree course.

In all cases detailed above, this represents a temporary waiving of sanctions to the end of the academic year, or course of study, only. There is a continuing process to contact all students with debt individually by telephone or email to remind them of the need to pay their fees.

Students with material tuition fee debt will not be able to register to continue their studies next year. Students who are due to graduate this academic year will not receive their degree award until they have paid their tuition fees.

[Comprehensive FAQs](#) for students are published on the Student Hub and there is further guidance for staff below.

## Supporting our students

We know that everyone in our community will wish to support students who are affected by our fee collection processes and to maintain a fair and manageable approach for all students.

The best and kindest way to support our students is by helping them to reach the appropriate University services and being honest about the University's approach to debt. We know that many of our students face significant financial challenges. These pressures, compounded by economic factors both in the UK and internationally, require a clear, consistent approach from the University to ensure fair support for all students, past and present.

The Finance, Faculty and Student Services teams have worked hard to create clear processes and resources to support students. Staff are asked to encourage students to access these resources, read the information sent to them and, where appropriate, engage with student services early via the [Student Centre](#). Please note, student services are no longer located in Bramber House, staff should ensure they are directing students to the Student Centre building located on Refectory Road.

Staff can familiarise themselves with advice to students using the published [student FAQs](#).

In all cases, we ask that staff refrain from contacting services on behalf of individual students, outside of existing referral protocols. While we understand the well-intentioned nature of such advocacy, it places additional pressure on University services and leads to delays. The offer of direct interventions by staff may also lead students to believe that there can be flexibility in University policy, which is not the case.

## Signposting students to get support:

### Students who have the funds to pay for their education, but who are experiencing timing issues with their payments.

Students in this situation should contact Finance to request an extended due date. **Other student services cannot help with this.**

There is access to specialist Finance staff in person at the Student Centre every day between Tuesday 18 February and Friday 28 February, between 10am and 4pm. This is a walk-in service but students may also book an appointment to see Finance colleagues by emailing [Finance.appointments@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:Finance.appointments@sussex.ac.uk).

Students can also contact specialist Finance staff by email at [creditcontrol@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:creditcontrol@sussex.ac.uk).

Students often ask for 'a new payment plan'. Staff should be aware that the only fixed instalment options we can offer are based on the published payment instalment dates. However, students who can provide evidence that they can afford their study costs within the academic year (or before their expected graduation if this is sooner), but cannot meet their

contractual due dates for reasons outside of their control, may request an extended payment date. There are no payment plans. Students are asked to take responsibility for paying as and when they can afford, so that the University receives all funds owed by the due date.

To agree an extended payment date, the Finance team will require appropriate third-party evidence, e.g. loan agreements or bank statements. This is because the University cannot encourage students to take on further debt without a reasonable expectation that they can meet their financial liabilities.

**If agreed, the new extended payment date will be no later than the end of the academic year, or the expected date of graduation, whichever is the sooner.**

### Students who do not know how much to pay, or are concerned about how to pay

Students who need to know how much they owe, or how to pay, should contact Finance by email at [creditcontrol@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:creditcontrol@sussex.ac.uk) or visit a specialist Finance advisor at the Student Centre. Specialist Finance staff will be available in person at the Student Centre every day between Tuesday 18 February and Friday 28 February, between 10am and 4pm. This is a walk-in service but students may also book an appointment to see Finance colleagues by emailing [Finance.appointments@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:Finance.appointments@sussex.ac.uk).

### Students who do not have the funds to pay for their education and associated needs, or who are worried about paying their next instalment

There is no provision to write-off or waive tuition fees, or to delay payment into future academic years, and we all need to be realistic with students who are hoping that we can reduce their debt or will award their degree if they have tuition fee debt.

Students who are unable to afford their fees should be advised to get help to understand what options they have, for example taking a period of temporary withdrawal whilst they resolve their financial situation. They can access information about withdrawal and the support available via the [Student Hub](#), or be connected with the Student Advice team by raising an enquiry via My Sussex.

Students are also encouraged to discuss their situation with their Academic Advisor.

**Students who are in attendance on or after 12 April 2025 will incur further tuition fee debt so should be strongly advised to seek advice now if they have concerns about the overall affordability of their studies.**

### Students who want to check that their payment has been received or are concerned that their enquiry has been missed

To allow us to prioritise email and in person enquiries our usual phone lines will be closed. However, students who wish to speak to someone about whether a payment has been received, how to pay, or to check we have received an email, can call 01273 877172 between 9am and 1pm, and 2pm and 4 pm, Monday to Friday.

**Please note that this service will not be able to respond to queries about amounts owed or manage requests to extend payment dates. These enquiries need to be made to Finance by email or face to face at the Student Centre.**

## Students who are in immediate hardship or are experiencing other financial challenges, or have an issue with their Student Finance England (SFE) application

Students in hardship or who are struggling with their SFE application can find money and funding information on the [Student Hub](#), or they can raise an enquiry and be connected with the University's Money Advisor or Student Funding team via [My Sussex](#).

**Note, this service can only provide advice and support with personal finances and cannot help with requests to extend tuition fee payment dates. As above, requests to extend payment dates must be directed, with supporting evidence, to the Finance team by email or face to face at the Student Centre.**

## International students needing support to understand the impact of non-payment sanctions on their student visa

Students can access information and support available on the Student Hub [Visa and Immigration pages](#) or raise an enquiry via [My Sussex](#) and be connected with the International Advice team.

**This service cannot help with requests to extend tuition fee payment dates. As above, requests to extend payment dates must be directed, with supporting evidence, to the Finance team by email or face to face at the Student Centre.**

## Students experiencing significant wellbeing or welfare challenges affecting their ability to act

Students should be referred into [support services](#) in line with existing internal referral protocols.

## Students with multiple needs, or where needs are not clear

Where there appear to be multiple needs, or needs are not clear, students should be signposted to raise an enquiry via the [My Sussex online student support portal](#) to be connected directly with the relevant service depending on their need.

For in person help, the Student Centre Welcome & Triage team are available to assist students to find the information they need or to support them to access specialist services. The team are available in person (8.30am-5pm weekdays) or by calling 01273 075700 (9am-4.30pm weekdays).

**Please be aware that students may not be able to immediately access all services, or may be handed into multiple services, dependent on the assessment of needs.**

**Note, the Student Centre teams cannot offer access to specialist Finance staff, who should be contacted as above.**

## Other queries

- Students with queries regarding tuition fee status should follow guidance on the [University's Fee Status webpage](#).
- Students with queries regarding continuation fees should email [studentprogress@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:studentprogress@sussex.ac.uk)
- Students with queries regarding housing charges should contact [housing@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:housing@sussex.ac.uk).

If you have further questions or comments regarding the process to collect student fees please contact Sian Thomas (Deputy Director of Finance) or Jacinda Humphry (Chief Financial Officer).

If you have further questions or comments regarding the ongoing student engagement please contact [internal.communications@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:internal.communications@sussex.ac.uk).