

**The University of Edinburgh**

**The Moray House School of Education**

**School Postgraduate Studies Committee**

**28 September 2016**

**Taught postgraduate tuition fee deposit policy**

Brief description of the paper

Attached is the University's new policy on PGT tuition fee deposits which was approved by the Central Management Group on 30 August. It is not mandatory to request a fee deposit for PGT programmes. However, where deposits are currently being charged, or where, in future, deposits might be introduced, this policy has been developed to help introduce more consistency of practice across the University.

It is included here to raise awareness of this with members of SPGSC and to inform discussion on whether or not any programmes may wish to introduce or reintroduce a tuition fee deposit.

Action requested

For information

Resource implications

No

Risk assessment

Does the paper include a risk analysis? Yes – Section 8

Equality and diversity

Have due considerations been given to the equality impact of this paper? Yes

Freedom of information

Can this paper be included in open business? Yes

Originator of the paper

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**Central Management Group****30 August 2016****Taught postgraduate tuition fee deposit policy****1. Description of paper**

The paper proposes a taught postgraduate tuition fee policy for 2017/18 entrants.

**2. Action requested**

CMG is requested to consider the proposed tuition fee policy, and to approve for implementation for the 2017/18 entry.

**3. Recommendation**

CMG is requested to approve the taught postgraduate tuition fee deposit policy (Annex A).

**4. Background and context**

At the 14 June 2016 meeting CMG noted that Fee Strategy Group, through a working group, should develop a consistent taught postgraduate tuition fee deposit policy for implementation for the 2017/18 intake.

**5. Discussion**

The working group honed the draft policy taking into account input from FSG and further discussions with representatives of the Colleges and Support Groups. Given the broad range of practices currently in place across the University, and the short space of time available for discussions, it is recognised that the proposed policy should be regarded as 'the target operating model', signalling the direction of travel that Colleges should migrate to over the course of the next two years. Some Schools may be able to implement the new policy for all relevant programmes for 2017/18 entry whereas others will agree a timescale for making the transition towards adopting the new policy that does not cause adverse effects on programmes involved.

**6. Transparency of costs to applicants**

The list of relevant programmes along with the deposit required, and full details of the fee policy, will be published on the 'Fees and Funding' section of the University website prior to the University commencing the 2017 recruitment cycle. A link will be provided to these pages in the 'Fees and costs' section of the programme entry on the University's online Degree Finder and all other relevant published documents. This will maintain compliance with consumer law.

**7. Resource implications**

It is envisaged that the work required to implement the policy can be met from existing resources.

**8. Risk Management**

The University runs the risk of losing applicants by not introducing a more coherent and wide reaching deposit scheme as competitors seek to earlier conversion applicants through the payment of a deposit.

**9. Equality and Diversity**

None at this stage for applicants with protected characteristics.

**10. Next steps/implications**

Further work will be necessary to:

- Manage the collection of deposits within the Income section of Finance;

- Explore the options for offering alternative online payment methods for applicants;
- Identify and publicise the relevant programmes with Colleges/Schools by mid September 2016 and publicise the policy in line with consumer law.
- Manage the migration of all Schools to the new policy by 2019/20 intakes at the latest.

### **11. Consultation**

The working group consulted Finance and Admissions colleagues in all three Colleges, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Student Systems, the International Office and the Income section of the Finance Department.

### **12. Further information**

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22 August 2016

### **13. Freedom of Information**

Open.

**Annex A****Policy for tuition fee deposits for postgraduate taught degrees****1. Purpose**

- 1.1 Some University of Edinburgh academic Schools require a non-refundable tuition fee deposit to be paid by applicants who wish to secure the offer of a place on a postgraduate taught degree programme. This policy is designed to provide applicants with transparency about the arrangements for tuition fee deposits where they are required, and to set out a framework to be used by academic Schools when introducing tuition fee deposits.

**2. Scope**

- 2.1 For programmes where tuition fee deposits are required, all Home, EU and Overseas applicants will be required to pay the deposit in order to secure the offer of a place on the relevant programme, unless the student qualifies for an exemption as detailed in paragraph 3.4 below.

**3. Policy**

- 3.1 Where a tuition fee deposit is required, reference to the fee deposit policy will be included in the “Fees and Costs” section of the programme entry on the University’s online Degree Finder, and in relevant published documents, with the details of the fee policy published in the ‘Fees and Funding’ section of the website.
- 3.2 Tuition fee deposits for full-time programmes will be charged at £1,500 for a full Masters programme (£1,000 for a Postgraduate Diploma and £500 for a Postgraduate Certificate), which will be allocated to the student’s tuition fee account at matriculation. The tuition fee deposit is a minimum and students may pay more of their tuition fees in advance if they wish.
- 3.3 The requirement for a tuition fee deposit will form part of the conditions of both conditional and unconditional offers for a relevant postgraduate taught degree programme. In order to secure the offer of a place to study on such a programme, the applicant must pay the deposit in full.
- 3.4 The following applicants will not be required to pay a tuition fee deposit:
- Those who are sponsored by a University of Edinburgh recognised sponsor or who have a full scholarship covering their tuition fees. Applicants must provide acceptable evidence of this no later than the deadline by which the deposit would have been due. Details of the evidence required will be provided during the application process. University recognised sponsors include national governments, corporations or employers, national and international charities and universities, but do not include family members or friends; or
  - University of Edinburgh applicants who have received an undergraduate RUK Bursary or a Scotland Accommodation Bursary.

**3.5 Deposit deadlines**

- 3.5.1 When a deposit is required, it must be paid by the relevant deadline as shown in the table below for programmes that start in Semester 1

Offer date	Programme type	Deadline for payment of tuition fee deposit
Offers issued up to 1 March	High demand programmes*	28 days from the offer date
	Other relevant programmes*	31 March
Offers issued after 2 March until the programme start date	All programmes	Deadlines will be between 7 and 28 days, as determined by the relevant College taking into account the start date of the programme (this responsibility can be delegated to School level). The deadline period will be specified in the offer letter and information on deadlines will be published on the relevant website.

\* A list of high demand programmes and other relevant programmes will be published on the University of Edinburgh website. This list will be reviewed on an annual basis by each College postgraduate office and any changes to the list will be made no later than 15 August for programmes starting in September of the following year.

3.5.2 Failure to pay the tuition fee deposit by the appropriate deadline may result in the offer being withdrawn.

3.5.3 A link to information on the deadlines for payment of the tuition fee deposits will be included in the offer letter.

3.5.4 An extension to the deadline can be granted at the discretion of the appropriate College or School.

3.6 A link to information on how to pay a tuition fee deposit will be included in the offer letter.

### 3.7 Refunds

3.7.1 The full amount of the tuition fee deposit can only be refunded in the following circumstances:

- If the applicant requests a refund of the deposit within 14 days of payment being received by the University of Edinburgh (in accordance with the Consumer Protection Regulations 2014).
- The University is unable to provide the academic programme originally applied for, offered and accepted and the applicant does not want to take up a place on any alternative offered.
- An applicant fails to meet the conditions of their offer, including any English language qualifications required, with the applicant being required to provide appropriate validating evidence. If the applicant has made no attempt to meet the offer conditions no refund would be made.
- If the applicant's UK student visa or ATAS clearance application is refused or rejected, except where refusal is a result of:
  - A fraudulent visa application
  - Insufficient funds
  - Supply of incorrect documents
 In such cases, no refund will be made.

3.7.2 Refund requests must be made in writing to the relevant College or School.

3.7.3 If an applicant requests a refund of a tuition fee deposit, their application will be automatically withdrawn and they will need to contact the admissions office if they

wish to have their application for the same programme reactivated. An applicant will need to re-apply to the University should they wish to be considered for the same programme or a different programme in a subsequent year.

3.7.4 If an applicant requests a refund of a tuition fee deposit as a result of exceptional circumstances such as serious illness or bereavement, the decision on whether or not a refund can be made will be taken by the relevant College or School on a case by case basis.

3.7.5 Forfeited deposits will be retained by the School offering the programme.

### 3.8 Transfer of a tuition fee deposit

3.8.1 If an applicant has paid a tuition fee deposit for a postgraduate degree programme at the University of Edinburgh and subsequently wishes to accept the offer of a place on a different postgraduate degree programme at the University starting in the same academic year, the tuition fee deposit can be transferred to the new degree programme.

### 3.9 Deferrals

3.8.1 An applicant may request to defer an offer in accordance with the *University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Admissions Policy*. If the University agrees to such request before an applicant has paid the tuition fee deposit, the deposit will still be required in order to secure the offer of the deferred place.

3.8.2 If an applicant requests to defer an offer of a place after they have paid the tuition fee deposit and the University agrees to the request, the tuition fee deposit will be retained by the University against the tuition fees due for the deferred place.

3.8.3 If an applicant requests to defer an offer of a place after they have paid the tuition fee deposit and the University refuses the request, any refund will be at the discretion of the relevant School or College.

## 4. **Approval and review**

4.1 The University of Edinburgh's *Policy for tuition fee deposits for postgraduate taught degrees* will be endorsed by the Fees Strategy Group which will also be responsible for agreeing any changes to the level at which tuition fee deposits are charged, and approved by the Central Management Group.

**Approved: August 2016**  
**Review: January 2018**