

REFUND AND COMPENSATION POLICY



Document Title:	Refund and Compensation Policy
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Responsible Person and Department:	Director of Finance and Planning, Finance and Planning
Approving Body:	SMT / PRC
Date of Approval:	25 February 2020
Date Effective From:	Jan 2020
Review Date:	Aug 2021
Indicate whether the document is for public access or internal access only Indicate whether the document applies to collaborative provision? <i>(Strikethrough text, as appropriate)</i>	Public Access Internal Access Only Applies to Collaborative Provision
Summary: This statement sets out the University's policy for refunding and compensating students for planned mid-course termination or unexpected course termination. It does not apply to standard refunds for early withdrawal or deposit refunds that are set out in the Regulations for the Payment of University Fees.	

REFUND AND COMPENSATION POLICY

There are a number of circumstances where the University of Winchester would need to consider a refund of fees or financial compensation, including University staff industrial action. This Refund and Compensation Policy sets out the circumstances in which the University will refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to students and provide compensation, where necessary, if the University is no longer able to preserve continuation of study for one or more students. The Student Protection Plan identifies when students may be eligible to receive a refund of fees and appropriate compensation in accordance with this policy. This policy does not consider the refund of tuition fee deposits or student withdrawal / interruption of studies which are considered by the following policies:

- Refund of Tuition Fee Deposits Policy
- Payment of University Fees - Regulations

The University refunds and compensation are to be a remedy of last resort and the University is committed to using its best endeavours to ensure all students are able to continue and complete their studies at the University. It is, however, important to explain how the University will refund or compensate students if the University is unable to preserve that continuity of study. Any such case(s) will be considered on its own merit and any decision taken will be at the discretion of the University.

In this Policy, a reference to the University no longer being able to preserve continuation of study means that the University has terminated or intends to terminate either:

- (i) a University course of study on which an individual has been offered or accepted a place before that individual can register as a student or
- (ii) a University course of study on which a student is registered before that student has completed that course.

It does not include changes to or termination of courses where all registered students who would normally have been expected to complete at the date of termination have done so.

The University recognises two sets of circumstances, planned mid-course termination and unexpected course termination.

Planned Mid-Course Termination

A planned mid-course termination occurs when the University can no longer preserve continuity but is able to plan and align the termination with the end of an academic year. Such an event is not in the usual course of the University's business and, as such, is an unexpected event but one that can be planned to mitigate the impact of the termination.

If such circumstances arise, the University will, when preparing its plan for dealing with the termination, consult the students registered on the course and, as a minimum, will:

- (i) ensure all students on the course receive the University award or certificate that recognises the stage they have reached;
- (ii) offer those students advice and support to help them decide whether to transfer to a different course at the University or seek transfer to a suitable alternative provider to complete the course which is to be terminated;

- (iii) offer to pay reasonable travel costs to cover at least one visit per student to such an alternative provider;
- (iv) put in place a refund and compensation plan relevant to the circumstances of the particular termination that includes provision for a refund of tuition fees and compensation in respect of additional costs reasonably incurred by students as a result of the termination, any change of programme and any relocation; and
- (v) ensure that any student who has been in receipt of a bursary or similar funding and who would have continued to receive that bursary or funding had the course not terminated receives the remainder of that bursary or funding whether they transfer to a different course at the University or to the same course at an alternative provider.

The University will also ensure that its plan for dealing with the termination includes appropriate provision for communicating with and compensating individuals who have been offered or who have accepted a place on the course, to include as a minimum an offer of advice and support to help them decide whether to apply for a different course at the University or seek a suitable alternative.

Unexpected Course Termination

An unexpected course termination occurs when

- (i) a risk to continuation of study crystallises unexpectedly and the University has no alternative but to close a course during an academic year, or
- (ii) the University has insufficiently recruited to a course and consequently closes to new recruits, with less than 28 calendar days before your course starts, to the detriment of individuals who have already been offered or accepted places on that course.

If such circumstances arise, the University will treat communication and consultation with the students registered on the course as a priority. As a minimum, the University will:

- (i) ensure all students on the course receive the University award or certificate that recognises the stage they have reached;
- (ii) offer those students advice and support to help them decide whether to transfer to a different course at the University or seek transfer to a suitable alternative provider to complete the course which is to be terminated;
- (iii) offer to pay reasonable travel costs to cover at least one visit per student to such an alternative provider;
- (iv) put in place a refund and compensation plan relevant to the circumstances of the termination that includes provision for a refund of tuition fees and compensation in respect of additional costs reasonably incurred by students as a result of the termination, any change of course and any relocation; and
- (v) ensure that any student who has been in receipt of a bursary or similar funding and who would have continued to receive that bursary or funding had the course not terminated receives the remainder of that bursary or funding whether they transfer to a different course at the University or to the same course at an alternative provider.

The University will also ensure that it communicates with and compensates individuals who have been offered or who have accepted a place on the course, to include as a minimum an

offer of advice and support to help them decide whether to apply for a different course at the University or seek a suitable alternative.

Compensation

The University will make its best endeavour to rectify a situation where the University is no longer able to preserve continuation of study of one or more students, in agreement with the affected students. However, there are several circumstances, as outlined above, where the University of Winchester would need to consider a refund of tuition fees and associated costs and / or other financial compensation.

The refund and compensation plan referred to above may include appropriate provision for:

- (i) loss of earnings and / or interest costs associated with a course termination;
- (ii) additional tuition costs and costs associated with that tuition;
- (iii) living costs specifically associated with your studies;
- (iv) travel costs as a result of relocation of provision.

Relevant guidance published by either the Office for Students or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education will be considered in preparing any such plans.

Payments

Refunds will normally only be made to the bank and account holder (or other financial institution) that originally paid the tuition fee and will not be paid in cash. This applies whether the student is in receipt of a tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company, pays their own tuition fees or has their tuition fees paid by a sponsor.

Complaints

If a student is dissatisfied with the application of this policy, the complaint will be dealt with under the University's Complaints Policy which can be found on our website at: <https://www.winchester.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-and-governance/policies-and-procedures/>. This policy sets out the stages to follow to resolve concerns promptly, fairly, and as amicably as possible.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the University's complaints procedure, you may be able to ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review your complaint. However, you normally need to have completed the University's complaints procedure before you complain to the OIA. The OIA runs an independent scheme to review student complaints and the University is a member of this scheme. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right at: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

General

This Refund and Compensation Policy is linked to the University's Student Protection Plan and forms an important part of the University's Student Contract Terms and Conditions. It will be reviewed from time to time with those documents.

This Policy will not normally apply to individuals who have completed the studies for which they registered as a student with the University.

Queries about the application of this policy should be addressed to enquiries@winchester.ac.uk in the first instance.