

# Estates & Facilities
# Student Accommodation
# Debt Policy

UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

# INDEX


1. Introduction
2. Purpose & Modifications
3. Principles
4. Scope
5. Roles and Responsibilities
6. Support for Students
7. Communication Methods with Students
8. Accommodation Fees – Contractual Arrangements
9. Outstanding Debt, Fees and Charges
10 Training
11. Exceptions
12. Amendments
13. Terms of Reference
14. Information and Resources

POLICY

## 1. Introduction

The University of Wolverhampton is committed to developing and maintaining constructive relations with its employees and students. This policy has been approved by the University's Financial Committee and Executive Board. It sets out the University's requirements to manage the student accommodation and minimise the debt to the University. We encourage students to engage with accommodation services at an early stage with a view to arrange payment plans and seek assistance from the relevant departments to ensure the students are managing their finances proactively and not allowing themselves to get into financial difficulty.

## 2. Purpose and modifications

The process has been reviewed collaboratively with both the Finance team and the Students' Union. The key changes to the policy are as follows:

- If a student has not paid their first and second instalments (October and January), they will be advised that their full outstanding balance will be referred to an external debt collection agency. A referral fee of £200 will also be applied to their student account.

- This approach is intended to highlight the importance of making payments earlier in the academic year. It encourages students to seek support from the University's funding teams or the Students' Union for advice, with the aim of resolving any outstanding debt before the end of their licence period.

- Although students will be notified of the intention to refer the debt, the actual referral will not be made until the end of the residential year (June). This aligns with the process for lower-value non-payments. If the student clears their debt before this point, the £200 referral charge can be removed.

## 3. Principles

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that the University has a fair and transparent Accommodation Debt Policy, which assists students to reduce any accommodation debt they may have incurred, together with a collaborative approach working with Finance and the Students' Union to ensure that all students receive a professional unified service.

The implementation of this policy is in accordance with the University's core values which are to be Inclusive, Ambitious, Accountable, Resilient

## 4. Scope

The University Accommodation Debt Policy applies to all students who are registered and reside with the University of Wolverhampton. The authors of this policy are the Estates & Facilities directorate in collaboration with key stakeholders across the University.

Students registered with the University who fail to adhere to the terms of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Licence Agreement and Living in Accommodation Guide.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

**5.1 Estates and Facilities directorate:** Facilities Information Hubs are responsible for ensuring staff and students are aware of the policy and procedure as well as any updates to the policy. Appropriate staff will ensure that the policy and procedure is adhered to, and they signpost any students who require any support to the Information Hubs.

**5.2 Finance:** The Finance Income Team are responsible for the management of the financial records of each student account, ensuring all payments are processed and allocated against the correct accommodation accounts. Debt referrals to the nominated external debt collection agency will be wholly managed by the Finance department. All financial processes will be undertaken in a clear and transparent manner, further details can be found on the accommodation fees web page.

**5.3 Students:** Students are responsible for the payment of their accommodation and student fees and adhering to the current payment schedules in place.

## 6. Support for Students

Students experiencing difficulties in paying any fees and charges should seek help at the earliest opportunity through contacting one of the following:

- Facilities Information Hubs at each site.
- Students to log a helpdesk call on E: Vision
- Support from the Student Money team money@wlv.ac.uk
- Additional information and guidance can be found at financial support and advice web pages.
- Students' Union, the Advice and Support Centre offers confidential and impartial advice in relation to money management and budgeting; they can be contacted at www.wolvesunion.org/advice/enquiry or 01902 322038 for any appointments to be made.
- Contacting the Finance department by emailing Incomesection@wlv.ac.uk

In applying the policy, the University will always seek to be sympathetic and

understanding of individual students' financial circumstances. However, for the University to do so, students must engage in dialogue with the University if they are experiencing difficulties. Action to enforce settlement of debt for outstanding accommodation fees and charges may be taken against all current and former students who have failed to resolve outstanding debts or honour their payment agreements whilst taking individual situations into account on a case-by-case basis.

## 7. Communication Methods with Students

The main form of communication from the University to the students regarding outstanding accommodation fees will be via the student's nominated email address. In accordance with the terms set out in the Student Charter, it is expected that students make sure their email address and contact details are kept up to date to enable the University to communicate with them when necessary. Failure to check emails does not exempt students from their obligations.

Where necessary, communication may be via post and will usually be sent to the student's term-time address during term-time and to the student's home address at other times. Students are expected to collect or arrange to forward mail where appropriate.

Students are responsible for ensuring they notify the University immediately if there is any change in either their home or term-time address. Students can use e-vision (the University's online facilities) to notify change of address. The University's central records will then be updated.

## 8. Accommodation Fees – Contractual Obligations.

Accommodation offered by the University is dependent upon the student signing a Licence Agreement for the period of their study (Residential Year) and paying a £500 fee as Advanced Rent Payment. This amount is deducted from the sum of the final instalment payment due in April.

Returning students who held a Licence Agreement for the previous academic year are not required to pay the £500 Advanced Rent Payment and they will be required to pay the April instalment in full.

## 9. Outstanding Debt, Fees, and Charges

Students are personally responsible for ensuring that all accommodation fees, fines, and other charges are paid. In accepting the offer of accommodation, the student accepts a contractual liability to pay the accommodation fee fines and other charges on time.

In the event of failure to pay any outstanding fees the student and/or staff will be processed through the Debt Recovery Procedure and incur an additional referral fee of £200.

**Debt recovery process:**

- Reminder notices from Finance
- Letters sent out after each instalment to inform students of their debt and how they can gain support to assist with their financial predicament
- Engagement with support teams across the University
- External agencies

## 10. Training

Training will be delivered with the aim of equipping staff, students (and others where appropriate) with the relevant skills and knowledge required to follow this procedure. Training, briefings and information relating to this policy will be made available in a range of formats according to the needs of the trainee and different groups of staff, students, and others.

## 11. Exceptions

In applying the policy, the University will apply a compassionate approach to the understanding of the individual financial circumstances of students. As well as consideration of medical conditions, bereavement, financial hardship etc. To enable a compassionate approach, students must communicate with the University as soon as they are experiencing difficulties to enable appropriate support to be put in place.

Action to enforce settlement of debt for outstanding fees and charges will be taken against all current and former students who have failed to engage with the University to find a solution to settle any outstanding debt, or who have failed to honour payment agreements.

## 12. Amendments

This policy has been approved by the University's Executive Board. The University may change this policy at any time, and where appropriate. Students and staff will be notified of significant changes of this policy. Where a policy is not due for review, but is found to require updating, it will remain published, unless the reasons for review render it obsolete.

## 13. Terms of Reference

| Term | Description |
|---|---|
| 2026 /2027 | The document outlines the process if students have a debt relating to their accommodation |

## 14. Information and Resources

Please see below link for other policies relating to student activity:

WLV Policies- University of Wolverhampton.

Contact:

Please contact the University on 01902 321268, or Email: cityaccommodationhub@wlv.ac.uk, for further guidance and support.

For general queries, please contact the University Corporate Compliance Team via email: compliance@wlv.ac.uk.

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| **VERSION** | Version 3 | **AUTHOR/OWNER** | Bec Woolley – Business Support & Quality Assurance Manager |
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