

MANAGING POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS IN TUITION FEE DEBT

1. In this document 'we', 'our' and 'us' refers to Sheffield Hallam University. 'You' and 'your' refers to all postgraduate research (PGR) students at Sheffield Hallam University. Any variations to the following process in place at partner organisations will be notified to you.
2. Students who do not pay their tuition fees are in breach of the University's Terms and Conditions. Therefore the University is entitled to withdraw services from you, to not allow you to re-enrol on your course for the next academic year, and ultimately can terminate the enrolment contract and withdraw you from your course.

Debtor status

3. An invoice for tuition fees is sent out to you shortly after enrolment with a specified due date for payment. You are responsible for ensuring that payment is made by the due date.
4. If you do not make payment by the due date, you will be a debtor. You will still be able to continue to attend University and be assessed; please see Annex D for information on restrictions when you are in a debtor status.
5. Finance will send you a debtor reminder letter (Annex A) 7 days after the due date which gives you a further 21 days to make payment. This letter will inform you that your IT access will be removed at that point if the debt remains outstanding. This is called pre-exclusion.
6. If, as a result of exceptional circumstances, you are finding it difficult to clear your tuition fee debt, you can explain your circumstances and propose a payment plan to Finance via this on-line form <https://students.shu.ac.uk/finance/fees/extensionform.html>
7. You should do this as early as possible after you receive your invoice or debtor reminder letter. The agreement of a payment plan means that access to IT facilities will be reinstated in accordance with the plan. However, any non-compliance with the payment plan will result in you immediately being pre-excluded.

Pre-exclusion status

8. If you do not make payment by the deadline date specified in your debtor reminder letter, you will be pre-excluded and sent a pre-exclusion letter (Annex B). This letter will inform you that your IT access has been removed. This means that you are able to continue to attend University but that your ability to be assessed may be affected. This could result in you failing one or more modules or progression/assessment points which could impact on you continuing on the course once your debt has been cleared. You will be given a further 21 days to make payment. Please see Annex D for information on restrictions when you are in a pre-exclusion status.
9. The suspension of University IT facilities is not a valid reason to be granted an extension or reassessment attempt. You will be either referred or failed for the non-submission of coursework or other progression/assessment requirements during the period of IT suspension.

10. In exceptional cases, if you are unable to clear your tuition fee debt you may be able to take a Break in Study for financial reasons. You should refer to the Break in Study Policy for Postgraduate Research Students to understand the implications of this on your studies. If you wish to apply for a Break in Study, you should do this as early as possible. If a Break in Study is granted, you will still need to agree a payment plan with Finance but the debtor process will be paused during your approved Break in Study period. If you do not adhere to your agreed payment plan, the debtor process will be restarted.

Exclusion

11. If you do not make payment by the final extended payment deadline date specified in the pre-exclusion letter, you will be excluded and sent an exclusion letter (Annex C). This means that you will be withdrawn from your course and your contract with the University is terminated.

12. If you are an international student holding a Tier 4 visa, we will notify UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and end the sponsorship of your visa. This means you will have to leave the UK urgently and will not be able to re-enter the UK using your existing visa.

Assessment of work and re-entry to the University

13. Any assessment work you engage in whilst you are in debt or pre-exclusion status will be assessed and considered by Research Degrees Committee (RDC) as normal. You should not continue to engage in any assessments once you are excluded. If you do engage in assessments at this point, these will not be assessed nor considered at RDC.

14. University procedures for dealing with academic or research conduct allegations will be followed and concluded for all students, including those excluded. This is to ensure a record of the agreed outcome for any allegations is in place should an excluded student reapply to a course at the University.

15. Once you are excluded from the University, any further application for study at the University will normally be considered in accordance with the University's [Admissions Policy](#) and Research Degree Regulations. The Admissions Policy states the length of time after which re-application to the University will be considered once you have cleared your outstanding debt. The Research Degree Regulations outlines the factors involved in decision-making in relation to admission to postgraduate research degrees.

Version:	1.0		
Original Version approved by and date:	Research Degrees Committee, September 2020		
Owner:			
Date for Review:	March 2022		
Amendments since Approval:	Detail of Revision:	Date of Revision:	Revision Approved by:

ANNEX A - First reminder letter

Dear Student

According to our records, we do not appear to have received payment as stipulated on your invoice. Payment must be received by {insert date +7 day after due date} to prevent the University provisionally excluding you from your course.

What do I need to do now?

To avoid this happening, you must make payment immediately by credit or debit card in one of the following ways:-

- On-line via <https://epay.shu.ac.uk>

If you have any queries about your tuition fee payments, please contact:-

- Sales Ledger Team on 0114 2252478 or email Invoicing@shu.ac.uk if you believe that our information is incorrect, e.g. incorrect fee being charged or your invoice should be issued to a third party and for settlement queries.
- Student Finance England on 0300 100 0607 www.gov.uk/studentfinance if you have applied for an Undergraduate, Postgraduate or Doctoral loan

If payment is not received by the date above, the first stage of your exclusion from the University will be instigated. This is called pre-exclusion.

How does pre-exclusion impact on my studies?

If you are notified that you are pre-excluded, this means that you will:

- be able to attend the University
- no longer have access to University IT facilities
- no longer have access to submit coursework online
- no longer have access to your results online
- no longer are entitled to an award certificate
- no longer are entitled to attend Graduation ceremony.

Your pre-exclusion notice will give you a further 21 days before the University will exclude you and withdraw you from your programme of study due to being in breach of the University Terms and Conditions of your enrolment. Once you are withdrawn, you cannot be reinstated even if you clear your debt immediately. If you clear your debt after you are withdrawn, and want to return to your studies, you will need to re-apply through the usual University application process.

You should note that failure to submit coursework or assessment requirements as a result of pre-exclusion means that you will lose an assessment attempt. The suspension of University IT facilities is not a valid reason to be granted an extension or reassessment attempt under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure. This could result in failure of one or more modules or progression milestones which could impact on you continuing on the course once your debt has been cleared.

If, as a result of exceptional circumstances, you are unable to clear this outstanding amount by the above date, you can explain your circumstances and propose a payment plan to us via this on-line form <https://students.shu.ac.uk/finance/fees/extensionform.html>.

If you are suffering genuine hardship and need advice on your financial situation you can contact:-

- The Student' Union Advice Centre, The HUBS on 0114 2254148
- Student Services Centre, Level 5 Owen Building, City Campus on 0114 2253813
- Student Services Centre, Heart of the Campus, Collegiate Crescent on 0114 2253813
- University Finance Sales Ledger Team on 0114 2252478
- For Postgraduate Research Students, your Research Institute PGR Administration Team or PGR Lead

Failure to contact us or make payment in any way will result in further action being taken.

For further information, please see "Managing Students in Tuition Fee Debt" or "Managing Postgraduate Research Students in Tuition Fee Debt"

https://students.shu.ac.uk/regulations/assessment_awards

Yours sincerely

ANNEX B - Pre-exclusion letter

Dear Student

The Finance Team have contacted you previously regarding your outstanding tuition fee debt. As you have failed to either contact them, make payment or secure an exceptional payment plan you are in breach of the University's Terms and Conditions.

As such, the first stage of your exclusion from the University has been processed. Your status at the University is that you are enrolled but your financial clearance flag has been changed to PRE-EXCLUDED. This means that you are still able to attend University but you:-

- no longer have access to University IT facilities
- no longer have access to submit coursework online
- no longer have access to your results online
- no longer are entitled to an award certificate
- no longer are entitled to attend Graduation ceremony

How does this impact on my studies?

You should note that failure to submit coursework or assessment requirements as a result of this means that you will lose an assessment attempt. The suspension of University IT facilities is not a valid reason to be granted an extension or reassessment attempt under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure. This could result in failure of one or more modules or progression milestones which could impact on you continuing on the course once your debt has been cleared.

What do I need to do now?

You now have 21 days from the date of this letter to pay your outstanding debt. You must make payment online via <https://epay.shu.ac.uk> immediately. Full payment of the debt will result in your IT access being reinstated automatically. IT access will be reinstated within two working days of your payment being received.

What will happen if I don't pay?

Failure to make payment within 21 days of this letter means that the University will take the final step in this process and you will be withdrawn completely from your course and from the University. If you subsequently pay your debt after you are withdrawn, you cannot be reinstated. You will have to re-apply for entry to the University via the normal University application process. Please note that any debt incurred up to the date of withdrawal will still be due to the University.

I'm an international student studying on a Tier 4 visa - what happens with my visa?

If you are withdrawn from your course of study, the University must notify UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and end its sponsorship of your visa. This means you will have to leave the UK urgently. You will also be unable to re-enter the UK using your existing visa.

How does withdrawal impact on my funding?

When you are withdrawn, the University will inform the relevant funding body. This may affect payment of some loan and/or grants and bursaries.

In accordance with the principles contained in the General Data Protection Regulation, you are entitled to receive a copy of your assessment results and transcript. If you wish to obtain a copy of your

results, you need to submit a Subject Access Request in writing to the University. You should send your request to the University Secretariat by email at foi@shu.ac.uk or post to University Secretariat, Sheffield Hallam University, City Campus, Sheffield, S1 1WB.

For further information, please see "Managing Students in Tuition Fee Debt" or "Managing Postgraduate Research Students in Tuition Fee Debt" [here](#).

Yours sincerely

ANNEX C - Exclusion letter

Dear Student

We have previously notified you that you are in breach of the University Terms and Conditions as you have failed to pay your tuition fees. Despite repeated requests for payment and removing your access to University IT facilities, payment has still not been made.

You have now been formally withdrawn from your course and from the University. You are no longer a student of the University from the date of this letter.

If you are in possession of any material owned by the Learning Centre or University, please return this without delay. Please also return your Student Union card to Hallam Students' Union, the HUBS, Paternoster Row, Sheffield, S1 2QQ.

If you want to undertake any further study at the University, you will normally have to re-apply via the University application process. Financial clearance must be received before you are admitted to any further programme of study. The exception to this is when you have been excluded after teaching has been completed. If you then clear your outstanding debt with a view to re-entering the same course in the same or next academic year, your re-entry to the same course will be considered by your Student Support Adviser in liaison with the Course Leader, Course Administrator and other relevant staff. Your progress on the course, the credit you have achieved, the outstanding assessments you have to complete, the delivery of the course in the next academic year will be considered and a decision made regarding your ability to return and how to manage any outstanding study and assessment.

We will inform the relevant funding body that you have been withdrawn from the University. This may impact on the payment of some loan and/or grants and bursaries.

If you are an international student studying on a Tier 4 visa, please note that the University's sponsorship of your visa will now end. The University will notify UK Visas and Immigration of your withdrawal within 10 working days of the date of this letter. **You must now make urgent arrangements to leave the UK.** If you are currently outside the UK, you must not attempt to re-enter the UK using your current Tier 4 visa as you will be refused entry by UK Border Force. You are strongly advised to contact SHU International Experience Team internationalexperience@shu.ac.uk for urgent immigration advice.

Yours sincerely