

## (Affiliated Research Centres) Fee Rules 2023-24

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Version number: 1.0	Approved by: Professor Lindsay O’Dell (Graduate School Director)
Effective from: 1 August 2023	Date for review: March 2024

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

## Summary of policy

This document sets out the University's policy on setting and charging fees for postgraduate research students registered through an Affiliated Research Centre. It covers fee liability continuation and resubmission fee policy.

This information applies to you if you are registered as a research student through an Affiliated Research Centre. If you are registering directly with The Open University (OU), please refer to the separate [Postgraduate Research Students \(Directly Registered\) Fee Rules](#).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that you are aware of the financial commitment you are making when registering to study. It sets out how the University will act if you fail to meet your commitments.

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### Summary of significant changes since last version

There have been no policy changes since the previous version published.

### Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces the 2020-21 Fee Rules for ARC students.

## Scope

### What this document covers

This document applies to you only if you are a postgraduate research student supported through an ARC. If you are a student supported directly by The OU, you should refer to the separate [Postgraduate Research Students \(Directly Registered\) Fee Rules](#).

The policy applies for all registrations and re-registration from 1 August 2023. It is reviewed every year and re-published.

Please read this policy to familiarise yourself with the matters covered. You should refer to this document if, for example, you think you may be unable to pay your fees or if you think

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you are owed a refund. Should you have any questions about the application of this policy please contact the [Graduate School](#).

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## What this document does not cover

This document does not apply to you if you are a student directly supported by The OU, if you are studying a taught postgraduate module, if you are an undergraduate or if you are on an apprenticeship.

## Related Documentation

Refer to the following documentation in conjunction with this document:

- [Conditions of Registration for Postgraduate Research Students](#)
  - [Research Degrees Handbook: Affiliated Research Centres](#)
  - [Research Degrees Regulations](#)
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## The Open University Student Charter Principles

This policy aligns with the following [Open University Student Charter](#) Principles.

- Principle 1: We treat each other with dignity and respect.
- Principle 2: We aim to inspire and enable learning.
- Principle 3: We share the responsibility of learning.
- Principle 4: We work together to secure the University's mission and to promote the University's values.

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## Introduction

This document is a University-approved statement expressing the position on an issue of institution-wide importance and explains how the University intends to conduct its services, actions or business.

It includes guiding principles, values, requirements, and restrictions and establishes standards, rights and responsibilities.

We have produced this document to help you understand your rights and responsibilities and to set out our expectations of you when you register for a postgraduate research degree through an Affiliated Research Centre.

Separate documents referred to earlier (see Related Documentation above) set out the conditions of registration.

For specific guidance on how this policy may relate to your personal circumstances, please contact the [Graduate School](#) who are specially trained to advise on the implementation of policy.

## Policy

### Purpose

We have produced this document to help you understand your rights and responsibilities and to set out our expectations of you when you register for a postgraduate research degree.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To make clear why we set and change fees.
- To make clear your fee obligations and what will happen if you do not pay your fees.

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## Section A: Setting and changing fees

- A1. Fees for students based at an ARC are set by that ARC. Fees paid to the OU by an ARC are contained in Schedule 1 of the ARC agreement. This is updated annually and sent to all ARCs in the annual “Launch” message. This schedule is also published on the Graduate School Network (GSN), in the ARC page [‘Managing the institutional relationship’](#).
- A2. Prior to registration, you can consult your ARC institution, who will have been given information regarding the mechanisms for paying fees. They should also inform you of any additional fee components that you are required to pay directly to them.
- A3. The OU may charge different fees for different levels of study, and for students who start their studies at different times. This is because the way in which higher education is funded may be different, the costs of providing educational services may be different or because a different range of services is provided.
- A4. The OU provides the opportunity to study towards qualifications over an extended period of time and it may therefore be necessary to make changes in fees and charges and the rules relating to liability, payment and refunds during that time. The OU may amend fees and information from time to time in order to:
- Pass on efficiency gains and cost savings.
  - Increase fees to cover increased costs to The OU, taking into account market conditions, competitor pricing and The OUs strategic approach to fees
  - Ensure the efficient, economic and equitable use of OU resources
  - Comply with changes in legal or regulatory requirements
  - Take into account changes in the public funding of higher education or The OU
  - Support or enhance your ability to secure financial support for your studies.

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- Correct errors or improve clarity and accessibility of fee information.
- Take advantage of new technologies, methods, ideas and opportunities.

A5. The OU sets registration fees and other charges on an annual basis. Registration fees are revised each year in line with inflation, The OU’s strategic approach to fees and recommendations of fee-paying bodies such as UK research councils. Consequently, the annual registration fee shown in your Offer letter may be subject to an increase in future years. When you re-register to continue your studies in subsequent years, the fee information in place at the time of that re-registration will apply to that period of study.

A6. Where such changes are to be made The OU will follow its rules for governance approval of those changes.

A7. The OU will give you reasonable notice of changes to fees and fee information, and the date those changes will take effect.

## **Section B: Fee Liability**

### **Registration Fees and Charges**

B1. The Conditions of Registration, which you agree to when you register to study with The OU, sets out your obligation to pay fees. See paragraph A1 for information on current fees.

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### **Payment of Registration Fees and other Charges**

B2. Upon registration and re-registration, as per the conditions of registration, you agree to pay your registration fees, and other charges due in respect of your studies, through your ARC. Your ARC will forward payment to The OU.

B3. The fee amount and method of payment along the arrangements for collecting it will be specified in the agreement you have with your ARC.

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- B4. When you re-register in subsequent years, your registration fees are to be paid in advance. Your annual re-registration fee is payable every year or part-year for the duration of your study, up to and including the year in which you submit your thesis for examination (see paragraph A1). Invoices will be sent to your ARC for any period in which you are currently registered.
- B5. If you have to resubmit your thesis following examination a fee will be payable for the full year.
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### **Fee liability during periods of suspended registration**

- B6. You are liable to pay the registration fee unless The OU has approved the suspension of your studies for a period of more than twelve consecutive months. There is no reduction for a period of less than 12 consecutive months.
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### **Refunds**

- B7. If you submit your thesis within the first six months of your current registration period, you will be entitled to have 50% of your registration fee for that year refunded.
- B8. You will be eligible for refunds only when the following conditions have been met:
- i. the Graduate School at The OU has received a satisfactorily completed Candidate Declaration form within one month of your stated thesis submission date and
  - ii. your registration fee for the full year had been paid upon registration.
- B9. OU registration fees are not refundable to you if you withdraw from registration.

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## Section C: Failure to pay and debt

### If your ARC fails to send your registration fee payment to The OU

C1. If your ARC does not send your registration fee payment to The OU by the date the payment is due, you will remain liable for The OU registration fee. The OU may cancel your registration even if you have started studying or are continuing to study.

**NOTE:** If you are experiencing difficulties with payment of your fees, you should contact the [Graduate School](#) at The OU to find out if arrangements can be made to help safeguard your registration.

C2. If your registration is cancelled on the grounds set out in paragraph C1, you will be reinstated in the following circumstances:

- i. if you contact the Graduate School at The OU within seven days of the date of cancellation, with an undertaking to provide payment and providing payment within five working days of your initial contact; or
- ii. if you contact the Graduate School at The OU more than seven days after the date of cancellation and less than 28 days, undertaking to provide payment and providing payment within five working days of the initial contact, and
  - your ARC records that it has provided you with advice on the impact any gap in studies may have on your academic progress, and
  - The OU records that it has provided you with advice on the impact any gap in studies may have on your registration, and
  - you confirm that you have received that advice and wish to be reinstated.

C3. If your registration is cancelled on the grounds set out in paragraph C1, you will remain personally liable to The OU for all of the fees which are due by the date of the cancellation. If you do not pay those fees you will be in debt to The OU.

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C4. The OU will take all reasonable steps including legal action to recover any outstanding fees or charges.

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## **What happens when you are in debt to The Open University?**

### **Restriction on further study**

C5. Further study, for which any annual registration or other charges may become due, will only be permitted if all outstanding debt to The OU and any additional fees for further study are paid in advance.

### **Action to recover debt**

C6. If you do not pay your outstanding fees or other charges, including any further fees and other charges that may fall due, The OU will take all reasonable steps including legal action to recover those fees and other charges from you.

C7. Before The OU takes legal action, it will:

- i. Notify you of what action you may take, if appropriate, to limit any liability for further fees and other charges that may become due and give you a reasonable opportunity to take that action before any further liability will be incurred;
- ii. Notify you that you are in debt, the amount of the debt and how you may pay that debt. It will also give you a reasonable opportunity to pay any outstanding fees or other charges before taking any further action.

### **Discretion to postpone action**

C8. If The OU continues, at its discretion, to provide tuition, facilities or services or to allow further study by you when you are in debt to The OU, it reserves the right to take the actions in paragraphs C6-C7 at a later date.

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## Section D: Financial support for disabled students

### Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)

- D1. Disabled Students' Allowances are government grants for students in higher education who incur additional study-related costs because of a learning difficulty, health problem or disability.
- D2. Details vary depending upon where in the UK you live, so please check with the appropriate local authority for their eligibility criteria.

### Students from England

- D3. To confirm eligibility, check allowances available and to apply for a DSA, students based in England should visit the [Gov.uk website](#).

### Students from Northern Ireland

- D4. To confirm eligibility, check allowances available and to apply for a DSA, students based in Northern Ireland should visit the [student finance NI website](#).

### Students from Scotland

- D5. To determine eligibility and to apply for a DSA students based in Scotland should either:
- email: [scotland@open.ac.uk](mailto:scotland@open.ac.uk) or
  - call The OU in Scotland's Disability and Additional Requirements Team on +44 (0)131 226 3851 (Monday to Friday 08:30 to 17:00 GMT).

### Students from Wales

- D6. To confirm eligibility, check allowances available and to apply for a DSA, students based in Wales should visit the [student finance Wales website](#).

## Further clarification

If you have any queries around the content provided within this document and how to interpret it, please contact the [Graduate School](#) who are specially trained to advise on the implementation of policy.

If you have any comments about this policy document and how it might be improved, please submit these to [SPR-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk](mailto:SPR-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk).

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## Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact the [Graduate School](#).

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