

**Policy Identifier: Student Hardship Support**

<b>Policy Title:</b>	Student Hardship Support Policy
<b>Description:</b>	The Student Hardship Support Policy provides a mechanism for students who are experiencing financial difficulty to make arrangements with the Finance Office to ensure that they can meet their financial obligations to the Institute in a manageable way which does not impact their studies.
<b>Author (Position):</b>	Vice President (Academic Affairs) and Registrar
<b>Version:</b>	2.1
<b>Approved By:</b>	MIE Governing Body
<b>Policy Approval Date:</b>	June 2023
<b>Date of Next Policy Review:</b>	June 2027 (or as necessary)

## **Student Hardship Support Policy**

### **1 Context**

Marino Institute of Education (MIE) [Institute Charges Policy](#) sets out the payment due dates and amounts due for the year. MIE acknowledges that on some occasions students may experience difficulty in meeting the financial requirements of their course in a timely manner.

### **2 Purpose**

The Student Hardship Support Policy provides a mechanism for students who are experiencing financial difficulty to make arrangements with the Finance Office to ensure that they can meet their financial obligations to the Institute in a manageable way which does not impact their studies.

### **3 Benefits**

This Policy:

- 3.1 Provides students with a process to follow should they experience difficulty meeting the financial obligations of their course;
- 3.2 Provides the Institute with the scope to assist students who are unable to meet the deadlines for payment of their fees.

### **4 Scope**

- 4.1 This policy applies to all full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students of MIE.
- 4.2 Students repeating a year “on-books” of the course are not excluded from support under this policy.
- 4.3 Students on the [Trinity International Foundation Programme](#) (TIFP) are not included in this policy.

### **5 Principles**

- 5.1 Students must be in good academic standing with the Institute in order to be considered for support.

- 5.2 Students who are experiencing difficulty should inform the Institute, through their Tutor<sup>1</sup>, in a timely manner.
- 5.3 This policy relates to the financial obligations of the student only, such as course fees, placement charges, materials charges, Library charges<sup>2</sup>, etc. Financial assistance for other costs, such as maintenance and food can be sought from other schemes, such as the [Student Assistance Fund](#) (SAF).

## **6 Policy**

### **6.1 Application for extension**

Students in 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent years who notify the Finance Office that they will not be able to meet the payment deadlines are asked to formally request an extension, outlining their circumstances and outlining how/when they expect to pay the fee due.

Applications are reviewed by the Student Hardship Support Committee (SHSC) unless it is an unusual or complicated situation. The SHSC Committee comprises of the Lead Tutor<sup>1</sup> (chair), the Head of Department of Global Diversity, Sustainability & Intercultural Education and the Head of Department of Inclusion, Religious Education and Student Life.

### **6.2 Hardship**

Sometimes the granting of an extension to payment due dates is not sufficient, where a student finds him/herself in financial difficulty and is genuinely unable to pay the fees for the year.

Where the LeadTutor<sup>1</sup>, the Financial Controller or the Vice President for Finance and Professional Services becomes aware of a student in this situation (normally via the student's Tutor<sup>1</sup>), the student should be asked to attend a meeting with the Lead Tutor<sup>1</sup>, and the Finance Manager and either the Head of Department of Global Diversity, Sustainability & Intercultural Education or the Head of Department of Inclusion, Religious Education and Student Life. The student will also be notified that they may invite one other person to the meeting (generally their Tutor<sup>1</sup>) if they so wish.

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<sup>1</sup> See [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

<sup>2</sup> See [Library Access and Borrowing Policy](#)

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The purpose of the meeting is to discuss, in a non-confrontational and supportive manner, the student's financial circumstances, and assess their prospects of being able to pay the outstanding fee amount in due course, albeit after the normal due date.

Having met the student, a written note of the meeting will be prepared and copied to the student, inviting comments.

Following the meeting, the Lead Tutor<sup>3</sup> informs the Finance Office of the decision, who in turn informs the student. The Vice President for Finance and Professional Services may write to the Finance Committee<sup>4</sup> of the Governing Body<sup>5</sup> requesting permission for partial or full fee waiver. The student's name will not be disclosed to members of the Finance Committee<sup>2</sup>.

It is often the case that students in financial difficulty will have incurred other penalties during the course of the year, for late payment, etc. It is envisaged that such charges will be reversed where appropriate<sup>6</sup>.

### 6.3 Criteria

6.3.1 Factors to be considered in assessing whether a fee waiver may be appropriate include the following:

- i Have the student's financial circumstances changed unexpectedly since the start of the year?
- ii Is the student a [Higher Education Access Route or Disability Access Route to Education student](#)?
- iii Has the student made efforts to make payments to date?
- iv Has the student made attempts to obtain financial support e.g. from Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI)?
- v If the student is not entitled to a grant, what factors caused their difficulty in paying MIE the amounts due?
- vi Has the student applied to the SAF? (While the SAF does not permit funding of fee remission, it can provide assistance with other costs, e.g. food, travel, accommodation expenses).

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<sup>3</sup> See [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

<sup>4</sup> See [Finance Committee Terms of Reference](#)

<sup>5</sup> See [Code of Governance](#) and [Matters Reserved for the Governing Body of MIE](#)

<sup>6</sup> See [Institute Charges Policy](#)

- vii Are there any other sources of funds potentially available to the student (e.g. from a family member, or by borrowing)?
  - viii How is the student's performance generally – attendance, academic performance, suitability for the course, commitment and enthusiasm, etc.?
- 6.4 In considering whether a fee waiver will be of benefit, it is also important to establish the student's financial prospects for subsequent years.
- 6.5 Students repeating a year of the course are not excluded from support under this policy.
- 6.6 Students have the right to appeal any decisions made in relation to their individual case, appeals should be made to the Vice President for Finance and Professional Services.
- 6.7 This document will be reviewed at three yearly intervals. It may be reviewed between such intervals in the event of legislative or other relevant developments.

## **7 Responsibility**

The Registrar & Vice President for Academic Affairs has responsibility for this policy.

## **8 Related Documents**

- 8.1 [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#)
- 8.2 [Tutor System Policy](#)
- 8.3 [Tutor System Procedure](#)
- 8.4 [Finance Committee Terms of Reference](#)
- 8.5 [Code of Governance](#)
- 8.6 [Matters Reserved for the Governing Body of MIE](#)
- 8.7 [Institute Charges Policy](#)