



LEEDS BECKETT STUDENTS' UNION

making students' lives better

POL-2015/16-020

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HIDDEN FEES POLICY

Union Notes

- 1) A number of courses at Leeds Beckett have components, the costs of which are not included in the current tuition fee level of up to £9000 per annum.
- 2) These components are often mandatory.
- 3) Leeds Beckett University is considered to be more in favour of encouraging access to students from less affluent backgrounds than the pre 1992 Universities.
- 4) These additional costs are rarely referred to in pre-enrolment publicity or at open days.
- 5) There are many courses which require specialised materials to complete assignments or projects. These materials are often expensive and difficult to reuse.
- 6) Submission of assignments in hard copy exclusively or in conjunction with digital or online methodologies is subject to costs involved in printing charges/cost.
- 7) Leeds Beckett University ITS (Information Technology Services - formerly IMTS; Information Media Technology Services) reported an estimated revenue of over £1.2m in a reporting period of January 2015 from printing on student accessible printers.

Union Believes

- 1) That the imposition of additional fees for mandatory assessment disadvantages those students who are of less wealthy backgrounds.
- 2) Many students at this University do not have access to the basic maintenance loans and bursaries system and these students are particularly disadvantaged when these extra costs are required.
- 3) The imposition of these elements after enrolment amounts to "stealth fees".
- 4) That University enrolment should be an open process, with a true and honest assessment of the cost of studying clearly included with course information.
- 5) That the cost of course text books are accepted as additional costs to students.
- 6) Requiring students to use their own money to subsidise University activities is immoral.
- 7) That the imposition of additional essential course-related fees, means students are currently contributing more than upper limit (currently £9000) per year and is illegal as per Part 3, Para 24 (1) (a) of the 2004 Higher Education Act.
- 8) From 2012-13, the tuition fee paid by a student must be all-inclusive of tuition costs and associated activities.
- 9) The imposition of hard copy paper submissions is tantamount to requiring additional fees to submit.

Union Resolves

- 1) To instruct the executive committee to write to the Vice Chancellor expressing the concerns of students at the current practice.
- 2) To request a continuing summary from the University Director of Finance a summary of the total amount charged in these practices since 2006.
- 3) To organise and resource a campaign demanding the University guarantee that there will be no additional fees related to compulsory elements of assessment.
- 4) To request that the University prepare a costed “reading list” for each course.
- 5) To demand that any additional fees of this nature are and continue to be clearly included in University produced promotional & recruitment materials.
- 6) To lobby the University to investigate further options to provide cheap alternative sources for essential University supplies. Examples of this would be the bulk, direct purchase of popular course texts directly from the publisher and selling on with a minimal margin, encouraging and providing space for social enterprises trading directly to students in these goods / services, and the promotion of exchange schemes where skilled students can support each other.
- 7) To lobby and condemn the actions of Leeds Beckett University in all courses which require any student to incur personal, unrecoverable costs directly associated with submission of assignments, fees incurred required to attend and ‘sit’ an examination or timed assessment.
 - Examples of such instances include but are not limited to; cost incurred in printing a hard copy submission of a Word, PDF, or other text, static imagery, or diagrammatic document; Requirement the personal purchase of a book or other artefact in order to gain permission to submit to an examination.

i 24Condition to be imposed by English funding bodies E+W (1)A condition under this section requires the governing body of the relevant institution— (a)to secure that, in respect of any qualifying course, the qualifying fees in respect of any academic year which begins during the grant period at a time when an English approved plan is in force in relation to the institution do not exceed such limit, not exceeding the higher amount, as is provided by the plan for that course and that academic year.