

## University Student Loans Scheme Guidelines

<b>Approving authority</b>	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
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<b>Advisor</b>	Manager, Examinations   Examinations and Timetabling a.addie@griffith.edu.au   (07) 373 53874
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<b>TRIM document</b>	2017/8006026
<b>Description</b>	These guidelines describe the application of the University's Student Loans Scheme Policy including the types of financial assistance available, eligibility criteria for each type of financial assistance, the loan application and approval processes.

### Related documents

[University Student Loans Scheme Policy](#)

Emergency Cash Advance Policy

University Student Loans Scheme Website

[\[Introduction\]](#) [\[Available Financial Assistance\]](#) [\[Eligibility Criteria – Types of Financial Assistance\]](#) [\[Items not normally approved\]](#) [\[Student Loans Scheme Process\]](#) [\[Essential Information\]](#) [\[Loan Repayment\]](#) [\[Loan Finalisation\]](#) [\[Payment of Student Loans to Students\]](#) [\[Meetings of the Panel\]](#) [\[Annual Review\]](#) [\[Publicity of the Scheme\]](#) [\[Appendix A: Overview of Process\]](#)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

These guidelines should be read and implemented in conjunction with the University Student Loans Scheme Policy.

## 2. AVAILABLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The following forms of financial assistance are available to students via the University Study Loans Scheme:

<b>Type of Financial Assistance</b>	<b>Maximum Loan Amount</b>
Emergency Cash Advance	\$20 maximum per emergency/ \$60 maximum per trimester
Emergency Loan for International Students	\$1000 maximum
Standard Loan	\$1000 maximum
Major Loan	\$1500 maximum
Grants	\$1500 maximum

### 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – TYPES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The eligibility criteria for each type of financial assistance is described below and should be read in accordance with the general eligibility criteria specified in 3 of the University Student Loans Scheme Policy.

#### 3.1 Emergency Cash Advance (Maximum Loan Amount up to \$60 per trimester)

The emergency cash advance is available to a student who needs immediate financial support due to an unexpected circumstance, e.g. loss of wallet. It is for emergency use only and must be repaid within two weeks.

A student is not eligible for an emergency cash advance in the following circumstances:

- If the student has previously received an emergency cash advance and has not repaid the amount according to the repayment agreement;
- If a student has received an emergency cash advance three times within the current trimester;
- If a student has accrued outstanding University charges that may lead to the cancellation of his/her enrolment.

Normally, a student can only apply for one emergency cash advance i.e. \$20. However, in extreme circumstances, a student may apply for two emergency cash advances at the same time i.e. \$40. The maximum amount per trimester is \$60.

Please refer to the Emergency Cash Advance Policy.

#### 3.2 Emergency Loan for International Students (Maximum Loan Amount up to \$1000)

The emergency loan for international students is intended to provide short-term assistance to international students to assist with eligible costs outlined in [3.6.1](#) and [3.6.2](#). Students must demonstrate a genuine need for an emergency loan, including that their study will be adversely affected if assistance is not received.

Wherever possible, the student must provide documentary evidence of their financial need and their ability to repay the loan. All applications must be accompanied by a photocopy of the current visa of the student applying for the loan.

The loan must be repaid within six months, in line with the contract negotiated between the student and the Welfare and Student Liaison Officer. This date must be at least a month prior to the student's visa expiry date.

#### 3.3 Standard Loan (Maximum Loan Amount up to \$1000)

Financial assistance in the form of a standard loan is intended to provide short-term assistance to students to assist with any combination of eligible costs as outlined in [3.6](#). Students must demonstrate a genuine need for a loan, including that his or her study will be adversely affected if assistance is not received.

Wherever possible, the student must provide documentary evidence of their financial need and ability to repay the loan

The loan must be repaid in line with the contract negotiated between the student and the Welfare and Student Liaison Officer, or earlier if the student ceases to be a currently enrolled student prior to the negotiated finalisation date.

#### 3.4 Major Loan for Domestic Students (Maximum Loan Amount up to \$1500)

A student will not be considered for a major loan until they have passed the census date in their first trimester of study at the University.

Financial assistance in the form of a major loan is normally available to students to assist with any combination of eligible costs outlined in [3.6](#).

Students must demonstrate a genuine need for financial assistance and that their study will be adversely affected if assistance is not received. Wherever possible, the student must provide documentary evidence of their need, and ability to repay the loan, along with a letter outlining their circumstances, their need for the loan and other sources of assistance they have tried to access prior to applying to the University Student Loans Scheme.

The loan must be repaid in line with the contract negotiated between the student and the Welfare and Student Liaison Officer, or earlier if the student ceases to be a currently enrolled student prior to the negotiated finalisation date.

### **3.5 Grants**

Under normal circumstances it is expected that financial assistance shall be provided to currently enrolled students in the form of a loan. In circumstances of exceptional hardship where maintaining regular loan repayments would exacerbate hardship for the student, the Panel is empowered to make grants to assist the student to complete their studies.

Applications for a Grant should be made on the same application form as a loan, with 'Grant Application' marked clearly on the first page of the application. Grant applications will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Loans Panel.

The Panel shall be guided in its decision to approve a request for a grant by information (i.e. supporting letter) from the relevant Welfare and Student Liaison Officer

### **3.6 Eligible Costs**

#### **3.6.1 Living Expenses (Maximum Loan Amount up to \$1000)**

Living expenses may include, but are not limited to:

- Food (maximum loan amount of \$250)
- Transport (maximum loan amount of \$250)
- Rent
- Bond
- Utilities
- Medical expenses

and will be considered where they directly impact a student's ability to successfully undertake his or her study.

#### **3.6.2 Study and program related expenses**

These may include:

- Textbooks
- Program-related musical instruments or equipment
- Program-related photographic or art equipment and supplies
- Attending compulsory related field trips/seminars/workshops
- Other expenses deemed appropriate by the Panel.

#### **3.6.3 Relocation expenses**

For students who are relocating from rural or remote areas, costs associated with relocations, including rent, bond, and furniture purchase will be considered.

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## **4. ITEMS NOT NORMALLY APPROVED**

Financial assistance is not available from the University Student Loans Scheme to cover University fees or charges, Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) charges, Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) debts, Campus Life college charges, tax bills, repayments for other loans or credit card debts or fines.

Requests for financial assistance are not normally approved towards the purchase of a motor vehicle unless a direct relation to the student's ability to study is demonstrated.

Loans are not available to students who have been declared bankrupt. The Panel may consider a loan to a student who has been discharged from bankruptcy, if they can demonstrate they will not be able to continue their studies without assistance, and on the provision that written proof of discharge of bankruptcy is provided.

## 5. STUDENT LOANS SCHEME PROCESS

The Student Loan Scheme process comprises the following steps:

- Loan Application Interview
- Loan Assessment and Recommendation
- Consideration of the Loan Application and Recommendation
- Decision to approve or not to approve a loan
- Resubmission of the Loan Application, if applicable.

Refer to [Appendix A](#) for an overview of the Student Loans Scheme process.

### 5.1 Loan Application Interview

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that:

- An appointment for an interview has been made with a Welfare and Student Liaison Officer; and
- The application form has been completed and supporting documentation compiled and brought to the interview.

### 5.2 Loan Assessment and Recommendation

During the interview:

- The need for a loan and the student's financial circumstances are assessed; and
- The repayment schedule, including the negotiated amount and timeframe, is discussed.
- On the basis of a student's circumstances, a recommendation to proceed or not to proceed with the loan will be completed by the Welfare and Student Liaison Officer.

### 5.3 Consideration of Application and Recommendation

*Convenor Consideration*

- If the application is for an amount up to \$1000, the student's application and the Welfare and Student Liaison Officer's recommendation are to be forwarded to the Loans Panel Convenor for a decision.

*Panel Consideration*

- If the application is for more than \$1000, the Convenor provides the student's application and the Welfare and Student Liaison Officer's recommendation to the Loans Panel for consideration and decision.
- The Loans Panel meets every two weeks to consider applications. The Loans Panel Convenor can make decisions on behalf of the Panel in an emergency situation where a delay in the decision making will exacerbate hardship.

*Exceptional Consideration*

- If the student is experiencing circumstances of exceptional hardship, and incurring loan repayments would exacerbate their hardship, their application may be forwarded to the Loans Panel for consideration of a grant.
- Applications for a grant must be clearly marked and accompanied by a supporting letter from the Welfare and Student Liaison Officer.

### 5.4 Outcome of Application

*Application approved*

- Paperwork sent to the Office of Finance.
- Payment processed and client file established.

*Application not approved*

- Welfare and Student Liaison Officer notifies student in writing of outcome and grounds for decision.
- Student may resubmit the application to the Welfare and Student Liaison Officer with additional supporting documentation for consideration by the Panel.

## 5.5 Resubmission of Loan Application

The decision to approve a student loan relies on the information provided by the student. When a student's application for a loan is not approved the student is afforded the opportunity to resubmit their application through the Welfare and Student Liaison Officer to the Panel, along with additional information or documentation to facilitate the Panel's assessment of their financial hardship. This application will be processed at the next meeting of the Panel.

The Panel is in no way compelled to approve an application for financial assistance if, in the opinion of the Panel, the student has not provided sufficient additional information to warrant the approval of the financial assistance. The decision of the Panel in considering a resubmitted loan application shall be final.

## 5.6 Processing Timeline

As far as practicable, completed applications will be assessed and considered in accordance with the following timeframes:

Loan Type	Submission, Assessment and Approval of Loan	Approval to Payment
Emergency Cash Advances	Same working day as application	Same working day as application
Emergency Loans for International Students	3 working days	3-5 working days
Standard Loans	3 working days	3-5 working days
Major Loans	within 11 working days*	3-5 working days
Grants	within 11 working days*	3-5 working days

\*In an emergency situation the Convenor can organise approval in the timeframe of a Standard Loan.

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## 6. ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

For all forms of assistance, excluding the emergency cash advances, applicants must provide the contact details of two individuals on their application forms. These individuals should be people who have a personal knowledge of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that these individuals are aware that the University may contact them.

Students applying for financial assistance are required to provide a reliable mailing address in the form of a permanent street address (a Post Office Box is not considered to be reliable) on their application form. A notice mailed by the University to the mailing address advised by the student shall be deemed to have been received by the student.

All applications should be accompanied where ever possible with relevant documentation supporting the need for the loan and their ability to repay the loan.

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## 7. LOAN REPAYMENT

The loan repayment schedule will be negotiated between the student and the Welfare and Student Liaison Officer at the loan application interview. This schedule may be subject to change at the request of the Convenor or Panel. Loan repayment schedules shall normally comprise regular fortnightly instalments. The Convenor or Panel shall only consider lump sum loan repayment schedules in exceptional circumstances.

No application shall be approved without a loan repayment schedule setting out the various dates and amounts for loan repayments and the date that the loan shall be finalised.

Students can repay their loans in the following ways:

- payment through Direct Debit on the specified date each fortnight (please note, this option is only suitable for students who are absolutely certain they will have the funds in their account on the Direct Debit date to avoid financial penalty); or
- online (via credit card);
- Western Union (via credit card or telegraphic transfer);
- BPay;
- Phone (via credit card).

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## 8. LOAN FINALISATION

A student who has received a loan is required to make repayments in accordance with the loan repayment schedule detailed in the loan agreement.

The Panel has the authority to set or vary the approved loan repayment schedule after consultation with the student or the relevant Welfare and Student Liaison Officer.

All loans must be finalised by the due date on the original loan agreement, unless a new date has been approved. Extensions of loans can only be negotiated with a Welfare and Student Liaison Officer.

Loans must also be finalised in the following situations:

- where the student has completed all requirements of a program and is eligible to graduate. For the purposes of this section the date of eligibility to graduate shall be the last day of the teaching period of the relevant trimester; or
- where a student commences Leave of Absence. A student who has a current loan and is commencing Leave of Absence is normally required to repay the loan in full prior to the commencement of the period of Leave of Absence. A student in circumstances of financial hardship or on compassionate grounds, may negotiate an appropriate loan repayment schedule with Office of Finance staff; or
- where a student has been excluded under any of the policies of the University.

A student who is experiencing financial difficulties in any of the above three situations, may be able to negotiate an extension of time with the Office of Finance (FIN).

A student who ceases to be currently enrolled must make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Finance (FIN) concerning the finalisation of any loan amount outstanding.

**A student who has not complied with the conditions of his/her loan agreement and has failed to renegotiate terms, or has failed to adhere to renegotiated terms, or has ceased to be a current student will have their Academic Results withheld and enrolment suspended.** A Negative Service Indicator (NSI) will remain until such time as the outstanding loan balance, including recovery action costs and any subsequent legal costs have been repaid.

If the student is currently enrolled, the NSI will remain until the student submits an extension form and makes two consecutive payments in line with the loan repayment agreement. Provided payment is made and arrangements set in place with Student Financials in the Office of Finance, the Negative Service Indicator will be removed in time for the student to enrol for the subsequent trimester. A student who is no longer currently enrolled must negotiate their debt directly with the Office of Finance.

**A student who has their results withheld by the University will not be eligible to graduate.**

The Office of Finance shall be responsible for taking recovery action for outstanding amounts, including renegotiating terms with the students for the repayment of the loan. The Team Leader, Student Financials, Accounts Receivable or nominee may seek assistance and/or advice from the relevant Welfare and Student Liaison Officer concerning a student's circumstances. Where a student has not repaid his/her loan by the due date, and has not responded to any follow up action (letters and phone calls) from the Office of Finance, external collection action will occur.

Action for recovery of outstanding debts shall be taken against any defaulting applicant, at the discretion of the Chief Financial Officer or delegate. This recovery may include legal action or reporting

the default to a credit reporting agency. The costs incurred in undertaking this recoverable action will be added to the student's account.

Loans for currently enrolled students will not be written off. The write-off of an outstanding loan shall be in accordance with the University's Financial Delegations and is at the discretion of the Chief Financial Officer or delegate.

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## **9. PAYMENT OF STUDENT LOANS TO STUDENTS**

Loan funds are paid to the student via Electronic Funds Transfer. This generally means the funds are in the student's account within three to five working days of the application being approved and processed by the Office of Finance. It is crucial to the timeliness of the Scheme that the student's bank details be fully completed on page 3 of the application form before it is sent through for processing.

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## **10. MEETINGS OF THE PANEL**

The Loans Panel shall meet every two weeks throughout the trimester, or more frequently as required, to consider applications and other matters pertinent to the Scheme.

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## **11. ANNUAL REVIEW**

The guidelines for the Fund shall be reviewed annually by the Student Loans Panel and recommendations, if any, forwarded to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) for approval.

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## **12. PUBLICITY OF THE SCHEME**

Information regarding the University Student Loans Scheme shall be made available to students via the University's website and other appropriate mechanisms.

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## Appendix A: Overview of the University Student Loans Scheme Process

