
 MACQUARIE University	<h2>Fee Payment Policy</h2>	Work Area:	Early Learning
		Contact Officer:	Business Operations Manager Early Learning
		Revision Number:	9
		Last Modified:	November 2021
	Policy		
PURPOSE	To ensure practices relevant to fees and charges are clear, transparent, consistent, and support all services to be financially viable.		
OVERVIEW	<p>Campus Life provides high quality children’s programs on a fee for service basis.</p> <p>Fees are set by U@MQ Ltd (Campus Life) management and approved by the U@MQ Ltd Board on an annual basis.</p> <p>Unless specified otherwise, the parent or legal guardian is responsible for payment of fees in line with the policy.</p> <p>Banksia Cottage, Gumnut Cottage, Waratah Cottage may be collectively referred to as ‘Approved Services’, services, or Centres.</p> <p>A parent is someone who has legal responsibility for a child. This may be a natural parent (through birth) or a legal guardian (legally appointed) but does not include a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child.</p> <p>Long Day Care refers to full day, ongoing bookings for children aged between 6 weeks-5 years in the long day care program. This includes extra (ad-hoc) days booked in addition to the standard booking.</p> <p>Casual Care refers to short term bookings for children aged 6 weeks-5 years. It will comprise of minimum 2 hour, half day or full day bookings in the casual care program.</p> <p>Vacation Care refers to the recreational school holiday program open to children attending primary school, or about to commence at primary school.</p>		
RESPONSIBILITY/SCOPE	All Approved Services		
THE POLICY			
<p>Eligible parents may receive assistance from the Commonwealth Government towards the cost of fees through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).</p> <p>The Centres will utilise a third-party software provider, approved for the CCS, for all aspects of enrolment management. Parents will be provided with guidelines/information to enable them to access the third-party software where applicable.</p> <p>Invoices, Statements and Receipts It is expected that parents will independently access their invoices, statements, and receipts where these are accessible to parents via the third-party software.</p> <p>Fee Assistance The CCS will be applied to the accounts of eligible parents, where the CCS status is ‘confirmed’ and in line with the requirements of the Department of Education, Skills and Employment. Where applicable, the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) will be applied for eligible parents, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandparents getting an income support payment. • Parents transitioning from certain income support payments to work. • Parents experiencing temporary financial hardship. 			

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- Parents caring for a child who is vulnerable or at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

It is the responsibility of parents to determine their eligibility for the CCS and/or ACCS and to undertake the required application and maintenance procedures associated with these subsidies. This includes understanding that the CCS is generally not paid:

- if the child does not physically attend on their confirmed first day/s without an approved reason
- if the child does not physically attend on their confirmed last day/s without an approved reason

Early Learning Centres (Long Day Care and Casual Care)

The forms of payment accepted at Banksia, Waratah and Gumnut Cottages are:

- Direct debit from bank account
- Direct debit via credit card authority (MasterCard and Visa only)
- Salary Sacrifice for Macquarie University and Entity employees (If enrolment is regular)
- Payroll deduction for Macquarie University and Entity employees (If enrolment is regular)

Enrolment Patterns – Long Day Care

Parents are offered care on a permanent basis; days of care offered will remain the same each week. Children can attend between one and five days per week.

Enrolment Patterns – Casual Care

Parents are offered care on a temporary basis. Children might attend for any available session including:

- Minimum 2 hour block
- Half day morning (7:45am – 12:30pm)* or half day afternoon (12:30pm – 5:15pm)*
- Full day (7:45am – 5:15pm)

* *Half day bookings may be booked out of these hours if availability allows.*

There are no limitations on how far in advance bookings can be made for Casual Care within the calendar year.

Fee Schedule

The fee charged is based on the status of at least one of the parent/guardians of the child. The categories are:


- Current Macquarie University Student enrolled in an award course
- Current Macquarie University Staff employee
- Community Partners and the general public

The Staff/Student MQ number is to be collected and checked by the Centre at the time of enrolment and at any subsequent status change. Where both parents have different status, the status with the lowest fee will be applied.

Parents are required to advise the Centre if their status changes to ensure the correct fee is charged. This will be audited periodically by Centres to ensure the status is correct. Fees will be backdated to the commencement of the status change unless approved otherwise by the Business Operations Manager, Early Learning.

In the **Long Day Care** programs:

- Parents are provided with a Fee Schedule and Direct Debit Schedule upon enrolment. Four weeks' notice of any changes to fees or fee payment systems is provided to parents.

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- Parents are expected to pay fees one week in advance of the service being provided.
- Fees are not charged when the Centre is not operational, including for Public Holidays, Child Free Days, or the nominated closedown period in December/January.
- Fees are charged for permanent days booked when the Centre is operational irrespective of attendance; hence fees are charged during absences for family holidays, sick days etc.
- If families leave Australia for 6 weeks or more, or if they have not attended the Centre for 14 consecutive weeks, they may not be eligible for the CCS or ACCS. It is recommended parents check the [Services Australia](#) site for more information if this situation applies to them.
- Fees are charged for the whole day, regardless of the hours of attendance.

In the **Casual Care** program:

- Fees are charged prior to the child attending care, except in the case of a booking on short notice whereby the fees will be charged on the day of attendance.
- Fees are charged for days booked irrespective of attendance; hence fees are charged for absences such as sick days unless the required notice period is provided.

Bond Payment – Long Day Care Program

A bond payment equivalent to five days full fees is required via direct debit payment to confirm the parent's acceptance of enrolment from an agreed start date of care. A bond top up is also required for subsequent changes in fees. This includes changes to the fee type and/or when re-enrolling for the following year. Where a parent chooses to enrol their child at more than one Campus Life Centre, a separate bond will be required for each centre. The only exception will be where the parents wish to only attend one Campus Life Centre but due to availability of places the child is temporarily attending two Campus Life Centres. In this instance, if the child remains enrolled at two Campus Life Centres for more than a year, a bond at the second Centre will be required.

The bond must be paid in full prior to the commencement date; only in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Business Operations Manager, Early Learning can a child start care without having made a bond payment. The bond is credited to the parent account upon provision of four weeks' notice in writing that they are ceasing their enrolment. If the parent chooses to withdraw their acceptance of enrolment offer prior to the child's first day at the service, the bond is only refunded if four weeks' written notice prior to the agreed start date is provided.


Salary Sacrifice Fee Payment

Staff members of Macquarie University and its entities may be eligible to pay their childcare fees through Salary Sacrifice from their pre-tax income. As the employer is responsible for fee payment through salary sacrifice, parents are not eligible to claim the CCS at the same time. Note, due to the adhoc nature of Casual Care, Salary Sacrifice may not be appropriate if attendance is irregular.

All enquiries regarding Salary Sacrifice must be directed to the employer, i.e. HR. It remains the responsibility of the staff member to advise HR of any changes in regard to Salary Sacrifice as well as to inform the Centre in writing of their Salary Sacrifice arrangement, including when it will commence and/or cease. The Centre will provide the parent with the relevant fee amount payable.

Salary Sacrifice payments must be received two weeks in advance of the service being provided to align with the University pay period. Parents are required to check their Centre account regularly and to advise HR if any changes to payments are required. The Centre will also reconcile accounts paid via Salary Sacrifice quarterly and inform parents of any discrepancies.

Centre staff will not give any advice regarding Salary Sacrifice. It is recommended that parents seek independent financial advice regarding this arrangement and/or speak to their own HR department.

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Payroll Deduction Fee Payment

Staff members of Macquarie University and its entities may be eligible to pay their childcare fees through payroll deduction from their post-tax income. As the parent is responsible for fee payment through a payroll deduction, they may also be eligible to claim the CCS at the same time. Note, due to the adhoc nature of Casual Care, Payroll Deduction may not be appropriate if attendance is irregular.

All enquiries regarding Payroll Deduction must be directed to the employer, i.e. HR. It remains the responsibility of the staff member to advise HR of any changes in regard to Payroll Deduction as well as to inform the Centre in writing of their Payroll Deduction arrangement and when it will commence and/or cease.

Payroll Deduction payments must be received two weeks in advance of the service being provided and be the CCS reduced amount. Parents are required to check their Centre account regularly and to advise HR if any changes to payments are required.

The Centre will also reconcile accounts paid via Payroll Deduction quarterly and inform parents of any discrepancies.

Withdrawal from Care/ Change in Booked Days – Long Day Care Program

Four weeks' notice in writing is required to withdraw a child from the Centre or to change a child's permanent booked days. This can be via email, or a letter handed to the Centre Manager or Customer Service and Administration Officer. Note that Public Holidays and the closedown period in December/January cannot be counted in the notice period.

After a child's enrolment has ceased at the Centre, the account will be finalised once the final CCS reconciliation has taken place and any amounts owing will be charged to the nominated payment method. This will usually occur no earlier than one week after the child's final day of attendance.

Extra days can be booked by enrolled parents where a vacancy exists in the Long Day Care program. Extra days and permanent changes regarding attendance will depend on availability and the Centre's obligations to meet licensing and operational requirements. Normal Long Day Care fees will be charged for any extra day bookings made for the Long Day Care Program.

Cancellation of Booked Days – Casual Care Program


Two business days' notice in writing is required for cancellation of booked days in the Casual Care program. This notice period may be waived under exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Business Operations Manager, Early Learning.

Late Collection of a Child

At the Centre Manager's discretion, an additional charge may apply to parents who pick up their child after the program has closed. This fee is \$15 for the first 15 minutes or part thereof after closing and then an additional \$30 for every subsequent 15 minutes or part thereof. The parent will be made aware of the possible charge on the day of the late collection and will receive confirmation the next day as to whether the amount will/will not be added to the next account.

Rejected Fee Payments

Any fees incurred by the Centre for rejected fee payments will be passed on to the parent except where the Centre Manager chooses not to pass on a rejection fee due to extenuating circumstances for the rejected payment.

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Parents will be informed by the Centre when a rejection advice applies to their account and asked to correct the problem. The account will be updated to include the applicable rejection fee and the payment processed as soon as possible.

Overdue Fees

If fee payments fall into arrears, parents will be asked to bring the account up to date immediately within five (5) business days of notification. If a subsequent payment has not been made or a payment plan put in place within this period, then the late fee payment of \$30 may be applied.

The procedure for recovery of outstanding debts is discussed with parents during the enrolment process and is also available from the Centre on request.

Parents experiencing financial hardship are asked to make an appointment to speak to the Centre Manager to discuss payment options, preferably before the debt becomes unmanageable. This may include arrangements for a short-term payment plan.

Fee Credits

Where a child has an ongoing enrolment, any credits will automatically be offset against future debits until the credit has been exhausted.

If the child has withdrawn from the Centre or is an irregular booking in the Casual Care program, any credit owing is refunded to the parent no earlier than one week after the child's last day to allow for the final CCS reconciliation to take place.

If a parent pays via Salary Sacrifice and a fee credit exists, where possible adjustments must be made by the parent to the salary sacrifice approved amounts until the credit is fully allocated. Any outstanding credits in place once the child leaves the Centre will be refunded to the employer and cannot be refunded directly to the parent.

If a parent pays by Payroll Deduction and a fee credit exists, where possible adjustments must be made by the parent to the payroll deduction amount until the credit is fully allocated. Any outstanding credits in place once the child leaves the Centre will be refunded to the parent.

Vacation Care

The payment options at Vacation Care are:

- Direct debit from bank account
- Direct debit via credit card authority (MasterCard and Visa only)


Bookings

Bookings open for Vacation Care at least three weeks prior to the commencement of the gazetted holiday period.

Fee Schedule

Vacation Care fees include a base fee plus any excursion/incursion costs as detailed on the Program. Fees are charged after the Vacation Care period to allow for the correct application of CCS.

Withdrawal from Care/ Change in Booked Days

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Two business days' notice in writing is required for cancellation of booked days in the Vacation Care program. This notice period may be waived under exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Business Operations Manager, Early Learning.

Late Collection of a Child

At the Centre Manager's discretion, an additional charge may apply to parents who pick up their child after the program has closed. This fee is \$15 for the first 15 minutes or part thereof after closing and then an additional \$30 for every subsequent 15 minutes or part thereof. The parent will be made aware of the possible charge on the day of the late collection and will receive confirmation the next day as to whether the amount will/will not be added to the next account.

Rejected Fee Payments

Any fees incurred by the Centre for rejected fee payments will be passed on to the parent except where the Centre Manager chooses not to pass on a rejection fee due to extenuating circumstances for the rejected payment.

Parents will be informed by the Centre when a rejection advice applies to their account and asked to correct the problem. The account will be updated to include the applicable rejection fee and the payment processed as soon as possible.

Overdue Fees

If fees fall into arrears, parents will be asked to bring the account up to date immediately within five (5) business days of notification. If a subsequent payment has not been made, or a payment plan put in place within this period, then the late fee payment of \$30 may be applied.

A written procedure for recovery of outstanding debts is available from the Centre upon request.


Parents experiencing financial hardship are asked to make an appointment to speak to the Centre Manager, to discuss payment options, preferably before the debt becomes unmanageable. This may include arrangements for a short-term payment plan.

Fee Credits

Parents will be given the option to receive a refund or to automatically offset any fee credits against future debits for the next holiday period. A refund will be processed if a credit still remains after one additional holiday period has passed.

Policy Information

Contact Officer <i>(Role Title)</i>	Business Operations Manager, Early Learning
Date Approved	November 2021
Approval Authority <i>(Role Title)</i>	CEO, U@MQ Ltd
Date of Commencement	November 2021
Amendment History	Oct 2012, Aug 2013; Aug 2014; June 2015; Sept 2017; Nov 2018; April 2021, May 2021
Date for Next Review	November 2023
Related Documents	Debt Recovery Work Instruction Payment Plan Form

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<i>Policies superseded by this</i>	
<i>Keywords</i>	Fees, Late fee, Debt recovery, Fee credits Salary Sacrifice