

	<b>POLICY CS-0027.F</b>
 <b>MACQUARIE</b> University	<b>FEE PAYMENT</b>

<b>Purpose</b>	That practices relevant to fees and charges are clear, transparent and consistent, and support all services to be financially viable.
<b>Overview</b>	<p>Campus Life provides high quality children’s programs on a fee for service basis.</p> <p>Fees are set 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 and U@MQ Ltd Vacation Care may be collectively referred to as ‘Approved Services’, services, or Centres.</p> <p>For the purposes of this policy, ‘family’ and ‘families’ refer to the parent/s 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>
<b>Scope</b>	Banksia Cottage, Gumnut Cottage, U@MQ Ltd Vacation Care
<b>The Policy</b>	<p>Eligible families may receive assistance from the Commonwealth Government towards the cost of fees through the <a href="#">Child Care Subsidy (CCS)</a>.</p> <p>The Centres will utilise a third-party software provided, approved for the CCS for all aspects of enrolment management. Families will be provided with guidelines/information to enable them to access the third-party software where applicable.</p> <p><b>Invoices, Statements and Receipts</b> It is expected that families will independently access their invoices, statements and receipts where these are accessible to families via the third-party software. Otherwise, families will be provided with an invoice/statement prior to the processing of fees and a receipt after the processing of fees, in either a paper or online version.</p> <p><b>Fee Assistance</b> The CCS will be applied to the accounts of eligible families, where the CCS status is ‘confirmed’. Where applicable, the <a href="#">Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)</a> will be applied for eligible families, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grandparents getting an income support payment</li> </ul>

- Families transitioning from certain income support payments to work
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship

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.

## **Banksia and Gumnut Cottages**

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

- Direct debit from bank account
- Direct debit via credit card authority
- Salary Sacrifice for Macquarie University and Entity employees
- Payroll deduction for Macquarie University and Entity employees

### **Enrolment Patterns**

Families 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.

### **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 Students enrolled in an award course
- Current Macquarie University Staff employed full or part time on a permanent/on-going basis or for a minimum 12 month contract
- Community Partners and the general public

Parents are required to advise the Centre if their status changes to ensure the correct fee is charged. The Centre will also run internal audits on a regular basis to confirm the status of staff and student families. Where applicable, fees will be backdated to the commencement of the status change. Where both parents are different status, the status with the lowest fee will be applied.

Families 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 families.

Families are expected to pay fees two weeks 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, they may not be eligible for the CCS or ACCS. It is recommended families check the [Department of Human Services site](#) for more information if this situation applies.

Fees are charged for the whole day, regardless of the hours of attendance.

### **Bond Payment**

A bond payment equivalent to five days full fees is required to confirm the parent's acceptance of enrolment at either Banksia or Gumnut Cottage.

The bond must be paid in full prior to the commencement date; only in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the General Manager, Children's Services can a child start care without having made a bond payment.

The bond is credited to the family account upon provision of four weeks' notice in writing that they are ceasing their enrolment. If the family chooses to withdraw their acceptance of enrolment offer prior to the child's first day at the service, the bond is only refunded when four weeks' notice in writing is provided.

### **Salary Sacrifice Fee Payment**

Staff members of Macquarie University and Entities may be eligible to pay their child care 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.

All enquiries regarding Salary Sacrifice must be directed to the employer, ie HR. It remains the responsibility of the staff member to advise HR of any changes in regards to Salary Sacrifice.

Salary Sacrifice payments must be received two weeks in advance of the service being provided. Families 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 twice per year and inform families of any discrepancies.

Centre staff will not give any advice regarding Salary Sacrifice. It is recommended that families read the information sheet they can obtain from the centre and seek independent financial advice regarding this arrangement and/or speak to their own HR department.

### **Payroll Deduction Fee Payment**

Staff members of Macquarie University and its Controlled Entities may be eligible to pay their child care 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.

All enquiries regarding Payroll Deduction must be directed to the employer, ie HR. It remains the responsibility of the staff member to advise HR of any changes in regards to Payroll Deduction.

Payroll Deduction payments must be received two weeks in advance of the service being provided and be the CCS reduced amount. Families 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 twice per year and inform families of any discrepancies.

### **Withdrawal from Care/ Change in Booked Days**

Four weeks' notice in writing is required to withdraw a child from the centre or to change a child's booked days. This can be via email or the Centre can provide the relevant forms upon request. Note that Public Holidays and the closedown period in December/January cannot be counted in the notice period.

Additional casual days can be booked by enrolled families where a vacancy exists. Casual days and permanent changes regarding attendance will depend on availability and the centre's obligations to meet licensing and operational requirements. Normal fees will be charged for any casual day bookings.

### **Late Collection of a Child**

At the Centre Manager's discretion, an additional charge may apply to families 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 family 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 family.

Families 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 will be applied.

The procedure for recovery of outstanding debts is provided to families on enrolment and is also available from the Centre on request.

Families 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**

Except for a child who has withdrawn from the Centre, any credits will automatically be offset against future debits until the credit has been exhausted.

If the child has withdrawn from the Centre then any credit owing is refunded to the family no earlier than one week after the child's last day to allow for the final CCS reconciliation to take place.

If a family pays via Salary Sacrifice and a fee credit exists, where possible adjustments must be made by the family 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 family.

If a family pays by Payroll Deduction and a fee credit exists, where possible adjustments must be made by the family 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 family.

## **U@MQ Ltd 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. All bookings must be paid for prior to the child attending Vacation Care.

Information about the booking and payment process is available on the [Vacation Care website](#).

### **Fee Schedule**

Vacation Care fees include a base fee, set by the U@MQ Ltd Board, plus any excursion/incursion costs as detailed on the Program. Where the third-party software allows, fees will be charged and paid for at the time of booking. If this is not an option, families will be informed of the date that fees will be charged, which will always be prior to the child attending the Centre.

**Withdrawal from Care/ Change in Booked Days**

Due to the short-term nature of Vacation Care, generally no refunds will be provided for change in the number of days or withdrawal from care unless in exceptional circumstances or with 2 weeks' notice in writing. It is at the discretion of the Manager, Recreation Programs to approve any refunds.

**Late Collection of a Child**

At the Centre Manager's discretion, an additional charge may apply to families 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 family 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 family.

Families 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 will be applied.

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

Families experiencing financial hardship are asked to make an appointment to speak to the Manager, Recreation Programs 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.

**Keywords**

Fees, late fee, debt recovery, fee credits, salary sacrifice.

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<b>Date Approved</b>	22 Nov 2018
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Approval Authority</b>	CEO of U@MQ Limited
<b>Date of Commencement</b>	October 2012
<b>Amendment Dates</b>	August 2013; August 2014; June 2015, September 2017, November 2018
<b>Date for Next Review</b>	November 2020
<b>Related Policies, Work Instructions, Forms or Manuals</b>	National Quality Standard: QA 7 CS-0003 Debt Recovery Procedure
<b>Policies/Rules Superseded by this Policy</b>	CS-0027A/B/C/D/E