University Policy on the Costs of Studying: 
“Transparent Costs Policy for taught programme students”

This policy covers taught programmes and does not apply to research students.

Nothing in this policy overrides the University’s duties in relation to protected characteristics; the needs of students with disabilities are considered separately through their support discussions.

Any staff or students who have queries about this policy should raise it with their Course Representatives or Head of School in the first instance and via their School Staff Student Liaison Committee. This policy will be owned and wider queries addressed by the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office (AQPO) within the Academic Registry and the Sabbatical Officers in the University of Bristol Students’ Union (academic experience and postgraduate posts). Questions which need to be raised beyond school level should be referred to AQPO in the first instance [www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality).

Making costs Transparent
The University considers that costs related to essential activity required from students in relation to a taught course at the University of Bristol should be included in the basic course fees. This policy explains what is included within that commitment.

A University education is about joining a community of scholars. As such the University hopes students will want to own and treasure books and other resources associated with their discipline and their study at Bristol. However, it is essential that students are not excluded from equal access to education for financial reasons, and should not encounter hidden mandatory additional costs of study.

This policy has three core principles:

1. **Timely Transparency** Students should be made aware of any costs they will encounter or might decide to incur beyond their fees prior to registration so there are no substantial surprises.

2. **Costs the school/faculty/University will bear** The school/faculty/University will carry mandatory costs for materials that are not of use to students outside of their University studies and are not personal (so will not cover such things as notebooks, personal copies of books etc).

3. **Means tested support** Where there are high discretionary costs not met by the University, schools should ensure a means tested fund is available to enable all students to take part e.g. to help with overseas or pre sessional field trips.

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1 Except in relation to those postgraduate programmes where additional fees, such as bench fees, are specifically set out for applicants.
1. **Timely Transparency**

1.1. A Bristol student will not encounter hidden costs.

1.2. Where there are essential additional costs associated with a programme information will be made available to students prior to registration at the start of the first year, so that students can plan for these.

1.3. Schools, academic societies and student representatives will work together to map the actual costs students are incurring in studying in the discipline, both mandatory and discretionary and then make information available to students prior the start of their first year about the likely costs they will encounter, and the costs students are likely to incur per year for example, if they chose to buy their own copies of books.

1.4. Students will be given clear and consistent guidance about whether particular resources are mandatory.

1.5. Students are encouraged to draw to the attention of their course representatives, and through them to their Faculty Representative any concerns they have about the delivery of this policy, so these can be addressed in a timely manner.

2. **Costs the school / faculty / University will bear**

2.1. **Included items**

Unless specified in published fee data for particular programmes the fee includes:

- Bench costs
- Mandatory field trips
- Studio fees
- Laboratory coats, clothing or uniform that is not general clothing
- Examination fees
- Library – shared access to books, e-books, e-reserves and other electronic resources
- IT facilities including wifi, computer use and free / reduced price access to software for personal use

Students are expected to bear the costs of showing they are able to take part in a particular activity e.g. of conducting a DBS check when needed.

2.2. **Books**

The University does not supply personal copies of books whether textbooks or otherwise. The University Library is a shared resource and the University makes available copies of books, journals and other learning materials in the library / on line for students to use on a shared basis. Students can use the reservation system to help plan their own reading. The University recognises that many students will wish to purchase their own copies of books or works and hopes students will want to do so as scholars committed to their discipline and lifelong learning.

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2 This does not include scrubs which are provided by NHS Trusts

3 There are limited exceptions where the fee is designed to include all materials but these are exceptional and the fee has been set in light of that.
Schools can advise students that students may find it more convenient to purchase their own copies of books, but will not indicate students ‘must’ purchase any.

Students will be advised clearly e.g. “You will need to use this text extensively. There are copies to share in the library, but past students say they have found it helpful to purchase their own copy.”

Under principle 1.3 of this policy staff and students in schools will map any particular subject needs e.g. in disciplines where it is particularly helpful to have a particular edition of a text in seminars and ensure students are aware of the merits of personal purchase, whilst also ensuring at least some library copies are available.

2.3. The University aims to make computers available for students who wish to use University desk top computers, but recognises that most students arrive at University with their own computers, and aims to facilitate the use of personal computers and other mobile devices for learning through the provision of wifi and study spaces.

2.4. The University does not provide stationery and basic office equipment for students.

2.5. Travel to and from a place of study / placement or additional accommodation costs arising from the placement are not reimbursed. Where students have some of their teaching in an academic year at Langford, alongside teaching on the precinct, all students should have equal access to transport to travel to and from the precinct.

2.6. The cost of compulsory field trips will be included in programme fees, but optional field trips will incur an additional charge. Optional residential field trips e.g. pre-sessional or optional overseas trips will be supported through means-tested bursary funding for less affluent students to ensure parity of experience.

2.7. Equipment

2.7.1. The University will normally supply items that are essential for the programme of study, such as laboratory coats and the laundry thereof – with the exception of students in Chemistry who are supplied with a laboratory coat for the duration of their studies, and are then responsible for laundry.

2.7.2. The student is responsible for supplying materials that students on professional programmes will normally own personally as a feature of their chosen profession (stethoscopes or trowels for example) , use after

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4 Except in relation to the PGCE where costs are partly reimbursed and the term-time BVSc Manchester RSPCA placement travel costs and accommodation.

5 Veterinary Science students are expected to provide their own boiler or parlour suits as they may use them after graduation, depending upon their post – qualification specialism.
they have graduated or items that a student might normally own such as wellington boots and waterproof clothing.

2.7.3. Some items may be provided on a shared basis, such as dissection kits, but students will have the opportunity for an optional purchase of their personal kit if they wish to do so. Schools must not impose mandatory charges for the use of such shared items but may use a deposit system.

2.7.4. Where it is unclear into which category an item fits into, this is to be determined by the school, working with the Staff Student Liaison Committee, Course Representatives and the discipline Academic Society.

2.8. Printing costs & Digital Practice

2.8.1. Students need to develop practices of study for their lives beyond University – the need to develop an appreciation of the respective roles of electronic and paper resources and develop the skills of manipulating, annotating, storing and creating digital and paper resources. The precise balance will be personal to each student. It is for students themselves to determine this and bear any associated costs.

2.8.2. The University operates within the framework of copyright legislation which governs what material can be copied and provided free of charge to students in print or electronic form.

2.8.3. Subject to copyright legislation, schools will:
  o provide access to electronic copies of all materials where this is appropriate (but not provide printed versions unless covered below)
  o provide access to learning materials (such as short extracts or readings)\(^6\) that students are required to have in paper form for use in class or examinations (not just material that needs to be read before class) free of charge or provide equivalent print credits
  o only provide printed copies of lecture slides in specific cases where it is a requirement that students work on the printed slides during lectures. In general, students are expected to take their own lecture notes and develop personal techniques for doing so.
  o work to maximise e-submission
  o in collaboration with the Library, continue to monitor the availability and use of printed library resources and the availability of e-resources and changes in student numbers or resource use and increase stock to ensure demand continues to be met
  o supply research students who teach with sufficient print credits to enable them to print anything they need for their teaching free, on the same basis as other teachers.

\(^6\) But not whole books or chapters
2.8.4. Subject to copyright legislation, the University will:
   o invest in digital literacy – including ensuring availability of and guidance about digital resources
   o continue the move to e-resources, e-submission, e-reserves and e-books/journals to maximise access

2.8.5. If students are required to submit summative coursework in printed form, the school will be expected to bear the cost e.g. through the provision of print credits.

2.8.6. Where students are permitted to take marked copies of materials into examinations, the student will be responsible for supplying the materials as these are personally annotated and cannot be used by others.

2.8.7. The University will not offer a universal quota of free print credits, but will keep this under active periodic consideration.

2.8.8. Schools may make available an option to purchase printed sets of materials in addition to the electronic version via a bulk print order scheme, where allowed under the University’s copyright licence.

2.8.9. The University accepts differing disciplinary cultures mean that identical support for all students will not provide equality of provision, and that a diversity of practice better supports equality. The amount of print credit available, if any, and volume of paper material provided will depend upon the discipline.

2.8.10. Schools, should work with their Academic Societies and Course Representatives to articulate the level of support for printing / paper copies / study packs appropriate to their discipline, within the above criteria.