

**Action Group – Hidden Course Costs**

Meeting Date: 18.01.24

**Present**

Joseph Hill, Education Officer (**JH**) (**Allocated Officer**)

Christian Black, Senior Academic Representation Coordinator (**CB**) (**Staff Support**)

Scott Dawson, Student Voice and Representation Manager (**SD**) (**Note Taker**)

**Idea for Discussion:****Current Policy**

The Guild believes that students are faced with many hidden course costs as a result of University policies forcing students to pay for facilities and materials integral to their student experience. Such hidden course costs place an additional financial burden on students and often that burden is aggravated by students being caught unawares.

The Guild urges the University to keep course costs for students as low as possible, to not use course costs to generate revenue and at all times ensure that prospective students fully understand the true cost of studying at Birmingham, by clearly publishing the cost of any optional or required elements of the course

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**Minutes from meeting 18.01.24**

JH: The policy as it stands looks mostly worthwhile to keep as is. Although it would be to recognise the impact this may be having on commuters and the transport costs connected with that.

CB: Should we bulk up the transparency piece? Helping to make clear the ask of the University on being as open as possible on the reasoning behind course costs.

JH: Noted this policy would help with advocacy and engagement with the University in creating change in wider conversations with staff.

CB: Recommended that listing examples of hidden course costs may not be a good use of time as the type of hidden costs encountered alter on a yearly basis.

JH: Amendments suggested seem quite minor and bring the policy up to date. It also speaks to the cost of living crisis being faced by all students. Suggest this is something that can be immediately implemented.

There was agreement on the above.

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### **Amended Policy:**

The Guild believes that students are faced with many hidden course costs as a result of University policies forcing students to pay for facilities, materials or transport throughout their studies. Such hidden course costs place an additional financial burden on students. We therefore encourage the University to communicate openly and articulate any additional costs with students as soon as is reasonably possible.

The Guild encourages the University to keep course costs for students as low as possible and at all times ensure that prospective students fully understand the true cost of studying at Birmingham, by clearly publishing the cost of any optional or required elements of the course.

### **Agreed Actions:**

- There was agreement that the policy was still relevant to students.
- There was agreement that as the policy is in the benefit of all students and there have been no substantial changes, it does not require an All Student Vote to progress.
- It was agreed by consensus (with approval from JH as Chair) that this policy can automatically be re-enacted.

The Amended Policy will therefore be automatically re-introduced to the Guild Live Policy and Idea documentation. Reapproval (pending request for amendments) is scheduled for January 2027.

Any questions regarding approval, next steps or requests for further information can be submitted to: [studentvoice@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:studentvoice@guild.bham.ac.uk)