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UCT Council approves concessions for students with fee debt exceeding R10 000

In a commitment to offering financial support and ensuring higher education access to as many academically eligible students as possible, the University of Cape Town (UCT) management and the Students' Representative Council (SRC) tabled a joint proposal around student fee debt before a recent special Council meeting.

The joint proposal sought to address fee debt issues for students with outstanding balances above R10 000. UCT already has in place a Council-approved policy which allows students with a debt of less than R10 000 to register. Further measures already in place include the 2023 fee debt appeals process and the grace period process.

On Wednesday, 14 February 2024, UCT Council deliberated on a joint proposal by management and the SRC seeking approval for a framework to grant concessions to students with fee debt exceeding R10 000. Council approved this proposal.

The proposal is a result of extensive engagements between management and the SRC over a number of weeks. While recognising the importance of financial sustainability, the proposal aims to balance responsible financial resource management with promoting access to higher education and addressing social justice concerns.

To be eligible for further concessions, students who were registered at UCT in 2023 and wish to continue this year must:

- meet academic requirements for continued studies in 2024
- be South African or permanent residents
- be undergraduates, or postgraduates pursuing professional qualifications.

Further criteria apply in respect to the total outstanding debt according to various bands. Students will have to meet the following criteria in each band:

- students with a debt of between R10 000 and R50 000

- students with a debt of between R50 000 and R100 000 who are on track to qualify in 2024 **or** who have had no previous concessions
- students with a debt of between R100 000 and R200 000 who are on N+1 **or** on track to qualify in 2024 **and** have not had previous concessions
- students with a debt above R200 000 who are on track to qualify in 2024 **and** have had no previous concessions
- students with confirmed full funding for 2024.

Eligible students are receiving communication directly from the Fees Office on the next steps.

Management and the SRC tabled this framework as a balanced approach to addressing student debt challenges while protecting the university's financial stability. Students will be expected to sign acknowledgement of debt forms and have repayment plans in place.

It should be noted that the proposal only sought approval to deviate from the student fee and debt recovery policy, and not to write off debt. The university and the SRC will continue working towards fundraising initiatives to assist students who face financial challenges, and in this regard, UCT continues appealing to anyone – be it corporates or individuals – to consider [making a donation](#). Fee payers are also expected to continue honouring their payment obligations.

These further concessions illustrate both management's commitment to assisting academically eligible students as well as the SRC's resolve to work collaboratively and constructively to find solutions to fee debt issues.

ENDS

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