

Accommodation fees arrears recovery procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure explains to students the process on how arrears of accommodation fees are recovered. It highlights the result of non-payment and the steps that will be taken to recover payment and the circumstances that lead to a Notice to Quit being served for non-payment.

2. Scope

This procedure affects students living in our residences and covers students on University of Bristol tenancies with instalment dates around 24 October, 24 January, 24 April. This procedure does not affect student rights or responsibilities with regard to their accommodation fees and security of tenure as set out by any relevant legislation.

3. Procedure

Background information

A student with outstanding accommodation and/or tuition fees will receive emails from Finance at the following stages:

Contact made:	Approximate interval
Stage 1	Payment due date + 14 days
Stage 2 – if no payment/arrangement made	Payment due date + 35 days
Stage 3 – if no payment/arrangement made	Payment due date + 42 days
Stage 4 – if no payment/arrangement made	Payment due date + 49 days

The arrears procedure starts after the Stage 2 contact. It enforces the University of Bristol Residence Conditions:

“If you fail to pay any instalment of Accommodation Fees due to us under this Contract for more than 28 days after it falls due to be paid (whether you have been supplied with an invoice or not), then we may give you 28 days’ notice to leave the Accommodation. At the end of 28 days you must leave the Accommodation. If you fail to leave we may use all lawful means to remove you.”

Accommodation fees recovery procedure

Finance actions:

1. Within 3 days of the Stage 2 email Finance will share with the Head of Accommodation Office a list of students with accommodation fees overdue by 28 days or more. The list will:
 - i. Exclude students whose accounts are awaiting an amendment
 - ii. Include students who have failed to meet an amended payment instalment plan to pay off debt.
2. Within 3 working days of the Stage 4 email Finance will share with the Head of Accommodation Office a list of students whose accommodation fees are still in arrears without an agreed payment plan.

Accommodation Office actions:

1. Upon receipt of the Stage 2 list the Head of Accommodation Office will share a list of debtors with the and with the Accommodation Office Applications Manager.
2. The Head of Residential Life of each residential village and Accommodation Office Applications Manager will notify the Head of Accommodation Office within 5 working days of any who should not be sent a notice by reason of very serious ill health, disability or other serious welfare issue.
3. On receipt of information about senior residents and students with special circumstances from Residential Life and the Applications Manager the Head of Accommodation Office will inform Finance of any students who will not be subject to the normal Accommodation Debt Recovery Procedure, with brief reasons. It will be for Finance to decide whether to pursue their normal recovery procedures.
4. On receipt of the Stage 4 list the Head of Accommodation Office will send the students a Notice to Quit by reason of accommodation fee arrears sharing a list of the students so served with the Heads of Residential Life
5. At the end of the 28 day notice period the Accommodation Office will contact Finance to check whether any students are still in arrears without an agreed payment plan
6. A final attempt to recover the accommodation arrears will be made by emailing/telephoning the student and contacting the student's Residential Life team. The Accommodation Office will refer any students still in arrears without good reason or who have not set up an acceptable payment plan, as defined by the student fees office, to the Head of Student Residential Life to consider initiating Court action to evict the student(s)
7. Where it is decided to proceed with possession the student(s)' details will be passed to the secretary's office. A money judgement for court costs against the student will be requested.

Residential Life actions:

On receipt of the accommodation fees arrears list Residential Life staff will:

1. Identify any chief/senior residents who are in arrears and notify the Head of Accommodation Office within 5 working days. Performance of chief/senior resident duties is dependent upon the student living in the residence therefore recovery by the AO is not appropriate. Instead these students will be referred to the Head of Residential Life for the village who will interview them individually and ensure that their account is brought up to date or serve notice on their senior resident appointment concurrent with a Notice to Quit from the Accommodation Office.
2. Identify any students who should not be sent a notice by reason of very serious ill health, disability or other serious welfare issue. And notify the Head of Accommodation Office, with brief reasons, within 5 working days
3. Residential Life will be make contact with all students in arrears informally within 28 days to support them in making appropriate payment arrangements and to identify any pastoral issues.

3. Responsibility for this procedure

Head of Accommodation Office

4. Applicable to:

All students with University tenancies

5. Equality check list

1. Equality considerations - students	Check (✓)	Comments
If the procedure relates to any student-related service, you should consider data on the diversity of the service users.	Yes	
What equality strands have been covered (eg, gender, race, disability, age)?		Disability and health needs as well as other welfare issues which may arise from age, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation
What steps will be taken to mitigate the impact on current students?		Students with disabilities, health needs or other welfare issues are specifically excluded from this procedure.

2. Decision	Check (✓)	Comments
Has your equality analysis highlighted any differential or adverse equality impact?	No	
Based on this, has the procedure changed or remained the same?	N/A	

6. Version

September 2020