

## **Ministry of Education Funding Framework for Part-time Undergraduate Degree Programmes offered by Singapore University of Social Sciences**

This has been agreed between the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), formerly known as SIM University, and the information is correct at the time of publication.

### **Purpose of the Government Funding**

#### **1) What is the funding about?**

The Singapore Government provides funding for part-time undergraduate degree studies at Singapore autonomous universities (NUS, NTU, SMU, SUTD, SIT and SUSS) for those who have not previously benefited from a government-subsidised undergraduate education (local or overseas). This was first announced as part of the Budget speech made by Minister for Finance, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam on 15 February 2008.

To strengthen support for professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs) to upgrade themselves, it was announced on 18 February 2011 that the Ministry of Education (MOE) would make Continuing Education and Training (CET) programmes more affordable at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), polytechnics and autonomous universities by increasing subsidies to adult learners.

#### **2) What is the purpose of granting the funding?**

This is part of the broader national plan to promote continuing education and training of the Singapore workforce at all levels.

#### **3) Why are subsidies for part-time undergraduate degree programmes increased?**

This is to help Singapore Citizens who had missed out on university education to do so via part-time programmes at the Autonomous Universities (AUs). Singapore Citizens will receive the same percentage cost subsidy on their part-time courses as what a full-time student currently enjoys.

#### **4) Are there any conditions governing the enhanced subsidies?**

There are no changes to the eligibility criteria, number of credit units subsidised, and obligations.

#### **5) When do the enhanced subsidies take effect?**

The enhanced subsidies apply to new students admitted from the July 2011 intake, and all current students (as of July 2011) pursuing part-time undergraduate degrees awarded by SUSS. Students must meet the eligibility criteria listed in (6) below. There is no retrospective claim for the enhanced subsidies.

## **Eligibility**

### **6) Who are eligible for the government subsidy?**

New student who meets the following criteria will be eligible for the subsidy:

- a) Singapore Citizen (SC) or Singapore PR (SPR)<sup>1</sup> who has not previously received a government subsidy/sponsorship for an undergraduate degree or higher qualification (local or overseas), from SUSS/NUS/NTU/SMU/SUTD/SIT or from overseas university funded by government scholarship/bursary;
- b) At least 21 years of age; and
- c) Has either 2 years of full-time work experience or is currently employed on a full-time basis<sup>2</sup>.

### **Exemption from Age and Work Experience Criteria**

The following categories of applicants can be exempted from the age and work experience eligibility criteria:

- a) Applicant sponsored by his/her company for the part-time undergraduate degree programme; and
- b) Applicant who is currently employed in a job role/sector related to the part-time undergraduate degree programme.

Notwithstanding these exemptions, National Service (NS)-liable applicants must have fully discharged their full-time NS liability before they can be admitted into SUSS.

Supporting document(s) must be submitted, together with the admission application, for assessment. SUSS reserves the right to determine if exemption would be granted and the university's decision will be final and binding.

<sup>1</sup> *Foreigners (non-SC and non-SPR) are not eligible for the subsidy.*

<sup>2</sup> *Part-time employment will not be considered as full-time work experience. A part-time employee is one who works for less than 35 hours a week, under contract of service with an employer.*

**All current students** on part-time undergraduate degree programmes awarded by SUSS who meet condition 6(a) will qualify for the enhanced subsidy from July 2011 semester. There is no retrospective claim for the subsidy. Documentary proof or declaration is required for all the above criteria.

### **7) I have already obtained a first degree. Can I still qualify for the subsidy?**

Those who already have a first degree may also qualify if (6) above is satisfied.

### **8) Is there a cap on age to qualify for the subsidy?**

No, there is no cap on age to qualify for the subsidy, as long as students meet the eligibility criteria for the subsidy.

## **Subsidy Cover and Quantum**

### **9) How much course fee do I have to pay to the university if I am eligible for the subsidy?**

You need to pay the subsidised fee, which is the difference between the full course fee (set by the University) and the subsidy, and any prevailing GST on the subsidised fee.

### **10) What does the subsidy cover?**

The subsidy covers course fees.

The subsidy does not cover:

- a) Resit fee
- b) Extra courses taken beyond the requirements for the undergraduate degree programme
- c) Auxiliary charges like administrative fees (e.g., course choice amendment, deferment, transfer of programme, challenge exam fee, exam appeal, etc.), overseas travel expenses, etc.
- d) Any penalty charges (e.g., late fee payment)
- e) Any other miscellaneous fees.

### **11) Is the amount of subsidy the same for every semester of my studies?**

Yes, the subsidy is the same for every semester for eligible students, subject to annual course fee increase which may be imposed by the University.

### **12) Different courses have different course fees. Does the subsidy apply to all courses?**

Yes, the subsidy applies to all MOE-subsidised degree courses, subject to students meeting the subsidy eligibility criteria.

### **13) Is there a cut-off date to fully utilise the subsidy? Or is a student eligible for the subsidy as long as he/she is pursuing the degree within the programme's maximum candidature (i.e., 8 years)?**

The subsidy cut-off point will be either the maximum 8 years candidature period, or upon consuming the maximum claimable registered credit units, whichever is earlier. Please also see section under "Changes to Student's Programme of Studies".

## **Changes in Eligibility Status**

### **14) Is the eligibility for the subsidy considered only at the point of admission?**

No. If you have been admitted without the subsidy, but subsequently fulfill the criteria in (6), you would be eligible for the subsidy from the next academic semester onwards, upon your notification to the University.

### **15) I am currently a Singapore Permanent Resident. If I were to obtain the Singapore citizenship mid-way during my studies, will I be eligible for a higher amount of subsidy?**

Yes, but the subsidy would only be effective for course fees payable from the next academic semester onwards. No retrospective claims will be allowed.

### **Programmes Covered by the Scheme**

**16) Which programmes offered by SUSS are eligible for the subsidy?**

All part-time undergraduate degree programmes leading to a SUSS award are eligible for the subsidy. Graduate programmes are not eligible for the subsidy.

**17) If I am simultaneously taking an undergraduate degree programme at another autonomous university (NUS/NTU/SMU/SUTD/SIT) and with SUSS, do I still enjoy the subsidy for the SUSS programme?**

No, each student is eligible for the subsidy only once, i.e., for his/her first government subsidised undergraduate education (local or overseas).

### **Number of Credit Units (CUs) Subsidised**

**18) What is the number of registered CUs which can be subsidised?**

For a new student who meets the government subsidy eligibility criteria, the MOE will provide the subsidy for a maximum of:

- a) 200 registered CUs over 8 years maximum candidature period, if pursuing an honours or direct honours degree; OR
- b) 160 registered CUs over 8 years maximum candidature period, if pursuing a basic degree

For an existing student [SC or SPR who has not previously received government subsidy/sponsorship for a first degree (local or overseas)], the MOE will provide the subsidy for the remaining CUs required to complete his/her programme plus an additional 30 CUs for repeat courses (if required). For example, if a student has 40 CUs remaining before completion of the degree programme, the student will receive a maximum of 70 claimable registered CUs (40 CUs remaining and 30 additional CUs for repeat courses). No retrospective claim is allowed.

If an existing student is invited to take an honours programme, his/her maximum claimable registered CUs for the honours courses will be the unused CUs from the allocation of 200 CUs for an honours programme as listed in 19(a). For example, a student who has used up 130 CUs + 10 CU buffer to complete his/her basic degree programme will be able to claim up to 60 CUs (40 CUs + 20 CUs buffer) for the honours portion. The subsidy will be available within 8 years from the date he/she started the basic degree programme with the university.

**19) Does credit transfer/ credit recognition/challenge examination (CEX) waiver count towards the maximum subsidised credit units (CUs)?**

Yes, credit transfer/ credit recognition/CEX waiver counts towards the cap for subsidised CUs. For example, if you have been awarded 20 CUs of credit recognition at the time of admission for your basic degree programme, your maximum claimable registered CUs will be 140.

### Transfer/Re-admission University Students

- 20) If I have received partial tuition subsidy previously (e.g., enrolled but withdrew from one of the autonomous universities without having obtained a degree), am I still eligible for the subsidy if I enrol with SUSS now?**

If you are transferring from a full-time degree programme from another autonomous university to SUSS, you will be eligible to receive the full subsidy subject to satisfying the criteria listed in (6).

If you are transferring from a part-time degree programme from another autonomous university to SUSS, you will be eligible to receive the balance claimable subsidy subject to satisfying the criteria listed in (6).

### Changes to Student's Programme of Studies

- 21) If I apply for a transfer of programme, what is the claimable registered CUs for my new programme?**

If you apply for a transfer from one basic degree programme to another basic programme, the maximum claimable registered CUs for your new programme will be the balance claimable registered CUs carried forward from your current programme. For example, if a BSc Psychology student who has used up 70 registered CUs of subsidy, and applies for a transfer to a BSc Mathematics programme, he/she will be able to claim up to 90 CUs (i.e., 160 CUs less 70 CUs) for the BSc Mathematics programme.

If you apply for a transfer from an honours programme to a basic degree programme, the maximum claimable registered CUs for your new programme will be the unused portion of the 160 CUs available for a basic degree programme. For example, a BSc (Honours) Psychology student who has used 70 CUs of subsidy applies for a transfer to a BSc Psychology programme will be able to claim up to 90 CUs (i.e., 160 CUs less 70 CUs).

### Obligations – Bond, Non-completion of Programme

- 22) Do I have to pay back the subsidy or serve any bond?**

No, there is no need to repay the subsidy and there is no requirement to undertake a service bond.

- 23) If I accept the subsidy and subsequently withdraw from the course(s) or programme, do I have to pay back the subsidy to MOE or SUSS?**

No, you do not have to pay back the subsidy to MOE or SUSS.

For course withdrawal, the CUs of the withdrawn course(s) will count towards the maximum claimable registered CUs given to you. For example, if you are eligible for 160 registered CUs and you registered and then withdrew from 10 CUs of course(s), your balance claimable CUs will be 150.

If you withdraw from the university without completing the degree programme, should you choose to re-enrol with the university at a later date, you can only claim the balance registered CUs within 8 years from the start of the semester when you first enjoyed the subsidy, excluding the duration in-between the two programmes. For example, if you are eligible for 160 registered CUs and you have consumed 20 CUs in Year 2015 before you withdrew from the degree programme in Year 2016 (i.e., you had used up 1 year), and you re-enrol in a SUSS part-time undergraduate programme in Year 2017, you can claim the remaining 140 registered CUs within 7 years from 2017.

### **Others**

**24) If I am sponsored by my company, can I choose not to receive the subsidy?**

Yes, students who do not wish to receive the subsidy can inform SUSS in writing.

**25) I am currently a recipient of the sponsorship scheme (e.g., SUSS-NTUC sponsorship). Will I still be eligible for the subsidy?**

Yes. Students receiving such sponsorships will also be entitled to the subsidy, subject to meeting the subsidy eligibility criteria.

**26) I am entitled to the university's concessionary course fee, will I still enjoy the subsidy?**

Yes, you can enjoy the subsidy subject to meeting the subsidy eligibility criteria.

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