

PAYMENT OF TUITION AND FEES

STAGE II FAQs

Q. What was the timeline for fall bill distribution and communications for the payment of tuition and fees process?

A. First week of July: Students in the WVU System received an electronic bill in their MIX accounts. (Only students who did not have sufficient financial aid to cover their amount due or hadn't enrolled in a payment plan to cover their balance due received a bill.)

The bill included a message for each campus clearly outlining payment options and resources and that a 2.25% late fee would be assessed if payment arrangements were not made to cover their balance due by August 1. Students were given nearly a month to pay their bill before the late fee was assessed.

Early-to-mid July: "To the family of" letters were sent to the permanent addresses of students who owed. The letter reinforced the same message from student communications regarding options for payment, the deadline and late fee. Messaging was also included via Parent Electronic News, Student UNews, students.wvu.edu and Infostations.

Mid-to-late July: A postcard was mailed to permanent addresses and a series of reminder emails, text messages and phone calls were made to students who still owed a balance throughout the month of July to ensure they were clear on options to pay to avoid the late fee.

Q. How many students paid their balance due by the deadline?

A. As of August 2 (when the late fee was assessed):

- ✓ 74% of students across all three campuses were paid in full or enrolled in a payment plan. This is an increase of 15% from students who were paid in full on the same date in 2017.
- ✓ Zero-payers were down by 1,700 from the same date in 2017.

Q. What happens next for students who did not pay or enroll in a payment plan by August 1?

A. Students will have until September 1 to pay their balance down to less than \$1,000 or they will be removed from classes at the close of business on September 4.

Q. How is the WVU System ensuring that students are clear that they must pay their bills by September 1 to remain in their classes?

A. Students who **registered before July 1** who still owed a balance or did not enroll in a payment plan to cover their balance due were sent a second eBill via their MIX accounts on **August 6** that included the 2.25% late fee assessment.

The bills included a message from Student Account teams for each campus clearly outlining payment options and resources. It was also shared that students who did not pay their balance down to less than \$1,000 by September 1 would be removed from classes on September 4.

Students who **registered July 1 or later** who still owed a balance or did not enroll in a payment plan to cover their balance due received their first eBill **August 6**. They received the same message about payment options and resources, and that they have until September 1 to pay their balance down to less than \$1,000 or they will be removed from classes September 4. The difference in the message for this population is that they have until September 1 to pay before the 2.25% late fee is assessed.

Supplemental eBills will be sent to students who still owe a balance due after the add/drop date (August 22).

Q. What additional communications are planned for students who still owe to ensure they understand the importance of paying by September 1 to avoid being removed from classes?

A. "To the family of" letters have been mailed to the permanent addresses of students who still owe a balance. The letter reinforces the same message from student communications regarding options for payment, the deadline, late fee and the importance of paying by September 1 to remain in their courses. Messaging is also being shared via Parent Electronic News, Student UNews, students.wvu.edu and Infostations.

A series of reminder emails, text messages and phone calls are scheduled for students who still owe a balance throughout the month of August to ensure they are clear on payment options to remain in their courses. All messaging will emphasize that the University is here to help them understand their options.

Q. What is the last day for students to enroll in a payment plan?

A. Students interested in paying their bill in installments through the payment plan must enroll by **August 22**. This deadline is set by our tuition payment plan vendor, CashNet. Students will be able to make the first payment at the time they enroll, with additional installments due September 1 and October 1.

Q. Can students pay their bill and be reinstated if they are dropped for non-payment on September 4?

A. Yes, students can be reinstated with payment that will take their balance owed to \$1,000 or less. They will be assessed a reinstatement fee of \$250 that must be paid prior to reinstatement. Students have until the close of business on September 7 to be reinstated.

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Q. Can students or parents pay their balance owed by credit card over the phone?

A. It depends on the campus they attend. On the Morgantown campus, the Hub records all calls so credit card information cannot be given over the phone. Students can pay online through their student portal, grant their parents proxy access to their account or present themselves in the Hub to pay and/or make financial arrangements. Students on the Beckley and Keyser campuses may pay over the phone.

Please note that once a student is removed from classes at the close of business on September 4, they will no longer be able to pay online. They will need to present themselves in person to pay their balance due.

Q. If they want to pay in person, where do students go?

A. On the Morgantown campus, students should go to the Mountaineer Hub on the second floor of Evansdale Crossing. On the Beckley campus, students should go to the One Stop Shop. On the Keyser campus, students should go to the Administration Building, Room 101.

Q. What about students who pay their balance down to less than \$1,000 to remain in classes but still owe a balance?

Students who pay their balance down to under \$1,000 but still have a balance greater than \$200 will remain in their classes. They will have a hold placed on their account and will be assessed a late fee.

Q. How will this affect a student's class registration, eCampus access, University Housing and dining plan status?

A. Students who owe a balance of \$1,000 or greater by September 1 will be dropped from classes on September 4. Their Mountaineer Identification Cards will be turned off on the removal date, so they will not be able to swipe for Student Rec Center access or any campus activity requiring an ID card. They will not be able to access eCampus when they are removed from classes.

University Housing will work closely with affected students in residence halls on their next steps. (This typically applies to a very small number of students.)

Q. Should advisors and instructors advise students who have been removed from classes to attend class anyway?

A. No, students who are removed from class on September 4 should not go to class. They will have to pay their bill down to less than \$1,000 and pay the \$250 reinstatement fee to attend classes.

Q. The University has said they are going to remove students from classes in the past, but then have not. Will this be enforced?

A. Yes, it is true that the University has been inconsistent in the past. This pattern has resulted in additional debt being carried by both the student and the University. Moving forward, the University wants to ensure it is being a good steward of its funds, as well as not allowing students to fall into deeper debt. Students will be removed from classes if they do not pay their bill or enroll in a payment plan to cover their balance due. A robust communications strategy is being executed to ensure students and families are clear, while emphasizing the message that staff at all campuses are happy to work with them on understanding their options.

Q. It seems that we are being tougher on students who pay late or do not pay their balances this year. Why is that?

A. The late fee and removal from class policies were adjusted with the goal of reinforcing the message to students that the University takes financial responsibility seriously. An important part of transitioning to adulthood is learning the importance of paying your bills on time.

In addition to teaching students the importance of financial responsibility, improving our payment of tuition and fees policies and enforcement allows the University to reduce debt, as we have carried a substantial amount of unpaid balances in the past. In the spring 2018 semester, there were nearly 1,400 students carrying a balance of \$1,000 or more, resulting in excess of \$7 million in delayed revenue for the University.

A committee has been working on this issue since fall of 2017 and is gradually implementing steps toward promoting increased financial responsibility with students. A "Soft Drop" policy was implemented in the spring 2018 semester as a first step.

Q. Where should they go if they have questions?

A. Students on the Morgantown campus should contact or visit the Mountaineer Hub on the second floor of Evansdale Crossing. On the Beckley campus, students should go to the One Stop Shop. On the Keyser campus, students should visit the Administration Building, Room 101.