

## HSC Defaulters Policy 2023-4

### Introduction

The HSC Defaulters Policy has been created in order to set down the responsibilities of both The Healthcare Library of Northern Ireland, and users in terms of loans, fines and charges. This document has been produced to establish clear guidelines for all library service points, which is essential if users are to be treated fairly and consistently by The Healthcare Library. By detailing the variety of methods that users can avail of to manage their loans and their library account, The Healthcare Library aims to encourage good library practice by users.

The Healthcare Library of Northern Ireland is the collective name for those libraries involved in the delivery of services to HSC users:

<https://healthcarelibrary.qub.ac.uk/UsingtheLibrary/YourLibraries/>

Smaller library branches using the Library Management System and other small collections may also be subject to this policy. HSC users availing of services offered by The McClay Library are also subject to this policy.

QUB staff and students using library services offered by The Healthcare Library branches are subject to the QUB Defaulters Policy:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/TheLibrary/CustomerService/PoliciesandRegulations/>

### Operating Principles

- It is the responsibility of the customer to ensure the safe return of items to the Library and that they are removed from their library account.
- If you have not finished with the book, it will be [automatically renewed](#) 3 times subsequent to the original loan period, so long as it is not requested by another reader.
- The library no longer charges fines. Very overdue items will be considered lost and customers will be invoiced for their replacement cost.
- Users with outstanding replacement charges will not be allowed to borrow, renew or request further books or material until the item(s) has been returned or replacement charge(s) are paid. The Medical and Healthcare Librarian or any other person nominated by such shall have the power to remit or reduce fines in a particular case.
- Users will be considered to be in default with the Library if, within a reasonable time and without lodging an objection, they fail to (a) return a book by its due date, (b) return any book recalled by the Library or (c) pay the replacement charge incurred.

- Users who are in default will, after written warning, be suspended from the use of the Library. A suspension prevents users from borrowing, renewing or requesting material from the Library.
- All items are subject to recall.
- A user, on receiving notice that a book on loan to him/her is required by another user, must return that book to the Library by the date stipulated in the notice. A book will be deemed to be overdue if kept beyond this date.
- A book will be considered to be in demand if required by more than one user at any one time, and will be available for loan for one week only. If kept beyond this period, it may incur a replacement charge.
- The Library facilitates the payment of fines and charges via My Account through The Healthcare Library website: <https://healthcarelibrary.qub.ac.uk/>

### **Replacement Charges - The Library's Responsibilities**

The Healthcare Library has a responsibility to enforce the HSC Defaulters Policy in a fair and consistent manner.

In order to assist users in managing their loans, the Library communicates with them regularly about their loans. Communications include:

- reminder notices
  - These alert users to the imminent due date of their loans. This is only available to users with a valid email address in their record.
- overdue notices
  - These alert users to the fact that their books are now overdue and that they should be returned or renewed as soon as possible. Overdues prevents users from borrowing, renewing or requesting material from the Library.
- replacement charge notice
  - A replacement charge notice will be automatically generated if the user fails to return the book.
  - The replacement charge is waived if the item is returned.
  - The Library will consider a replacement copy of the book instead of payment of the invoice. This should be discussed and agreed between the user and the Specialist Librarian / Branch Librarian prior to the copy being purchased. This is at the discretion of and per the conditions set by the Specialist Librarian / Branch Librarian.
  - The Library will endeavour to refund the replacement charge of the book, should the user pay and subsequently return the item within one working week.
- unpaid replacement charges

- In the event that a Healthcare Library user fails to return or pay for the replacement charge of the book and the matter remains unresolved at 30 days after the date of the initial charge, the Library may contact the user again.
- If the matter remains unresolved at 60 days after the date of the initial invoice, the defaulter's membership may be expired.

### **Replacement charges- The Customers' Responsibilities**

Customers also have responsibilities to the Library and fellow customers. The following services are available to help them.

- My Account via The Healthcare Library website: <https://healthcarelibrary.qub.ac.uk/>
  - By being able to view what items are on loan to them and the due dates, users can effectively manage their loans and library account.
- Renewing books up to current renewal limits
  - Provided the item is not required by another user, there are a number of options for renewing books: in person, by telephone, by email and via the My Account facility on The Healthcare Library website.

### **Enforcing the Policy**

The Healthcare Library will take the following actions if users are in default.

- Loans
  - A user will be suspended from the Library if s/he fails to return or renew the overdue books which will prevent them from borrowing, renewing or requesting material from the Library.
  - The Library will charge for the replacement charge of the book if the book has not been returned within an agreed time after its due date.
  - Once a replacement charge has been issued, the user is liable to pay the replacement charge. If the book is returned, the charge is waived in full.
- The Library will consider a replacement copy of the book instead of payment of the charge. This should be discussed and agreed between the user and the Specialist Librarian / Branch Librarian prior to the copy being purchased. This is at the discretion of and per the conditions set by the Specialist Librarian / Branch Librarian.

### **Charges**

- The Healthcare Library will send an email notification to users outlining replacement charges on a regular basis.

- An automatic block will be placed on the user's account when replacement charges are incurred. This will prevent any further borrowing, renewing or requesting material from the Library and Inter-Library Loans will not be processed.

### **Dealing with Exceptional Circumstances**

In exceptional circumstances, The Healthcare Library may

- waive or part-waive fines.
  - Such decisions have to be recorded to comply with audit requirements and will be closely monitored.
- renew items beyond the current renewal limits.

Such decisions are at the discretion of the Medical and Healthcare Librarian or by any other person nominated by such.

### **HSC Students**

HSC Placement students must contact the Library to renew items or use the facility through My Account. Renewal limits apply. Failure to renew items on time may result in overdue items and subsequent replacement charge(s).

- Loans
  - Overdue notices, suspensions and replacement charges will apply at the same timeframes to HSC Placement students as for HSC users.
  - HSC students will be suspended from the Library if they fail to return or renew the overdue books.
  - When the suspension is activated, library staff may contact the placement student and attempt to get the outstanding items returned.
  - The Library will charge the user for the replacement charge if they have not returned the book within an agreed time after its due date.
  - If the book is returned after the charge has been applied the charge is waived in full.
  - The Library will consider a replacement copy of the book instead of the replacement charge. This should be discussed and agreed between the user and the Specialist Librarian / Branch Librarian prior to the copy being purchased. This is at the discretion of and per the conditions set by the Specialist Librarian / Branch Librarian.