



USJ HARDSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The University of Saint Joseph is committed to the wellbeing of its students; its Hardship Fund is part of that commitment by providing support for students in challenging circumstances.
- 1.2 The University of Saint Joseph is committed to ensuring that its students are not prevented from studying at USJ by unforeseen and/or emergency financial hardships.
- 1.3 The University of Saint Joseph recognizes that, given the diversity of its student population, unforeseen and emergency challenges arise in many forms that threaten the ability of students to continue their studies at USJ, and it offers assistance to its students in this respect.
- 1.4 The Hardship Fund is an emergency fund for students whose immediate financial situation impacts negatively on their studies at USJ.
- 1.5 The Hardship Fund is available as a safety net, not a source of income, to the students.

2. THE HARDSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The Hardship Fund Committee is a sub-committee of the Scholarship and Fellowship Committee of University of Saint Joseph (USJ). Its members are appointed by the Scholarship and Fellowship Committee.
- 2.2 The Hardship Fund Committee meets regularly and on an *ad hoc* basis as the occasion demands.

3. THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE

- 3.1 The Hardship Fund Committee handles all aspects of the University's Hardship Fund in the University, including, but not limited to:
 - (i) enacting policy decisions on the Hardship Fund, developing, organizing, administering and implementing procedures for receiving and recording donations to the Hardship Fund and applications from eligible students for funding support;
 - (ii) ensuring that its deliberations, decisions and actions conform to all the contents of the document '*University of Saint Joseph's Hardship Fund: Policy and Procedures*';
 - (iii) communicating with applicants and potential about their application, e.g. meeting with them in private, but formally minuted meetings;
 - (iv) screening and considering applications from eligible students for funding support and deciding any action to be taken in assisting the decision-making process;
 - (v) deciding the awards to be given to eligible students, disbursing monies to students from the Hardship Fund with due adherence to the requirements set out in the document '*University of Saint Joseph's Hardship Fund: Policy and Procedures*';
 - (vi) where appropriate, rejecting applications for funding awards;
 - (vii) seeking advice from relevant parties, as set out in the document '*University of Saint Joseph's Hardship Fund: Policy and Procedures*';



- (viii) implementing the accounting, record-keeping, decision making, reporting and disbursement of the Hardship Fund;
 - (ix) ensuring that records of donors are addressed with due identification of the donor (on the request of the donor) and safeguarding of confidentiality (upon request of the donor), and anonymity where the donor is unidentified;
 - (x) ensuring that records of beneficiaries are addressed with due safeguarding of confidentiality and in accordance with Macau law on disclosure and confidentiality;
 - (xi) reporting to the Scholarship and Fellowship Committee a minimum of once each semester and on request;
 - (xii) within its remit, attending to other requests from the Scholarship and Fellowship Committee or other University committees or senior officers of the University.
- 3.2 The Hardship Fund Committee ensures that the nature and contents of the Hardship Fund are fully discussed and arranged with, and reported to the Scholarship Committee of the University.
- 3.3 The Hardship Fund Committee handles the operations for recommending, arranging, overseeing, monitoring and reviewing, and assisting students who are experiencing financial difficulties through the awards of the Hardship Fund.
- 3.4 The Hardship Fund collects on-line donations, and the Hardship Fund Committee publishes regular audited reports on their use.

4. THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

- 4.1 Members of the USJ Hardship Fund Committee are appointed by the Scholarship and Fellowship Committee.
- 4.2 The Committee membership comprises three (3) members, consisting of:
- a) Head of Finance Office;
 - b) Head of Office for Student and Alumni Affairs;
 - c) Faculty of Social Science (FSS)'s professor in the area of Social Work, nominated by the FSS Dean.
- 4.3 The Chair of the Hardship Fund Committee is elected by its members from amongst its members.
- 4.4 The Hardship Fund Committee has a Secretary who is a member of the Office for Student and Alumni Affairs and who is an additional, non-voting colleague from the Office for Student and Alumni Affairs who has responsibility for scholarships and fellowships.
- 4.5 The Hardship Fund Committee may include one or more coopted members of USJ's academic staff, with voting rights, on an *ad hoc* basis as the occasion demands.

5. TERM OF OFFICE

- 5.1 The term of office for the members of the USJ Hardship Fund Committee is two academic years (1 September to 31 August), renewable. Care is taken to ensure that there is continuity of



membership across years, to avoid wholesale or a significant amount of replacement of the Hardship Fund Committee in any one year.

- 5.2 If a vacancy occurs during the term of office, the Scholarship and Fellowship Committee may appoint a replacement to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of office.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 To carry out the duties of the Hardship Fund Committee as set out in the Terms of reference in (3) and the document '*University of Saint Joseph's Hardship Fund: Policy and Procedures*'.
- 6.2 To develop, promote, disseminate and explain hardship information procedures to students.
- 6.3 Hardship Fund Committee members are expected to attend each meeting of the committee, or provide advance notice of absence wherever possible. Substitutes for Committee members are not permitted except with the approval of the Chair of the Scholarship and Fellowship Committee.
- 6.4 Committee members must disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest in the decision making process concerning applications made to the Hardship Fund.
- 6.5 Committee members must keep all information of applicants confidential in accordance with local legislation on data protection.

7. OPERATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

- 7.1 The quorum for the committee is two thirds of the voting Committee members, rounded down to the nearest whole number.
- 7.2 Decisions are decided by a simple majority of votes of those present from a quorum of voting members. If the meeting becomes inquorate, no voting takes place.
- 7.3 In the events of a tied vote, the Chair of the Hardship Fund Committee has the casting vote.
- 7.4 Minutes of the meeting are kept and are available to the members of the Scholarship and Fellowship Committee.

8. REVIEW

The Terms of Reference for the Hardship Fund Committee are reviewed a minimum of biennially, in the September of the year in question, or sooner if required, and recommendations for amendments are brought to the Scholarship and Fellowship Committee, which latter may bring proposals to the Executive Council for approval.

Author: Hardship Fund Committee

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