

# Charges for SMSTC

This document sets out:

1. How we share the running costs of SMSTC between member departments, under the agreement with heads of member departments made in August–September 2016 and modified by agreement with the Academic Steering and Management Group in May 2021 and again in May 2024.
2. The charges to participants in SMSTC courses who are not PhD students or staff at member departments.

## 1 Charges to member departments

The member departments are the mathematics departments at the following universities: Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Glasgow, Heriot–Watt, St Andrews, Stirling and Strathclyde.

**Principle** The principle is that each department’s fee should over the long term be proportional to the number of SMSTC core modules taken. In order to avoid large year-to-year fluctuations, which might discourage students from taking a module because of the immediate impact on their departments, fees are based on a moving average of the number of courses taken.

**Charges** For the purposes of this formula, a *student* is a PhD student in an SMSTC member department. A *module* is one of the sixteen SMSTC core modules. In any given academic year in any given department, we count the total over all students of the number of modules enrolled for. Call this the department’s *consumption* for that year. For example, if a department contains two students, one enrolled for 3 modules and one enrolled for 5, then its consumption for that year is 8.

To compute the fees for a department for the next academic year:

1. Take the mean of the department’s consumption over the last three years (or the mean of all available data in the case of consortium members who joined less than three years ago).
2. Express this as a percentage of the total of all mean departmental consumptions as calculated above.
3. Fees are proportional to this percentage.

Notes:

- The total amount charged to departments is based on the annual budget discussed at ASMG the previous year, but may be modified if actual income and expenditure differed from the budget. Any surplus will be retained by SMSTC and ultimately used to reduce future fees.
- The charges will be calculated, and heads of department advised, following the Academic Steering and Management Group meeting in May each year.
- For the purposes of measuring consumption, Maxwell Institute students are divided evenly between Edinburgh and Heriot–Watt.
- As agreed with the relevant heads of school in April 2024, students in the Algebra, Geometry and Quantum Fields CDT will be counted in the department of their primary supervisor for the purposes of measuring consumption.

- Up until 2016, we principally kept statistics for *first-year* PhD students taking core modules, and the moving average was calculated using that data. However, higher-year PhD students also benefit from taking SMSTC courses, and increasing numbers are doing so. For this reason, the definition of ‘student’ above includes all PhD students, and from 2017 we have counted all of them in fee calculations.
- Until 2020, an additional banding system was applied before determining fees. This had the unintended effect of increasing fees for smaller departments, in some cases quite substantially. The ASMG meeting in May 2021 unanimously agreed to discontinue banding.

## 2 Charges to other participants

**Principles** Participants from outside SMSTC member departments are welcome. However, SMSTC costs money to run, principally for administrative support and website development. Our charges for external participants are roughly cost price, that is, total annual expenditure of SMSTC divided by total number of modules taken.

Member departments are also charged for masters and undergraduate students taking SMSTC courses, since those departments receive tuition fees. This charge is slightly lower than the charge for external participants.

At present, only core modules are charged for. Supplementary modules, which are often offered on a less formal basis, are free.

All course fees gathered stay within SMSTC and, therefore, contribute to the financial health of the member departments.

**Charges** In principle, anyone in the world can take an SMSTC course. We group people into the following categories:

1. **Staff at member departments** (including postdocs). We do not charge staff to participate in SMSTC courses.
2. **PhD students at member departments.** More exactly: PhD students with at least one supervisor in a member department. These are charged for indirectly via the formula in Section 1.
3. **Other students at member departments.** This means Master’s or undergraduate students whose principal department is a member of SMSTC. (‘Principal department’ means the department that runs the student’s degree programme.) The charge is **£80 per core module**. Note that Master’s students will not normally be assessed as part of SMSTC; assessment remains the responsibility of their department.
4. **Everyone else** (including staff and students at our universities but not in our departments). We charge **£100 per core module**.

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May 2024