

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>NON-REFUNDABLE ACCEPTANCE DEPOSIT</b>
<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 21, 2017</b>

Forwarded to the Board of Governors on the Recommendation of the President

**APPROVED FOR  
SUBMISSION**



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 Santa J. Ono, President and Vice-Chancellor

**For Information**

<b>Report Date</b>	August 24, 2017
<b>Presented By</b>	Andrew Szeri, Provost and Vice-President Academic Dermot Kelleher, Dean, Faculty of Medicine Mary MacDougall, Dean, Faculty of Dentistry James Olson, Interim Dean, Faculty of Applied Science

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The non-refundable acceptance deposit of \$250 for the **Combined Master of Public Health with Diploma in Dental Public Health (MPH/DPH)** program and the **Combined Master of Public Health and Master of Science in Nursing (MPH/MSN)** program were approved by the President in July 2017. The new acceptance deposit was made effective for all MPH/DPH and MPH/MSN students commencing in the academic year of 2018-2019.

The non-refundable acceptance deposits will be payable within 30 days of notification of acceptance into the programs. The acceptance deposits are credited towards the first tuition instalment. If the student does not commence the program, the deposit is non-refundable.

**INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SUPPORTED**

- Learning     
  Research     
  Innovation     
  Engagement     
  International  
 (Internal / External)
- or  Operational

**DESCRIPTION & RATIONALE** Please refer to the attached memorandum approved by the President: Non-Refundable Acceptance Deposit for the the Combined Master of Public Health with Diploma in Dental Public Health (MPH/DPH) program and the Combined Master of Public Health and Master of Science in Nursing (MPH/MSN) program

**BENEFITS** Providing an acceptance deposit will encourage good faith acceptance the offer of admission into the program and ensures that applicants accepting an offer of admission are serious about enrolling into the program by enrolling in a timely manner.

Learning, Research,  
 Financial,  
 Sustainability &  
 Reputational


<p><b>RISKS</b> Financial, Operational &amp; Reputational</p>	<p>The School of Population and Public Health does not foresee any hardship resulting from this deposit requirement. Potential students, typically early career professionals, are merely being asked to pay part of the first tuition instalment a few months before the commencement of the program. The deposit is then applied towards the student's first year tuition installment.</p>
<p><b>COSTS</b> Capital &amp; Lifecycle Operating</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>FINANCIAL</b> Funding Sources, Impact on Liquidity</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>SCHEDULE</b> Implementation Timeline</p>	<p>Non-refundable acceptance deposits for the MPH/DPH and MPH/MSN programs will be effective for incoming students commencing study in the academic year of 2018/19.</p>
<p><b>CONSULTATION</b> Relevant Units, Internal &amp; External Constituencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Dentistry</li> <li>• School of Nursing</li> <li>• MPH Students</li> <li>• Student Admission and Progression Committee</li> <li>• Full Faculty</li> </ul>

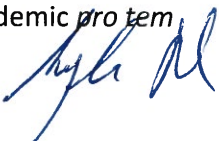
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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Dr. Santa J. Ono, President and Vice-Chancellor 

**FROM:** Dr. Angela Redish, Provost and Vice-President, Academic *pro tem* 

**DATE:** June 28, 2017

**RE:** **Non-refundable Acceptance Deposit for the COMBINED MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH WITH DIPLOMA IN DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH (MPH/DPH) program and the COMBINED MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING (MPH/MSN) program**

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It is hereby requested that the President approve the implementation of a non-refundable acceptance deposit of \$250 for domestic and international students applying to the Combined Master of Public Health with Diploma in Dental Public Health (MPH/DPH) program and the Combined Master of Public Health and Master of Science in Nursing (MPH/MSN) program. The non-refundable deposit would be levied when a student (domestic or international) accepts an offer of admission and be applied toward the student's first tuition instalment, effective 2018/19.

## BACKGROUND

The Combined Master of Public Health with Diploma in Dental Public Health (MPH/DPH) Program is a non-clinical, non-thesis program that encompasses education, field work, and public service components offered by the School of Population and Public Health and the Faculty of Dentistry. The program is a full-time, 2-year program with a 12-week practicum. The program starts with a mandatory orientation in August of each year. The Combined Master of Public Health and Master of Science in Nursing (MPH/MSN) program provides graduate education for nurses currently in public health practice or wishing to enter the field and prepares graduates to function as leaders in a range of roles such as education, advanced practice, policy implementation, healthcare management, and knowledge development. Students admitted to the Combined Master of Public Health and Master of Science in Nursing (MPH/MSN) program must complete the requirements of both degrees, including the completion of 60 credits of work, including a 6-credit practicum and 9-credit thesis.

## RATIONALE

The MPH program makes offers to prospective students in March of each year, and students are given a deadline to accept their offers. Currently, no financial commitment is made when accepting an offer of admission. Declined offers are typically received by the MPH program from April to September of the intake year. Over the past few years, some applicants have reversed their original acceptance of offer as late as the summer months, which leads to vacant spots in the incoming cohort. This behaviour prevents other qualified applicants from enrolling in the program, which leaves the program with an under-enrolled cohort over the two years of the program. A vacant spot means that the tuition that would have been paid by a student is lost, resulting in lost revenue for the program.

Providing an acceptance deposit will encourage good faith acceptance of an offer of admission into the combined programs. This will ensure that applicants accepting an offer of admission are serious about attending and will encourage applicants to make their decision to enrol in a timely manner. Having greater certainty about the number of newly admitted students who intend to register will enable the School of Population and Public Health, the School of Nursing, and the Faculty of Dentistry to allocate resources and plan for courses, instructors and classrooms, accordingly. The acceptance deposit will reduce the risk of financial loss caused by students not registering and having unfilled seats. The Master of Public Health already has been approved to require a \$250 non-refundable deposit payable when an admission offer is accepted. Other programs, including the professional master's programs in the Faculty of Applied Science (Master of Community and Regional Planning, Master of Engineering Leadership, Master of Health Leadership and Policy, and Master of Urban Design), require non-refundable deposits of \$5,000 to confirm acceptance of the admission offer. Similarly, the Master of International Forestry and the Master of Sustainable Forest Management had a non-refundable acceptance deposit approved in March 2017. In all cases, the deposits are credited to the first tuition payment for students who register.

The School of Population and Public Health does not foresee any hardship resulting from this deposit requirement. Potential students, typically early career professionals, are merely being asked to pay part of the first tuition instalment a few months before the commencement of the program. Tuition for the MPH/DPH program is \$5,918.71 per instalment for domestic students and \$15,498.43 for international students with a minimum of seven instalments required. Tuition for the MPH/MSN program is \$3,201.21 per instalment for domestic students and \$7,048.84 for international students with a minimum of six instalments required.

### Schedule of Implementation:

Academic Year 2018/19.

### Consultation and Discussions:

Faculty of Dentistry	August 2016
School of Nursing	September 2016
MPH Student Consultation	September 2016
Student Admission and Progression Committee	October 2016
Full Faculty	October 2016

Written responses were received from 30 students: 21 in favour of the acceptance deposit, with 9 against. A summary of student concerns and the related program responses is provided as an attachment.

# UBC MPH Acceptance Deposit Student Feedback

## Student Feedback Summary

- 21 in FAVOUR and 9 AGAINST

## Student Concerns

1. Belief that this is a revenue generation tactic by the program
  - *Response: The acceptance deposit will be put towards the student's tuition so it is not considered an additional fee. In addition, the deposits that we keep due to last minute decision reversals will directly support students in the program. As such, the proposal is not a tactic to generate revenue and the main goal is to allow us to plan more accurately with the incoming cohort.*
2. May deter prospective students from applying
  - *Response: Several other MPH programs in Canada including SFU and McGill have implemented acceptance deposits. In addition, we believe that as one of the top MPH programs in Canada, the acceptance deposit will not be a major obstacle for prospective students.*
3. Will pressure students into committing to UBC despite not hearing back from other graduate programs and other universities
  - *Response: The deadline of May 31 is about a week or two before the anticipated date of registration for graduate students. Ideally, we only want students who have committed to the program to register into courses. In addition, we believe that the majority of graduate programs will have sent their offers at that point which should allow prospective students to decide between their various options. We also believe that students should feel some pressure when accepting an offer as it impacts our planning for the term and indicates a level of commitment to the program. Last minute decisions to decline an originally accepted offer means that we lose a spot in the cohort that could have been filled by an equally qualified applicant. Another benefit to an acceptance deposit is that it would provide waitlisted applicants more opportunity to get into the program.*
4. More clarification regarding what criteria will determine if an applicant is unable to pay
  - *Response: The program will consider requests to waive the acceptance deposit or pay a decreased deposit from applicants who self-declare as low-income, have financial hardships, or have difficulties sending money to our office. Inability for an applicant to pay will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the final decision lies with the MPH Program Director.*
5. More clarification regarding what alternative arrangements will look like
  - *Response: This will be decided on a case-by-case basis and can include arrangements such as waiving of the acceptance deposit and a decrease amount for the acceptance deposit. Alternative arrangements will be determined by the MPH Program Director.*

## APPENDIX I - Student in Favour of Proposal Feedback

1. One international student says that acceptance deposits did not play a huge role in deciding where to go as it was more about the school's reputation.
2. One student said the \$250.00 acceptance deposit was fine and it was not too much. The May 31 deadline is also reasonable as most school's would have informed applicants about the status of the applications.
3. *"This is a good idea to deal with last-minute drop outs, etc. However, it may be difficult for students to decide that early in the summer. U of T MPH acceptance/decisions are released late June. Perhaps a later due date would be more fair."*
4. *"I think this could be beneficial to those who do choose to enrol in the MPH program here at UBC, it may also decrease the (already small) number of decision reversals, so all-in-all it sounds like a good idea. I also think it's a good idea to have alternative arrangements available to those who are unable to pay the deposit, I understand this idea is just being thrown around right now, but I would be interested in knowing what "unable to pay" entails? (low-income?) and what these "alternative arrangements" would be, before fully supporting the idea.*

Thanks!"

5. *"I think this is a good idea and the amount seems right."*
6. *"That seems reasonable to me."*
7. *"I agree with the proposal. It seems a reasonable amount and has been successfully adopted at other universities. I would like to be sure there is a similarly democratically agreed upon plan for the money collected. I would be in favor of bursaries for students with a financial need."*
8. *"I think this is a reasonable proposal, although May seems early to make a decision, especially if the student is waiting for offers from multiple schools. Perhaps June or July?"*
9. *"I would be in favour of this levy after looking at the proposal, mainly due to the high number of applicants, low number of offers and moderately high number of reversed decisions. I understand that prospective students are faced with difficult decisions and offers do not come in at the same time from universities. However, I think this levy would make people think more critically about their decision as it is at the expense of other students when they reverse their decision at a later date. As long as this charge would be applied to tuition, as seems to be the plan, I think it is entirely fair given the high demand for the MPH program at UBC."*
10. *"I think this would be a great idea, and I was actually surprised when there was no deposit for my MPH acceptance. As a very competitive program, students should need to show their commitment to UBC so that if they are not committed, then other students are able to join the incoming cohort. This is especially true for students who might need to make travel and/or visa plans for moving to Vancouver, as doing so last minute is generally impossible. In the grand scheme of things, \$250 is not a significant amount to ask for as a deposit, and should be a 'doable' amount, even for students who are planning on paying for tuition with student loans or with other monetary means."*



11. *"I was surprised that the UBC program did not have a deposit requirement in order to accept the proposal. I think a \$250 CAD deposit is quite affordable and engages students to commit with the University. Anyway, I would extend the waiting time period until mid-June to allow students to decide based on all possible admission offers they have (some universities, especially in Europe, start receiving applications by March and respond by June).*

*Thanks!"*

12. *"The \$250.00 acceptance deposit for the Master of Public Health program is a great idea, as it will bring our program in line with other MPH programs across the country who have implemented such a policy (e.g., U of T, SFU). As students often apply to multiple schools, establishing the deposit policy will deter student who receive offers from multiple schools from accepting all of them, often to the detriment of the programs/program planning. I am in full support of this."*

13. *"I think this is a reasonable idea.*

*I personally knew right away that the UBC MPH program was what I wanted to do so there was no hesitation about my decision.*

*I would have been happy to pay a \$250 deposit if it was then applied to my tuition.*

*I think you have well addressed potential points of concern, more specifically the fact the the money will go back into the program and students and alternative arrangements can be made for those who are unable to pay the deposit are important criteria to have in this proposal.*

*All the best for moving this forward!"*

14. *"I think this will help ensure that people are making the right decision when they accept the program. I think it is good that they have until May 31st to pay it as anything earlier would be too soon for that applicant but also for any other applicant taking their place should they choose to decline."*

15. *"I like the idea"*

16. *"I think this is a good idea and would ensure that students commit to the program early and to deter drop outs."*

17. *"UBC MPH was the first program I have are back from and making a deposit would have been tough before hearing back from others. However, by May 31st I had definitely heard back from all and had made a decision so I wouldn't have had a problem making a deposit. I think it makes sense to have a deposit attached to acceptance of admission to ensure that people are serious about their decision and committed to the program. It would also allow for students to hear back earlier if they are in the second wave of acceptance"*

18. *"I would support the deposit. Every other program I applied to requested a deposit by a certain date to ensure your acceptance. Students on the waiting list at UBC would highly benefit from this deposit as it would force those offered and acceptance to be transparent about their choice to accept the offer or decline for another program elsewhere. Nothing is worse than waiting for an answer from the program you applied to because another student has just not declined their acceptance yet. Additionally, I would highly recommend an option for those who are unable to pay the deposit for financial reasons as this should not be a barrier for students but a way of requiring those who have been accepted and may decide to choose another institution to be accountable for their responses and decisions."*
19. *"I would absolutely encourage implementing the deposit. It would ensure a certain level of commitment by students as well as give the opportunity to other students to get early acceptance offers rather than last minute. I think \$250 is a reasonable amount. It's high enough that students will think about it before actually accepting it but it's also low enough that if they do have to decline the offer later on, it's not a ridiculous amount of money."*
20. *"Yes, I agree with implementing a one-time deposit of \$250."*
21. *"I appreciated the fact that there was no deposit this year as I was awaiting news from other programs I was considering. The offer of acceptance to the MPH came several months before I heard back from other programs, so I was able to keep my options open. Perhaps the deposit could be due a bit later when people are more likely to have news from other programs they are considering. I do think it is fair to require a deposit as do other programs and it may help the waitlist to move faster. Thank you!"*



## APPENDIX II - Student Against Proposal Feedback

1. One student mentioned that there's an appreciation for not having to think about an acceptance deposit when applying to UBC as it placed less pressure on the situation. Although it wouldn't have made a big difference, it was appreciated not having to worry about an acceptance deposit.

2. "No.

*Reduces access to the program as well as people's options. It is already expensive enough to apply for schools.*

*You may lose valuable students by implementing this."*

3. "This is a shameless money grab."

4. "I believe this is just a money grab by the university, and is very underhand. This should not be implemented; and students should not have to feel pressured into accepting a spot in the program, especially when you are waiting for receipt of other offers."

5. "I am outraged to hear that this is even being considered. Assuming that this would be in addition to the fee already paid to apply to the program, this additional tax on students only means two things to me:

*(i) It is being used as revenue generation. If this is the case, shame on the program for considering this measure. Having experienced outside of UBC, I can say that this would be an exception rather than a rule of most institutions. Should the funding model for SPPH be built around squeezing money out of graduate students, I question the administration and sustainability of this institution. At a time when federal and provincial governments are recognizing the financial burden that education has on students and is instead implementing debt relief packages, SPPH is instead making a revenue decision that is nonsensical.*

*(ii) It is being used to deter applicants. If this is the case, don't worry. I'm already not going to be recommending this institution to others for graduate studies. I've had too many difficulties with applications, finances, and quality of education that I cannot bring myself to speak positively of my experience here."*

6. "While I understand that students accepting an offer and later changing their mind causes problems, I don't think it is fair to charge an acceptance deposit. There are many reasons why a student might end up rejecting an offer that they initially accepted, many of which are not entirely in their control. It might also make things especially stressful for students who are awaiting a response from other schools. I know that for me, UBC responded to me several weeks before I heard from any other schools."

7. "Good morning UBC SPPH Administrators,

*After looking over your proposal, I don't feel convinced that a \$250 acceptance deposit is the right move. As a recent graduate, there were a few reasons as to why I selected UBC as the school for me, with the lower tuition costs being one of them. However, to ask new students to spend \$250 out of their own pocket for an acceptance deposit seems problematic since:*

a) the issue with prospective students withdrawing stems from receiving early acceptance letters from UBC in comparison to all other schools, which subsequently forces prospective students to make a rushed, preemptive decision on accepting the offer before other schools have even evaluated our packages. This can be rectified by delaying acceptance offers, not asking students to spend money before they have evaluated all other offers.

b) the \$250 seems like a cash grab since some - but definitely not all - of graduate schools are asking for this. It feels coercive, especially since UBC as an academic institution already has the reputation of being a strongly funded school. In addition, for the low-income individuals who have already spent their funds applying to grad school and is struggling to make ends meet, adding this additional fee can end up being a strong deterrent and the reason we lost candidates to other schools, specifically UofT.

c) Lastly, asking students to pay \$250 may push students further away since they will be paying the fee for a school that has no specified academic streams - unless you want to be an epidemiologist or bio statistician - whereas other schools who do have streams, do not ask for this.

The retention issues - in my opinion - stem from the fact that the acceptance letters are sent very early compared to all other schools in Canada. If you could coordinate this, strengthen the streams in terms of program selection and not just marketing SPPH as a holistic school - since let's be serious, no qualitative courses are mandatory and you can go your entire career without going into any qualitative courses at SPPH as an MPH - but actually becoming the holistic school you market.

In sum, asking \$250 from prospective students will not address retention issues since it comes off that UBC - which is often perceived by young adults as a supremely elitist school - is trying to find more ways to take money from their students, or they don't have a lot of funding to begin with."

8. "I think asking students who are applying for a masters program to pay high fees just to apply for the program, and then after that, another \$250.00 for an acceptance deposit is downright exorbitant, inequitable, and elitist. It already costs too much to apply for a program and get a leg up. This deposit has the ability to stifle a student's choice in which program they may want to accept particularly since different schools have different timelines for acceptance and registration of this program. \$250 dollars is too large of an amount to be penalized for if you choose not to pick the MPH, especially for starving students."
9. "I think the deposit seems as a way to almost push students to accept UBC as opposed to any other schools. Speaking from my personal experience, other Public Health programs from other universities actually sent out acceptances at a much later time (almost around June). Thus, if students are holding their acceptance then it is only because they are waiting for all their schools of choice to respond to them so they can go ahead and make an appropriate decision. By implementing this non-refundable deposit, it seems UBC might be pushing the students to make a hurried decision when in some cases, they don't have a choice but to wait out for their offers which is why they take a time to respond to UBC and other schools who send out early acceptances. Alternatively, by implementing this fee, you might find more students choose to reject UBC's offer because they may not want to pay the fee."