

SUBJECT	NON-REFUNDABLE ACCEPTANCE DEPOSIT MDS PROGRAM
MEETING DATE	FEBRUARY 7, 2019

Forwarded on the Recommendation of the President

**APPROVED FOR
SUBMISSION**



Santa J. Ono, President and Vice-Chancellor

DECISION REQUESTED	IT IS HEREBY REQUESTED that <i>approval be granted for an increase from \$1,000 to \$3,000 for the non-refundable acceptance deposit for domestic and international students entering the Master of Data Science (MDS) Program at UBC Okanagan campus, effective for the academic year 2019-2020.</i>
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Report Date	November 30, 2018
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Presented By Deborah Buszard, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Principal, UBC Okanagan
 Ananya Mukherjee-Reed, Provost and Vice-Principal Academic
 Patricia Lasserre, Associate Provost, Enrolment & Academic Programs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Master of Data Science program at UBC Okanagan proposes to increase the current \$1,000 non-refundable acceptance deposit for both domestic and international students to \$3,000. The deposits are required of students who accept an offer of admission to the MDS program. The increase to the non-refundable acceptance deposit would be effective for the September 2019 intake. Acceptance deposits are credited towards the first tuition instalment. Students who do not commence their programs, after accepting an offer of admission, are not refunded their deposits. This increase would also be consistent with the MDS program at the UBC Vancouver campus.

Attached: Student Tuition Deposit Consultation Report

STRATEGIC CORE AREAS SUPPORTED

- People and Places
 Research Excellence
 Transformative Learning
 Local / Global Engagement

DESCRIPTION & RATIONALE A deposit is collected from students when they accept admission to the program. Admission acceptance is typically four to six months before the program starts in September. The non-refundable deposit is used to ensure students who accepted an admission offer to the program will attend. Since this is a professional degree program with limited seats, it is critical that the Department knows exactly how many students will attend and be part of the cohort for that year.

Further, accepted students who do not attend the program have effectively taken a seat from a student who potentially could have been accepted in the program. Overall, the goal of the deposit is to ensure students are committing to attending the program and that the Department is able to accurately plan the number of students in the program each year.

At UBC Okanagan in 2018, about 10% of the cohort decided not to attend the program due to various reasons, informing the Department very late, in many cases less than a month before the program started. The proposed increase to the current deposit from \$1,000 to \$3,000 would also allow us to be consistent with the MDS program at the UBC Vancouver campus.

BENEFITS The intent of the non-refundable acceptance deposit is to encourage applicants with offers of admission from UBC and from other universities to make their decisions with respect to their choice of program in a timely manner. Such decisions will permit the Master of Data Science program to make timely offers to waitlisted students if and when spaces become available.

Learning,
Research,
Financial,
Sustainability &
Reputational

RISKS The Master of Data Science program does not foresee any hardship resulting from this deposit requirement. The intent of the fee change is not to place undue hardship on the applicants. Special arrangements will be made for students who may not be able to pay the increased deposit on a case-by-case basis.

Financial,
Operational &
Reputational

SCHEDULE The increased non-refundable acceptance deposit for the MDS Program at UBC Okanagan will be effective for incoming students commencing study in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Implementation
Timeline

CONSULTATION A consultation was undertaken with the UBC Students' Union and current graduate students enrolled in the Masters of Data Science program, by the AVP Students Office, between October 15, 2018 and November 10, 2018. Current graduate students showed support for the deposit increase during a face-to-face meeting while the UBCSUO did not submit a response. The report of the consultation is attached.

Relevant Units,
Internal & External
Constituencies



Masters of Data Science Deposit Increase Consultation

The University would like to gather your comments on the proposed increase to the deposit required to secure a seat in the Masters of Data Science program upon acceptance of an admission offer. Below you will find:

- instructions to provide feedback
- an overview of the program
- the proposed deposit increase and rationale

Instructions

We are seeking comments from individual students and student organisations on campus. Please review and distribute the information below as you deem appropriate.

All comments should be sent to ian.cull@ubc.ca by November 10th, 2018.

If you have any questions about this consultation process, please contact the AVP Students Office: ian.cull@ubc.ca.

Confidentiality

The Office of the Associate Vice-President (Students) will collect comments, and only analysts within that office will know the identity of individual students submitting comments. At no time will anyone outside of the Office of the Associate Vice-President (Students) know the identity of individual students who submit comments to this consultation. Your comments will only be used for the purposes of the tuition consultation. Comments from individual students will be stripped of any identifying information to ensure confidentiality, but otherwise will be provided to the responsible Faculties and the Board of Governors verbatim.

Comments received from student organizations will be reported as coming from those organizations, and provided to the responsible faculty and Board of Governors as received.

Program Overview

The Master of Data Science program is a 10-month, 30-credit non-thesis accelerated professional degree program that offers a sound foundation in data science techniques. The program focuses on modeling, data extraction, data cleaning, data analysis, and communicating results to support evidence-based decisions. The capstone project provides an outstanding opportunity for students to get project experience and apply their skills on real data.



The MDS targets students with a strong background in quantitative sciences who wish to deepen their skills in Data Analytics and Data Science to pursue a career in industry. Students entering the program typically have a bachelor's degree in any discipline that relies increasingly on data such as Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Engineering, Geography, Management, or Psychology, but also Digital Media, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Education, Health Care, History, Physics, Sociology, etc.

This program is not designed for students with an undergraduate degree in Computer Science or Statistics. It is restricted to students who have not declared a Major or Minor in Data Science and have not taken a significant number of data science courses.

For more information about the MDS program, please visit <https://cosc.ok.ubc.ca/graduate/data-science.html> or contact Ramon Lawrence (ramon.lawrence@ubc.ca).

Deposit Increase and Rationale

A deposit is collected from students when they accept admission to the program. Admission acceptance is typically 4 to 6 months before the program starts in September. The non-refundable deposit is used to ensure students who accepted an admission offer to the program will attend. Since this is a professional degree program with limited seats, it is critical that the Department knows exactly how many students will attend and be part of the cohort for that year. Further, accepted students who do not attend the program have effectively taken a seat from a student who potentially could have been accepted in the program. Overall, the goal of the deposit is to ensure students are committing to attending the program and that the Department is able to accurately plan the number of students in the program each year.

The current deposit is \$1,000. The proposed new deposit is \$3,000. The current \$1000 deposit is too small a financial disincentive to prevent students from dropping the program. At UBC Okanagan in 2018, about 10% of the cohort decided not to attend the program due to various reasons, informing the Department very late, in many cases less than a month before the program started. This late withdrawal caused issues in program planning, but more importantly, did not allow other qualified students to be admitted into the program.

The increase to \$3,000 is consistent with the MDS program at the UBC Vancouver campus which has also experienced similar issues. Note that the \$3,000 deposit is applied to the tuition for students attending the program and is still a relatively small percentage (less than 10%) of the total tuition for the program. Data from UBC Vancouver for 2017W indicates that 16% of the students who accepted an offer forfeited their deposit just before the program started, which resulted in lower enrolment than anticipated and fewer opportunities for other qualified students.



Masters of Data Science Tuition Consultation

STUDENT TUITION CONSULTATION REPORT

The Associate Vice-President, Students Office, in partnership with the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences conducted a student consultation regarding the proposed increase to the deposit required to secure a seat in the Masters of Data Science program upon acceptance of an admission offer.

Student Representative Bodies Invited to the Consultation

Current graduate students enrolled in the Masters of Data Science program
University of British Columbia Students' Union Okanagan

Mode of Consultation

The consultation consisted of a face-to-face meeting with the graduate students enrolled in the Masters of Data Science program. We met with current graduate students enrolled in the Masters of Data Science program on October 22, 2018. At this meeting, all of the required Program information was shared.

The Students Union was invited to the consultation through email, and asked to distribute the invitation to their constituents, as they felt appropriate.

Basis of Consultation: The consultation was based on a proposed increase to the deposit required to secure a seat; the document created by the Faculty.

Summary of Student Feedback: Submissions were requested from the University of British Columbia Students' Union Okanagan (UBCSUO) and graduate students enrolled in the Masters of Data Science program. They were requested to have this to Ian Cull, AVPS on or before November 10, 2018.

We met with Dr. Bernard Momer and the graduate students enrolled in the Masters of Data Science program on October 22, 2018 to carry out the consultation on the Masters of Data Science Tuition Fee schedule. There Dr. Momer provided a rationale for increasing the fee from \$1000.00 to \$3000.00. The comments we received regarding the increase were supportive. We did not receive any comments that were in opposition to the increase.

Ian Cull requested that any student who might want to comment privately could do so through an email submission to ian.cull@ubc.ca. To this date, he has received no further comments.

The Executive of the Students Union Okanagan were also invited to meet and to provide feedback. Ian Cull sent out several reminders of the request for consultation and has not



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Okanagan Campus

received a reply. To date the UBCSUO have not written to express their views in the proposal above, we still hope to hear from them.