

Student criticises Library for new admin fees on lost items



By [Oscar Bentley](#), Editor (2018)

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Image: Wikipedia

The University of York Library has introduced a new administration fee on items that are deemed to be lost. From the start of September, a new procedure was introduced that charges a £20 administration fee on lost items in addition to a Lost Item Charge for the value of the item which has been lost. The new system replaces the previous standard replacement fee, which charged a flat £35 rate on all items that were lost.

The Library claims this is an attempt to make the system fairer, explaining that they are “charging [for] the actual replacement cost for any lost items, plus an administrative charge to cover the associated costs (eg staff time, book processing etc)”, rather than charging users a flat rate even if the item they have lost is of a lower value.

The new Lost Item Charge is also non-refundable, with the Library explaining that “we’re likely to have [already] replaced the item”, even if the user then finds it at a later date. If the lost item is out of print, the Library also state they will “apply a replacement charge that will enable us to buy either a new version (if it returns to print) or a suitable alternative.”

However, Early Modern History MA student Enya Holland has criticized the change on Twitter, calling it “hideously out of touch” and stating that she was “genuinely disgusted”. Holland claims this points to universities not understanding the financial constraints that some students are under, saying that “this last year has made me realise how unis just don’t get some people can’t really afford £30 for binding etc”, likely referring to the charges incurred for printing and binding dissertations and other papers.

When the University and Library Twitter accounts responded that the updated charge was intended to make the system fairer, Holland hit back that in her view the new system wasn’t fairer at all, stating that “No one loses a book on purpose and the less well off students who lose them will have to face a potentially large fine that they may struggle to pay. I would be surprised if many books cost more than £35 to replace.

“And in any case you’re looking at a minimum £20 fine anyway assuming you pay an admin fee PLUS a lost item fee instead of just a lost item fee. So assuming a book costs less than £15 then you end up paying less than the flat fee but in all other cases you pay more.”

She concluded that the Library “also charge[s anyone] who doesn’t renew even though no one else wants the book? It’s just a thinly veiled way to charge students more.”

The Library say they often assume an item is lost if they are not returned when requested, so the new subjective Lost Item Charges and administration fee is intended to reduce inconvenience to other borrowers.



3 comments

Richard

18 Sep '17 at 6:41 pm

It REALLY isn't that hard to not lose a book. I mean, if you're unable to not lose a book, maybe you're degree might be a little bit beyond you

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Dave

18 Sep '17 at 10:28 pm

Seems fair. Each time a book gets lost they've got to mark it as lost, find another source (some books might not be on Amazon!), organize delivery times that fall in line with library times, get the University credit card, get authorization to buy the book, register the book, put in whatever library ownerships bits and the time stamp page, take it out and put it back on the shelves.

As previous commenter suggested – don't lose books!

[▲ Report](#)

Tom Finch

22 Sep '17 at 12:18 pm

“I would be surprised if many books cost more than £35 to replace.”

Academic books usually run £50+, and often into the hundreds. You can protest the ludicrous monopolies

of the big publishing houses (in fact, please do!), but in the meantime the library's considerably worse off. At least now students only pay late fines if another patron has requested the book- it used to be a fine whether or not anybody needed the book.

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