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# Fee Policy: 2023 – 2024

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## 1.0 Purpose and scope of the policy

- 1.1 College tuition fee rates for the academic year 2023-24 reflect the funding rules of its funding bodies and takes into account the differences arising from age and prior attainment level as imposed by those funding bodies. Some learners will be fully funded, some co-funded, others having access to loans and in some cases where no public funding is available, learners will be self-financing. This policy sets out the tuition fee rates and the requirements in relation to payment and remission of tuition fees for all learners studying with the College during the academic year 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024. The policy applies to all full-time, part-time courses, Higher Education and Apprenticeship programmes.
- 1.2 The policy applies to tuition fees in relation to funding from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for Adult Skills, Apprenticeships, 16-18 and 19-23 with an Educational Health Care Plan and Higher Education funding from the Office for Students (OFS). The policy also applies to those courses which attract a loan from Student Finance England (SFE) for which students can pay the full fee via a student loan. All programmes excluding higher education must be on the find a learning aim to be eligible for funding for an Advanced Learning Loan.
- 1.3 For the purpose of collecting, payment and refund of tuition fees in this policy 'fee' is comprised of registration, certification, examination fees and other elements where appropriate unless otherwise stated. For learners in receipt of fee remission and in receipt of relevant state benefits, all essential course items will be required to be included within the cost of tuition. Where learners are not eligible for funding the policy includes tuition fee rates calculated as a proportion of the funding income or a set tuition fee will apply.
- 1.4 Any changes in the fee policy will be applied to all learners which includes, any learners already in learning and continuing into their second year of the same qualification aim (excluding Higher Education learners funded via OFS), unless specifically stated otherwise in the ESFA Funding Rules.
- 1.5 All learners for further education courses must satisfy residency requirements as published in the associated government funding documents. The College is not registered with the UK Border Agency and is therefore unable to accept international students onto college courses unless they satisfy the residency requirements of the appropriate funding agencies.
- 1.6 Fees for all courses will be published in the Colleges associated marketing publications and, or on the College website. The Colleges Discretionary Learner Support funding for learners aged 19 and over can provide funding to support the costs of tuition fees subject to eligibility to minimise financial hardship as a barrier to learning. Where appropriate and applicable, information on alternative sources of finance will be made available to support learners with the cost of tuition fees.

## 2.0 Definitions

2.1	AEB	Adult Education Budget
2.2	ESFA	Education & Skills Funding Agency
2.3	OFS	Office for Students
2.4	JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
2.5	ESA	Employment Support Allowance
2.6	WRAG	Work Related Activity Group
2.7	UC	Universal Credit
2.8	SFE	Student Finance England
2.9	SLC	Student Loans Company
2.10	OLASS	Offender Learning and Skills Service
2.11	RPL	Recognition of prior learning
2.12	APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
2.13	EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan

## 3.0 Related documents

- 3.1 Course Cancellation/Transfer Form
- 3.2 Learning Agreement

## 4.0 Tuition fee rates

- 4.1 Tuition fees for full time provision funded by AEB will be remitted for learners 19 – 23 up to and including level 2. Part-time course fees will, in general, not exceed 50% of the national funding rate in line with the funding rules. Tuition fees for learners aged 19 and above studying qualifications full and part time at level 3 and 4 will not exceed the national loan rate for Advanced Learner Loans. Tuition fees for higher education programmes with The Open University/University of Sunderland partnership will be set by each University and the College for higher education programmes funded through OFS.
- 4.2 Where learners hold existing qualification or other certificates for which RPL can be applied the tuition fee costs will be reduced proportionately.
- 4.3 If RPL is applied to learners and exceeds 50% of the qualification then funding will be reduced by 50%. Tuition fees will incur a fee reduction by the College which will be agreed on an individual basis with the learner prior to enrolment.
- 4.4 For learners aged 16 – 18 in full-time education and those under 16 and wishing to study part-time the following tuition rates will apply:
  - Study of 385-484 hours: £3123
  - Study of 300-384 hours: £2469
  - Study of 299 hours or less, fee will be determined by the tuition hours/640x4642

- 4.5 Fees for part-time courses will be based upon market sensitivity and the College will vary fees from national rates and loan amounts where appropriate to do so but will not exceed 50%. The College may offer certain courses free to targeted groups of students at its discretion.

## 5.0 Payment of tuition fees

- 5.1 All fees will be paid in full upon enrolment unless a payment plan is agreed or fees are to be paid via a loan from SFE, or an employer/sponsor.
- 5.2 In the event that a student loan application is declined, learners will be required to pay the full fee or establish a payment plan within two weeks of receipt of information, or they will be asked to leave the course.
- 5.3 Learners in receipt of a Higher Education Loan or an Advanced Learning Loan who withdraw after two weeks will be liable for any outstanding fees not covered by their loan payment.
- 5.4 Where payment of course fees are through a Payment Plan the following applies

Fees from £100 - £199	payment arranged over a 3-month period
Fees from £200 - £499	payment arranged over a 6-month period
Fees from £500 upwards	payment arranged over a 9-month period

20% of the total fee will be required in the first instance upon enrolment. All payment plans will need to be completed prior to the end of the course and if students subsequently cancel their course the payment plan will continue in accordance with the student refund policy.

- 5.5 Payment plans will not exceed the duration of the course and will not be available for course fees less than £100.
- 5.6 The College will actively pursue all outstanding fees including where payment plans have been cancelled to recover payment in full and any associated legal costs and interest charges resulting from debt recovery.
- 5.7 If for any reason a learner is found to be studying at the College and the tuition fee has not been received the learner will be withdrawn from the course and unable to attend until payment is secured.

## 6.0 Payment of tuition fees from Advanced Learner Loan

- 6.1 Loans must be applied for before the start date of the course, failure to apply for a loan will result in the learner being fully liable for fees. Enrolment will not take place until a loan is secured.
- 6.2 Following loan approval and the commencement of the course, the College will receive an aggregated monthly payment from the SLC for all students in receipt of a loan following confirmation of learner attendance.

## 7.0 Payment of tuition fees from a Higher Education loan

- 7.1 Where students are studying courses in partnership with The Open University, fees will be paid direct to the College. For all other higher education programmes provided by the College higher education loans are available from Student Finance England to cover the cost of fees which will be paid direct to the College. Learners are required to secure loan approval within six weeks of enrolment. Where learners do not secure loan approval within six weeks of course commencement invoices for payment will be issued to learners and the College will actively pursue outstanding fees.
- 7.2 Following loan approval and commencement of the course the College will receive a termly payment from SLC (25%/25%/50%) for all learners in receipt of a Higher Education Loan following confirmation of attendance.

## 8.0 Tuition fee remission

- 8.1 All learners must meet the learner funding criteria as detailed in the ESFA Funded AEB Budget Funding Rules 2023 to 24 to be eligible for fee remission and the qualification of study must appear on the 'find a learning aim' portal.
- 8.2 Fee remission does not automatically apply to dependents of learners in receipt of fee remission, eligibility will be required independently, or payment of fees may apply.
- 8.3 Fee remission does not apply to higher education courses funded by OFS.
- 8.4 The College retains the right to charge exam fees and reimburse on successful completion for learners who are fee remitted. Fees may also be charged where learners fail to attend exams. A limit may be applied to the number of exam resits a student in receipt of remission can take before a fee is applied.
- 8.5 The following categories are eligible for fee remission and full funding for learning:
- Learners aged 16 – 18
- Full and part-time courses (remission for part-time is only given if not being fully funded by ESFA at another institution)
  - Intermediate, Advanced and Higher-Level Apprenticeship programmes
- Learners aged 19 and older not starting an apprenticeship
- Starting GCSE English or maths where they do not currently have these qualifications at grades 4 – 9 (A\* - C)
  - Progressing towards English and maths aims at a level above that which they have been assessed, if do not have GCSE Grades 4 – 9 (A\* - C).

#### Learners aged 19 – 23

- Full-time programme up to and including level 2 designated for young people (without displacing a young person). For qualifications categorised as local flexibility you must have already achieved a full level 2 qualification or above.
- Continuing into a second year of the same qualification and who were aged 16 – 18 at the start of the programme
- Local flexibility provision up to and including Level 1 to support progression to a first full level 2 and/or level 2 for those who already have full level 2 or above, if they are unemployed
- First **full level 2** qualification
- First **full level 3** qualification.

#### Learners aged 19 and over learning aims up to and including level 2

Note: For qualifications categorised as local flexibility 19-23year-old learners must have already achieved a full level 2 qualification or above.

- Full-time programme designated for young people (without displacing a young person).
- In receipt of low wage, and earn less than £20,319.00 (Tees Valley £27,040.00 annual gross salary). You must provide either a wage slip or a UC statement dated within 3 months of your learning start date or your current employment contract stating gross monthly/annual wages.
- In receipt of JSA including receipt of National Insurance Credits only
- In receipt of ESA
- In receipt of UC and take-home pay is recorded on your UC statement (disregarding UC payments and other benefits) is less than £617 per month (you are sole adult in the benefit claim) or £988 per month (if you have a joint benefit claim with your partner)
- In receipt of other state benefits (not included in list above) and your take home pay (disregarding UC payments and other benefits) is less than £617 per month (you are sole adult in the benefit claim) or £988 per month (if you have a joint benefit claim with your partner), and you want to be employed or progress into more sustainable employment (remission is at the discretion of the College)
- In custody and on temporary licence and not funded by the Ministry of Justice.

Learners aged 19 and over studying level 3 learning aims categorised as 'Free Courses for Jobs' may be eligible if you:

- Are 19 or over and do not already have a full level 3 qualification or above
- Already have a level 3 qualification or higher and have an annual gross salary below the National Living Wage £20,319 (Tees Valley £27,040.00)
- Already have a level 3 qualification or higher but are classed as unemployed (in receipt of JSA, ESA, UC (thresholds apply) or on temporary licence)
- Have not previously been funded by Free Courses for Jobs in line with the funding rules

Learners aged 25 and under who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

- All learners with a current EHCP will be able to access education following their identified pathway. This may cease before age 25 due to following a route to HE, employment or completion of their education progress.

## **9.0 Non-funded learners**

9.1 Learners not eligible to receive funding are those:

- Studying full time with another learning provider
- Repeating a qualification that has subsequently been achieved
- Who have received the same provision from any other source.

Fees will be agreed for any non-funded learner by individual arrangement.

## **10.0 Late entrants**

10.1 One third fee reduction for each complete term not attended, excluding learners in receipt of a student loan.

## **11.0 Refund of tuition fees**

11.1 Fees will only be refunded after the commencement of a course in exceptional circumstances.

## **12.0 Right of appeal for tuition fee refund**

12.1 All learners have the right to appeal in relation to the College policy of refund of fees. All appeals are to be made in writing to the Director of Finance within 28 days of the last date of attendance on the course. All decisions made relating to course refunds are final. Notification of the outcome of appeal will be made within 5 working days.

12.2 The College also has a complaints procedure and copies are available upon request.

12.3 The College is unable to accept complaints regarding student loans and will refer learners to Student Finance England or the Student Loans Company whichever is applicable.