

CATEGORY:	Finance
TYPE:	Policy
TITLE:	Tuition Fee Policy
PERSON RESPONSIBLE:	Group Accountant

Introduction:

It is expected that the further education budget for adults will continue to reduce year on year. Dealing with these reductions will be a challenge for individuals, training organisations and colleges.

It is a stated Government aim to raise productivity to the levels of our major international competitors and, consequently, to increase the levels of training to improve job-related skills. As ever, finance is a limiting resource to such an ambition and from this has grown the assumption that individuals should be required to invest in their own training especially as, in the longer-term, it should lead to increased income levels.

It is anticipated that in 2025/26 the assumed fee/employer contribution will remain at 25% for Level 1 and Level 2 courses, plus any Exam fees. Collection of fees from individuals and contributions from employers remains a priority and the Education and Skills Funding Agency will continue to monitor this with a view to identifying how best to maximise fees and employer contributions, with the expectation of reflecting non collection in future allocations.

In addition, Advanced Learning Loans, which were introduced from the start of the 2013-14 academic year for students aged over 24, have been expanded to cover all mature students (aged 19+) studying at level 3 or above (not first full level 3 aged 19-23). Students are not funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency but have access to a loan set on a model similar to that of the HE sector.

The following document sets out the Tuition Fee Policy for the 2025-26 academic year.

Further Education Tuition Fees

In response to the above the College has considered the levels of fees currently charged to students and makes the following policy statements:

- With the exception of Basic Skills, all courses offered by the College will be subject to a tuition fee.
- The Chief Officer: Finance and Operations to have delegated responsibility for the calculation and marketing of tuition fee information

- The tuition fee will reflect the market conditions for each particular course
- Levels 1 and 2 tuition fees will usually account for circa 25% of the national weighted funding rate for that particular course plus examination costs
- Level 3 funded course tuition fees will be fully inclusive of examination / assessment costs

The Chief Officer: Finance and Operations to have delegated responsibility to offer further incentives to employers sponsoring multiple learners. This may include offering an additional level of fee remission to increase the uptake on specific courses in order to attract learners, particular when the course is part of the National Skills Agenda.

- The Chief Officer: Finance and Operations to have delegated responsibility to offer modest incentives for early enrolment
- School pupils (under 16), excluding those attending the College on a school link course or level 3 course, will be charged the appropriate tuition fee. In addition, each pupil will be required to present a letter of authority from their Head teacher approving the undertaking of such courses
- Students aged 16-18, and under 16, attending recreational courses which are outside their primary study programmes will be requested to pay a voluntary contribution
- The courses being funded by an Advanced Learner Loan will be invoiced to the students for information purposes only. Evidence of the loan approval will be held against the invoice.

Remission

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has published a statement of nationally recognised categories for remission of tuition fees (for new learners only) which the College will apply. These include:

- A student aged 16-18, or 19-23 with an Education Health Care Plan, on 31st August 2023, including those on part-time courses
- Learners aged 19 or older who are not starting an apprenticeship and:
 - English or Maths up to and including Level 2, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 (C), where it is delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualification
 - Essential Digital Skills up to and including Level 1 where it is delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications
- Learners who are employed and cannot contribute to the cost of co-funding tuition fees providing the learner meets the following criteria
 - the course is eligible for co-funding;
 - and earns less than £25,000 annual gross salary
 - are on a Level 3 Entitlement course, or equivalent, course funded by the Free course for jobs offer

Individuals aged 19 to 23 on the day they start:

- entry-level and level 1 learning aims (excluding English, maths or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) delivered through classroom learning where they have a maximum prior learning accreditation of level 1, and are progressing to a full level 2 qualification
- vocational entry-level and level 1 learning aims (excluding English, maths or ESOL) delivered through workplace learning where they have a maximum prior learning accreditation of level 1, and are progressing to a full level 2 qualification
- their first ESFA approved full level 2 qualification are eligible for entitlement
- their first ESFA approved full level 3 qualification are eligible for entitlement
- their first ESFA approved full level 3 qualification funded by the Free Course for Jobs Offer

Individuals aged 19 or older on the day they start learning aims up to and including level 2 who need help to move into work, progress in work or remove a barrier to getting into work, and who are:

- receiving Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA),
- receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), or
- receiving Universal Credit and earning under £25,000 through the total of the individuals pay plus UC claim
- are released on temporary licence and studying outside a prison environment and not funded by the Ministry of Justice

At our discretion to fully fund individuals aged 19 or older on the day they start learning up to level 2 if either of the following apply. The learner:

- receives other state benefits (not included in the list above) and their take-home pay (disregarding UC payments and other benefits) is less than £892 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £1,437 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
- is not receiving any benefits, wants to be employed, and you are satisfied identified learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs.

In addition, the College makes the following recommendations for additional categories for remission:

- The Chief Officer: Finance and Operations to have delegated powers to grant Discretionary Remission of Fees (full or part) on the basis of personal/financial circumstances
- Fees for Education & Skills Funding Agency funded part-time courses attended by College staff subject to the approval of the Vice Principal: Communication, Staff and Student Services

Withdrawal & Refunds

- All courses fees are non-refundable unless the College cancels the course.
- The Chief Officer: Finance and Operations to have delegated responsibility for the agreement of a pro-rata refund in exceptional circumstances.

Higher Education Tuition Fees

- Part-time awards – between £2,975 and £3,100 per annum - this includes part-time Foundation Degrees, Higher National Certificates/Diplomas and Teacher Training courses.
- Full-time awards– between £5,950 and £6,200 per annum - this includes full-time Foundation Degrees and Higher National Certificates/Diplomas.
- The fee charged for the first year of study will continue throughout the duration of the course
- Tuition fees are inclusive of examination costs
- The Chief Officer: Finance and Operations to have delegated responsibility to offer modest incentives for early enrolment
- The Chief Officer: Finance and Operations to have delegated responsibility to offer further incentives to employers sponsoring multiple learners
- The courses being funded by an HE Loan will be invoiced to the students for information purposes only. Evidence of the loan approval will be held against the invoice.
- Fees for students who, in exceptional circumstances, take a break (intermit) from their course will remain the same as the fee charged for the first year of study under the existing loan agreement. In the academic year of intermitting fees due will be based on 50% in term 1, 75% in term 2 and 100% in term 3.

Withdrawal & Refunds

- Withdrawal in the first term will incur a charge of 25% of the full year fee as the Student Loan Company (50% in the second terms and the full fee in the third term) plus a refund of student specific costs and a modest administration fee.
- The Chief Officer: Finance and Operations to have delegated responsibility for the agreement of a pro-rata refund in exceptional circumstances.

Lifelong Learning Entitlement

From September 2026, learners will be able to apply for LLE funding for the first time for courses and modules starting from January 2027 onwards.

The LLE will allow people to develop new skills and gain new qualifications at a time that is right for them.

From its launch, the LLE loan will be available for:

- full courses at level 4 to 6, such as degrees, technical qualifications, and designated distance-learning and online courses
- modules of high-value technical courses at level 4 to 5

Under the LLE, eligible learners will be able to access:

- a tuition fee loan, with new learners able to access up to the full entitlement of £38,140 – equal to 4 years of study based on academic year 2025 to 2026 fee rates
- a maintenance loan to cover living costs

Extra financial help will also be available for:

- learners with disabilities
- support with childcare

An additional entitlement may be available for priority subjects or longer courses.

Learners will be able to see their loan balance through their own LLE personal account.