



FEES POLICY ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/2018

POLICY/ DOCUMENT PURPOSE STATEMENT

This document outlines the policies and procedures operated by the College in the setting and operation of fees associated with academic provision for the period 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018. In preparing this document care has been taken to ensure that the recommendations of the Education and Skills Funding Agency ESFA and the Higher Education Funding Agency for fees as outlined in the funding guidance have been given due consideration.

The College has a policy of equal opportunities and seeks to ensure that arrangements for fees and charges are consistent with this.

APPLICATION

This policy should be used by all college staff, and applies to all aspects of fees and fee setting. With the exception of the Principal no member of staff is authorised to use or approve fee rates other than those contained within this policy.

INTERPRETATION

Further guidance on the use or interpretation of this policy may be obtained from the Vice Principal Corporate & Resources, Assistant Principal - Information Systems and Student Experience (ISSE), Head of MIS, and Director of Finance.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS/ISSUES

ESFA Funding Guidance for Young People 2017 to 2018
 ESFA Funding guidance for young people 2017 to 2018 rates and formula
 ESFA Adult Education Budget draft funding and performance management rules: 2017 to 2018
 ESFA Adult Education Budget funding rates and formula 2017 to 2018
 ESFA Advanced learner loans funding rules 2017 to 2018
 ESFA Apprenticeship funding and performance management rules for training providers May 2017 to March 2018
 Consumer Markets Authority Guidelines

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY (DISABILITY, EQUALITY, DUTY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Has a preliminary Equality Impact Assessment been completed? Yes Date Completed: ?

Is a full Impact Assessment required? No

If 'yes', has a copy been sent to the Equality Manager? N/a

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

OFFA Agreement (Office for Fair Access)
 College Financial Regulations and Procedures.
 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy

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Fees policy 2017/21018

Introduction

General Principles

The College is committed to ensuring that its course fees are fair, represent value for money and are reviewed annually. The College also commits to providing potential learners with clear information about its fees, concessions and payment methods.

This document outlines the fees associated with academic provision for the period 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018. In preparing this document care has been taken to ensure that the Agency fee recommendations as outlined in their funding guidance have been given due consideration.

The College aims to optimise income from fees and charges by adopting a market driven approach to setting fee levels, but also wherever possible to take account of an individual's ability to pay. This document sets out the basis on which charges are arrived at, and the circumstances in which learners may not be required to pay the full fee.

The College has a policy of equal opportunities and seeks to ensure that arrangements for fees and charges are consistent with this.

Learners or their sponsors, unless they qualify for exemptions/ waivers, may be charged:

- 1) A tuition fee.
- 2) A materials charge (specific to individual courses).
- 3) External fees (awarding body, examination, registration).

These principles extend to all areas of charging for teaching and related services, including further and higher education, educational and training contracts, and commercial activities. Where the award of a grant supports the activity, then the terms of that grant, if different from the policy principles, must take precedence.

Fee concessions will be offered in accordance with government directives, and to learners in groups for whom the Education and Skills Funding Agency ESFA offers discretionary fee compensation as detailed in this policy.

All fees are normally due at enrolment. Instalment arrangements may be available in certain circumstances subject to the approval of the Vice Principals, Director of Finance or Head of Finance, in line with Financial Regulations.

Fee refunds or waivers will only be allowed where the College has cancelled a course, there is a justified complaint, or in exceptional personal circumstances.

Tuition Fee

Tuition fees are calculated individually for each course.

In determining the appropriate fee, the curriculum team will consider market conditions, College strategy and funding body regulations, as well as the cost of running the course.

The standard LAS rate for the course or qualification will also be instrumental in determining the final fee rate. Each course has a standard tuition fee which is payable by qualifying learners on funded courses. A special fee rate will be payable where a learner is ineligible for funding.

Where a course lasts for two or more academic years a tuition fee is charged annually. Fees for second and subsequent years of a course may differ from fees in the current year.

Where an eligible learner enrolling on a funded course does not wish to be entered for the examination/assessment, meaning no funding can be claimed, a higher fee rate reflecting this will be charged. Where, in exceptional circumstances, the Principal endorses the decision not to enter for examination or assessment, the additional fee rate may be waived.

Learners who fail to complete their funded programme within the allocated time are no longer eligible for funding. If the learner wishes to return in order to complete these studies a further charge will be made.

Learners who apply to transfer to an alternative learning programme may incur an additional charge if there is an increased fee level associated with the new programme of study.

Late joiners will be charged the full tuition fee applicable to any FE programme followed. HE fees are based on semesters and students commencing in the second semester may be entitled to pay a reduced fee in their first year of study.

Recreational courses do not attract any fee remission and the full fee must be paid (unless the student is aged 16-18 years and in line with ESFA funding requirements no fee can be charged).

19+ Full time FE learners

Full time FE learners aged 19+ who do not qualify for "full funding" as defined by the Education and Skills Funding Agency will be charged a fee for each year of their course. Additional charges may be made for materials, equipment, uniforms, educational visits and non-attendance at tests or exams.

Learners aged 19+ will be charged in line with their eligibility for 19+ Advanced Learning Loans.

These learners may be eligible to take out an Advanced Learning Loan.

HE Fees

Fees for full time and part-time Higher Education (HE) courses are governed by the Colleges OFFA agreement.

HE fees are based on semesters. The academic year consists of two semesters. In certain circumstances students who are unable to commence the first year of the course until the second semester may be eligible to have their fees reduced for the first year of study only.

Fees for full and part-time HE courses run by the College on behalf of Universities (i.e. franchised) are determined and charged by the host University.

External Fees

These are fees payable to awarding bodies and cover registration, examination and assessment fees. They are usually payable on enrolment

Examination, registration and assessment fees (including late entry charges) are payable by all learners aged 19 and over, with the exception of those learners classed as fully funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and 19-24 year olds with an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) funded by the ESFA at the 16-19 year old rate.

Where an external fee is payable in addition to the tuition fee this is clearly identified on the College website. If learners are directly responsible for the payment of external fees staff should ensure that learners are made aware of these additional costs.

Learners aged 16-18 who have poor attendance (below 85%), who have failed to complete the required work, or who fail to attend an examination without good reason can be charged for their external fees

Learners aged 16 -18 who are re-taking an examination resulting from an initial failure or are re-taking an exam with the aim of a marginal improvement in grades will also be charged the external fee.

Any late entry fees incurred by the College will be recharged to learners, unless the late entry is the fault of the College.

In exceptional circumstances members of the public, who are not enrolled learners, may wish to sit examinations already running at the College. If agreed, in addition to any examination fee the College will also charge a Private Candidates Fee to cover College overheads. The College will review individual requests to sit exams not already running at the College however costs may be prohibitive to private candidates.

A learner who has withdrawn from a course but who wishes to sit the examination must be entered as a Private Candidate and pay the appropriate fee. Additionally if the examination entry fee had previously been remitted the learner must pay this in addition to the Private Candidate Fee.

The Private Candidates Fee is in addition to the examination fee and covers College overheads.

Once sums have been paid over to an external body refunds cannot be made, nor any sums invoiced waived.

Any learners who fail to attend an examination will be charged the awarding body fee except where the absence is due to illness and a doctor's certificate can be provided.

Any private candidate learners who fail to attend an examination will be charged the full fee.

Retakes

External fees for examination re-sits are payable by all learners. In addition candidates may be required to pay an additional charge to cover the administration associated with the re-sit.

Where no charge is made by the awarding body for a re-sit a standard fee of £20 will be charged to candidates to cover administration, invigilation and room hire.

Exam Support Assistance

The college will arrange for appropriate support services for those learners who have been identified as requiring additional support during exams.

Learner who are in receipt of 19+ Advanced Learning Loans do not qualify for College support and will be charged for additional learning support unless they are eligible for funding from the Loans Bursary scheme.

Where this involves an additional cost (for example; a need for extra or specialist invigilators) the college will make a charge to a learner who fails to attend an exam except where the absence is due to illness and a doctors certificate can be provided. The college may waive this charge if sufficient notice of non-attendance is given and no additional costs are incurred.

Additional Qualifications

External fees for additional qualifications are payable by all learners, however tuition fees for funded additional qualifications are remitted in full for those learners identified in the fee concessions section.

To be funded, an additional qualification must be extra to a learner's main qualification and must not duplicate any element of the main or other additional qualifications. It must be included in the learning agreement, and require additional guided learning hours (GLH) to complete.

Educational Visits and Materials

Some full time programmes include field trips and residential visits which are an integral part of the programme. Where a residential fee is payable in addition to the tuition fee this is clearly identified in the College Prospectus. Learners defined by the Education and Skills Funding Agency as Fully Funded cannot be charged for trips or visits where without attending them a learner cannot complete and achieve their learning aim.

All educational visits should be self-financing. Charges for visits should be in line with College policy. The College does not aim to generate any surplus from student visits; however any deficit resulting from an educational visit will be borne by the organising department.

The cost of all course materials should generally be incorporated within the tuition fee. However, where costs are significant and vary from learner to learner a separate charge may be made in addition to the tuition fee. Learners defined by the Education and Skills Funding Agency as Fully Funded cannot be charged for materials where without them a learner cannot complete and achieve their learning aim. However a charge may be made if the learner wishes to keep these outside of the learning environment, for example artwork, models and food.

The College will pass on to learners the full cost of learning materials for study by Open/Distance learning.

Special/protective clothing, equipment and materials which learners may need in order to participate in certain activities which form part of the course, but which they retain will attract an additional charge.

Where a student fails to return items loaned to them such as learning resources, books and equipment, the College reserves the right to seek payment for these items in full.

16-18 Learners

Definition

For the purposes of the funding agreement, '18', means 'under 19 on 31 August in the teaching year when the learner commences a programme of study' and also 19-24 year olds with an EHCP funded by the ESFA at the 16-19 year old rate

Charges to 16-18 Learners

Tuition fees cannot be charged to learners aged 16-18 in full time or part-time education. It is intended that such learners should continue to receive free tuition in any consecutive subsequent year of study on the same programme.

No compulsory enrolment, registration or examination fees can be charged to learners aged 16-18 in full time or part-time education, other than in the following circumstances which confirm that reasonable conditions of attendance can be applied in order for students to qualify for free examination entry.

Examinations and re-sits may be charged for as follows;

- Where the required attendance or completion of work has not been achieved.
- Where the learner fails without good reason to sit the examination for which the college has paid.
- Where a learner re-sits an examination resulting from an initial examination failure.
- Where a learner re-sits an exam with the aim of achieving marginal improvements in grades.

Requirements for attendance and coursework must be applied reasonably. Absences or non-completion of coursework because of illness or other acceptable reasons should not be grounds for charging.

The College may set conditions for, and seek voluntary contributions from students or their sponsors. Requests for voluntary contributions must make it clear that there is no obligation to contribute, and that learners would not be treated differently according to whether they or their sponsors have made any contribution in response to the request. Any request for voluntary contributions needs to be adequately communicated in advance of the activity taking place.

No fees should be charged to students aged 16-18 for instrumental tuition which is part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination, which includes music qualifications on the section 96 list.

The College does not charge DBS fees to learners aged 16-18 where a DBS check is necessary for learners to undertake and complete their course.

No tuition fees can be charged for provision funded by the ESFA at the 16-19 yr old rate for students with learning difficulties or disabilities aged 19-24.

Students aged 16-18 in full-time or part-time education may be charged for other elements of their study programme as set out below;

- Where clothing or equipment is necessary for the learner's health or safety, a charge may be made for clothing and equipment that the learner retains, but only if the learner also has the option of borrowing the clothing or equipment free of charge.
- Fines for the late return of library books or other disciplinary fines (provided such penalties have been made known in advance); and deposits on lockers, ID cards, keys, library cards or smartcards and equipment that are fully refundable except in cases of damage or theft. Fines and deposits are not fees.
- Photocopying and printing, including computer printouts, are not fees as long as they are not course-specific, are optional and there are alternative sources for these services.
- The recreational use of leisure and other non-academic facilities where the activity taking place is not a requirement of a course syllabus or not part of a student union membership free entitlement.
- Travel, board and lodging and other additional costs, including any tuition costs, associated with field trips and similar activities that may form part of or be outside the requirement of the course syllabus or agreed study programme.
- Optional extra activities where the activity is taking place outside a required part of an agreed study programme. Examples of optional extra activities include theatre, cinema or museum visits or other day or residential visits that are not a requirement of course syllabuses.

Fully Funded Learners

Definition

The Education and Skills Funding Agency defines the following Learners as entitled to full funding for their learning programme. (Learners must also be undertaking a current, learning aim which is eligible for funding).

Learners aged 16 to 18 on the day they start:

- an intermediate level apprenticeship
- an advanced level apprenticeship
- higher apprenticeships at level 4, 5 and 6 for their non-prescribed higher education learning aims.

Fully-funded apprenticeships only apply to those eligible learners who are employed by an employer with less than 50 employees as defined by the ESFA. Exceptions apply for those eligible learners with EHC Plans (see later).

Learners aged 19 – 24 on the day they start:

- Traineeships, where they have not achieved a full level 3 qualification.

English and maths for those aged 19 or older

The ESFA will fully fund individuals aged 19 or older, who have not previously attained a GCSE grades A* to C in English and maths or grade 4, or higher, as part of their legal entitlement on the day they start the following qualifications:

- GCSE and IGCSE English language or maths
- Functional Skills English or maths from Entry to Level 2
- Stepping-stone qualifications (including components, where applicable) in English or maths approved by the ESFA.

If a learner wants to 'retake' their GCSE English and maths because they did not achieve a grade 4 or higher (C or above), the ESFA will not fund the learner to only resit the exam.

Learners must not be enrolled on qualifications which are not necessary for progressing towards a GCSE or Functional Skill Level 2.

Individuals aged 19 to 23 (excluding English, maths and ESOL)

- Provision up to and including, Level 1 to support progression to a first full Level 2
- Provision, up to and including Level 2 for those who already have a full Level 2 if they are unemployed
- Qualifications defined within the legal entitlements that are:
 - first full Level 2
 - first full Level 3

Individuals aged 24 or older (excluding English, maths and ESOL)

- Provision up to, and including, a Level 2, if they are unemployed

Definition of Unemployed for Funding Purposes

For funding purposes a learner is defined as unemployed if one or more of the following apply.

- They receive Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), including those receiving National Insurance credits only.
- They receive Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are in the work-related activity group (WRAG).
- They receive Universal Credit, earn either less than 16 times the National Minimum Wage /National Living Wage a week or £330 a month (this is subject to change) and are determined by Jobcentre Plus (JCP) as being in one of the following groups.
 - All Work-Related Requirements Group.
 - Work Preparation Group.
 - Work-Focused Interview Group.
- They are released on temporary licence (RoTL) and studying outside a prison environment and not funded through the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS).
- Providers may also use their discretion to fund other learners if all of the following apply.
- The learner receives other state benefits and earns either less than 16 times the National Minimum Wage a week or £330 a month.
- The learner wants to be employed (or progress into more sustainable employment, if they earn less than 16 times the National Minimum Wage a week or £330 a month) and you are satisfied that the learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs.

Charging Fully Funded learners

Where the Education and Skills Funding Agency has made a full contribution to the costs of a learners programme, providers must not make compulsory charges to learners for any delivery of the learning activity funded by the Agency.

This includes: administration, registration, assessment, material or examination costs whether incurred directly by the provider or charged by other organisations such as awarding bodies. This includes charges for identification passes, uniforms, tools and materials where a learner cannot achieve their learning aim without them.

Providers can pass on fees or subscriptions made by professional bodies in order to become a member of that organisation on to the learner or their employer if they are aged 19 years or more. If achieving the learning aim relies on membership you can make the learner pay this as a requirement of enrolling.

DLS (Discretionary Learner Support) may be used to support professional fees. Learners funded via an Advanced Learning Loan may apply to the Loans Bursary Fund.

Where additional or optional services or provision are supplied then the College will ask a fully funded learner or their employer to pay. This also applies to learners funded via an Advanced Learning Loan. For example; trips and visits where they are not a central part of the learning aim being delivered. It cannot be compulsory that the learner takes up the extra or optional provision to complete or achieve their learning aim.

Other charges outside of learning can also be charged where they do not directly relate to the learning activity, for example library fines, replacement keys or ID cards, and printing and photocopying outside of learning.

If a fully funded learner needs a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check to take part in learning they cannot be charged for this. If the learning is associated with the learners employment their employer is responsible for carrying out and paying for the DBS check.

Materials used in a learning activity can be charged for if the learner wishes to keep them outside of the learning environment, for example, artwork, models and food.

LLDD Learners

The Education and Skills Funding Agency will fund learners with learning difficulties or disabilities as set out in the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children & Learning Act 2009, and will fund provision for individuals who are:

- Aged 19 and over and under 25, who are not subject to an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHC Plan) or Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) for their learning programme,
- Aged 25 and over

The Education and Skills Funding Agency will fund apprenticeship training for individuals who:

- Have left compulsory school age but are under 19, or
- Are 19 or over, including those who are subject to an EHC Plan or LDA for their learning programme.

The ESFA is responsible for funding provision and support costs for any other learners aged 19 to 24 who are subject to an EHC Plan or LDA for their learning programme.

Co-funded learners

General

The Education and Skills Funding Agency defines the following learners as **entitled to co-funding** for their learning programme (unless they meet the criteria for full funding outlined above).

Learners aged 16-18 and 19 or older on the day they start:

- an intermediate level apprenticeship

- an advanced level apprenticeship
- higher apprenticeships at level 4,5 and 6 for their non-prescribed higher education learning aims, or
- ESOL learning aims delivered through classroom learning.

Co-funded apprenticeships only apply to those eligible 16-18 learners who are employed by an employer with 50 or more employees as defined by the ESFA. Exceptions apply for those eligible learners with EHC Plans (see later).

Leamers aged 19 to 23 on the day they start (excluding English, maths and ESOL):

- learners who have already achieved a Level 2 will be co-funded up to, and including, a Level 2.

Leamers aged 24 or older on the day they start (excluding English, maths and ESOL):

- provision up to, and including, a Level 2

Advanced Learning Loans

General

The Education and Skills Funding Agency no longer funds learners aged 19 or over when they start their learning for provision at level 3 and 4. For these learners agency funding has been replaced by Advanced Learning Loans. The only exception to this is where a 19 – 23 year old learner undertakes their first full level 3 qualification that is approved by the ESFA for first level 3 entitlement and the learner receives the training fully funded.

Where agreed by the ESFA, Loans can be used to fund the following;

- A-levels and AS-levels (up to a maximum of four full A-levels)
- QAA Access to HE Diplomas
- Vocational qualifications including technical and professional qualifications at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Loans cannot be used to fund components of qualifications.

For specific details on learning aims that are eligible to be funded through a loan refer to the learning aims section of the “Hub” or the Advanced Learning Loans Qualifications Catalogue.

Where a learner takes out a loan for the Access to HE Diploma, completes it and progresses to, and completes a Student England funded HE course, the balance relating to the Access for HE Diploma will be written off.

Eligibility

Learners are entitled to up to four Loans, which they can take out either one after the other or at the same time.

Learners must apply for a loan for each learning aim.

Within the entitlement of four loans, a learner is entitled to apply for:

- No more than one loan to complete an Access to HE Diploma
- Up to eight loans to undertake a maximum of four A-levels (this will be treated as one single loan entitlement)
- No more than four loans to undertake vocational qualifications including technical and professional qualifications at Levels 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Eligibility for Loans is assessed by the Student Loans Company (SLC).

Loans have a minimum value of £300.00. Loans will be calculated based on the lower of the LAS funding rate for the qualification and the College fee for the qualification.

Charging Loan learners

Learners can only apply for loans to cover the tuition fee element of their provision, including all costs and charges for items without which a learner cannot complete their course.

Providers can pass on fees or subscriptions made by professional bodies in order to become a member of that organisation on to the learner funded via a Loan. If achieving the learning aim relies on membership you can make the learner pay this as a requirement of enrolling. Learners funded via an Advanced learning Loan may apply to the Loans Bursary Fund to support professional fees.

Where additional or optional services or provision are supplied then the College will ask a Loan funded learner to pay. For example; trips and visits where they are not a central part of the learning aim. It cannot however be compulsory that the learner takes up the extra or optional provision to complete or achieve their learning aim.

If a learner funded by a Loan needs a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check to take part in learning they cannot be charged for this. If the learning is associated with the learners employment their employer is responsible for carrying out and paying for the DBS check.

Learners cannot be confirmed as started for the purpose of a Loan until they have been attending for 2 weeks, and continued confirmation of attendance needs to be made every 3 months.

Payment

The SLC will make Loan payments to the College to cover the learners fees based on actual attendance on the course. If a learner drops out or stops attending the course before the course end date payments to the College from the SLC will cease, and the learner will become personally liable for any unpaid fees.

Learners eligible for Loans cannot access any college funding including additional learning support, but may be able to apply to the Loans Bursary fund for support with other costs.

A learner can apply for a Loan retrospectively (after the initial liability point but while still undertaking the Learning Aim). If a learner applies for a loan retrospectively, and they have already paid fees to the College, the college will refund any portion of the fees paid which are covered by the Loan.

Fee Concessions

General

Fee remission is available to all 16 –18 year-old FE learners, including those on part time programmes, and for adult learners who meet the specified criteria as outlined above.

Learners seeking reduction or remission of fees under these policies must produce satisfactory documentary evidence when enrolling of their entitlement to receive benefit or proof of their membership of the relevant group.

Funding guidance states that in order for a learner to be eligible for funding for their learning programme the learner must have the legal right to be resident in the UK at the start of their programme. Any person subject to a Home Office deportation order will ordinarily be ineligible for funding until their situation has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Home Office, as funding can only be claimed for learners who can complete their programme.

For individuals of all ages, eligibility for funding is based on the premise that a Learner must be able to complete and achieve the aim or programme of study within the time that they have available. For example, a Learner who is planning to leave England in three months cannot be funded for an aim that is planned to take 12 months to complete and achieve.

To qualify for Agency funding the individual must be eligible for funding on the first day of the learning aim. If a learner has already started a learning aim when they were not eligible for funding any change in their circumstances making them eligible will not result in them receiving Agency funding for that learning aim. However they may be able to receive funding for future learning aims.

Block bookings concessions, early enrolment discounts and other incentives may be considered at the discretion of the Principal.

Agency Remission Policy

Full details of this policy are set out in the relevant funding agency documents for 2017/18. The information below is the Colleges interpretation of this guidance at the time of publication.

Tuition Fee

Tuition fees are remitted for;

- Learners aged 16-18 in full time or part time education. For the purpose of the funding agreement “18” means “ under 19 on 31 August in the teaching year the

learner commences a programme of study". It is intended that such learners should continue to receive free tuition in any consecutive subsequent years of study on the same programme whilst they remain aged under 19.

- Those classed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency as Fully Funded Learners

External Fees

The following full-time Agency-funded learners are fully exempt from paying external fees:

- Those aged 16–18 (i.e. under 19 on 31st August in the calendar year when the programme begins), on their main qualification.
- Those classed by the ESFA as Fully Funded Learners

External fees for examination **resits** are **not** remitted by the College.

College Staff

The College provides a range of in-house training and development events that are designed to support staff in their work at the College. The College also supports attendance at relevant, short external events, within financial constraints.

College staff may also choose to undertake long courses for personal and career development. Where such courses incur a fee, staff may apply to the College's Long Term Award Panel for support. Course fees may be fully or partially funded, dependant on the relevance of the course to their work at the College and the availability of funds. (On some HoW College programmes the number of staff places may be limited). Examination fees and professional subscriptions remain the financial responsibility of the member of staff.

Where there are other fees in addition to the tuition fees, (i.e. residential, registration fees etc.) financial support will be at the discretion of the Long Term Award Panel.

Where staff are required to achieve qualifications as part of their role this will be supported where possible, although staff may be required to contribute towards some costs. Applications supported by an individual's line manager, should be submitted to the Long Term Award Panel for final approval.

Full details of eligibility for support and repayment criteria if staff withdraw from a programme, or leave the College's employment after signing a professional development agreement are contained within the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy.

Staff would not normally be supported on full cost programmes.

Attendance on the learning programme must be outside normal contracted working hours; alternatively staff who are released for training must make up the time. This excludes Basic skills aims, which are available to all staff (both teaching and support staff) during working hours.

Other Fee Issues

Student Loan Company (SLC) funding

Some learners have their tuition fees funded via a SLC loan. Continued payment of Loan funding by the SLC to the College is dependent on the learners continued attendance on the programme of study. If a learner drops out or fails to complete the course or programme of study then Loan funding will cease.

In these cases the learner becomes personally liable for any part of their fees not covered by Loan funding and will be responsible for reimbursing the College for that portion of their agreed fee no longer covered by SLC payments. This liability is reiterated on the enrolment form and in the Funding & information letter for Advanced Learner Loans.

Refunds and Waivers

A refund of fees is the repayment of fees already received by the College; a waiver occurs when the College discharges part or all of a learner or sponsor's obligation to pay outstanding fees.

The College does not refund tuition fees where a learner simply decides to stop attending a course.

Refunds of tuition fees will be given in the following circumstances,

- When the college cancels a course.
- When a learner withdraws from a course before the first meeting date, (although an admin fee may be chargeable).
- At the discretion of the Principal if, as the result of a complaint, the college is found to be at fault.

All other requests for fee refund will be at the discretion of the Principal and will only be considered in **exceptional** circumstances.

If a course is cancelled the department concerned will complete a refund request on behalf of the learner, and pass this form directly to the Head of Finance who will authorise the refund and process these requests as a priority.

With the exception of cancelled courses, all other learners requesting a refund of fees must complete a "Tuition Fee Refund Request".

Refunds will normally be made by cheque, or directly back onto the payment card originally used. Evidence of the original payment must be provided in order to support the refund claim.

Learners requesting a refund will have a refund / cancellation fee deducted from any refund awarded, and in addition any external fees already paid over to awarding or other bodies will not normally be refunded. Candidates who have enrolled but subsequently withdraw will be charged a cancellation fee.

Refunds will normally be made within 10 working days of receipt of an authorised refund request.

Sponsors and Employers

Where a learner's fees are to be paid by a third party (e.g. an employer), written evidence of the third party's commitment to pay these fees is required at the time of enrolment. This may be in the form of a letter, contract agreement or purchase order addressed to the College. An invoice will be issued to the employer, payable in line with standard College payment terms.

If the sponsor provides no documentation to confirm acceptance of the fees and the College invoice remains unpaid, the learner will become liable for the full fee.

Financial Support

Learners may be able to obtain financial support where they are experiencing difficulty in commencing or continuing their studies. This support may be for fees or other costs. Learners should contact the Advice Centres. (Access to support is by application and is not automatic).

Principal's Discretion

The Principal will have discretion to approve fee-charging arrangements for categories of learners or course programmes not directly referred to by this policy, or where an alteration is considered appropriate for marketing or other reasons.

Funding eligibility

General

Learners who are attending programmes of more than one term's duration, and are eligible for funding at the start of their programme, will usually be eligible for funding for the whole duration of their learning aim. Similarly, learners who are not eligible for funding at the start of their programme are very unlikely to become eligible for funding during the period of their learning programme.

Those learners not eligible for funding will be liable for higher fee rates to compensate for the absence of Agency funds.

Agency Funded Learners

Funding eligibility is detailed in full in the Education and Skills Funding Agency funding documents issued for 2017/18. Further advice can be obtained from the Assistant Principal - Information Systems and Student Experience or the Head of MIS.

Most individuals will be eligible for funding if they:

- Are a citizen of a country within the EU/ EEA, or any other countries determined within the EEA, or have a right of abode in the UK.
- Have been ordinarily resident in the EU/ EEA for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning, and
- The learning is taking place in England

Please see the latest ESFA funding guidance.

Enrolment at more than one ESFA-funded provider;

While the ESFA recognises that learners may occasionally enrol at more than one provider, groups of learners enrolled on a full time programme at one provider should not be enrolled on part-time programmes with other providers, including through sub-contract provision. For example, it would not be appropriate for several learners enrolled on a full time sports and leisure programme to be enrolled at another provider to undertake a first-aid or sports coaching qualification.

Learners in the Armed Forces

The Education and Skills Funding Agency recognises that British Armed Forces (Armed Forces) personnel wish to continue in education and training while serving their country. The Agency will fund eligible programmes of study for service personnel, Ministry of Defence (MoD) personnel or civil and crown servants, their husbands, wives, civil partners and family members in the circumstances outlined in The Education and Skills Funding Agency: common and performance management funding rules for the 2017 to 2018 funding year

ESOL

From 2012/13, ESOL has been ineligible for funding where it is delivered in the workplace. Where ESOL is not delivered in the workplace eligibility for funding is determined in the same way as other qualifications.

Charges may also be made for materials, equipment, uniforms, non-attendance at tests and College visits. External candidates wishing to take a stand alone ESOL test will be charged the External Candidates fee.

Higher Education Students

General

Funding eligibility is set out and governed by the Education (Fees & Awards) Regulations 1997.

HND and Foundation Degrees (full time and part time mode of study) fees are set by the College and where appropriate in association with any validating partners. These fees are set out in the OFFA Agreement available on the College website.

Responsibility for the funding of all prescribed HE lies within HEFCE.

The funding provided by HEFCE (England) for HE learners is intended to fund all the learners' studies. If, in order to gain their HE qualifications, a group of Learners requires, for example, key skills, additional tuition in mathematics or sports coaching awards, then this would be funded out of the resources provided by HEFCE for the HE programme.

HEFCE funded students are not eligible for ESFA funding

International Students

Full Time

Overseas students are not entitled to ESFA funding and must therefore pay the overseas rates (see Appendix A).

Overseas students are defined as:

- nationals of countries outside the EU and EEA
- students who have not lived in the EU for three years
- British Nationals returning to England after spending time abroad outside the EU, unless this was temporary.
- Those with British national (overseas) passports or similar and Hong Kong nationals are ineligible for ESFA funding until they have been resident in the UK for three years.
- Students from outside the EU and EEA whose main reason for residence in England or the EU has been attendance at a fee-paying school or non-maintained school.

International students must be in possession of a Visa permitting them to enter/remain in the UK as a student. Refunds will not be made if the student cannot complete a course because no visa is held or if a visa is found to be defective.

International students attending full-time programmes (at least 450glh) will pay the international fee relevant to that programme. Any additional tuition on an individual basis may attract a further charge.

Part Time

International students who wish to undertake a part time College course will need to pay a fee, which reflects the loss of any subsidy arising from their overseas status.

Payment

International students on a student visa will be required to pay all fees prior to the commencement of their course. Payment arrangements for other international students are in line with standard College terms.

14 – 16 Provision

14-16 Learning Programmes

Learners attending programmes through our partnership schools are the responsibility of the Local Education Authority (LEA), and individual schools. In some instances it is in the young persons' interest to attend College for part of the week for vocational or other provision.

In addition to the negotiated fees the College will make a charge for any protective clothing or examination board registration fees and additional materials required. A further charge will also be made if the College needs to provide additional learning support for a group or individual.

The College will consider the viability of all provision when negotiating a fee for 14-16 provision. This may include agreeing a minimum group size and corresponding minimum charge where necessary.

Fees are quoted in the Funding arrangements agreement.

Registration, all examination, and ALS costs reside with the learners "home school". Course materials will be supplied by Heart of Worcestershire College with protective clothing and high cost equipment being covered by the school. Trips and visits are payable in addition to the above by the individual learner.

Electively Home Educated 14 to 15 year olds

The College may admit children aged 14 or 15 who are being electively home educated, to take courses on an infill basis by arrangement with the local authority or with the parents. These courses are funded by the ESFA at the 16-19 year old rate and the student then counts for lagged funding in just the same way as if they were aged 16 – 18 years old.

Any charges made to this group should follow the same rules as charging 16-18 year old learners as detailed on page 9-10. Local authorities and parents should no longer be expected to pay fees for this provision.

Other students under age 16

All students under age 16, except those covered by the above categories, who join any part time College course must pay the full adult fee applicable to the course plus a subsidy to cover any loss of Agency funding. A flat fee will apply to full time courses.

Fees & Payment

Personal and Employer Contributions

All learners eligible for funding are either fully funded or co-funded. Where the learner is co-funded then either the learner or their employer will need to make a contribution towards costs of learning to add to the state's contribution.

Agency funding is no longer available for learners aged 19 years or over for provision at level 3, 4, 5 and 6. Learners may access Loans to fund their learning or may choose to pay for this provision in full themselves.

Apprentices cannot be made to contribute financially to the direct cost of learning. ESFA Funding Guidance states that employers should be made aware of the financial value of the government's contribution to training their apprentices. The College is expected to provide this information at the start of the apprenticeship and at the start of each funding year.

Employers subject to the apprenticeship levy will utilise this to provide funding for their employees subject to enough funding being available in their levy account. Non-levy paying employers (and levy-paying employers with insufficient levy account funding) are required to contribute 10% of the agreed value of the apprenticeship. Any agreed charges over and above the government's maximum funding band for each apprenticeship will need to be paid in full.

Payment of Fees

All fees become payable on the completion of an enrolment form either by the learner or their sponsor unless the learner is entitled to full fee remission.

Payment of fees may be made by cash, credit or debit card, or cheque. Instalment payments may also be made by recurring card payment or direct debit.

The College also offers an on-line payment facility.

Instalments

Payment of fees may be made in instalments when fees due at enrolment exceed a pre-determined level. An instalment fee is charged to administer this facility.

Fee Amount	No. of instalments	Payment of instalments
£0 - £75	Not available	N/A
£76 - £150	Two	1/3 at enrolment balance by 1 November
£151 - £250	Three	1/3 at enrolment remainder in two equal instalments due; 1 November & 1 January
£251 and over	Four	1/3 at enrolment remainder in three equal instalments due; 1 November, 1 January & 1 March

Instalment payments may be made via credit/debit card or post-dated cheque.

Instalment applications will not be considered unless accompanied, at enrolment, with a payment equal to 1/3 of the total cost plus the instalment administration charge of £7.50.

Where the College is unable to collect any instalment payment on its due date an additional £5.00 charge will be levied to cover the costs of re-collection.

Any other proposed alternative instalment arrangement must be approved by the Director of Finance or Head of Finance before any commitment is made.

Non Payment of Fees

Continued attendance on a programme of study is dependent upon the learners' payment of their fees. Where instalment terms have been agreed, but an instalment is not paid by the due date the full outstanding balance will become immediately payable, together with an additional administration charge to cover the extra collection costs.

Learners who default on instalment agreements will not be offered this facility for any subsequent enrolment.

If a learners or their sponsor pays for fees by cheque, and the issuing bank subsequently dishonours this cheque, an administration fee of £5.00 per default will be charged to cover the additional costs of re-collection.

Learners undertaking a two year programme will not be allowed to automatically progress to the second year of the course where fees relating to the first year remain unpaid. In addition, learners who complete a programme of study but have fees outstanding will not be allowed to enrol on further programmes of study until arrangements to clear the outstanding debt have been agreed.

Where fees remain outstanding on completion of a programme of study examination and other certificates may not be released and learners will not be entitled to graduate until the debt is cleared.

The college uses a debt collection agency to recover unpaid fees and learners should be aware that the college reserves the right to share certain personal information necessary to facilitate the collection of debts with that agency.

Proposed Fee Rates 2017/18

Tuition Fees

Individual fee rates are quoted for all College courses. Fees quoted are only valid for the current academic year. Learners commencing courses covering more than one year should be advised that an additional fee is payable for the second and any subsequent years, and that fee rates change annually.

ESOL

ESOL programmes (EU Citizen)

Maximum charge of **£3.15** per glh

LLDD

Learners not eligible for fee remission (EU Citizen)

£3.15 per glh

College Registration Fee

The College does not charge learners a separate College Registration Fee; instead a nominal **£ 25.00** per year is now incorporated within each course tuition fee.

External Fees

Examination / Assessment Fees – in line with awarding/examining bodies rates. (additional charge for late entry where applicable)

College overhead costs will be agreed on an individual basis by the Director of Finance.

Private candidate fee: **£30 plus** invigilation / room costs in addition to standard awarding body/College external fees.

Learners who have failed to complete a programme and wish to return

Infill to group sessions **£2.00** per hour

Assignment/Unit marking/assessment fee **£18.00**

One-to-one tuition **£54.00** per hour

International Students

(Payment strictly in advance only)

International learners will not be eligible for Agency funding and will therefore be charged the same rate for a course as other non-funded learners. This will normally equate to the rate applied to Loan funded learners or for HE courses the standard fee rate applied to all learners.

ESOL programmes for international students will be charged at **£6.50** per glh, plus **£52.00** for examinations & enrolment.

Instalment Set Up Fee

£7.50 per application.

Default Fee

£7.50 per unpaid instalment/dishonoured cheque.

Withdrawal/Cancellation Fee

£25.00 administrative fee.

14-16 Learning Programmes

Fees are quoted in the Funding arrangements agreement.

The College will consider the viability of all provision when negotiating a fee for 14-16 provision. This may include agreeing a minimum group size and corresponding minimum charge where necessary.

Registration, all examination, and ALS costs reside with the learners "home school".

(Additional charges will be made for registration, examination, protective clothing, and Additional Learning Support. Schools are responsible for supplying high cost equipment.)

Other students under age 16 (excluding home educated)

(Payment strictly termly in advance only)

Full-time programmes, fee per academic year variable dependant on programme

Part time programmes **£8.30** per glh.

Definitions and Terminology

Ref Educational Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency definitions 2017/18

16-18 year old learner

For funding purposes, the ESFA defines a 16–18-year-old learner as; aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August in the relevant funding year. Such learners are normally eligible for ESFA 16-19 year old funding subject to the other regulations in the ESFA guidance.

To maintain eligibility for funding for individual learners during a learning programme, a wider definition has been agreed with the Education and Skills Funding Agency. For funding eligibility purposes, any learner who was aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August in the funding year when they began a programme of study continues to be funded as a 16- to 18-year-old learner. If they become 19 years old during their learning programmes such students are funded at 16-18 rates to complete their learning programmes.

Absence

ESFA guidance states; A provider may continue to record funding for reasonable student absences of up to four weeks (28 days) if the student continue in learning after the absence. Students who do not return to learning after 4 weeks should be withdrawn from their programme. The ESFA does not distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence for funding purposes.

Actual leaving date

The ESFA defines this as the date when the learner completes their learning activity, or the date when the learner is deemed to have terminated the learning activity (last day of learning), if this is an earlier date (as set out in the Specification of the Individualised Learner Record 2017/18).

Assumed fee income

The Agency's funding approach assumes that all learners other than those eligible to full funding are charged a tuition fee. The assumed fee income will be reflected in a reduction to the funding payable for the programme. The current fee income assumption is 50%.

Civil partner

A person who is in a civil partnership as recognised by the state.

European Economic Area (EEA), Switzerland and the overseas territories

For funding eligibility purposes the EEA is defined as all members of the EU and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Norway and each of their overseas territories as defined in to the ESFA Funding Guidance for Young People 2017/18 and the Education and Skills Funding Agency AEB Funding Rules 2017/18 The Fees and Awards Regulations now confer extended eligibility on EEA citizens and their extended family members (such as grandchildren and grandparents). Students who are nationals of certain British Overseas Territories and of certain European Overseas Territories will also be eligible for funding, subject to the usual 3 year rule on residency.

Students who are nationals of any new country that joins EU (or EEA) or who become nationals of the EEA during their programmes will usually be eligible for ESFA funding from the start of the next teaching year, subject to the student meeting the normal 3 year residency requirements in the revised EEA, and for programmes that start on or after the date they became a EEA national.

EEA citizen

An individual who is a citizen of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland or Norway. It is recognised that all EU citizens are EEA citizens. However the non-EU group need definition.

EHC Plan

An EHC Plan is the document which replaces Statements of Educational Needs and Learning Difficulties Assessments for children & young people with special educational needs. The local authority where the holder of such a plan lives has the legal duty to 'secure' the educational provision specified in the EHC Plan, i.e. to ensure the provision is delivered.

Full level 2 qualification

The following qualifications are now designated full at level 2.

- Five GCSEs A* - C.
- Substantial Level 2 Vocational Qualifications (SL2VQ) when they become available in the 16 to 19 Performance Tables.
- Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) qualifications at Level 2 which are 15 credits or more.

Full level 3 qualification

The following qualifications are now designated full at level 3.

- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Access to Higher Education Diplomas.

- Two A-levels.
- Tech Levels which are in the 16 to 19 Performance Tables.
- Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) qualifications at level 3 which are 30 credits or more.
- Early Years Educator qualifications which are 30 credits or more or 300 guided learning hours or more.

Functional skills

A set of qualifications in English, mathematics and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) that are assessed at Entry Levels, level 1 and level 2.

Full-time learner

ESFA 16 – 19 year old rules defines a full-time learner as one engaged on a programme of at least 540 study hours.

For some purposes other than funding calculations, it is important to measure whether a learner is in full time education and training over a period other than a year. In this context, learners engaged in education or training of more than 16glh a week are also considered full time.

Guided learning hours

All times when a member of staff is present to give specific guidance towards the learning aim being studied on a programme. This includes lectures, tutorials and supervised study in; for example, open learning centres and learning workshops. It also includes time spent by staff assessing a learner's achievements.

It does not include time spent by staff in the day-to-day marking of assignments or homework where the learner is not present. Neither does it include hours where supervision or assistance is of a general nature outside the study of the learners.

Higher apprenticeships

A framework of qualifications where the main aim is at level 4 or above.

High Needs Students

Those who need more support than normal to get access to progress towards and successfully achieve their learning goals.

Individualised learner record (ILR)

The individualised learner record (ILR) is used by providers to record all relevant funding ILR data about EFA-funded learners.

LAS

The Learning Aims Search (LAS) is the repository for detailed information on learning aims including funding rates.

Learner support

The ESFA 16 -19 year old funding stream gives financial support for particular groups of young learners. This includes learner support funds that support the learner to stay in learning.

Learning programme

A learning programme comprises all of a student's activities that lead to a set of outcomes agreed with the learner as part of their IAG process.

A learning programme may be composed of one or more learning aims and may span more than one funding year.

A learning programme will generally be centred around learning aims at a single level, with a minority of, if any, learning aims at a different level being used to support the wider needs of the learner (for example, a GCSE retake in Mathematics would be appropriate for a learner studying non mathematical A levels).

National funding rates 2017/18

Annual timetabled hours		National funding rate per student
540+ hours	16 and 17 year olds Students aged 18 & over with high needs	£4,000
450+ hours	Students aged 18 and over who are not high needs	£3,300
450 – 539 hours	16 and 17 year olds Students aged 18 and over with high needs	£3,300
360 - 449 hours		£2,700
280- 359 hours		£2,133
Up to 279 hours		£4,000 per full time equivalent (FTE)

No recourse to public funds

In an individual's passport the UK Border Agency may have stamped "no recourse to public funds". Public funds are defined in the immigration rules and the benefits and services listed do not include education or education funding. As a result this condition therefore makes no difference to a learner's eligibility, which must be determined under the normal eligibility criteria.

Ordinary residence

For funding purposes the Agencies regards as ordinarily resident in a given country any person who habitually, normally and lawfully resides from choice and for a settled purpose in that country. Temporary absences from the relevant area should be ignored. Someone who has not been ordinarily resident because he or she or the person's parent or spouse or civil partner was working temporarily abroad will be treated as if they were ordinarily resident in the relevant area.

Overseas learner

For funding purposes an 'overseas' learner will be defined as "One who does not meet the criteria for a home learner". Overseas learners are not eligible for Agency funding and can be charged full cost tuition fees.

Parents-to-be

Learners who are expecting to be unavoidably absent from learning for a period of time, such as for maternity or paternity leave, should not be discouraged from entering into a learning agreement. Providers should ensure that the planned start and end dates for the learners' programme, as agreed at the commencement of the programme, reflect the overall planned duration of study.

Partnership provision

Learning provision that is delivered with the involvement of a third party.

Part-time learner

A learner engaged in a programme that is less than 540 study hours for 16 /17 yr olds 450 study hours for 18 yrs + in the academic year.

Programme weighting

A funding uplift reflecting the fact that some learning aims of similar length are more costly to deliver than others; there are four programme weighting factors in the 16-18 model.

Qualifying days for funding

Where the learner or apprentice has not achieved the learning aim you only qualify for ESFA funding if the learner or apprentice is in learning for the minimum number of qualifying days. This is calculated from the number of days between the learning start date and the learning planned end date, including both of those days.

Planned length of the learning aim	Minimum qualifying days
168 days	42 days
14 – 167 days	14 days
Fewer than 14 days	1 day

Small or medium-sized enterprises (SME)

A micro, small and medium sized enterprise which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, and/or an annual balance sheet not exceeding 43 million euros.

Transfer

Where a learner transfers between funding aims (i.e. they withdraw from a learning aim and as a direct result at the same time start studying for another learning aim with the same provider) funding is only available for the latter aim in that academic year.